

<b>Subject:</b>	The External Audit Plan for 2013/14	<b>Status:</b>	For Publication
<b>Report to:</b>	Audit and Accounts Committee	<b>Date:</b>	24 June 2014
<b>Report of:</b>	Grant Thornton	<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Finance and Resources
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>General Exception</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Special Urgency</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Equality Impact Assessment:</b>	Required:	No	Attached: No
<b>Biodiversity Impact Assessment</b>	Required:	No	Attached: No
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<b>1.</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATION(S)</b>
1.1	Members are asked to consider the audit plan for the 2013/14 audit.

**2. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

2.1 The report sets out the planned work for the 2013/14 audit. It also includes a summary of some of your challenges and the audit risks we have identified through our planning and interim audit work.

**3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

3.1 The matters discussed in this plan do not impact directly on the Council's corporate priorities:

**4. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no risk assessment implications.

**5. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS**

5.1 The Audit Plan sets out the work required between June 2014 and September 2014 on your financial statements and also for the VfM Conclusion. The plan highlights some of your key challenges and our response to these. It also notes the audit risks identified and how we are going to address these risks through our work. We also set out in the plan our initial findings from our interim audit work.

**COMMENTS FROM STATUTORY OFFICERS:**

**6. SECTION 151 OFFICER**

6.1 This is a report of the External Auditor

**7. MONITORING OFFICER**

7.1 This is a report of the External Auditor

**8. POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT**

8.1 Not applicable

**9. CONCLUSION**

9.1 The audit plan is presented for consideration by the Committee.



# The Audit Plan for Rossendale Borough Council

**Year ended 31 March 2014**

12 June 2014

**Karen L Murray**

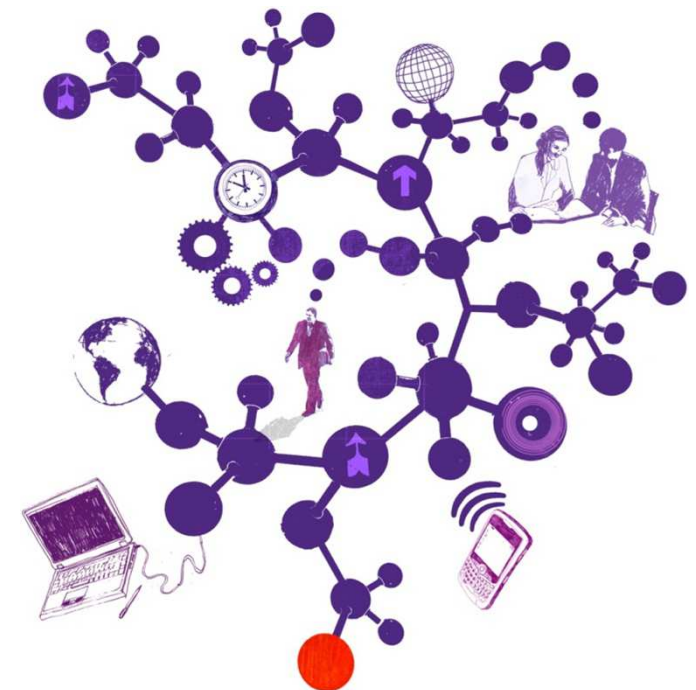
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The contents of this report relate only to the matters which have come to our attention, which we believe need to be reported to you as part of our audit process. It is not a comprehensive record of all the relevant matters, which may be subject to change, and in particular we cannot be held responsible to you for reporting all of the risks which may affect the Council or any weaknesses in your internal controls. This report has been prepared solely for your benefit and should not be quoted in whole or in part without our prior written consent. We do not accept any responsibility for any loss occasioned to any third party acting, or refraining from acting on the basis of the content of this report, as this report was not prepared for, nor intended for, any other purpose.

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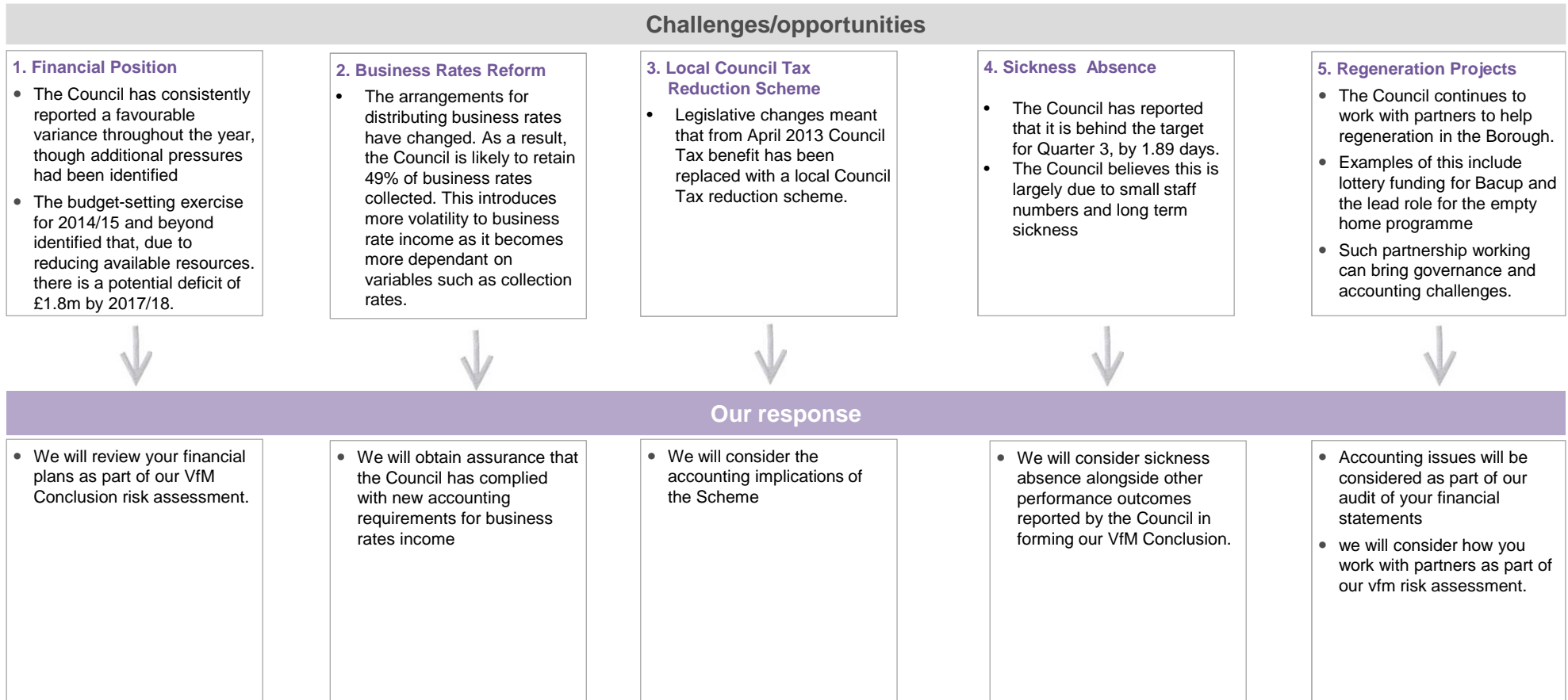
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# Understanding your business

In planning our audit we need to understand the challenges and opportunities the Council is facing. We set out a summary of our understanding below.



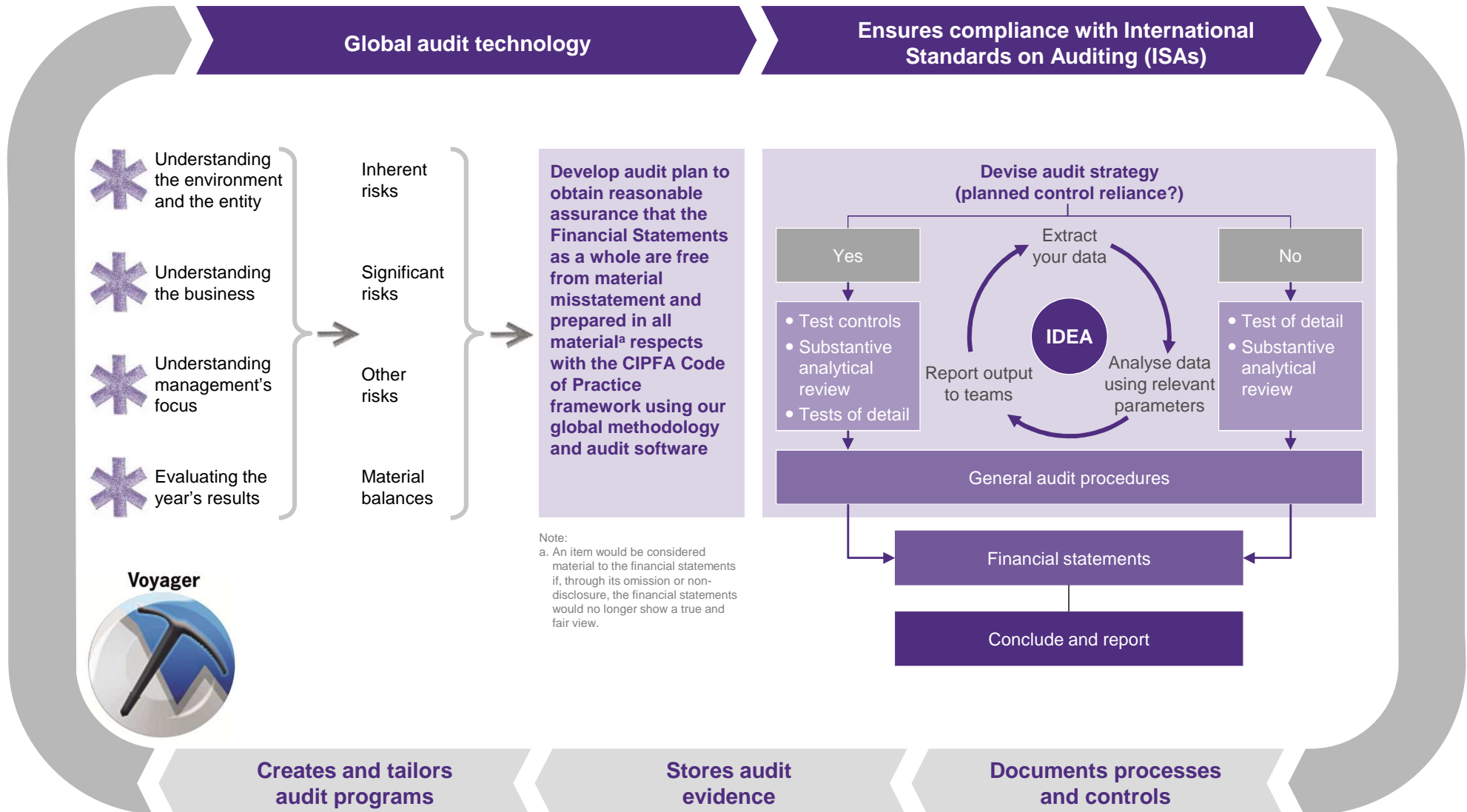
# Developments relevant to your business and the audit

In planning our audit we also consider the impact of key developments in the sector and take account of national audit requirements as set out in the Code of Audit Practice ('the code') and associated guidance.

Developments and other requirements					
<p><b>1. Financial reporting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes to the CIPFA Code of Practice</li> <li>• Clarification of Code requirements around Property Plant and Equipment (PPE) valuations</li> <li>• Changes to NDR accounting and provisions for business rate appeals</li> </ul>	<p><b>2. Legislation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Government Finance settlement</li> <li>• Welfare reform Act 2012</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. Corporate governance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Governance Statement (AGS)</li> <li>• Explanatory foreword</li> </ul>	<p><b>4. Pensions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The impact of 2013/14 changes to the Local Government pension Scheme (LGPS)</li> </ul>	<p><b>5. Financial Pressures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managing service provision with less resource</li> <li>• Progress against savings plans</li> </ul>	<p><b>6. Other requirements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council is required to submit a Whole of Government accounts pack on which we provide an audit opinion</li> <li>• The Council completes grant claims and returns on which audit certification is required</li> </ul>

Our response					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will ensure that the Council complies with the requirements of the CIPFA Code of Practice through discussions with management and our substantive testing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will discuss the impact of the legislative changes with the Council through our regular meetings with senior management and those charged with governance, providing a view where appropriate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will review the arrangements the Council has in place for the production of the AGS</li> <li>• We will review the AGS and the explanatory foreword to consider whether they are consistent with our knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will review how the Council dealt with the impact of the 2013/14 changes through our meetings with senior management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will review the Council's performance against the 2013/14 budget, including consideration of performance against the savings plan</li> <li>• We will undertake a review of Financial Resilience as part of our VFM conclusion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will carry out work on the WGA pack in accordance with requirements</li> <li>• We will certify grant claims and returns in accordance with Audit Commission requirements</li> </ul>

# Our audit approach



# Significant risks identified

'Significant risks often relate to significant non-routine transactions and judgmental matters. Non-routine transactions are transactions that are unusual, either due to size or nature, and that therefore occur infrequently. Judgmental matters may include the development of accounting estimates for which there is significant measurement uncertainty' (ISA 315).

In this section we outline the significant risks of material misstatement which we have identified. There are two presumed significant risks which are applicable to all audits under auditing standards (International Standards on Auditing – ISAs) which are listed below:

Significant risk	Description	Substantive audit procedures
The revenue cycle includes fraudulent transactions	Under ISA 240 there is a presumed risk that revenue may be misstated due to the improper recognition of revenue.	<b>Work completed to date:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Initial review of revenue recognition policies</li><li>• Initial testing of material revenue streams</li></ul> <b>Further work planned:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review and testing of revenue recognition policies</li><li>• Testing of material revenue streams</li></ul>
Management over-ride of controls	Under ISA 240 there is a presumed risk that the risk of management over-ride of controls is present in all entities.	<b>Work completed to date:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of accounting estimates, judgments and decisions made by management</li><li>• Testing of journal entries</li></ul> <b>Further work planned:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of accounting estimates, judgments and decisions made by management</li><li>• Testing of journal entries</li><li>• Review of unusual significant transactions</li></ul>



# Other risks identified

The auditor should evaluate the design and determine the implementation of the entity's controls, including relevant control activities, over those risks for which, in the auditor's judgment, it is not possible or practicable to reduce the risks of material misstatement at the assertion level to an acceptably low level with audit evidence obtained only from substantive procedures (ISA 315).

In this section we outline the other risks of material misstatement which we have identified as a result of our planning.

Other reasonably possible risks	Description	Work completed to date	Further work planned
Operating expenses	Creditors understated or not recorded in the correct period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation of processes and controls</li> <li>• Evaluation and walkthrough of controls</li> <li>• Sample testing of expenditure in the year to date</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sample testing of operating expenses for the remaining period of the year.</li> <li>• Detailed review and testing of year end accruals and creditor balances.</li> </ul>
Employee remuneration	Employee remuneration accrual understated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation of the processes and controls</li> <li>• Evaluation and walkthrough of controls</li> <li>• Sample testing of expenditure in the year to date</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreement to accounts and supporting notes.</li> <li>• Sample testing of employee remuneration for the remaining period of the year.</li> </ul>
Welfare Expenditure	Welfare benefit expenditure improperly computed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation of processes and controls</li> <li>• Evaluation and walkthrough of controls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreement to accounts and supporting notes.</li> <li>• Housing Benefit Subsidy Claim testing using Audit Commission HBCOUNT approach.</li> </ul>
Property, Plant & Equipment	PPE activity not valid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirmation of the operation of the system and controls</li> <li>• Evaluation and walkthrough of controls.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sample testing of PPE movements during the year.</li> <li>• Agreement to accounts and supporting notes.</li> <li>• Sample test of PPE additions and disposals.</li> </ul>
Property, Plant & Equipment	Revaluation measurement not correct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial review of the arrangements made by management to commission an appropriate valuation of the Authority's asset base.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will agree a sample of revaluation entries to information provided by the valuer</li> <li>• We will review revaluation disclosures in the accounts to confirm they are in line with CIPFA guidance</li> </ul>

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# Group audit scope and risk assessment

ISA 600 requires that as Group auditors we obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding the financial information of the components and the consolidation process to express an opinion on whether the group financial statements are prepared, in all material respects, in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework.

Component	Significant?	Level of response required under ISA 600	Risks identified	Planned audit approach
Rossendale Transport Limited	Yes	We currently plan a targeted approach.	None	Procedures include a desktop review, for example reviewing the component's financial statements and the consolidation process. Review of correspondence and targeted enquiries as required with the auditor of component at planning and final accounts audit time. Other procedures to be targeted at specific risks identified.

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# Value for money

## Value for money

The Code requires us to issue a conclusion on whether the Council has put in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. This is known as the Value for Money (VfM) conclusion.

Our VfM conclusion is based on the following criteria specified by the Audit Commission:

VfM criteria	Focus of the criteria
The organisation has proper arrangements in place for securing financial resilience	The organisation has robust systems and processes to manage financial risks and opportunities effectively, and to secure a stable financial position that enables it to continue to operate for the foreseeable future
The organisation has proper arrangements for challenging how it secures economy, efficiency and effectiveness	The organisation is prioritising its resources within tighter budgets, for example by achieving cost reductions and by improving efficiency and productivity

We will complete a detailed risk assessment to identify areas of risk to our VfM conclusion. As part of this approach we will consider the progress the Council has made in delivering its saving plans in 2013/14 and identifying future efficiencies for 2014/15 onwards. We will continue to update our knowledge of the Council's arrangements and will complete a review of your financial resilience.

The results of our VfM audit work and the key messages arising will be reported in our Audit Findings Report and in the Annual Audit Letter.

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## Results of interim audit work

The findings of our interim audit work, and the impact of our findings on the accounts audit approach, are summarised in the table below:

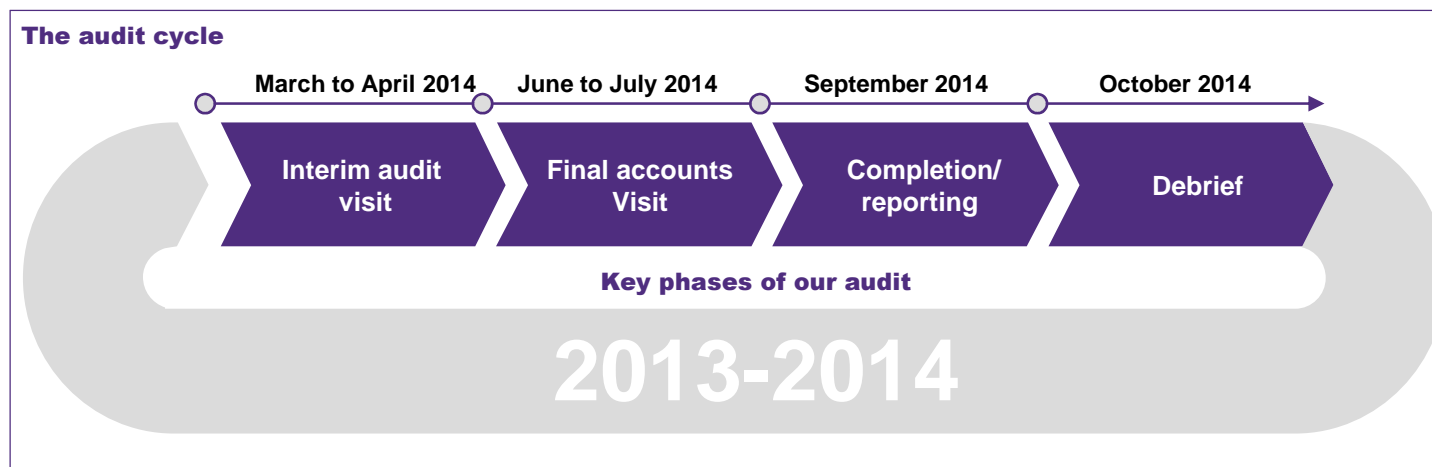
	<b>Work performed and findings</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
<b>Internal audit</b>	<p>We have reviewed internal audit's overall arrangements in accordance with auditing standards. Our work has not identified any issues which we wish to bring to your attention.</p> <p>We also reviewed internal audit's work on the Council's key financial systems to date. We have not identified any significant weaknesses impacting on our responsibilities.</p>	<p>Overall, we have concluded that the internal audit service continues to provide an independent and service to the Council and contributes to an effective internal control environment at the Council.</p> <p>Our review of internal audit work has not identified any weaknesses which impact on our audit approach.</p>
<b>Walkthrough testing</b>	<p>We have completed walkthrough tests of controls operating in areas where we consider that there is a risk of material misstatement to the financial statements.</p> <p>Our work has not identified any issues which we wish to bring to your attention. Internal controls have been implemented in accordance with our documented understanding.</p>	<p>Our work has not identified any weaknesses which impact on our audit approach.</p>
<b>Review of information technology controls</b>	<p>Our information systems specialist are performing a high level review of the general IT control environment, as part of the overall review of the internal controls system. This is to provide assurance that IT controls have been implemented in accordance with our documented understanding.</p>	<p>We will report relevant findings when the review is complete.</p>

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## Results of Interim Audit Work

	<b>Work performed</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
<b>Journal entry controls</b>	<p>We have reviewed the Council's journal entry policies and procedures as part of determining our journal entry testing strategy and have not identified any material weaknesses which are likely to adversely impact on the Council's control environment or financial statements.</p> <p>To date we have undertaken detailed testing on journal transactions recorded for the first eleven months of the financial year, by extracting entries for further review.</p>	<p>Our work to date has not identified any material weaknesses which are likely to adversely impact on the Council's control environment or financial statements.</p>
<b>Early substantive testing</b>	<p>We have completed initial testing of employee remuneration and operating expenses for the first 11 months of the year.</p>	<p>Whilst we have a small number of queries outstanding there are no issues we wish to raise.</p>

# Key dates



Date	Activity
January to March 2014	Planning
24 March to 8 April 2014	Interim site visit
24 June 2014	Presentation of audit plan to Audit and Accounts Committee
June to July 2014	Year end fieldwork
July 2014	Audit findings clearance meeting with Head of Finance & Property Services
September 2014	Report audit findings to those charged with governance (Audit and Accounts Committee)
September 2014	Sign financial statements opinion

# Fees and independence

## Fees

	£
Council audit	60,161
Grant certification	7,832
<b>Total fees (excluding VAT)</b>	<b>67,993</b>

## Our fee assumptions include:

- Supporting schedules to all figures in the accounts are supplied by the agreed dates and in accordance with the agreed upon information request list
- The scope of the audit, and the Council and its activities, have not changed significantly
- The Council will make available management and accounting staff to help us locate information and to provide explanations

## Fees for other services

Service	Fees £
None	Nil

## Independence and ethics

We confirm that there are no significant facts or matters that impact on our independence as auditors that we are required or wish to draw to your attention. We have complied with the Auditing Practices Board's Ethical Standards and therefore we confirm that we are independent and are able to express an objective opinion on the financial statements.

Full details of all fees charged for audit and non-audit services will be included in our Audit Findings report at the conclusion of the audit.

We confirm that we have implemented policies and procedures to meet the requirement of the Auditing Practices Board's Ethical Standards.

# Communication of audit matters with those charged with governance

International Standards on Auditing (ISA) 260, as well as other ISAs, prescribe matters which we are required to communicate with those charged with governance, and which we set out in the table opposite.

This document, The Audit Plan, outlines our audit strategy and plan to deliver the audit, while The Audit Findings will be issued prior to approval of the financial statements and will present key issues and other matters arising from the audit, together with an explanation as to how these have been resolved.

We will communicate any adverse or unexpected findings affecting the audit on a timely basis, either informally or via a report to the Council.

## Respective responsibilities

This plan has been prepared in the context of the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies issued by the Audit Commission ([www.audit-commission.gov.uk](http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk)).

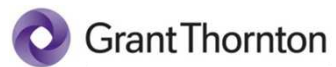
We have been appointed as the Council's independent external auditors by the Audit Commission, the body responsible for appointing external auditors to local public bodies in England. As external auditors, we have a broad remit covering finance and governance matters.

Our annual work programme is set in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice ('the Code') issued by the Audit Commission and includes nationally prescribed and locally determined work. Our work considers the Council's key risks when reaching our conclusions under the Code.

It is the responsibility of the Council to ensure that proper arrangements are in place for the conduct of its business, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for. We have considered how the Council is fulfilling these responsibilities.

Our communication plan	Audit plan	Audit findings
Respective responsibilities of auditor and management/those charged with governance	✓	
Overview of the planned scope and timing of the audit. Form, timing and expected general content of communications	✓	
Views about the qualitative aspects of the entity's accounting and financial reporting practices, significant matters and issue arising during the audit and written representations that have been sought		✓
Confirmation of independence and objectivity	✓	✓
A statement that we have complied with relevant ethical requirements regarding independence, relationships and other matters which might be thought to bear on independence.	✓	✓
Details of non-audit work performed by Grant Thornton UK LLP and network firms, together with fees charged.		
Details of safeguards applied to threats to independence		
Material weaknesses in internal control identified during the audit		✓
Identification or suspicion of fraud involving management and/or others which results in material misstatement of the financial statements		✓
Non compliance with laws and regulations		✓
Expected modifications to the auditor's report, or emphasis of matter		✓
Uncorrected misstatements		✓
Significant matters arising in connection with related parties		✓
Significant matters in relation to going concern		✓





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