

Buckinghamshire and
Milton Keynes Fire
Authority
Draft audit results
report

Year ended 31 March 2019

2 July 2019



Dear Committee Members,

We have substantially completed our audit of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority for the year ended 31 March 2019.

Subject to concluding the outstanding matters listed in our report, we confirm that we expect to issue an unqualified audit opinion on the financial statements in the form that appears in section 4, before 31 July 2019. We also have no matters to report on your arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in your use of resources.

This report is intended solely for the use of the Overview and Audit Committee, other members of the Authority, and senior management. It should not be used for any other purpose or given to any other party without obtaining our written consent.

We would like to thank your staff for their help during the engagement.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss the contents of this report with you at the Overview and Audit Committee meeting on 17 July 2019.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Grindley', written in a cursive style.

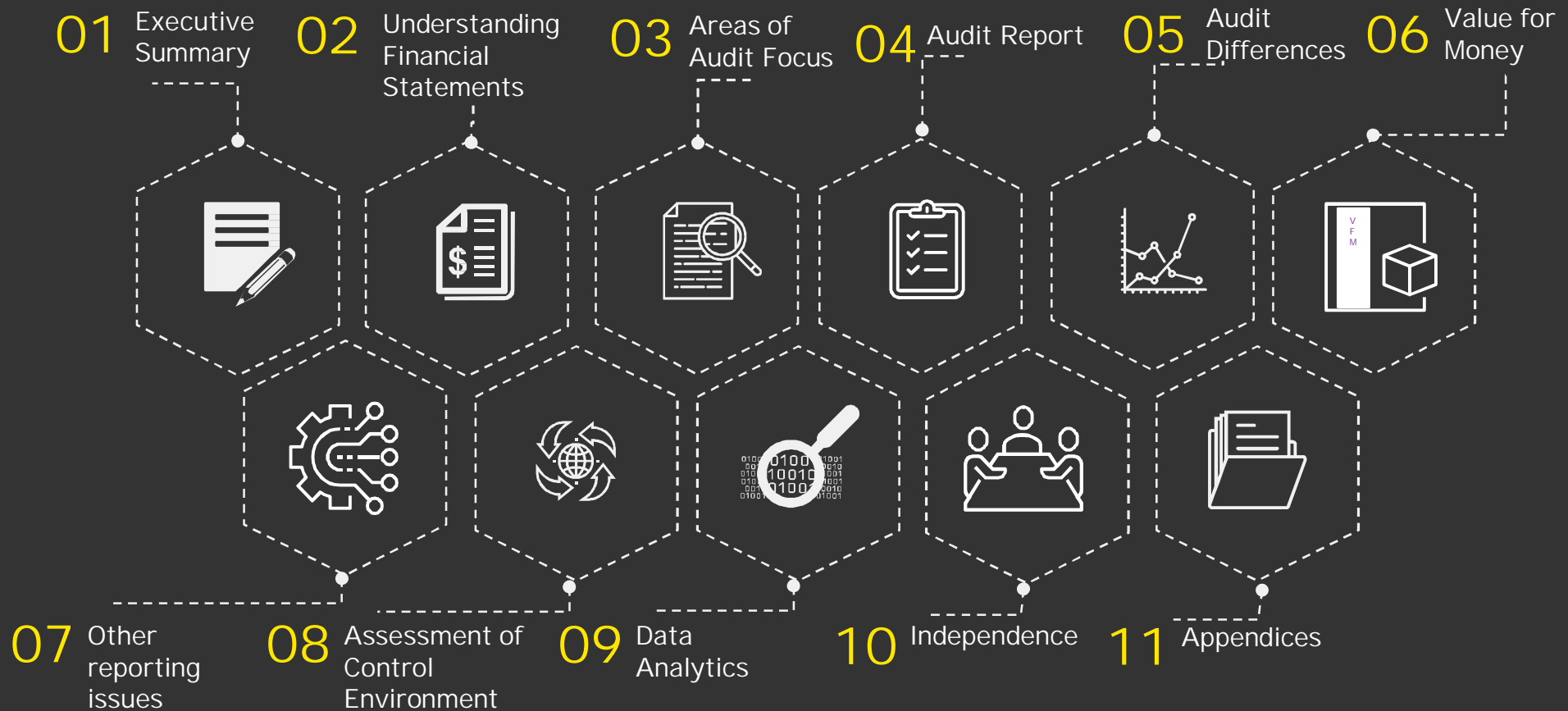
Maria Grindley

Associate Partner

For and on behalf of Ernst & Young LLP

Encl

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Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) have issued a 'Statement of responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies'. It is available from the Chief Executive of each audited body and via the PSAA website (www.psa.co.uk). This Statement of responsibilities serves as the formal terms of engagement between appointed auditors and audited bodies. It summarises where the different responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies begin and end, and what is to be expected of the audited body in certain areas.

The 'Terms of Appointment (updated April 2018)' issued by PSAA sets out additional requirements that auditors must comply with, over and above those set out in the National Audit Office Code of Audit Practice (the Code) and statute, and covers matters of practice and procedure which are of a recurring nature.

This Audit Results Report is prepared in the context of the Statement of responsibilities / Terms and Conditions of Engagement. It is addressed to the Members of the audited body, and is prepared for their sole use. We, as appointed auditor, take no responsibility to any third party.

Our Complaints Procedure - If at any time you would like to discuss with us how our service to you could be improved, or if you are dissatisfied with the service you are receiving, you may take the issue up with your usual partner or director contact. If you prefer an alternative route, please contact Steve Varley, our Managing Partner, 1 More London Place, London SE1 2AF. We undertake to look into any complaint carefully and promptly and to do all we can to explain the position to you. Should you remain dissatisfied with any aspect of our service, you may of course take matters up with our professional institute. We can provide further information on how you may contact our professional institute.



01 Executive Summary



Executive Summary

Scope update

In our audit planning report presented on the 7 March 2019 Overview and Audit Committee meeting, we provided you with an overview of our audit scope and approach for the audit of the financial statements.

In our Audit Planning Report, we communicated that our audit procedures would be performed using a materiality of £667,440 for the main accounts and £154,900 for the pension fund. We updated our planning materiality assessment using the draft financial statements and have also reconsidered our risk assessment. Based on our materiality measure of gross expenditure on provision of services, we have updated our overall materiality assessment to £806,780 for the main accounts and £191,940 for the pension fund. This results in updated performance materiality, at 75% of overall materiality, of £605,085 for the main accounts and £143,955 for the pension fund. The updated threshold for reporting misstatements is £40,339 for the main accounts and £9,597 for the pension fund.

Executive Summary

Status of the audit

We have substantially completed our audit of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority's financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2019 and have performed the procedures outlined in our Audit planning report. Subject to satisfactory completion of the following outstanding items we expect to issue an unqualified opinion on the Authority's financial statements in the form which appears at Section 4. However until work is complete, further amendments may arise:

The audit will continue through the coming weeks and the following list was outstanding at the time this report was sent into papers i.e. 2 July 2019 - we will update Members at the Committee meeting on progress against these.

- Review of the final set of financial statements
- Contingent liabilities - McCloud case
- Disclosure checklist
- Annual governance statement
- Leases
- Officers remuneration
- Receivables cut-off
- IAS19 protocol procedures - still to receive pension auditors confirmations
- PPE
- Employee costs
- Unrecorded liabilities
- Debtors
- Capital grants received in advance
- Investments - some confirmations still outstanding
- Revaluation gains/losses
- Reserves
- VFMc
- WGA
- Review of the final set of financial statements
- Final Associate Partner review of the audit work
- Receipt of the signed management representation letter
- Completion of subsequent events review

We expect to issue the audit certificate at the same time as the audit opinion.

Audit differences

There were some adjusted audit difference arising from our audit on note 29a Financial instruments balances and note 29g financial instruments refinancing and maturity risk.

There are no unadjusted audit differences arising from our audit.

Executive Summary

Areas of audit focus

Our Audit Planning Report identified key areas of focus for our audit of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority's financial statements. This report sets out our observations and conclusions, including our views on areas which might be conservative, and where there is potential risk and exposure. We summarise our consideration of these matters, and any others identified, in the "Areas of Audit Focus" section of this report.

We ask you to review these and any other matters in this report to ensure:

- There are no other considerations or matters that could have an impact on these issues;
- You agree with the resolution of the issue; and
- There are no other significant issues to be considered.

There are no matters, apart from those reported by management or disclosed in this report, which we believe should be brought to the attention of the Overview and Audit Committee.

Control observations

We have adopted a fully substantive approach, so have not tested the operation of controls.

Value for money

We have considered your arrangements to take informed decisions; deploy resources in a sustainable manner; and work with partners and other third parties. We have no matters to report about your arrangements to secure economy efficiency and effectiveness in your use of resources. Work is still ongoing in this area.

Other reporting issues

We have reviewed the information presented in the Annual Governance Statement for consistency with our knowledge of the Authority. We have no matters to report as a result of this work to date.

We have still to perform the procedures required by the National Audit Office (NAO) on the Whole of Government Accounts submission.

We have no other matters to report.

Independence

Please refer to Section 10 for our update on Independence.

The background of the slide features a close-up, shallow depth-of-field photograph of Euro currency. In the foreground, a 1 Euro coin is in sharp focus, showing its intricate design and the word 'EURO'. Behind it, another coin is slightly out of focus. The background is filled with the textured patterns and colors of Euro banknotes, including a prominent blue note on the left and green notes at the bottom. A dark grey horizontal bar is overlaid on the lower portion of the image, containing the title and a yellow hexagonal icon with the number '02'.

02

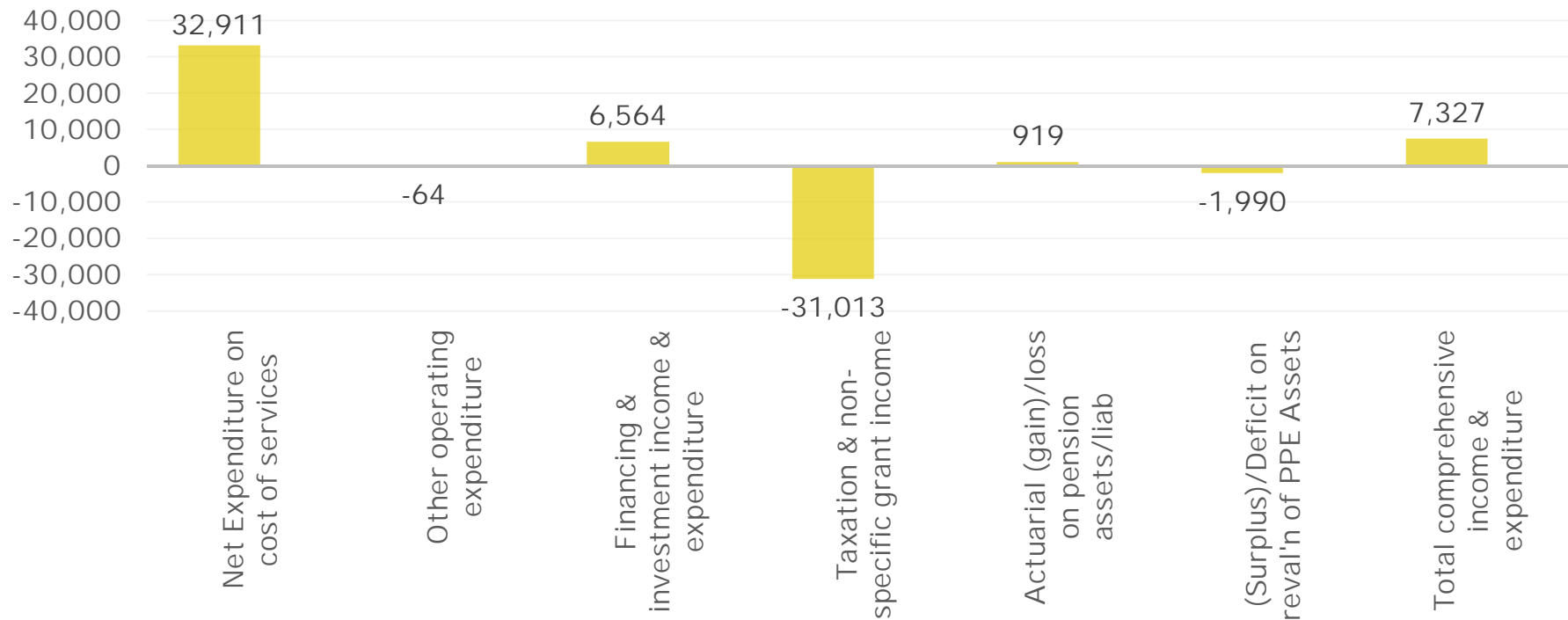
Understanding Financial Statements



Understanding Financial Statements

Key components of net expenditure

The provision of services for the year ended 31 March 2019 was £8,398k deficit, a decrease in deficit of £3,024k from the prior year. During the year there were no significant events that impacted the underlying financial position of the Authority. The following provides an overview of the material items:



Our audit procedures consider the nature of the Authority's results including the impact of non-recurring and recurring items where the size is variable although judgmental. Such an assessment provides a useful insight into the underlying net expenditure and outturn.



03

Areas of Audit Focus



Areas of Audit Focus

Significant risk

Misstatements due to fraud or error

What is the risk?

The financial statements as a whole are not free of material misstatements whether caused by fraud or error.

As identified in ISA (UK and Ireland) 240, management is in a unique position to perpetrate fraud because of its ability to manipulate accounting records directly or indirectly and prepare fraudulent financial statements by overriding controls that otherwise appear to be operating effectively. We identify and respond to this fraud risk on every audit engagement. For the Authority we have identified that this risk may manifest itself in the incorrect classification of revenue expenditure and this is covered on the following slide.

What judgements are we focused on?

As part of our work we focused the key judgemental areas of financial statements, such as estimates, journals and unusual transactions.

What did we do?

We identified the key fraud risks at the planning stage of the audit and considered the effectiveness of management's controls that are designed to address the risk of fraud. We updated our understanding of the risks of fraud and the controls put in place to address them and made enquiries of Internal Audit, management and those charged with governance to support our understanding.

We have:

- Reviewed key estimates made by management and the reasonableness of these;
- Reviewed the appropriateness of journal entries recorded in the general ledger, and other adjustments made in the preparation of the financial statements;
- Reviewed the transactions in the financial statements for evidence of any significant unusual transactions.

What are our conclusions?

We have not identified any instances of inappropriate judgements being applied.

We have not identified any material weaknesses in controls over journals or evidence of material management override.

We did not identify any other transactions during our audit which appeared unusual or outside the Authority's normal course of business



Areas of Audit Focus

Significant risk

PPE Additions - Incorrect classification of revenue expenditure

What is the risk?

Local authorities have a statutory duty to balance their annual budget and are operating in a financially challenged environment with reducing levels of government funding and increasing demand for services. Achievement of budget is critical to minimizing the impact and usage of the Authority's usable reserves and provides a basis for the following year's budget. Any deficit outturn against the budget is therefore not a desirable outcome for the authority and management, and therefore this desire to achieve budget increases the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated.

Due to financial environment in which the authority operates and funding pressures, there is a risk of the Authority incorrectly capitalising purchases.

For this reason we will consider manipulation of revenue expenditure and the risk of it being re-classified to capital.

What judgements are we focused on?

We focus on whether expenditure is properly capitalised in its initial recognition, or whether subsequent expenditure on an asset enhances the asset or extends its useful life.

For 2018/19, PPE additions totalled £7,657k. We will consider whether this figure is complete, the asset is in existence and whether the asset has been valued correctly in the statement of accounts.

What did we do?

We have:

- ▶ Tested PPE additions to ensure that the expenditure incurred and capitalised is clearly capital in nature; and
- ▶ Sought to identify and understand the basis for any significant journals transferring expenditure from revenue to capital codes on the general ledger at the end of the year.

What are our conclusions?

Our testing has not identified any material misstatements from Inappropriate capitalisation of revenue expenditure.



Areas of Audit Focus

Other areas of audit focus

Valuation of Land and Buildings

What is the risk?

We identified the valuation of land and buildings as an area of audit focus in our Audit Plan. The fair value of Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE) and Investment Properties (IP) represent significant balances in the Authority's accounts and are subject to valuation changes, impairment reviews and depreciation charges. Management is required to make material judgemental inputs and apply estimation techniques to calculate the year-end balances recorded in the balance sheet.

What judgements are we focused on?

As part of our work we focused the key judgemental areas within asset valuations, such as the floor areas used to generate the valuations and the method used for valuing certain assets. We reviewed the accounting estimate of asset valuation for evidence of management bias.

What did we do?

We have performed the procedures described in our original audit plan. We have:

- Considered the work performed by the Authority's valuers, including the adequacy of the scope of the work performed, their professional capabilities and the results of their work;
- Sample tested key asset information used by the valuers in performing their valuation (e.g. floor plans to support valuations based on price per square metre);
- Considered the annual cycle of valuations to ensure that assets have been valued within a 5 year rolling programme as required by the Code for PPE and annually for IP. We have also considered if there are any specific changes to assets that have occurred and that these have been communicated to the valuer;
- Reviewed the assets not subject to valuation in 2018/19 to confirm that the remaining asset base is not materially misstated;
- Considered changes to useful economic lives as a result of the most recent valuation; and
- Tested accounting entries to ensure they have been correctly processed in the financial statements.

What are our conclusions?

This work is currently on-going.



Areas of Audit Focus

Other areas of audit focus

Pension liability valuation

What is the risk?

The Local Authority Accounting Code of Practice and IAS19 require the Authority to make extensive disclosures within its financial statements regarding its membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme administered by Buckinghamshire County Council.

The Authority's pension fund deficit is a material estimated balance and the Code requires that this liability be disclosed on the Authority's balance sheet. At 31 March 2019 this totalled £297 million.

The information disclosed is based on the IAS 19 report issued to the Authority by the actuary to Buckinghamshire County Council and also the Firefighters Pension Fund.

Accounting for this scheme involves significant estimation and judgement and therefore management engages an actuary to undertake the calculations on their behalf. ISAs (UK) 500 and 540 require us to undertake procedures on the use of management experts and the assumptions underlying fair value estimates.

What did we do?

We have:

- Liaised with the auditors of Buckinghamshire County Council, to obtain assurances over the information supplied to the actuary in relation to Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority;
- Assessed the work of the LGPS Pension Fund actuary (Barnett Waddingham) and the Firefighters pension actuary (Hymans Robertson LLP) including the assumptions they have used by relying on the work of PWC - Consulting Actuaries commissioned by the National Audit Office for all Local Government sector auditors, and considering any relevant reviews by the EY actuarial team; and
- Reviewed and tested the accounting entries and disclosures made within the Authority's financial statements in relation to IAS19.

What are our conclusions?

McCloud issues still o/s and we haven't received report from pension auditors yet.



Areas of Audit Focus

Other areas of audit focus

What is the risk/area of focus?

McCloud and Sargeant issue:

This involved legal cases concerning age discrimination on transitional arrangements in Judges Pension Scheme and Fire Pension Scheme. Cipfa released a paper on the McCloud ruling. This was discussed on a recent NAO Local Government Technical Network (LGTN) call, where it was felt the sectors response to include as a contingent liability was not properly considering the latest available legal views or calculations being performed by the Government Actuaries Dept (GAD).

GAD's report reviewing the impact for the LGPS, Police & Fire schemes has been issued in draft to the LGA. Impact has been assessed at scheme level, looking at the increase to liability and service costs.

EY, via the NAO, have requested legal views to be made available via MHCLG and the Home Office as appropriate to the schemes. This is to try and ensure consistency across the sector.

GAD were commissioned to review the potential impacts, including LGPS, Police and Fire. GAD have now produced and shared their report. PWC have now reviewed the GAD report in their role as the NAO's consulting actuary.

EY have now reviewed PWC's report. We have considered the PWC report, and assessed whether GAD's method is judged to be robust and producing a reasonable estimate, and also how the two scenarios they have used could (or should) be applied by an actuary.

The issue that now exists is that the increase in the gross pension liability and the increase to the past service cost, will not be accounted for correctly in the statement of accounts and the disclosure notes. This adjustment is material and affects a lot of areas in the accounts and disclosure notes.

What did we do?

We judge that:

- The circumstances meet the criteria for a provision, taking account of the principles under IAS37;
- We note that IAS37 does not determine how to account for post-employment benefits, and therefore the appropriate accounting is made under IAS19.
- These circumstances would most likely lead to an increase in gross pension liability, and past service cost
- Since the adjustments are material, we would expect an amendment to any draft statement of accounts that were prepared on a different assumption to our judgment - i.e. prepared using an assumption of a contingent liability.

Therefore we need to review your actuaries assumptions and figures calculating the increase in provision and past service cost (which is our current expectation of the relevant accounting).

We need to review the revised statement of accounts and the disclosure notes affected. These will include;

- the increase in the net liability on the balance sheet, and the associated movements through the CIES,
- the Pension Reserve,
- disclosures on adjustments made under statute as the movement is reversed from impacting on the General Fund,
- critical judgements in applying the accounting policies,
- use of estimates and judgements,
- disclosure of events after the balance sheet date to the Supreme Court decision to deny the Government leave to appeal, and
- a pension fund is required to make an IAS26 disclosure regarding the Actuarial Present Value of Promised Retirement Benefits. Updating the assumptions made for McCloud would be expected to increase this value.

This work is currently on-going.



Areas of Audit Focus

Other areas of audit focus

What is the risk/area of focus?

IFRS 9 financial instruments

This new accounting standard is applicable for local authority accounts from the 2018/19 financial year and will change:

- How financial assets are classified and measured;
- How the impairment of financial assets are calculated; and
- The disclosure requirements for financial assets.

There are transitional arrangements within the standard; and the 2018/19 Cipfa Code of Practice on local authority accounting provides guidance on the application of IFRS 9.

IFRS 15 Revenue from contracts with customers

This new accounting standard is applicable for local authority accounts from the 2018/19 financial year.

The key requirements of the standard cover the identification of performance obligations under customer contracts and the linking of income to the meeting of those performance obligations.

The 2018/19 Cipfa Code of Practice on local authority accounting provides guidance on the application of IFRS 15 and includes a useful flow diagram and commentary on the main sources of LG revenue and how they should be recognised.

The impact on local authority accounting is likely to be limited as large revenue streams like council tax, non domestic rates and government grants will be outside the scope of IFRS 15. However where that standard is relevant, the recognition of revenue will change and new disclosure requirements introduced.

What did we do?

We have:

- Assessed the authority's implementation arrangements that should include an impact assessment paper setting out the application of the new standard, transitional adjustments and planned accounting for 2018/19;
- Considered the classification and valuation of financial instrument assets;
- Reviewed the new expected credit loss model impairment calculations for assets; and
- Checked additional disclosure requirements.

Conclusion: We concluded that IFRS 9 financial instruments has been applied correctly.

We have:

- Assessed the authority's implementation arrangements that should include an impact assessment paper setting out the application of the new standard, transitional adjustments and planned accounting for 2018/19;
- Considered application to the authority's revenue streams, and where the standard is relevant test to ensure revenue is recognised when (or as) it satisfies a performance obligation; and
- Checked additional disclosure requirements.

Conclusion: This work is currently on-going.



04 Audit Report



Audit Report

Draft audit report

Our opinion on the financial statements (draft)

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements and the firefighters' pension fund financial statements of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority for the year ended 31 March 2019 under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. The financial statements comprise the:

- Movement in Reserves Statement,
- Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement,
- Balance Sheet,
- Cash Flow Statement,
- The related notes 1 to 31, and
- The firefighters' pension fund financial statements comprising the Fund Account and the Net Assets Statement.

The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2018/19.

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial position of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority as at 31 March 2019 and of its expenditure and income for the year then ended; and
- have been prepared properly in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2018/19.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report below. We are independent of the Authority in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard and the Comptroller and Auditor General's (C&AG) AGN01, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the ISAs (UK) require us to report to you where:

- the Chief Financial Officer's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is not appropriate; or
- the Chief Financial Officer has not disclosed in the financial statements any identified material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about the Authority's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the Statement of Accounts 2018/19, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for the other information.



Audit Report

Draft audit report (continued)

Our opinion on the financial statements (draft)

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in this report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of the other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters prescribed by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014

Arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit, having regard to the guidance issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) in November 2017, we are satisfied that, in all significant respects, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2019.

Matters on which we report by exception

We report to you if:

- in our opinion the annual governance statement is misleading or inconsistent with other information forthcoming from the audit or our knowledge of the Authority;
- we issue a report in the public interest under section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014;
- we make written recommendations to the audited body under Section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014;
- we make an application to the court for a declaration that an item of account is contrary to law under Section 28 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014;
- we issue an advisory notice under Section 29 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014; or
- we make an application for judicial review under Section 31 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

We have nothing to report in these respects

Responsibility of the Chief Financial Officer

As explained more fully in the Statement of Responsibilities set out on page 14, the Chief Financial Officer is responsible for the preparation of the Statement of Accounts, which includes the Authority's financial statements and the firefighters pension fund financial statements, in accordance with proper practices as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2018/19, and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view.



Audit Report

Draft audit report (continued)

Our opinion on the financial statements (draft)

In preparing the financial statements, the Chief Finance Officer is responsible for assessing the Authority's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Authority either intends to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

The Authority is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources, to ensure proper stewardship and governance, and to review regularly the adequacy and effectiveness of these arrangements.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion.

Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at <https://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities>. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Scope of the review of arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources

We have undertaken our review in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice, having regard to the guidance on the specified criterion issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) in November 2017, as to whether Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority had proper arrangements to ensure it took properly informed decisions and deployed resources to achieve planned and sustainable outcomes for taxpayers and local people. The Comptroller and Auditor General determined this criterion as that necessary for us to consider under the Code of Audit Practice in satisfying ourselves whether Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority put in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2019.

We planned our work in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice. Based on our risk assessment, we undertook such work as we considered necessary to form a view on whether, in all significant respects, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority had put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

We are required under Section 20(1)(c) of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 to satisfy ourselves that the Authority has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. The Code of Audit Practice issued by the National Audit Office (NAO) requires us to report to you our conclusion relating to proper arrangements.

We report if significant matters have come to our attention which prevent us from concluding that the Authority has put in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. We are not required to consider, nor have we considered, whether all aspects of the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources are operating effectively.



Audit Report

Draft audit report (continued)

Our opinion on the financial statements (draft)

Certificate

We certify that we have completed the audit of the accounts of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Code of Audit Practice issued by the National Audit Office.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the members of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority, as a body, in accordance with Part 5 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and for no other purpose, as set out in paragraph 43 of the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies published by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Authority and the Authority's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Maria Grindley (Key Audit Partner)
Ernst & Young LLP (Local Auditor)
Reading
XX July 2019

The maintenance and integrity of the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority web site is the responsibility of the directors; the work carried out by the auditors does not involve consideration of these matters and, accordingly, the auditors accept no responsibility for any changes that may have occurred to the financial statements since they were initially presented on the web site. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a dark sleeveless top, is pointing her right index finger at a large digital display wall. The wall is filled with various financial charts, including line graphs and data tables. The background is a dimly lit room with blue ambient lighting.

05 Audit Differences



Audit Differences

In the normal course of any audit, we identify misstatements between amounts we believe should be recorded in the financial statements and the disclosures and amounts actually recorded. These differences are classified as “known” or “judgemental”. Known differences represent items that can be accurately quantified and relate to a definite set of facts or circumstances. Judgemental differences generally involve estimation and relate to facts or circumstances that are uncertain or open to interpretation.

Summary of adjusted differences

We highlight misstatements greater than £40,339 for the main accounts and £9,597 for the pension fund which have been corrected by management that were identified during the course of our audit.

Note 29a Financial Instruments Balances;

Loans and receivables had been stated as £17,246k, it should have been £292k less at £16,954k

Note 29g Financial instruments refinancing and maturity risk

Loans maturing within 2 to 5 years was stated at £620k instead of £1,620k

Loans maturing within 5 to 10 years was stated at £2,000k instead of £1,000k.

There were no uncorrected misstatements to date.

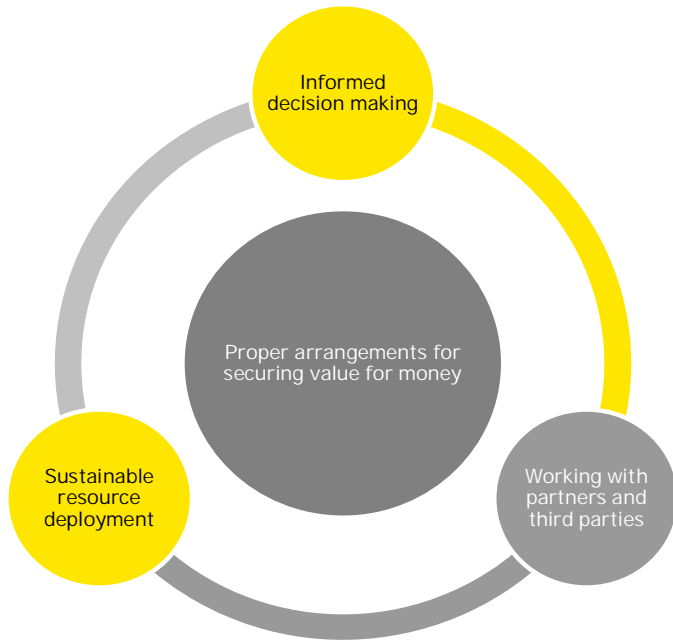


06

Value for Money Risks



Value for Money



Background

We are required to consider whether the Council has put in place 'proper arrangements' to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness on its use of resources. This is known as our value for money conclusion.

For 2018/19 this is based on the overall evaluation criterion:

"In all significant respects, the audited body had proper arrangements to ensure it took properly informed decisions and deployed resources to achieve planned and sustainable outcomes for taxpayers and local people"

Proper arrangements are defined by statutory guidance issued by the National Audit Office. They comprise your arrangements to:

- Take informed decisions;
- Deploy resources in a sustainable manner; and
- Work with partners and other third parties.

In considering your proper arrangements, we will draw on the requirements of the CIPFA/SOLACE framework for local government to ensure that our assessment is made against a framework that you are already required to have in place and to report on through documents such as your annual governance statement.

Overall conclusion

We did not identify any significant risks around these criteria to date. We are completing our work in this area and will provide an update to the Committee. We therefore expect having no matters to report about your arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in your use of resources.



07 Other reporting issues

Other reporting issues

Consistency of other information published with the financial statements, including the Annual Governance Statement

We must give an opinion on the consistency of the financial and non-financial information in the Statement of Accounts 2018/19 with the audited financial statements.

We must also review the Annual Governance Statement for completeness of disclosures, consistency with other information from our work, and whether it complies with relevant guidance.

Financial information in the Statement of Accounts 2018/19 and published with the financial statements was consistent with the audited financial statements.

We have reviewed the Annual Governance Statement and can confirm it is consistent with other information from our audit of the financial statements and we have no other matters to report.

Whole of Government Accounts

We have not yet been provided with the scope of work by the NAO, however, we expect it to be consistent with prior years. As the authority is below the expected threshold of £500m, we expect to have no issues to raise.

Other powers and duties

We have a duty under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 to consider whether to report on any matter that comes to our attention in the course of the audit, either for the Authority to consider it or to bring it to the attention of the public (i.e. "a report in the public interest"). We did not identify any issues which required us to issue a report in the public interest.

We also have a duty to make written recommendations to the Authority, copied to the Secretary of State, and take action in accordance with our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. We did not identify any issues.

Other matters

As required by ISA (UK&I) 260 and other ISAs specifying communication requirements, we must tell you significant findings from the audit and other matters if they are significant to your oversight of the Authority's financial reporting process. There are no issues to report.



08

Assessment of Control Environment



Assessment of Control Environment

Financial controls

It is the responsibility of the Authority to develop and implement systems of internal financial control and to put in place proper arrangements to monitor their adequacy and effectiveness in practice. Our responsibility as your auditor is to consider whether the Authority has put adequate arrangements in place to satisfy itself that the systems of internal financial control are both adequate and effective in practice.

As part of our audit of the financial statements, we obtained an understanding of internal control sufficient to plan our audit and determine the nature, timing and extent of testing performed. As we have adopted a fully substantive approach, we have therefore not tested the operation of controls.

Although our audit was not designed to express an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control we are required to communicate to you significant deficiencies in internal control.

We have not identified any significant deficiencies in the design or operation of an internal control that might result in a material misstatement in your financial statements of which you are not aware.

Reliance on internal audit

We have reviewed Internal Audit reports issued to management during the period to 31 March 2019 to ensure that any financial statement risks identified are considered in determining the extent of our audit procedures.



09 Data Analytics



Use of Data Analytics in the Audit

► Data analytics

Analytics Driven Audit

Data analytics

We used our data analysers to enable us to capture entire populations of your financial data. These analysers:

- Help identify specific exceptions and anomalies which can then be the focus of our substantive audit tests; and
- Give greater likelihood of identifying errors than traditional, random sampling techniques.

In 2018/19, our use of these analysers in the authority's audit included testing journal entries and employee expenses, to identify and focus our testing on those entries we deem to have the highest inherent risk to the audit.

We capture the data through our formal data requests and the data transfer takes place on a secured EY website. These are in line with our EY data protection policies which are designed to protect the confidentiality, integrity and availability of business and personal information.

Journal Entry Analysis

We obtain downloads of all financial ledger transactions posted in the year. We perform completeness analysis over the data, reconciling the sum of transactions to the movement in the trial balances and financial statements to ensure we have captured all data. Our analysers then review and sort transactions, allowing us to more effectively identify and test journals that we consider to be higher risk, as identified in our audit planning report.



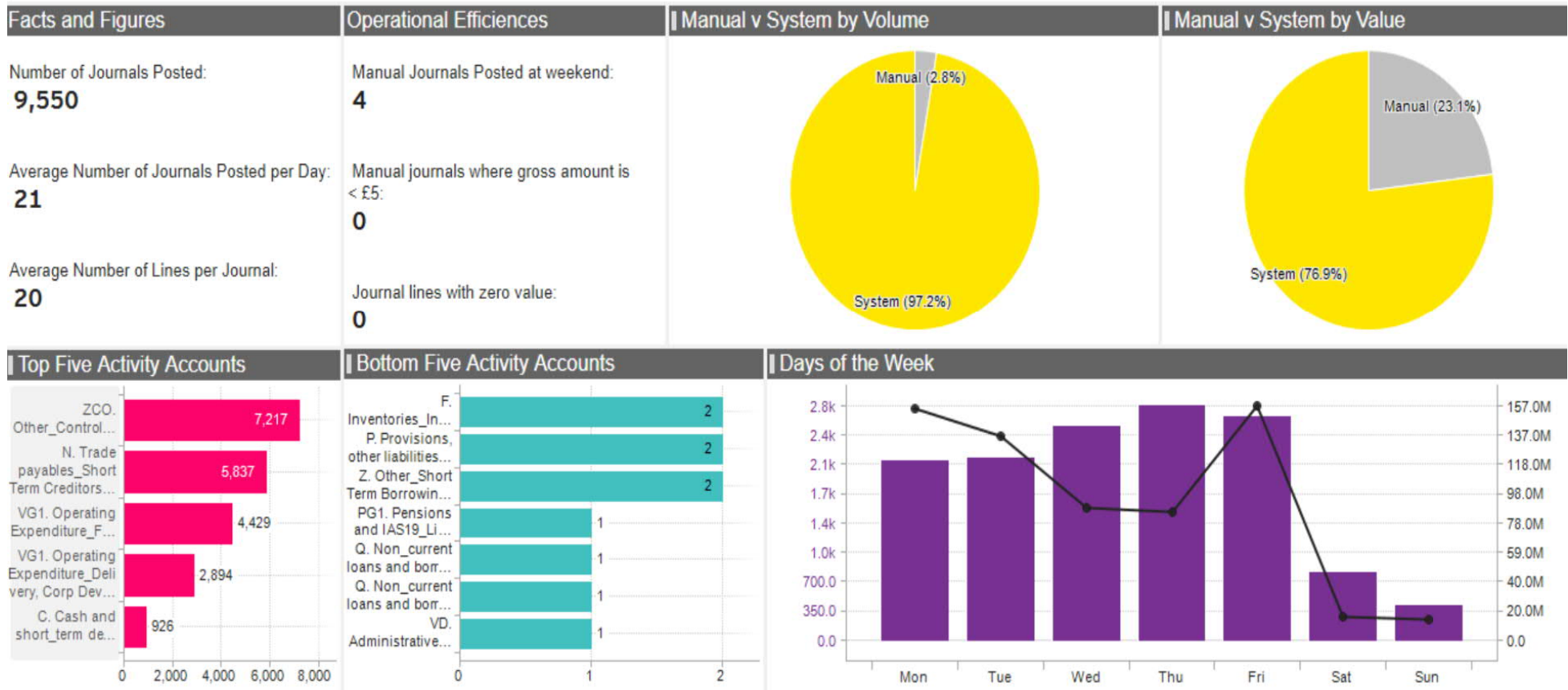
Data Analytics

Journal Entry Data Insights

The graphic outlined below summarises the journal population for 2018/19. We review journals by certain risk based criteria to focus on higher risk transactions, such as journals posted manually by management, those posted around the year-end, those with unusual debit and credit relationships, and those posted by individuals we would not expect to be entering transactions.

The purpose of this approach is to provide a more effective, risk focused approach to auditing journal entries, minimising the burden of compliance on management by minimising randomly selected samples. We can share this information with management to provide additional insight and value from our audit procedures.

EY Helix - GLASS: Journal Entry Data Insights - 19 Bucks & MK Fire Authority - P1 to P12 - 31/03/2019





Journal Entry Testing

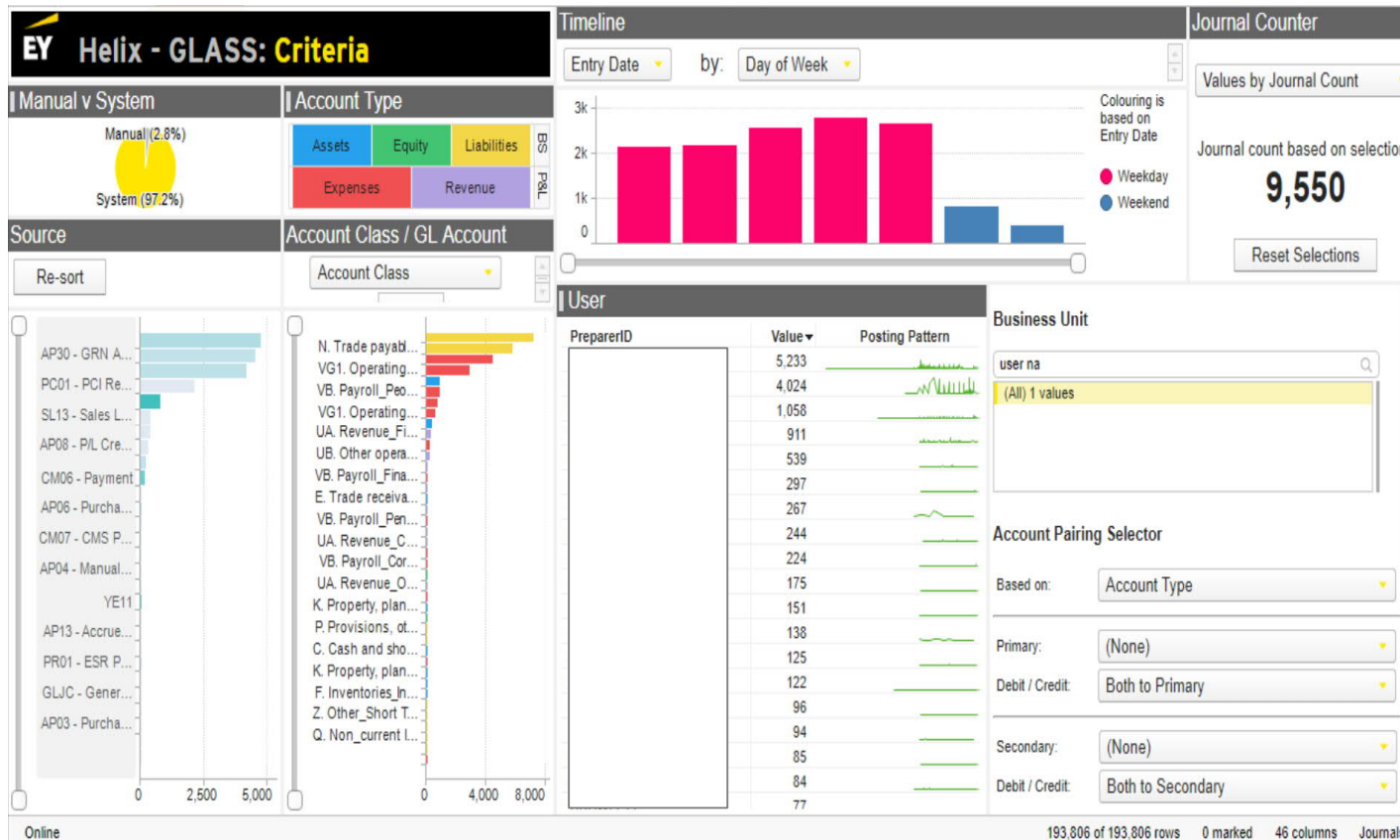
What is the risk?

In line with ISA 240 we are required to test the appropriateness of journal entries recorded in the general ledger and other adjustments made in the preparation of the financial statements.

Journal entry data criteria – 31 March 2019

What judgements are we focused on?

Using our analysers we are able to take a risk based approach to identify journals with a higher risk of management override, as outlined in our audit planning report.



What did we do?

We obtained general ledger journal data for the period and have used our analysers to identify characteristics typically associated with inappropriate journal entries or adjustments, and journals entries that are subject to a higher risk of management override.

We then performed tests on the journals identified to determine if they were appropriate and reasonable.

What are our conclusions?

We isolated a sub set of journals for further investigation and obtained supporting evidence to verify the posting of these transactions and concluded that they were appropriately stated.



10

Independence

Confirmation



We confirm that there are no changes in our assessment of independence since our confirmation in our Audit Planning Report dated January 2019.

We complied with the FRC Ethical Standards and the requirements of the PSAA's Terms of Appointment. In our professional judgement the firm is independent and the objectivity of the audit engagement partner and audit staff has not been compromised within the meaning of regulatory and professional requirements.

We consider that our independence in this context is a matter which you should review, as well as us. It is important that you and your Overview and Audit Committee consider the facts known to you and come to a view. If you would like to discuss any matters concerning our independence, we will be pleased to do this at the meeting of the Overview and Audit Committee on 17 July 2019.

Independence



Relationships, services and related threats and safeguards



The FRC Ethical Standard requires that we provide details of all relationships between Ernst & Young (EY) and your Authority, and its directors and senior management and its affiliates, including all services provided by us and our network to your Authority, its directors and senior management and its affiliates, and other services provided to other known connected parties that we consider may reasonably be thought to bear on the our integrity or objectivity, including those that could compromise independence and the related safeguards that are in place and why they address the threats.

There are no relationships from 1 April 2018 to the date of this report, which we consider may reasonably be thought to bear on our independence and objectivity.

Services provided by Ernst & Young

Below includes a summary of the fees that you have paid to us in the year ended 31 March 2019 in line with the disclosures set out in FRC Ethical Standard and in statute.

We confirm that none of the services provided have been provided on a contingent fee basis.

As at the date of this report, there are no future services which have been contracted and no written proposal to provide non-audit services has been submitted.



Fee analysis

As part of our reporting on our independence, we set out below a summary of the fees paid for the year ended 31 March 2019.

We confirm that we have not undertaken non-audit work outside the NAO Code requirements. We have complied with Auditor Guidance Note 1 issued by the NAO.

	Final Fee 2018/19	Planned Fee 2018/19	Scale Fee 2018/19	Final Fee 2017/18
	£	£	£	£
Total Audit Fee – Code work	24,162	24,162	24,162	35,879

Due to the additional work involved in auditing the adjustments that have taken place to reflect the McCloud issue, there may be an additional fee. This will be discussed with officers once we know the full effect it has had on the audit.







11 Appendices

Appendix A

Required communications with the Audit Committee

There are certain communications that we must provide to the Audit Committees of UK clients. We have detailed these here together with a reference of when and where they were covered:

 Our Reporting to you		
Required communications	 What is reported?	  When and where
Terms of engagement	Confirmation by the Overview and Audit Committee of acceptance of terms of engagement as written in the engagement letter signed by both parties.	The statement of responsibilities serves as the formal terms of engagement between the PSAA's appointed auditors and audited bodies.
Our responsibilities	Reminder of our responsibilities as set out in the engagement letter.	Audit Planning Report presented at the Overview and Audit Committee 13 March 2019.
Planning and audit approach	Communication of the planned scope and timing of the audit, any limitations and the significant risks identified.	Audit Planning Report presented at the Overview and Audit Committee 13 March 2019.
Significant findings from the audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our view about the significant qualitative aspects of accounting practices including accounting policies, accounting estimates and financial statement disclosures • Significant difficulties, if any, encountered during the audit • Significant matters, if any, arising from the audit that were discussed with management • Written representations that we are seeking • Expected modifications to the audit report • Other matters if any, significant to the oversight of the financial reporting process. 	Audit Results Report presented at the Overview and Audit Committee 17 July 2019.





Appendix A

		Our Reporting to you
Required communications	What is reported?	When and where
Going concern	<p>Events or conditions identified that may cast significant doubt on the entity's ability to continue as a going concern, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether the events or conditions constitute a material uncertainty • Whether the use of the going concern assumption is appropriate in the preparation and presentation of the financial statements • The adequacy of related disclosures in the financial statements 	No conditions or events were identified, either individually or together to raise any doubt about Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority's ability to continue for the 12 months from the date of our report
Misstatements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncorrected misstatements and their effect on our audit opinion • The effect of uncorrected misstatements related to prior periods • A request that any uncorrected misstatement be corrected • Material misstatements corrected by management 	Audit Results Report presented at the Overview and Audit Committee 17 July 2019
Subsequent events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enquiry of the Overview and Audit Committee where appropriate regarding whether any subsequent events have occurred that might affect the financial statements. 	Request for Overview and Audit Committee to approve the letter of representation from management at the Overview and Audit Committee meeting on 17 July 2019
Fraud	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enquiries of the Overview and Audit Committee to determine whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud affecting the Authority • Any fraud that we have identified or information we have obtained that indicates that a fraud may exist • Unless all of those charged with governance are involved in managing the Authority, any identified or suspected fraud involving: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Management; b. Employees who have significant roles in internal control; or c. Others where the fraud results in a material misstatement in the financial statements. • The nature, timing and extent of audit procedures necessary to complete the audit when fraud involving management is suspected • Any other matters related to fraud, relevant to Overview and Audit Committee responsibility. 	<p>Enquiries by letter to the Chair of the Overview and Audit Committee dated 3 April 2019.</p> <p>We have no matters to report.</p>

Appendix A

		Our Reporting to you
Required communications	What is reported?	When and where
Related parties	<p>Significant matters arising during the audit in connection with the Authority's related parties including, when applicable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-disclosure by management • Inappropriate authorisation and approval of transactions • Disagreement over disclosures • Non-compliance with laws and regulations • Difficulty in identifying the party that ultimately controls the Authority 	<p>Audit Results Report presented at the Overview and Audit Committee 17 July 2019.</p> <p>We have no matters to report</p>
Independence	<p>Communication of all significant facts and matters that bear on EY's, and all individuals involved in the audit, objectivity and independence.</p> <p>Communication of key elements of the audit engagement partner's consideration of independence and objectivity such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principal threats • Safeguards adopted and their effectiveness • An overall assessment of threats and safeguards • Information about the general policies and process within the firm to maintain objectivity and independence <p>Communications whenever significant judgments are made about threats to objectivity and independence and the appropriateness of safeguards put in place.</p>	<p>Initial reporting in the Audit Planning Report presented at the Overview and Audit Committee 13 March 2019.</p> <p>Confirmation in the Audit Results Report presented at the Overview and Audit Committee 17 July 2019</p>
External confirmations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management's refusal for us to request confirmations • Inability to obtain relevant and reliable audit evidence from other procedures. 	<p>Audit Results Report presented at the Overview and Audit Committee 17 July 2019.</p> <p>We have no matters to report.</p>
Consideration of laws and regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject to compliance with applicable regulations, matters involving identified or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations, other than those which are clearly inconsequential and the implications thereof. Instances of suspected non-compliance may also include those that are brought to our attention that are expected to occur imminently or for which there is reason to believe that they may occur • Enquiry of the Overview and Audit Committee into possible instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations that may have a material effect on the financial statements and that the audit committee may be aware of 	<p>Audit Results Report presented at the Overview and Audit Committee 17 July 2019.</p> <p>We have no matters to report.</p>

Appendix A

		 Our Reporting to you
Required communications	 What is reported?	  When and where
Significant deficiencies in internal controls identified during the audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant deficiencies in internal controls identified during the audit. 	Audit Results Report presented at the Overview and Audit Committee 17 July 2019. We have no matters to report.
Written representations we are requesting from management and/or those charged with governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written representations we are requesting from management and/or those charged with governance 	Request for Overview and Audit Committee to approve the letter of representation from management at the Overview and Audit Committee meeting on 17 July 2019
Material inconsistencies or misstatements of fact identified in other information which management has refused to revise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Material inconsistencies or misstatements of fact identified in other information which management has refused to revise 	Audit Results Report presented at the Overview and Audit Committee 17 July 2019. We have no matters to report.
Auditors report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any circumstances identified that affect the form and content of our auditor's report 	Audit Results Report presented at the Overview and Audit Committee 17 July 2019
Fee Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breakdown of fee information when the audit planning report is agreed Breakdown of fee information at the completion of the audit Any non-audit work 	Audit Planning Report presented at the Overview and Audit Committee 13 March 2019 Confirmation in the Audit Results Report presented at the Overview and Audit Committee 17 July 2019

Management representation letter

Management Rep Letter

Ernst & Young
Apex Plaza
Forbury Road
Reading
RG1 1YE

Dear Maria,
Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire and Rescue Authority - Audit for the year ended 31 March 2019

This letter of representations is provided in connection with your audit of the financial statements of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority ("the Authority") for the year ended 31/03/2019. We recognise that obtaining representations from us concerning the information contained in this letter is a significant procedure in enabling you to form an opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view of the Authority financial position of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority as of 31/03/2019 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended in accordance with CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2018/19.

We understand that the purpose of your audit of our financial statements is to express an opinion thereon and that your audit was conducted in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland), which involves an examination of the accounting system, internal control and related data to the extent you considered necessary in the circumstances, and is not designed to identify - nor necessarily be expected to disclose - all fraud, shortages, errors and other irregularities, should any exist.

Accordingly, we make the following representations, which are true to the best of our knowledge and belief, having made such inquiries as we considered necessary for the purpose of appropriately informing ourselves:

A. Financial Statements and Financial Records

1. We have fulfilled our responsibilities, under the relevant statutory authorities, for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2018/19.
 2. We acknowledge, as members of management of the Authority, our responsibility for the fair presentation of the financial statements. We believe the financial statements referred to above give a true and fair view of the financial position, financial performance (or results of operations) and cash flows of the Authority in accordance with the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2018/19, and are free of material misstatements, including omissions. We have approved the financial statements.
 3. The significant accounting policies adopted in the preparation of the financial statements are appropriately described in the financial statements.
 4. As members of management of the Authority, we believe that the Authority has a system of internal controls adequate to enable the preparation of accurate financial statements in accordance with the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2018/19, that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.
- There are no unadjusted audit differences identified during the current audit and pertaining to the latest period presented.

B. Non-compliance with law and regulations, including fraud

1. We acknowledge that we are responsible to determine that the Authority's activities are conducted in accordance with laws and regulations and that we are responsible to identify and address any non-compliance with applicable laws and regulations, including fraud.
2. We acknowledge that we are responsible for the design, implementation and maintenance of internal controls to prevent and detect fraud.
3. We have disclosed to you the results of our assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud.

Management representation letter

Management Rep Letter (continued)

4. We have no knowledge of any identified or suspected non-compliance with laws or regulations, including fraud that may have affected the Authority (regardless of the source or form and including without limitation, any allegations by “whistleblowers”), including non-compliance matters:

- involving financial statements;
- related to laws and regulations that have a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the Authority’s financial statements;
- related to laws and regulations that have an indirect effect on amounts and disclosures in the financial statements, but compliance with which may be fundamental to the operations of the Authority’s activities, its ability to continue to operate, or to avoid material penalties;
- involving management, or employees who have significant roles in internal controls, or others; or
- in relation to any allegations of fraud, suspected fraud or other non-compliance with laws and regulations communicated by employees, former employees, analysts, regulators or others.

C. Information Provided and Completeness of Information and Transactions

1. We have provided you with:

- Access to all information of which we are aware that is relevant to the preparation of the financial statements such as records, documentation and other matters;
- Additional information that you have requested from us for the purpose of the audit; and
- Unrestricted access to persons within the entity from whom you determined it necessary to obtain audit evidence.

2. All material transactions have been recorded in the accounting records and are reflected in the financial statements.

3. We have made available to you all minutes of the meetings of the Authority, the Executive Committee and the Overview and Audit Committee held through the year to the most recent meeting on the following date: 19 June 2019.

4. We confirm the completeness of information provided regarding the identification of related parties. We have disclosed to you the identity of the Authority’s related parties and all related party relationships and transactions of which we are aware, including sales, purchases, loans, transfers of assets, liabilities and services, leasing arrangements, guarantees, non-monetary transactions and transactions for no consideration for the period ended, as well as related balances due to or from such parties at the [period] end. These transactions have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed in the financial statements.

5. We believe that the significant assumptions we used in making accounting estimates, including those measured at fair value, are reasonable.

6. We have disclosed to you, and the Authority has complied with, all aspects of contractual agreements that could have a material effect on the financial statements in the event of non-compliance, including all covenants, conditions or other requirements of all outstanding debt.

D. Liabilities and Contingencies

1. All liabilities and contingencies, including those associated with guarantees, whether written or oral, have been disclosed to you and are appropriately reflected in the financial statements.

2. We have informed you of all outstanding and possible litigation and claims, whether or not they have been discussed with legal counsel.

3. We have disclosed, as appropriate, all liabilities related litigation and claims, both actual and contingent, and have disclosed in Note 27 to the financial statements all guarantees that we have given to third parties.

E. Subsequent Events

1. There have been no events subsequent to period end which require adjustment of or disclosure in the financial statements or notes thereto.

Management representation letter

Management Rep Letter (continued)

F. Other information

1. We acknowledge our responsibility for the preparation of the other information. The other information comprises the narrative statement.
2. We confirm that the content contained within the other information is consistent with the financial statements.

G. Ownership of Assets

1. Except for assets capitalised under finance leases, the Authority has satisfactory title to all assets appearing in the balance sheet, and there are no liens or encumbrances on the Authority's assets, nor has any asset been pledged as collateral. All assets to which the Authority has satisfactory title appear in the balance sheet.
2. All agreements and options to buy back assets previously sold have been properly recorded and adequately disclosed in the financial statements.
3. There are no formal or informal compensating balance arrangements with any of our cash and investment accounts.

H. Reserves

1. We have properly recorded or disclosed in the financial statements the useable and unusable reserves.

I. Use of the Work of a Specialist

1. We agree with the findings of the specialists that we engaged to evaluate the fair value of property, plant and equipment and the IAS19 actuarial valuations of pension liabilities and have adequately considered the qualifications of the specialists in determining the amounts and disclosures included in the financial statements and the underlying accounting records. We did not give or cause any instructions to be given to the specialists with respect to the values or amounts derived in an attempt to bias their work, and we are not otherwise aware of any matters that have had an effect on the independence or objectivity of the specialists.

J. Pension Liability and PPE Valuations Estimate

1. We believe that the measurement processes, including related assumptions and models, used to determine the accounting estimate(s) have been consistently applied and are appropriate in the context of the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2018/19.
2. We confirm that the significant assumptions used in making the estimates appropriately reflect our intent and ability to carry out the specific courses of action on behalf of the entity.
3. We confirm that the disclosures made in the financial statements with respect to the accounting estimate(s) are complete and made in accordance with the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2018/19.
4. We confirm that no adjustments are required to the accounting estimate(s) and disclosures in the financial statements due to subsequent events.

K. Retirement benefits

1. On the basis of the process established by us and having made appropriate enquiries, we are satisfied that the actuarial assumptions underlying the scheme liabilities are consistent with our knowledge of the business. All significant retirement benefits and all settlements and curtailments have been identified and properly accounted for.

Yours faithfully,

Director of Finance and Assets and Chief Financial Officer

Chairman of the Overview and Audit Committee

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