



**Brighton & Hove  
City Council**

# **AUDIT & STANDARDS COMMITTEE ADDENDUM**

**4.00PM, TUESDAY, 9 JANUARY 2018**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL, BN3 3BQ**



# ADDENDUM

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**COMMITTEENAME****Agenda Item 41**

Brighton &amp; Hove City Council

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Ernst &amp; Young – Audit Plan 2017/18</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>9 January 2018</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Ernst &amp; Young</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Paul King</b>	<b>Tel:</b> <b>0118 928 1556 (Ext 41556)</b>
	<b>Email:</b>	<b><a href="mailto:pking1@uk.ey.com">pking1@uk.ey.com</a></b>	
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

*Note: The special circumstances for non-compliance with Council Procedure Rule 7, Access to Information Rule 5 and Section 100B (4) of the Local Government Act as amended (items not considered unless the agenda is open to inspection at least five days in advance of the meeting) related to delayed finalisation of the reports due to the Christmas period.*

**1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:**

1.1 Audit Plan 2017/18 - The 2017/18 Audit Plan sets out how we intend to carry out our responsibilities as your external auditor. It covers the work we plan to perform in order to provide you with:

- our audit opinion on whether the Council's financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position as at 31 March 2018 and the income and expenditure account for the year then ended; and
- a statutory conclusion on the Council's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

The report summarises our progress to date, our assessment of the key risks which drive the development of an effective audit for the Council, and outlines our planned audit strategy in response to those risks.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

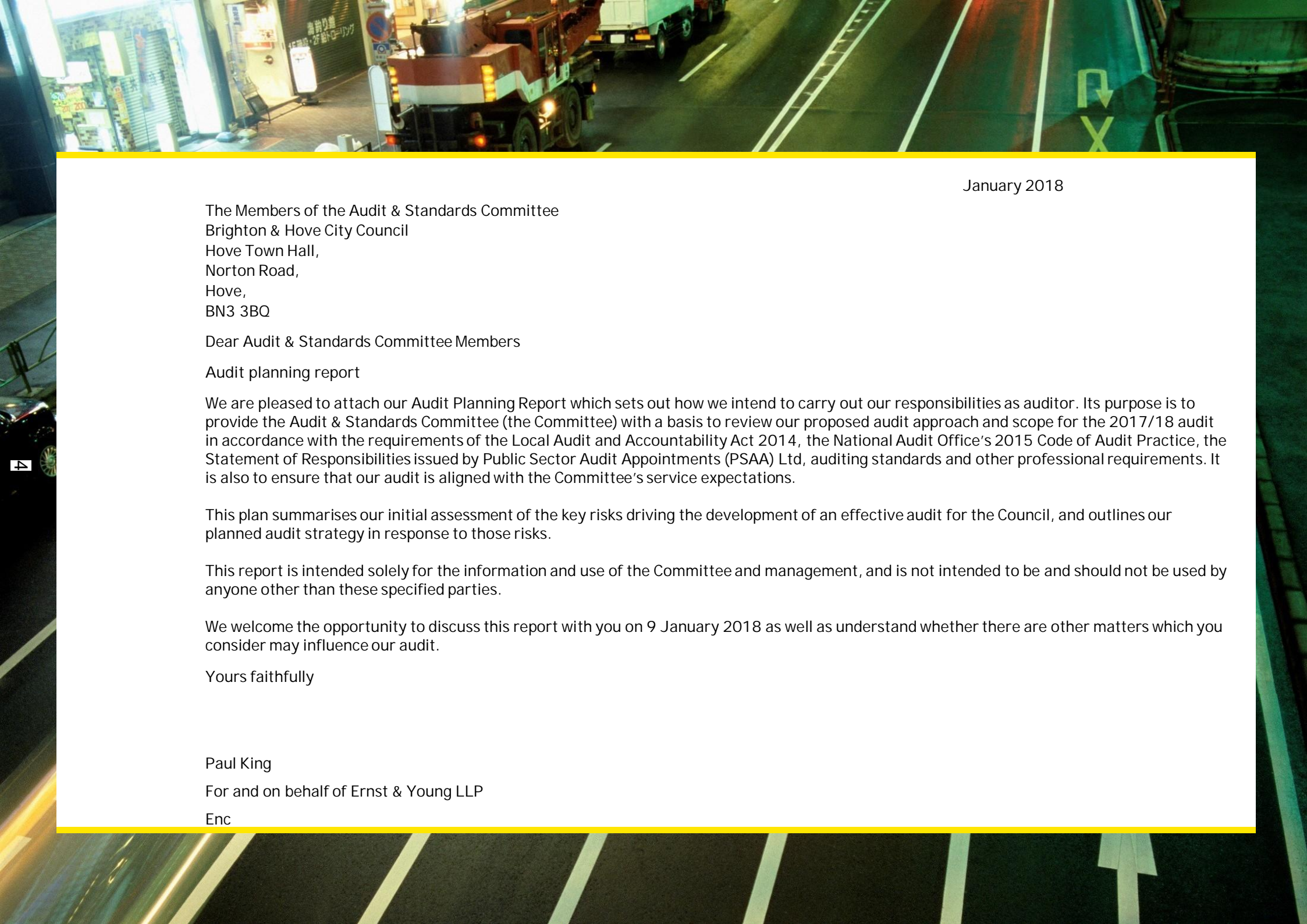
2.1 To consider the 2017/18 Audit Plan and ask questions as necessary on our proposed audit approach, progress to date and audit scope. You should also consider whether there are any other matters which you consider may influence our audit.





Brighton & Hove  
City Council  
Audit planning report  
Year ended 31 March 2018

January 2018



January 2018

The Members of the Audit & Standards Committee  
Brighton & Hove City Council  
Hove Town Hall,  
Norton Road,  
Hove,  
BN3 3BQ

Dear Audit & Standards Committee Members

#### Audit planning report

We are pleased to attach our Audit Planning Report which sets out how we intend to carry out our responsibilities as auditor. Its purpose is to provide the Audit & Standards Committee (the Committee) with a basis to review our proposed audit approach and scope for the 2017/18 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 to those risks.

This report is intended solely for the information and use of the Committee and management, and is not intended to be and should not be used by anyone other than these specified parties.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss this report with you on 9 January 2018 as well as understand whether there are other matters which you consider may influence our audit.

Yours faithfully

Paul King  
For and on behalf of Ernst & Young LLP  
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# Contents



In April 2015 Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) issued "Statement of responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies". It is available from the via the PSAA website ([www.PSAA.co.uk](http://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 (updated February 2017)" issued by the 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 in legislation, and covers matters of practice and procedure which are of a recurring nature. This report is made solely to the Audit & Standards Committee and management of Brighton & Hove City Council in accordance with the statement of responsibilities. Our work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Audit & Standards Committee, and management of Brighton & Hove City Council those matters we are required to state to them in this report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Audit & Standards Committee and management of Brighton & Hove City Council for this report or for the opinions we have formed. It should not be provided to any third-party without our prior written consent.



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# Overview of our 2017/18 audit strategy



# Overview of our 2017/18 audit strategy

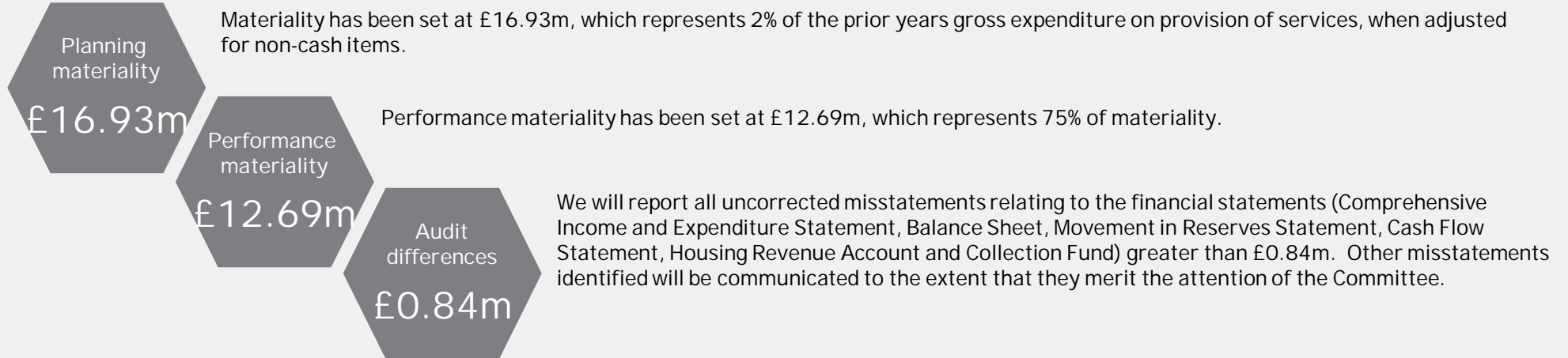
The following 'dashboard' summarises the significant accounting and auditing matters outlined in this report. It seeks to provide the Audit & Standards Committee with an overview of our initial risk identification for the upcoming audit and any changes in risks identified in the current year.

## Audit risks and areas of focus

Risk / area of focus	Risk identified	Change from PY	Details
Risk of management override	Fraud risk	This risk was also identified in the prior year.	As identified in ISA 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 would otherwise appear to be operating effectively.
Valuation of Land & Buildings	Significant risk	This risk was also identified in the prior year.	<p>Findings raised by the FRC's Audit Quality Review team in their report on their inspection findings in the prior year for the firm found PPE valuation of land and buildings included in the financial statements is complex and often includes a number of assumptions and judgements and that enhanced procedures are required to challenge and evaluate key assumptions.</p> <p>In addition, our audit of both the 2015/16 and the 2016/17 financial statements highlighted a number of errors in relation to PPE Valuation which resulted in material adjustments to the financial statements.</p> <p>The risk therefore remains that the PPE balance could be materially misstated in 2017/18.</p>
Pension Liability Valuation	Other risk	No change in risk or focus	<p>The Local Authority Accounting Code of Practice and IAS19 require the Council to make extensive disclosures within its financial statements regarding its membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme administered by East Sussex County Council.</p> <p>The Council's pension fund asset is a material estimated balance and the Code requires that this asset be disclosed on the Council's balance sheet. The information disclosed is based on the IAS 19 report issued to the Council by the actuary to the County Council.</p> <p>Accounting for this scheme involves significant estimation and judgement and therefore management engages an actuary to undertake the calculations on their behalf. ISAs (UK and Ireland) 500 and 540 require us to undertake procedures on the use of management experts and the assumptions underlying fair value estimates.</p>

# Overview of our 2017/18 audit strategy

## Materiality



# Overview of our 2017/18 audit strategy

## Audit scope

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

- § Our audit opinion on whether the financial statements of Brighton & Hove City Council give a true and fair view of the financial position as at 31 March 2018 and of the income and expenditure for the year then ended; and
- § 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 are required to 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.



# 02 Audit risks



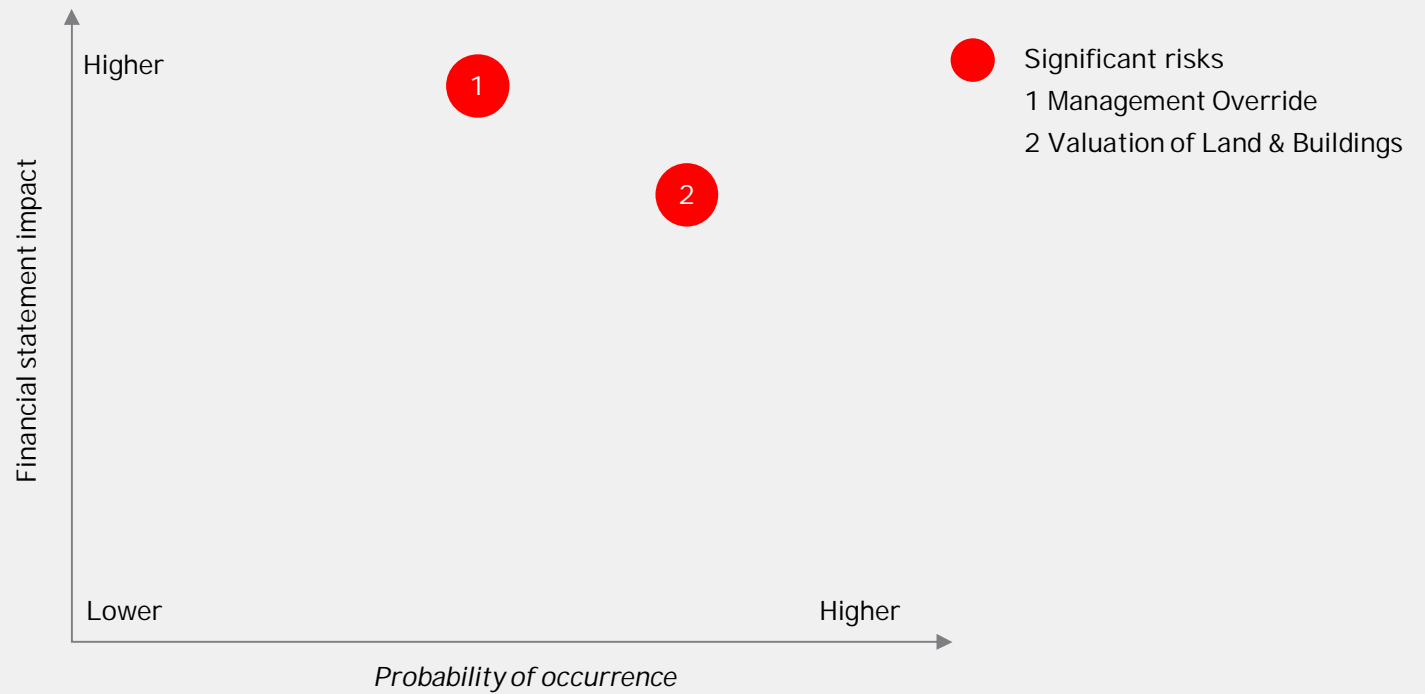
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# Risk assessment

## Risk assessment

We have obtained an understanding of your strategy, reviewed your principal risks as identified in your 2016/17 Annual Report and Accounts and combined it with our understanding of the sector to identify key risks that impact our audit.

The following 'dashboard' summarises the significant matters that are relevant for planning our year-end audit:



# Audit risks

## Our response to significant risks

We have set out the significant risks identified for the current year audit along with the rationale and expected audit approach. The risks identified below may change to reflect any significant findings or subsequent issues we identify during the audit.

	What is the risk?	What will we do?
<b>Management Override of Control</b>	<p>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.</p> <p>We identify and respond to this fraud risk on every audit engagement.</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ test the appropriateness of journal entries recorded in the general ledger and other adjustments made in the preparation of the financial statements;</li><li>▶ review accounting estimates for evidence of management bias, and</li><li>▶ evaluating the business rationale for significant unusual transactions.</li></ul> <p>We will utilise our data analytics capabilities to assist with our work, including carrying out testing on the Income and Expenditure accounts, and journal entry testing. We will assess journal entries for evidence of management bias and evaluate for business rationale.</p>
<b>Financial statement impact</b>		
Misstatements that occur in relation to the risk of fraud by management override could affect the income and expenditure accounts, alongside significant balance sheet accounts where key estimates are processed.		



## Our response to significant risks (continued)

### Valuation of Land & Buildings

#### What is the risk?

The fair value of Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE) and Investment Properties (IP) represent significant balances in the Council'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 will we do?

- Consider the work performed by the Council's valuers, including the adequacy of the scope of the work performed, their professional capabilities and the results of their work;
- Sample testing key asset information used by the valuers in performing their valuation (e.g. floor plans to support valuations based on price per square metre);
- Consider 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;
- Review assets not subject to valuation in 2017/18 to confirm that the remaining asset base is not materially misstated;
- Consider changes to useful economic lives as a result of the most recent valuation; and
- Test accounting entries have been correctly processed in the financial statements.

#### Financial statement impact

Land and buildings is the most significant balance in the Council's Balance Sheet. The valuation of land and buildings is complex and is subject to a number of assumptions and judgements. A small movement in these assumptions can have a material impact on the financial statements.

We identified a number of errors and adjustments to the financial statements in this area in the prior years.

## Audit risks

### Other areas of audit focus

We have identified other areas of the audit, that have not been classified as significant risks, but are still important when considering the risks of material misstatement to the financial statements and disclosures and therefore may be key audit matters we will include in our audit report.

#### What is the risk/area of focus?

##### Pension Liability Valuation

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

The Council's pension fund deficit is a material estimated balance and the Code requires that this liability be disclosed on the Council's balance sheet. At 31 March 2017 this totalled £254.9 million.

The information disclosed is based on the IAS 19 report issued to the Council by the actuary to the County Council.

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

#### What will we do?

We will:

- Liaise with the auditors of East Sussex Pension Fund, to obtain assurances over the information supplied to the actuary in relation to Brighton & Hove City Council;
- Assess the work of the Pension Fund actuary (Hymans) including the assumptions they have used by relying on the work of PWC - Consulting Actuaries commissioned by Public Sector Auditor Appointments for all Local Government sector auditors, and considering any relevant reviews by the EY actuarial team; and
- Review and test the accounting entries and disclosures made within the Council's financial statements in relation to IAS19.



# 03 Value for Money Risks



## 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 2017/18 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.

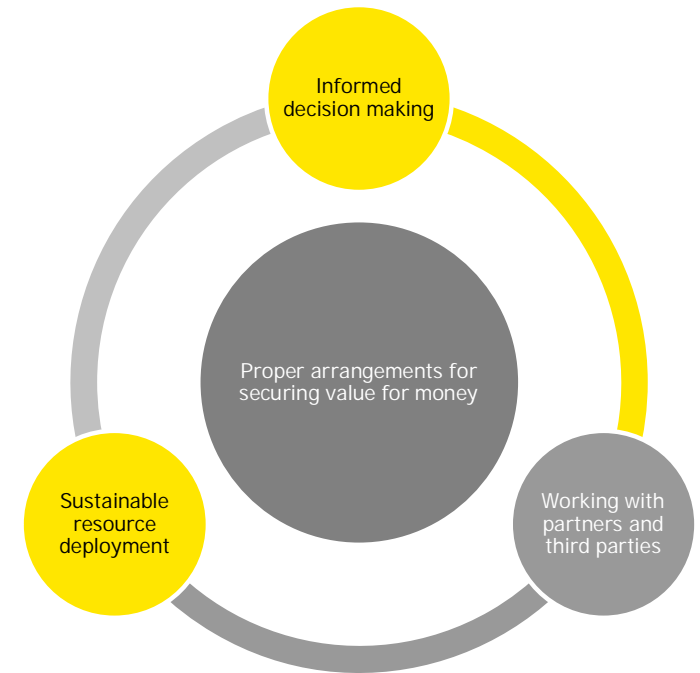
In considering your proper arrangements, we will draw on the requirements of the CIPFA/SOLACE framework for local government to ensure that our assessment is made against a framework that you are already required to have in place and to report on through documents such as your annual governance statement.

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 supports the planning of sufficient work to enable us to deliver a safe conclusion on arrangements to secure value for money and enables us to determine the nature and extent of 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. This has resulted in the identification of one significant risks, as noted on the following page. We consider this risk as relevant to our value for money conclusion.





## Value for money risks (continued)

### Securing financial resilience

#### What is the risk?

The Council continues to face very significant and increasing financial challenges. It must save £47 million over the period 2017/18 to 2019/20. Taking the savings plans alongside other measures and changes to revenues and budgets, there is a forecast residual gap for the three years of just under £7 million.

We therefore recognise a risk that the Council will not be able to plan its finances effectively to support the sustainable delivery of strategic priorities and maintain statutory functions.

#### What will we do?

Our approach will focus on:

- use of PSAA's value for money profile tool to assess Council spending against similar councils; and
- reviewing and assessing the updated assumptions within the Council's 2017/18 budget and medium term financial plan.
- reviewing and understanding the 2017/18 outturn position.
- reviewing forecast savings from the 4 year Service & Financial Plans and progress in meeting them.



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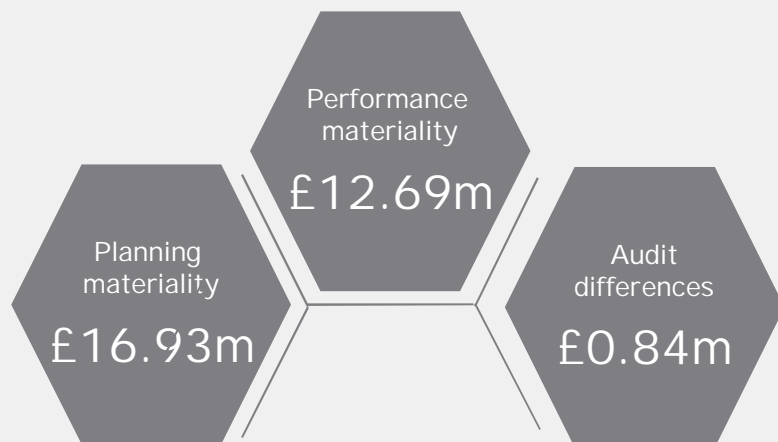
# Audit materiality



## Materiality

### Materiality

For planning purposes, materiality for 2017/18 has been set at £16.93m. This represents 2% of the Council's prior year gross expenditure on provision of services, adjusted for non-cash flow items. It will be reassessed throughout the audit process. We have provided supplemental information about audit materiality in Appendix D.



We request that the Committee confirm its understanding of, and agreement to, these materiality and reporting levels.

### Key definitions

**Planning materiality** – the amount over which we anticipate misstatements would influence the economic decisions of a user of the financial statements.

**Performance materiality** – the amount we use to determine the extent of our audit procedures. We have set performance materiality at £12.69m which represents 75% of planning materiality.

**Audit difference threshold** – we propose that misstatements identified below this threshold are deemed clearly trivial. We will report to you all uncorrected misstatements over this amount relating to the comprehensive income and expenditure statement, Balance Sheet, Housing Revenue Account and Collection Fund that have an effect on income or that relate to other comprehensive income.

Other uncorrected misstatements, such as reclassifications and misstatements in the cashflow statement and movement in reserves statement or disclosures, and corrected misstatements will be communicated to the extent that they merit the attention of the Committee, or are important from a qualitative perspective.



# 05 Scope of our audit



## Our Audit Process and Strategy

### Objective and Scope of our Audit scoping

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 also 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 the course of 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; and
- Auditor independence.

#### Procedures required by the Code

- Reviewing, and reporting on as appropriate, other information published with the financial statements, including the Annual Governance; and
- Reviewing and reporting on the Whole of Government Accounts return, in line with the instructions issued by the NAO [delete if not applicable]

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

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.

## Our Audit Process and Strategy (continued)

### Audit Process Overview

Our audit involves:

- Identifying and understanding the key processes and internal controls; and
- Substantive tests of detail of transactions and amounts.

For 2017/18, we plan to follow a substantive approach to the audit as we have concluded this is the most efficient way to obtain the level of audit assurance required to conclude that the financial statements are not materially misstated.

Analytics:

We will use our computer-based analytics tools to enable us to capture whole populations of your 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 Committee.

Internal audit:

We will regularly meet with the Internal Audit, and 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 they raise issues that could have an impact on the financial statements.



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# 06 Audit team



## 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
Valuation of Land and Buildings	EY Valuations Team
Pensions disclosure	EY Actuaries
PFI	EY Internal PFI Specialist (only if there is significant change to the PFI compared to previous years).

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 business 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 specialist to establish whether the source data 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; and
- Assess whether the substance of the specialist's findings are properly reflected in the financial statements.



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Audit timeline





# Audit timeline

## Timetable of communication and deliverables

### Timeline

Below is a timetable showing the key stages of the audit and the deliverables we have agreed to provide to you through the audit cycle in 2017/18.

From time to time matters may arise that require immediate communication with the Committee and we will discuss them with the Audit & Standards Committee Chair as appropriate. We will also provide updates on corporate governance and regulatory matters as necessary.

Audit phase	Timetable	Audit & Standards Committee timetable	Deliverables
Planning: Risk assessment and setting of scopes.	October 2017		
	November 2017		
Walkthrough of key systems and processes	December 2017		
	January 2018	Audit & Standards Committee	Audit Planning Report
Testing of routine processes and controls Interim audit testing	February 2018		
	March 2018	Audit & Standards Committee	Interim audit update
	April 2018		
Year end audit	June 2018		
Audit Completion procedures	July 2018	Audit & Standards Committee	Audit Results Report Audit opinions and completion certificates
	Autumn	Audit & Standards Committee	Annual Audit Letter



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# Independence



## Introduction

The FRC Ethical Standard and ISA (UK) 260 “Communication of audit matters with those charged with governance”, requires us to communicate with you on a timely basis on all significant facts and matters that bear upon our integrity, objectivity and independence. The Ethical Standard, as revised in June 2016, requires that we communicate formally both at the planning stage and at the conclusion of the audit, as well as during the course of the audit if appropriate. The aim of these communications is to ensure full and fair disclosure by us to those charged with your governance on matters in which you have an interest.

### Required communications

#### Planning stage

- ▶ The principal threats, if any, to objectivity and independence identified by Ernst & Young (EY) including consideration of all relationships between the you, your 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 the general policies and process within EY to maintain objectivity and independence.
- ▶ Where EY has determined it is appropriate to apply more restrictive independence rules than permitted under the Ethical Standard [note: additional wording should be included in the communication reflecting the client specific situation]

#### Final stage

- ▶ In order for you to assess the integrity, objectivity and independence of the firm and each covered person, we are required to provide a written disclosure of relationships (including the provision of non-audit services) that may bear on our integrity, objectivity and independence. This is required to have regard to relationships with the entity, its directors and senior management, its affiliates, and its connected parties and the threats to integrity or objectivity, including those that could compromise independence that these create. We are also required to disclose any safeguards that we have put in place 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 in relation thereto;
- ▶ Written confirmation that the firm and each covered person is independent and, if applicable, that any non-EY firms used in the group audit or external experts used have confirmed their independence to us;
- ▶ Written confirmation that all covered persons are independent;
- ▶ Details of any inconsistencies between FRC Ethical Standard and your policy for the supply of non-audit services by EY and any apparent breach of that policy;
- ▶ Details of any contingent fee arrangements for non-audit services provided by us or our network firms; and
- ▶ An opportunity to discuss auditor independence issues.

In addition, during the course of the audit, we are required to communicate with you whenever any significant judgements are made about threats to objectivity and independence and the appropriateness of safeguards put in place, 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 services that have been contracted, and details of any written proposal to provide non-audit services that has been submitted;

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



## 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 the principal threats, if any. We have adopted the safeguards noted below to mitigate these threats along with the reasons why they are considered to be effective. However we will only perform non-audit services if the service has been pre-approved in accordance with your policy.

### Overall Assessment

Overall, we consider that the safeguards that have been adopted appropriately mitigate the principal threats identified and we therefore confirm that EY is independent and the objectivity and independence of Paul King, your audit engagement partner and the audit engagement team have not been compromised.

### Self interest threats

A self interest threat arises when EY has financial or other interests in the Council. Examples include 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 you. 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 you have approved.

None of the services are prohibited under the FRC's ES or the National Audit Office's Auditor Guidance Note 01 and the services have been approved in accordance with your policy on pre-approval. The ratio of non audit fees to audits fees is not permitted to exceed 70%.

At the time of writing, we do not undertake any non-audit work, therefore no additional safeguards are required.

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 you. We confirm that no member of our audit engagement team, including those from other service lines, has objectives or is rewarded in relation to sales to you, in compliance with Ethical Standard part 4.

There are no other 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 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 of the Council. Management threats may also arise during the provision of a non-audit service in relation to which management is required to make judgements or decision based on that work.

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

## Other communications

### EY Transparency Report 2017

Ernst & Young (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 in place 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 1 July 2017 and can be found here:

<http://www.ey.com/uk/en/about-us/ey-uk-transparency-report-2017>



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# Appendices



## Appendix A

### 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.

	Planned fee 2017/18	Scale fee 2017/18	Final Fee 2016/17
	£	£	£
Total Fee - Code work	158,550	158,550	162,050
Other	0	0	0
<b>Total audit</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>158,550</b>	<b>158,550</b>
Other non-audit services not covered above (Housing Benefits)	16,957	16,957	13,898
<b>Total other non-audit services</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total fees</b>	<b>175,507</b>	<b>175,507</b>	<b>172,448</b>

*All fees exclude VAT*

Note: the Housing Benefit Certification Fee has increased compared to the prior year. This fee is set by the PSAA based on the amount of work and errors identified in 2015/16. Should comparably less errors be identified and less work be completed in 2017/18 than in 2015/16, we will consider refunding some of this fee.

The agreed fee presented is based on the following assumptions:

- ▶ Officers meeting the agreed timetable of deliverables;
- ▶ Our accounts opinion and value for money conclusion being unqualified;
- ▶ Appropriate quality of documentation is provided by the Council; and
- ▶ The Council has an effective control environment.

If any of the above assumptions prove to be 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 formal objections will be charged in addition to the scale fee.

## Appendix B

# Required communications with the Audit & Standards Committee

We have detailed the communications that we must provide to the Audit & Standards Committee.

### Our Reporting to you



Required communications	 What is reported?	 When and where
Terms of engagement	Confirmation by the Audit & Standards 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	The statement of responsibilities serves as the formal terms of engagement between the PSAA's appointed auditors and audited bodies.
Planning and audit approach	<p>Communication of the planned scope and timing of the audit, any limitations and the significant risks identified.</p> <p>When communicating key audit matters this includes the most significant risks of material misstatement (whether or not due to fraud) including those that have the greatest effect on the overall audit strategy, the allocation of resources in the audit and directing the efforts of the engagement team</p>	Audit planning report.
Significant findings from the audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our view about the significant qualitative aspects of accounting practices including accounting policies, accounting estimates and financial statement disclosures</li> <li>• Significant difficulties, if any, encountered during the audit</li> <li>• Significant matters, if any, arising from the audit that were discussed with management</li> <li>• Written representations that we are seeking</li> <li>• Expected modifications to the audit report</li> <li>• Other matters if any, significant to the oversight of the financial reporting process</li> </ul>	Audit results report.

## Appendix B

# Required communications with the Audit & Standards Committee (continued)



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"> <li>• Whether the events or conditions constitute a material uncertainty</li> <li>• Whether the use of the going concern assumption is appropriate in the preparation and presentation of the financial statements</li> <li>• The adequacy of related disclosures in the financial statements</li> </ul>	Audit results report.
Misstatements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uncorrected misstatements and their effect on our audit opinion, unless prohibited by law or regulation</li> <li>• The effect of uncorrected misstatements related to prior periods</li> <li>• A request that any uncorrected misstatement be corrected</li> <li>• Corrected misstatements that are significant</li> <li>• Material misstatements corrected by management</li> </ul>	Audit results report.
Fraud	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enquiries of the Audit &amp; Standards Committee to determine whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud affecting the entity</li> <li>• Any fraud that we have identified or information we have obtained that indicates that a fraud may exist</li> <li>• A discussion of any other matters related to fraud</li> </ul>	Audit results report.
Related parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant matters arising during the audit in connection with the entity's related parties including, when applicable:</li> <li>• Non-disclosure by management</li> <li>• Inappropriate authorisation and approval of transactions</li> <li>• Disagreement over disclosures</li> <li>• Non-compliance with laws and regulations</li> <li>• Difficulty in identifying the party that ultimately controls the entity</li> </ul>	Audit results report.

## Appendix B

# Required communications with the Audit & Standards Committee (continued)






Our Reporting to you

Required communications	 What is reported?	 When and where
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"> <li>• The principal threats</li> <li>• Safeguards adopted and their effectiveness</li> <li>• An overall assessment of threats and safeguards</li> <li>• Information about the general policies and process within the firm to maintain objectivity and independence.</li> </ul>	Audit Planning Report and Audit Results Report.
External confirmations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management's refusal for us to request confirmations</li> <li>• Inability to obtain relevant and reliable audit evidence from other procedures.</li> </ul>	Audit results report.
Consideration of laws and regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> <li>• Enquiry of the Audit &amp; Standards 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 &amp; Standards Committee may be aware of.</li> </ul>	Audit results report.
Internal controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant deficiencies in internal controls identified during the audit.</li> </ul>	Audit results report.

## Appendix B

# Required communications with the Audit & Standards Committee (continued)

### Our Reporting to you

Required communications	 What is reported?	  When and where
Representations	Written representations we are requesting from management and/or those charged with governance	Audit results report
Material inconsistencies and misstatements	Material inconsistencies or misstatements of fact identified in other information which management has refused to revise	Audit results report
Auditors report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key audit matters that we will include in our auditor's report</li> <li>• Any circumstances identified that affect the form and content of our auditor's report</li> </ul>	Audit results report
Fee Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breakdown of fee information when the audit plan is agreed</li> <li>• Breakdown of fee information at the completion of the audit</li> <li>• Any non-audit work</li> </ul>	Audit planning report Audit results report
Certification work	Summary of certification work undertaken	Certification report



## Additional audit information

### Other required procedures during the course of the audit

In addition to the key areas of audit focus outlined in section 2, we have to perform other procedures as required by auditing, ethical and independence standards and other regulations. We outline the procedures below that we will undertake during the course of our audit.

#### Our responsibilities required by auditing standards

- Identifying and assessing the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.
- Obtaining an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Council's internal control.
- Evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Concluding on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting.
- Evaluating the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.
- Obtaining sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding the financial information of the entities or business activities within the Council to express an opinion on the consolidated financial statements. Reading other information contained in the financial statements, including the board's statement that the annual report is fair, balanced and understandable, the Audit & Standards Committee reporting appropriately addresses matters communicated by us to the Audit & Standards Committee and reporting whether it is materially inconsistent with our understanding and the financial statements; and
- Maintaining auditor independence.

## Additional audit information (continued)

### Purpose and evaluation of materiality

For the purposes of determining whether the accounts are free from material error, we define materiality as the magnitude of an omission or misstatement that, individually or in the aggregate, in light of the surrounding circumstances, could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of the users of the financial statements. Our evaluation of it requires professional judgement and necessarily takes into account qualitative as well as quantitative considerations implicit in the definition. We would be happy to discuss with you your expectations regarding our detection of misstatements in the financial statements.

Materiality determines:

- The locations at which we conduct audit procedures to support the opinion given on the financial statements; and
- The level of work performed on individual account balances and financial statement disclosures.

The amount we consider material at the end of the audit may differ from our initial determination. At this stage, however, it is not feasible to anticipate all of the circumstances that may ultimately influence our judgement about materiality. At the end of the audit we will form our final opinion by reference to all matters that could be significant to users of the accounts, including the total effect of the audit misstatements we identify, and our evaluation of materiality at that date.

**COMMITTEENAME****Agenda Item 42**

Brighton &amp; Hove City Council

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Annual Certification Report 2016/17</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>9 January 2018</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Ernst &amp; Young</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Paul King</b>	<b>Tel:</b> <b>0118 928 1556 (Ext 41556)</b>
	<b>Email:</b>	<b><a href="mailto:pking1@uk.ey.com">pking1@uk.ey.com</a></b>	
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

*Note: The special circumstances for non-compliance with Council Procedure Rule 7, Access to Information Rule 5 and Section 100B (4) of the Local Government Act as amended (items not considered unless the agenda is open to inspection at least five days in advance of the meeting) related to delayed finalisation of the reports due to the Christmas period.*

**1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:**

- 1.1 The purpose of the Certification Report is to communicate to the Members of the Council our findings relating to the certification of grant claims completed in 2016/17.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 To note the 2016/17 Certification Report.



# Certification of claims and returns annual report 2016-17

Brighton & Hove City Council

January 2018

Ernst & Young LLP



The Members of the Audit & Standards Committee  
Brighton & Hove City Council  
Hove Town Hall  
Norton Road,  
Hove,  
BN3 3BQ

January 2018  
Ref:

Direct line: 0118 928 1556  
Email: [pking1@uk.ey.com](mailto:pking1@uk.ey.com)

Dear Members

## **Certification of claims and returns annual report 2016-17 for Brighton & Hove City Council**

We are pleased to report on our certification and other assurance work. This report summarises the results of our work on Brighton & Hove City Council's (the Authority's) 2016-17 claims.

### **Scope of work**

Local authorities claim large sums of public money in grants and subsidies from central government and other grant-paying bodies and must complete returns providing financial information to government departments. In some cases these grant-paying bodies and government departments require appropriately qualified auditors to certify the claims and returns submitted to them.

From 1 April 2015, the duty to make arrangements for the certification of relevant claims and returns and to prescribe scales of fees for this work was delegated to the Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

For 2016-17, these arrangements required only the certification of the housing benefits subsidy claim. In certifying this we followed a methodology determined by the Department for Work and Pensions and did not undertake an audit of the claim.

### **Summary**

Section 1 of this report outlines the results of our 2016-17 certification work and highlights the significant issues.

We checked and certified the housing benefits subsidy claim with a total value of £157,738,923. We met the submission deadline. Our initial work identified a number of errors. As a result further testing needed to be undertaken by the Authority and reviewed by us. We reported the results of our initial and additional testing to the DWP in a qualification letter. Details of the qualification matters are included in section 2.

Fees for certification and other returns work are summarised in section 3. The housing benefits subsidy claim fees for 2016-17 were published by the Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) in March 2016 and are now available on the PSAA's website ([www.psaa.co.uk](http://www.psaa.co.uk)).



We welcome the opportunity to discuss the contents of this report with you at the January 2018 meeting of the Audit & Standards Committee.

Yours faithfully

**Paul King**  
Associate Partner  
Ernst & Young LLP  
Enc

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## 1. Housing benefits subsidy claim

Scope of work	Results
Value of claim presented for certification	£157,738,923
Amended/Not amended	Not amended
Qualification letter	Yes
Fee – 2016-17	£13,898
Fee – 2015-16	£16,957

Local Government administers the Government's housing benefits scheme for tenants and can claim subsidies from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) towards the cost of benefits paid.

The certification guidance requires auditors to complete more extensive '40+' or extended testing if initial testing identifies errors in the calculation of benefit or compilation of the claim. 40+ testing may also be carried out as a result of errors that have been identified in the audit of previous years claims. We found errors and carried out extended testing in several areas.

We have reported underpayments, uncertainties and the extrapolated value of other errors in a qualification letter. The DWP then decides whether to ask the Authority to carry out further work to quantify the error or to claw back the benefit subsidy paid. These are the main issues we reported:

- Testing of Non-HRA Rent Allowances cases identified one case where benefit had been overpaid as the Authority had miscalculated the claimant's average weekly income. 40+ testing was completed and cases identified 9 cases where benefit had been underpaid and 9 cases where benefit had been overpaid. The overpayment errors were extrapolated across the population to produce a figure of £19,110 and included in our qualification letter stating subsidy was over-claimed by the same amount.
- Testing of Rent Allowances cases identified one case where the claimant's eligible rent had not been included correctly in the assessment. 40+ testing was completed but did not identify any further errors. The overpayment was extrapolated to produce a figure of £15,083 and included within our qualification letter stating subsidy was over-claimed by the same amount.
- Testing of our initial sample of Rent Allowance cases did not identify any errors in the calculation of claimant income. However, the certification guidance required a 40+ sample to be tested as errors were identified in the prior year. This 40+ sample identified three cases where incorrect calculation of claimant income resulted in an overpayment of benefit, three cases where incorrect calculation of income resulted in underpayment of benefit and one case which included periods of both overpayment and underpayment of benefit. The overpayments were extrapolated across the population to produce a figure of £50,996 and was included within our qualification letter stating subsidy was over-claimed by the same amount.
- Testing of our initial sample of Rent Allowance cases did not identify any errors related to the misclassification of Eligible Overpayments, which had been identified in the prior year. As we identified this error in the prior year, certification guidance required 40+ testing to be completed. This additional testing identified one case where a Local Authority Error had been incorrectly recorded as an Eligible Overpayment. This error was extrapolated across the population to produce a figure of £34,850 and was included in our qualification letter stating subsidy was over-claimed by the same amount.



## 2. 2016-17 certification fees

The PSAA determine an indicative fee each year for the audit of claims and returns. For 2016-17, these indicative fees were published by the Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA's) in March 2016 and are now available on the PSAA's website ([www.psa.co.uk](http://www.psa.co.uk)).

Claim or return	2016-17	2016-17	2015-16
	Actual fee £	Indicative fee £	Actual fee £
Housing benefits subsidy claim	13,898	13,898	16,957

The fee for 2016/17 did not vary from the indicative fee set by the PSAA.

### 3. Looking forward

#### 2017/18

From 1 April 2015, the duty to make arrangements for the certification of relevant claims and returns and to prescribe scales of fees for this work was delegated to (PSAA) by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

The Authority's indicative certification fee for 2017/18 is £16,957. This was set by PSAA and is based on final 2015/16 certification fees.

Details of individual indicative fees are available at the following web address:  
<https://www.psa.co.uk/audit-fees/201718-work-programme-and-scales-of-fees/individual-indicative-certification-fees/>

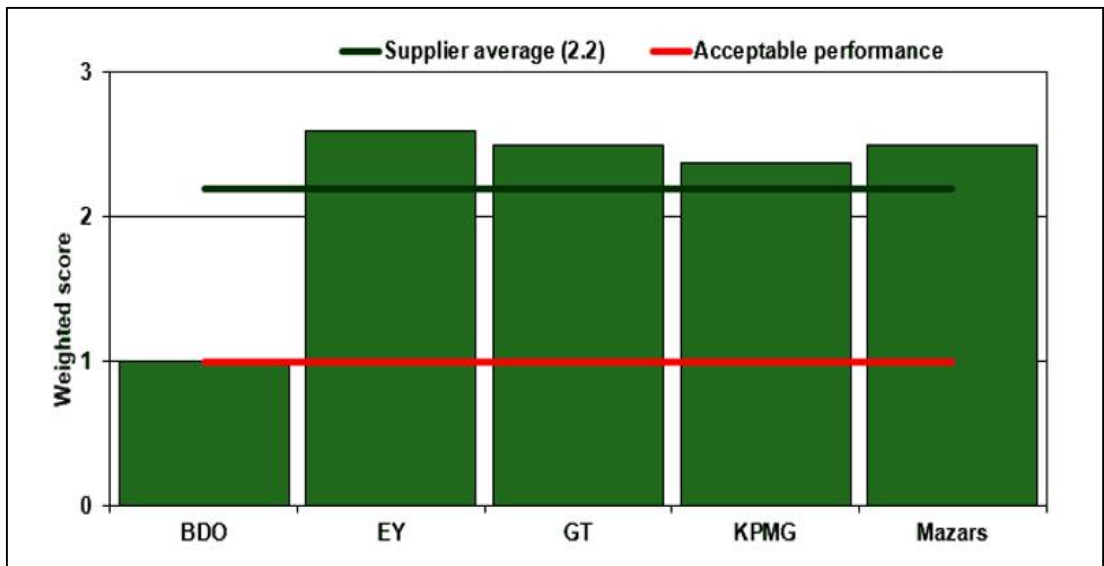
We must seek the agreement of PSAA to any proposed variations to these indicative certification fees. We will inform the Executive Director Finance & Resources before seeking any such variation.

#### 2018/19

From 2018/19, the Authority will be responsible for appointing their own reporting accountant to undertake the certification of the housing benefit subsidy claim in accordance with the Housing Benefit Assurance Process (HBAP) requirements that are being established by the DWP. DWP's HBAP guidance is under consultation and is expected to be published around January 2018.

We would be pleased to undertake this work for you, and can provide a competitive quotation for this work.

We currently provide housing benefit certification to 106 clients, through our specialist Government & Public Sector team. We provide a quality service, and are proud that in the PSAA's latest Annual Regulatory and Compliance Report (July 2017) we score the highest of all providers, with an average score of 2.6 (out of 3).



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