South Bucks District Council

Year ending 31 March 2017

Audit Plan

19 January 2017

Ernst & Young LLP







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Audit Committee
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Dear Committee Members,

Audit Plan

We are pleased to attach our Audit Plan which sets out how we intend to carry out our responsibilities as auditor. Its purpose is to provide the Audit Committee with a basis to review our proposed audit approach and scope for the 2016/17 audit in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the National Audit Office's 2015 Code of Audit Practice, the Statement of Responsibilities issued by Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) Ltd, auditing standards and other professional requirements. It is also to ensure that our audit is aligned with the Committee's service expectations.

This plan summarises our initial assessment of the key risks driving the development of an effective audit for the Council and outlines our planned audit strategy in response

We welcome the opportunity to discuss this plan with the Committee on 19 January 2017 and to understand whether there are other matters which it considers may influence our audit.

Yours faithfully

Andrew Brittain
For and behalf of Ernst & Young LLP
Enc

19 January 2017

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In April 2015 Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) issued "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.psaa.co.uk).

The 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 from 1 April 2015' 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 Plan is prepared in the context of the Statement of responsibilities. It is addressed to the Audit Committee, and is prepared for the sole use of the audited body. 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.

1. Overview

This Audit Plan covers the work that we plan to perform to provide the Council with:

- our audit opinion on whether the financial statements of South Bucks District Council give a true and fair view of the financial position as at 31 March 2017 and of the income and expenditure for the year then ended;
- our conclusion on the Council's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness;

We will also review and report to the National Audit Office (NAO), to the extent and in the form required by them, on the Council's Whole of Government Accounts return.

Our audit will also include the mandatory procedures that we must perform in accordance with applicable laws and auditing standards.

When planning the audit we take into account several key inputs:

- strategic, operational and financial risks relevant to the financial statements;
- developments in financial reporting and auditing standards;
- the quality of systems and processes;
- changes in the business and regulatory environment; and
- management's views on all of the above.

By considering these inputs, our audit is focused on the areas that matter and our feedback is more likely to be relevant to the Council.

2. Financial statement risks

We outline below our current assessment of the financial statement risks facing the Council, identified through our knowledge of the Council's operations and discussion with those charged with governance and officers.

At our meeting, we will seek to validate these with the Audit Committee.

Significant risks (including fraud risks)

Our audit approach

Risk of fraud in revenue recognition

Under ISA240 there is a presumed risk that revenue may be misstated due to improper recognition of revenue.

In the public sector, this requirement is modified by Practice Note 10, issued by the Financial Reporting Council, which states that auditors should also consider the risk that material misstatements may occur by the manipulation of expenditure recognition.

We will

- Review and test revenue and expenditure recognition policies
- Review and discuss with management any accounting estimates on revenue or expenditure recognition for evidence of bias
- ► Develop a testing strategy to test material revenue and expenditure streams
- Review and test revenue cut-off at the period end
- Review in-year financial projections and compare to year-end position.
- Review capital expenditure on property, plant and equipment to ensure it meets the relevant accounting requirements to be capitalised

Risk of management override

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.

Our approach will focus on:

- Testing the appropriateness of journal entries recorded in the general ledger and other adjustments made in the preparation of the financial statements
- Reviewing accounting estimates for evidence of management bias, and
- Evaluating the business rationale for significant unusual transactions
- Review capital expenditure on property, plant and equipment to ensure it meets the relevant accounting requirements to be capitalised.

2.1 Responsibilities in respect of fraud and error

We would like to take this opportunity to remind you that management has the primary responsibility to prevent and detect fraud. It is important that management, with the oversight of those charged with governance, has a culture of ethical behaviour and a strong control environment that both deters and prevents fraud.

Our responsibility is to plan and perform audits to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free of material misstatements whether caused by error or fraud. As auditors, we approach each engagement with a questioning mind that accepts the possibility that a material misstatement due to fraud could occur, and design the appropriate procedures to consider such risk.

Based on the requirements of auditing standards our approach will focus on:

- identifying fraud risks during the planning stages;
- asking management about risks of fraud and the controls to address those risks;

- understanding the oversight given by those charged with governance of management's processes over fraud;
- consideration of the effectiveness of management's controls designed to address the risk of fraud;
- determining an appropriate strategy to address any identified risks of fraud; and
- ▶ performing mandatory procedures regardless of specifically identified risks.

3. Value for money risks

We are required to consider whether the Council has 'proper arrangements' to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness on its use of resources. For 2016/17 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 the Council's arrangements to:

- take informed decisions;
- · deploy resources in a sustainable manner; and
- · work with partners and other third parties.

In considering the Council's 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 is already required and to report through documents such as the annual governance statement.

We are only required to determine whether there are any risks that we consider significant, which the Code of Audit Practice defines as:

"A matter is significant if, in the auditor's professional view, it is reasonable to conclude that the matter would be of interest to the audited body or the wider public"

Our risk assessment helps us to plan enough work for us to deliver a safe conclusion on arrangements to secure value for money, and enables us to determine the nature and extent of any further work that may be required. If we do not identify any significant risks there is no requirement to carry out further work.

Our risk assessment has therefore considered both the potential financial impact of the issues we have identified, and also the likelihood that the issue will be of interest to local taxpayers, the Government and other stakeholders.

We have not identified any risks which we view as significant to our value for money conclusion at this point.

We will keep monitoring our assessment during the course of the year and will report back to you if there are any changes in circumstances which impact on our risk assessment.

4. Our audit process and strategy

4.1 Objective and scope of our audit

Under the Code of Audit Practice our principal objectives are to review and report on the Council's:

- financial statements, and
- arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources to the extent required by the relevant legislation and the requirements of the Code.

We issue an audit report that covers:

1. Financial statement audit

Our objective is to form an opinion on the financial statements under International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland).

We report to the Committee by exception in respect of your governance statement and other accompanying material as required, in accordance with relevant guidance prepared by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General.

Alongside our audit report, we also:

► Review and report to the NAO on the Whole of Government Accounts return to the extent and in the form they require.

2. Arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness (value for money)

We are required to consider whether the Council has 'proper arrangements' to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness on its use of resources.

4.2 Audit process overview

Our audit involves:

- audit process overview
- assessing the key internal controls and testing the operation of controls;
- review and re-performance of the work of internal audit in relation to controls testing of Accounts Payable and Accounts Receivable;
- reliance on the work of experts on pensions and valuations; and
- substantive tests of detail of transactions and amounts.

Processes

Our initial assessment of the key processes across the Council has identified the following areas where we will seek to test key controls:

- Accounts Payable
- ▶ Accounts Receivable

Analytics

We will use our computer-based analytics tools to enable us to capture whole populations of the Council's financial data, in particular journal entries. These tools:

- ▶ help identify specific exceptions and anomalies which can then be subject to more traditional substantive audit tests, and
- ▶ give greater likelihood of identifying errors than random sampling techniques.

We will report the findings from our process and analytics work, including any significant weaknesses or inefficiencies identified and recommendations for improvement, to management and the Audit Committee.

Internal audit

As in previous years, we will review internal audit plans and the results of their work. We will reflect the findings from these reports, together with reports from any other work completed in the year, in our detailed audit plan, where we raise issues that could have an impact on the year-end financial statements

Use of specialists

When auditing key judgements, we are often required to rely on the input and advice provided by specialists who have qualifications and expertise not possessed by the core audit team. The areas where either EY or third party specialists provide input for the current year audit are:

Area	Specialists		
Property, plant and equipment	Wilks, Head and Eve		
Pensions	EY Pensions team/ Barnett Waddingham		
Business rates provision	Analyse Local		

In accordance with Auditing Standards, we will evaluate each specialist's professional competence and objectivity, considering their qualifications, experience and available resources, together with the independence of the individuals performing the work.

We also consider the work performed by the specialist in light of our knowledge of the Council's environment and processes and our assessment of audit risk in the particular area. For example, we would typically perform the following procedures:

- ▶ analyse source data and make inquiries as to the procedures used by the expert to establish whether the source date is relevant and reliable:
- assess the reasonableness of the assumptions and methods used;
- consider the appropriateness of the timing of when the specialist carried out the work;
- assess whether the substance of the specialist's findings are properly reflected in the financial statements.

4.3 Mandatory audit procedures required by auditing standards and the Code

As well as the financial statement risks (section two) and value for money risks (section three), we must perform other procedures as required by auditing, ethical and independence

standards, the Code and other regulations. We outline below the procedures we will undertake during our audit.

Procedures required by standards

- Addressing the risk of fraud and error
- Significant disclosures included in the financial statements
- ► Entity-wide controls
- Reading other information contained in the financial statements and reporting whether it is inconsistent with our understanding and the financial statements
- Auditor independence.

Procedures required by the Code

- ► Reviewing, and reporting on as appropriate, other information published with the financial statements, including the Annual Governance Statement
- ► Reviewing and reporting on the Whole of Government Accounts return, in line with the instructions issued by the NAO

Finally, we are also required to discharge our statutory duties and responsibilities as established by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and Code of Audit Practice.

4.4 Materiality

In order to decide whether the financial statements are free from material error, we define materiality as the scale of an omission or misstatement that, individually or added together could reasonably be expected to influence the users of the financial statements. Our evaluation requires professional judgement and so takes into account qualitative as well as quantitative considerations implied in the definition.

We have determined that overall materiality for the financial statements of the Council is £700,240 based on 2% of gross expenditure. We will communicate uncorrected audit misstatements greater than £35,012.

The amount we consider material at the end of the audit may differ from our initial decision. At this stage, however, we cannot anticipate all the circumstances that might influence our judgement. At the end of the audit we will form our final opinion by referring to anything that could be significant to users of the financial statements, including the total effect of any audit misstatements, and our evaluation of materiality at that date.

4.5 Fees

The duty to prescribe fees is a statutory function delegated to Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. PSAA has published a scale fee for all relevant bodies. This is defined as the fee required by auditors to meet statutory responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 in accordance with the NAO Code. The indicative fee scale for the audit of South Bucks District Council is £42,399, together with an estimated fee of £20,895 for the certification of the housing benefits subsidy claim.

4.6 Your audit team

The engagement team is led by Andrew Brittain, who is experienced in the audit of public sector bodies, and in particular of local government. Andrew is supported by Susan Gill, who is responsible for the day-to-day direction of audit work and the key point of contact for the Head of Finance.

4.7 Timetable of communication, deliverables and insights

We have set out below a timetable showing the key stages of the audit, including the value for money work and the Whole of Government Accounts. The timetable includes the deliverables we have agreed to provide to the Council through the Audit Committee's cycle in 2016/17.

From time to time matters may arise that require immediate communication with the Audit Committee and we will discuss them with the Chairman as appropriate.

Following the conclusion of our audit we will prepare an Annual Audit Letter to communicate the key issues arising from our work to the Council and external stakeholders, including members of the public.

Timetable	Committee timetable	Deliverables		
December 2016	19 January	Audit Fee Letter		
to January 2017	2017	Audit Plan		
December 2016 to January 2017	19 January 2017	Audit Plan		
January 2017	June 2017	Progress Report (if applicable)		
June to July 2017				
September 2017	September 2017	Report to those charged with governance via th Audit Results Report		
		Audit report (including our opinion on the financial statements; and the overall value for money conclusion).		
		Audit completion certificate		
		Reporting to the NAO on the Whole of Government Accounts return.		
October 2017	November 2017	Annual Audit Letter		
June to November 2017		Certified claim		
December 2017	January 2018	Annual certification work report		
	December 2016 to January 2017 December 2016 to January 2017 January 2017 June to July 2017 September 2017 October 2017 June to November 2017	Timetable timetable December 2016 to January 2017 December 2016 to January 2017 January 2017 June 2017 June to July 2017 September 2017 September 2017 October 2017 November 2017 June to November 2017		

In addition to the above formal reporting and deliverables we will seek to provide practical business insights and updates on regulatory matters.

5. Independence

5.1 Introduction

The APB Ethical Standards and ISA (UK and Ireland) 260 'Communication of audit matters with those charged with governance', requires us to communicate with the Council on a timely basis on all significant facts and matters which have a bearing on our independence and objectivity. The Ethical Standards, as revised in December 2010, require that we do this formally both at the planning stage and at the conclusion of the audit, as well as during the audit if appropriate. The aim of these communications is to ensure full and fair disclosure by us to those charged with governance on matters in which the Council has an interest.

Required communications

Planning stage

Final stage

- Any principal threats to objectivity and independence identified by EY including consideration of all relationships between the Council, its affiliates and directors and us;
- The safeguards adopted and the reasons why they are considered to be effective, including any Engagement Quality Review;
- ▶ The overall assessment of threats and safeguards;
- Information about EY's general policies and processes to maintain objectivity and independence.
- A written disclosure of relationships (including the provision of non-audit services) that bear on our objectivity and independence, the threats to our independence that these create, any safeguards we have and why they address such threats, together with any other information necessary to enable our objectivity and independence to be assessed;
- Details of non-audit services provided and the fees charged for them;
- Written confirmation that we are independent;
- Details of any inconsistencies between APB Ethical Standards, the PSAA Terms of Appointment and your policy for the supply of non-audit services by EY and any apparent breach of that policy; and
- An opportunity to discuss auditor independence issues.

During the course of the audit we must also communicate whenever any significant judgements are made about threats to objectivity and independence and the appropriateness of our safeguards, for example when accepting an engagement to provide non-audit services.

We also provide information on any contingent fee arrangements, the amounts of any future contracted services, and details of any written proposal to provide non-audit services;

We ensure that the total amount of fees that EY and our network firms have charged to the Council and its affiliates for the provision of services during the reporting period are disclosed, analysed in appropriate categories.

5.2 Relationships, services and related threats and safeguards

We highlight the following significant facts and matters that may be reasonably considered to bear upon our objectivity and independence, including any principal threats. However we have adopted the safeguards below to mitigate these threats along with the reasons why they are considered to be effective.

Self-interest threats

A self-interest threat arises when EY has financial or other interests in the entity. Examples include where we have an investment in it; where we receive significant fees in respect of non-audit services; where we need to recover long outstanding fees; or where we enter into a business relationship with the Council.

At the time of writing, there are no long outstanding fees.

We believe that it is appropriate for us to undertake permissible non-audit services, and we will comply with the policies that the Council has approved and are in accordance with PSAA Terms of Appointment. No non-audit work is planned at this stage.

A self-interest threat may also arise if members of our audit engagement team have objectives or are rewarded in relation to sales of non-audit services to the Council. We confirm that no member of our audit engagement team, including those from other service lines, is in this position, in compliance with Ethical Standard 4.

There are no self-interest threats at the date of this report.

Self-review threats

Self-review threats arise when the results of a non-audit service performed by EY or others within the EY network are reflected in the amounts included or disclosed in the financial statements.

There are no other self-review threats at the date of this report.

Management threats

Partners and employees of EY are prohibited from taking decisions on behalf of management. Management threats may also arise during the provision of a non-audit service where management is required to make judgements or decisions based on that work.

Other threats

Other threats, such as advocacy, familiarity or intimidation, may arise.

There are no other threats at the date of this report.

Overall Assessment

Overall we consider that the adopted safeguards appropriately mitigate the principal threats identified. We therefore confirm that EY is independent and the objectivity and independence of Andrew Brittain, the audit engagement Director, and the audit engagement team have not been compromised.

5.3 Other required communications

EY has policies and procedures that instil professional values as part of firm culture and ensure that the highest standards of objectivity, independence and integrity are maintained.

Details of the key policies and processes within EY for maintaining objectivity and independence can be found in our annual Transparency Report, which the firm is required to publish by law. The most recent version of this report is for the year ended June 2016 and can be found here:

http://www.ey.com/uk/en/about-us/ey-uk-transparency-report-2016

Appendix A Fees

A breakdown of our agreed fee is shown below.

	Planned Fee 2016-17 £	Scale fee 2016-17 £	Outturn fee 2015-16 £	Explanation
Opinion Audit and VFM Conclusion	42,399	42,399	42,399	
Total Audit Fee – Code work	42,399	42,399	42,399	
Certification of claims and returns ¹	20,895	20,895	19,280	The planned fee is based on actual benefit certification fees for 2014/15 but incorporates a 25 per cent reduction
Non-audit work	0	0	0	

All fees exclude VAT.

The agreed fee presented above is based on the following assumptions:

- officers meet the agreed timetable of deliverables;
- ▶ there are no significant deficiencies in the operating effectiveness of the internal controls for key processes outlined in section 4.2 above;
- we can rely on the work of internal audit as planned;
- our accounts opinion and value for money conclusion are unqualified;
- ▶ the Council provides appropriate quality documentation; and
- ▶ the Council has an effective control environment.

If any of the above assumptions prove unfounded, we will seek a variation to the agreed fee. This will be discussed with the Council in advance.

Fees for the auditor's consideration of correspondence from the public and any formal objections will be charged in addition to the scale fee.

¹ Our fee for the certification of grant claims is based on the indicative scale fee set by the PSAA.

Appendix B UK required communications with those charged with governance

There are certain communications that we must provide to the Audit Committee. These are detailed here:

Re	quired communication	Re	eference
Planning and audit approach		•	Audit Plan
Сс	mmunication of the planned scope and timing of the audit including any limitations.		
Significant findings from the audit		•	Audit Results Report
•	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		
Mi	sstatements	•	Audit Results Report
•	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		
•	In writing, corrected misstatements that are significant		
Fra	aud	•	Audit Results Report
>	Enquiries of the Audit Committee to determine whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud affecting the entity		
•	Any fraud that we have identified or information we have obtained that indicates that a fraud may exist		
•	A discussion of any other matters related to fraud		
Re	lated parties	>	Audit Results Report
	gnificant matters arising during the audit in connection with the entity's related rties including, when applicable:		
•	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 entity		
Ex	ternal confirmations	•	Audit Results Report
•	Management's refusal for us to request confirmations		
•	Inability to obtain relevant and reliable audit evidence from other procedures		
Со	nsideration of laws and regulations	•	Audit Results Report
•	Audit findings regarding non-compliance where the non-compliance is material and believed to be intentional. This communication is subject to compliance with legislation on tipping off		
•	Enquiry of the 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		

Required communication Reference Independence Audit Plan Communication of all significant facts and matters that bear on EY's objectivity and Audit Results Report independence Communication of key elements of the audit engagement director's consideration of independence and objectivity such as: 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 Going concern Audit Results Report Events or conditions identified that may cast significant doubt on the entity's ability to continue as a going concern, including: 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 Significant deficiencies in internal controls identified during the audit Audit Results Report **Fee Information** Audit Plan Breakdown of fee information at the agreement of the initial audit plan Audit Results Report Annual Audit Letter if Breakdown of fee information at the completion of the audit considered necessary Certification work Certification Report ▶ Summary of certification work undertaken Annual Audit Letter if considered necessary

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