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External Audit Plan 2012/13

North London Waste Authority

March 2013



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This report is addressed to the Authority and has been prepared for the sole use of the Authority. We take no responsibility to any member of staff acting in their individual capacities, or to third parties. The Audit Commission has issued a document entitled *Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies*. This summarises where the responsibilities of auditors begin and end and what is expected from the audited body. We draw your attention to this document which is available on the Audit Commission's website at www.auditcommission.gov.uk.

External auditors do not act as a substitute for the audited body's own responsibility for putting in place proper arrangements to ensure that public business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

If you have any concerns or are dissatisfied with any part of KPMG's work, in the first instance you should contact Philip Johnstone, the appointed engagement lead to the Authority, who will try to resolve your complaint. If you are dissatisfied with your response please contact Trevor Rees on 0161 246 4000, or by email to trevor.rees@kpmg.co.uk, who is the national contact partner for all of KPMG's work with the Audit Commission. After this, if you are still dissatisfied with how your complaint has been handled you can access the Audit Commission's complaints procedure. Put your complaint in writing to the Complaints Unit Manager, Audit Commission, Westward House, Lime Kiln Close, Stoke Gifford, Bristol, BS34 8SR or by email to complaints@audit-commission.gov.uk. Their telephone number is 0844 798 3131, textphone (minicom) 020 7630 0421.

This document describes how we will deliver our audit work for North London Waste Authority.

Scope of this report

We are pleased to be appointed as your external auditors for 2012/13. This document supplements our *Audit Fee Letter 2012/13* sent to you in September 2012. It describes how we will deliver our financial statements audit work for North London Waste Authority ('the Authority'). It also sets out our approach to value for money (VFM) work for 2012/13.

We are required to satisfy ourselves that your accounts comply with statutory requirements and that proper practices have been observed in compiling them. We use a risk based audit approach.

The audit planning process and risk assessment is an on-going process and the assessment and fees in this plan will be kept under review and updated if necessary.

Statutory responsibilities

Our statutory responsibilities and powers are set out in the *Audit Commission Act 1998*, the *Local Government Act 1999* and the Audit Commission's *Code of Audit Practice*.

The *Code of Audit Practice* summarises our responsibilities into two objectives, requiring us to review and report on your:

- *financial statements (including the Annual Governance Statement)*: providing an opinion on your accounts; and
- *use of resources*: concluding on the arrangements in place for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in your use of resources (the value for money conclusion).

The Audit Commission's *Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies* sets out the respective responsibilities of the auditor and the Authority.

Structure of this report

This report is structured as follows:

- Section 2 includes our headline messages, focusing on the key risks identified this year for the financial statements audit.
- Section 3 describes the approach we take for the audit of the financial statements.
- Section 4 provides further detail on the financial statements audit risks.
- Section 5 explains our approach to VFM work.
- Section 6 provides information on the audit team, our proposed deliverables, the timescales and fees for our work.

Acknowledgements

We would like to take this opportunity to thank officers and Members for their continuing help and co-operation throughout our audit work.

We have identified a number of key risks that we will focus on during the audit of the 2012/13 financial statements.

The remainder of this document provides information on our:

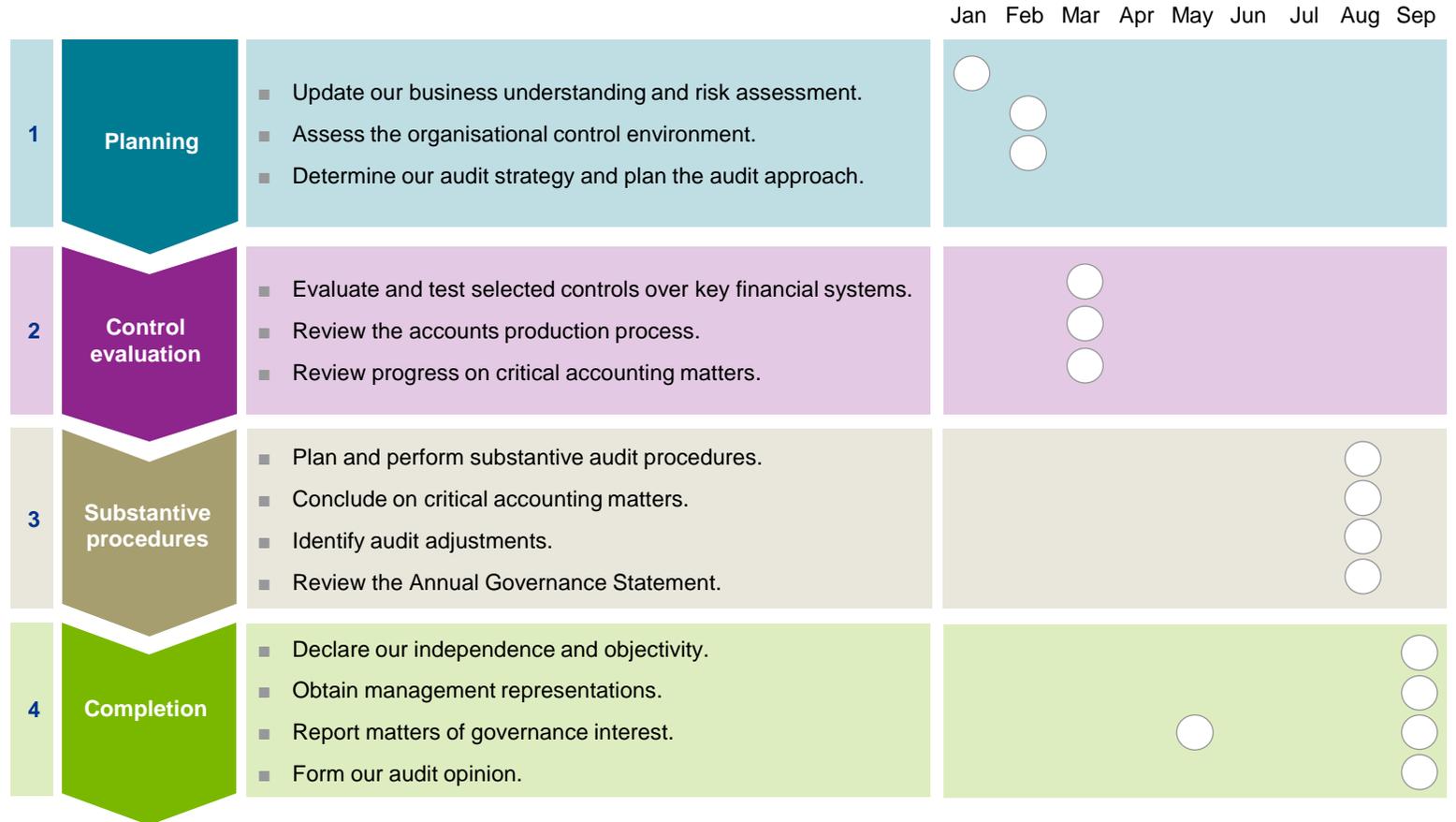
- approach to the audit of the financial statements;
- approach to VFM work; and
- audit team, proposed deliverables, timescales and fees for our work.

Area	Risk	Audit work
Procurement	<p>The Authority is engaged in a major procurement exercise to arrange the future of its waste service delivery at the expiry of current arrangements at the end of 2014. The procurement exercise was originally supported by PFI credits but this was withdrawn by the Government in 2010 and the process was further complicated on the withdrawal of one of the two remaining bidders in December 2012.</p> <p>Managing such a significant project clearly absorbs a significant amount of management time and presents a number of operational and financial risks to the Authority, with periodic steps in the process giving rise to specific audit issues.</p>	<p>Principally in the course of our VFM work we will keep a watching brief on the Authority's arrangements and discuss and identify with management specific risks as they arise.</p>

We undertake our work on your financial statements in four key stages during 2013:

- **Planning** (January to February).
- **Control Evaluation** (March).
- **Substantive Procedures** (August).
- **Completion** (September).

We have summarised the four key stages of our financial statements audit process for you below:



During January and February 2013 we complete our planning work.

We assess the key risks affecting the Authority's financial statements and discuss these with officers.

We assess if there are any weaknesses in respect of central processes, including the Authority's IT systems, that would impact on our audit.

We determine our audit strategy and approach, and agree a protocol for the accounts audit, specifying what evidence we expect from the Authority to support the financial statements.

Our planning work takes place in January and February 2013. This involves the following aspects:

Planning

- Update our business understanding and risk assessment.
- Assess the organisational control environment.
- Determine our audit strategy and plan the audit approach.

Business understanding and risk assessment

We update our understanding of the Authority's operations and identify any areas that will require particular attention during our audit of the Authority's financial statements.

We identify the key risks affecting the Authority's financial statements. These are based on our knowledge of the Authority, our sector experience and our ongoing dialogue with Authority staff. The risks identified to date are set out in this document. Our audit strategy and plan will, however, remain flexible as the risks and issues change throughout the year. It is the Authority's responsibility to adequately address these issues. We encourage the Authority to raise any technical issues with us as early as possible so that we can agree the accounting treatment in advance of the audit visit.

We meet with the finance team quarterly to consider issues and how they are addressed during the financial year end closedown and accounts preparation.

Organisational control environment

Controls operated at an organisational level often have an impact on controls at an operational level and if there were weaknesses this would impact on our audit. In particular risk management, internal control and ethics and conduct have implications for our financial statements audit. The scope of the work of your internal auditors also informs our risk assessment.

The Authority relies on information technology (IT) to support both financial reporting and internal control processes. In order to satisfy ourselves that we can rely on the use of IT, we test controls over access to systems and data, system changes, system development and computer operations. Whilst we undertake some general IT controls work, we also focus on testing the specific applications and reports that are pivotal to the production of the financial statements.

Audit strategy and approach

The Engagement Lead sets the overall direction of the audit and decides the nature and extent of audit activities.

We design audit procedures in response to the risk that the financial statements are materially misstated. The materiality level is a matter of judgement and is set by the Engagement Lead.

Group audit

To support our audit work on the Authority's group accounts, we seek to place reliance on the work of PKF who are the auditors to LondonWaste Limited. We will liaise with them in order to confirm that their programme of work is adequate for our purposes and they satisfy professional requirements.

During March 2013 we will complete our interim audit work.

We assess if controls over key financial systems were effective during 2012/13. We work with your Internal Audit team to avoid duplication.

We work with your finance team to enhance the efficiency of the accounts audit.

Our interim visit on site will be completed during March 2013. During this time we will complete work in the following areas:

Control Evaluation

- Evaluate and test controls over key financial systems identified as part of our risk assessment.
- Review the work undertaken by the internal audit function on controls relevant to our risk assessment.
- Review the accounts production process.
- Review progress on critical accounting matters.

Controls over key financial systems

We update our understanding of the Authority's key financial processes where our risk assessment has identified that these are relevant to our final accounts audit and where we have determined that this is the most efficient audit approach to take. We confirm our understanding by completing walkthroughs for these systems. We then test selected controls that address key risks within these systems. The strength of the control framework informs the substantive testing we complete during our final accounts visit.

Appendix 1 illustrates how we determine the most effective balance of internal controls and substantive audit testing.

Where our audit approach is to undertake controls work on financial systems, we seek to rely on any relevant work Internal Audit have completed to minimise unnecessary duplication of work.

Critical accounting matters

We will discuss the work completed to address the specific risks we identified at the planning stage. Wherever possible, we seek to review relevant workings and evidence and agree the accounting treatment as part of our interim work.

During August 2013 we will be on site for our substantive work.

We complete detailed testing of accounts and disclosures and conclude on critical accounting matters, such as specific risk areas. We then agree any audit adjustments required to the financial statements.

We also review the Annual Governance Statement for consistency with our understanding.

We will present our *ISA 260 Report* to the Authority in September 2013

Our final accounts visit on site has been provisionally scheduled during August 2013. During this time, we will complete the following work:

Substantive Procedures

- Plan and perform substantive audit procedures.
- Conclude on critical accounting matters.
- Identify and assess any audit adjustments.
- Review the Annual Governance Statement.

Substantive audit procedures

We complete detailed testing on significant balances and disclosures. The extent of our work is determined by the Engagement Lead based on various factors such as our overall assessment of the Authority's control environment, the effectiveness of controls over individual systems and the management of specific risk factors.

Critical accounting matters

We conclude our testing of the key risk areas as identified at the planning stage and any additional issues that may have emerged since. We will discuss our early findings of the Authority's approach to address the key risk areas with the Head of Finance in August 2013 prior to reporting to the Authority in September 2013.

Audit adjustments

During our on site work, we will meet with the Head of Finance each week to discuss the progress of the audit, any differences found and any other issues emerging.

At the end of our on site work, we will hold a closure meeting, where we will provide a schedule of audit differences and agree a timetable for the completion stage and the accounts sign off.

To comply with auditing standards, we are required to report uncorrected audit differences to the Authority. We also report any material misstatements which have been corrected and which we believe should be communicated to you to help you meet your governance responsibilities.

Annual Governance Statement

We are also required to satisfy ourselves that your Annual Governance Statement complies with the applicable framework and is consistent with our understanding of your operations. Our review of the work of internal audit and consideration of your risk management and governance arrangements are key to this.

We report the findings of our final accounts work in our *ISA 260 Report*, which we will issue to the Authority in September 2013.

In addition to the financial statements, we also audit the Authority's Whole of Government Accounts pack.

We may need to undertake additional work if we receive objections to the accounts from local electors.

We will communicate with you throughout the year, both formally and informally.

Whole of government accounts (WGA)

We are required to review and issue an opinion on your WGA consolidation to confirm that this is consistent with your financial statements. The audit approach has been agreed with HM Treasury and the National Audit Office.

Elector challenge

The Audit Commission Act 1998 gives electors certain rights. These are:

- the right to inspect the accounts;
- the right to ask the auditor questions about the accounts; and
- the right to object to the accounts.

As a result of these rights, in particular the right to object to the accounts, we may need to undertake additional work to form our decision on the elector's objection. The additional work could range from a small piece of work where we interview an officer and review evidence to form our decision, to a more detailed piece of work, where we have to interview a range of officers, review significant amounts of evidence and seek legal representations on the issues raised.

The costs incurred in responding to questions or objections raised by electors is not part of the fee. This work will be charged in accordance with the Audit Commission's fee scales.

Reporting and communication

Reporting is a key part of the audit process, not only in communicating the audit findings for the year, but also in ensuring the audit team are accountable to you in addressing the issues identified as part of the audit strategy. Throughout the year we will communicate with you through meetings with the finance team and the Authority. Our deliverables are included on page 12.

Use of off-shore audit resources

During our audit work we may make use of our KPMG Global Services (KGS Audit) team in India to undertake certain basic audit tasks and functions. Use of this 'off-shore' team is one of many initiatives we employ to deliver a cost-effective audit service for our clients. Although based in India, the KGS Audit team works closely with our local audit teams to undertake certain audit procedures remotely. We have provided our UK teams with guidance on the types of audit procedures and other tasks that it is suitable and permissible to use KGS Audit for - we do not use KGS Audit for any audit procedures that involve access to personal, confidential or sensitive information. Audit tasks are then allocated by our UK-based engagement teams to dedicated teams in India, allowing local staff to control what work KGS Audit undertakes and what information is accessed. They operate to our same quality standards and all work undertaken by KGS Audit is reviewed by the UK team.

The KGS Audit team operates in a paperless environment and we apply robust processes to control how data is accessed and used:

- all work is conducted electronically;
- all data files are maintained on servers in the UK with restricted access and only viewed on screen in India. These servers are governed by established KPMG IT controls;
- policy and technology restrictions are in place to protect data, for example locked down USB ports, no external emailing, no printing;
- KGS Audit staff are based in an office with restricted access and security; and
- the team members adhere to global KPMG ethics and independence standards, along with requirements governing the non-disclosure of client information.

Our independence and objectivity responsibilities under the Code are summarised in Appendix 2. We confirm our audit team's independence and objectivity is not impaired.

Independence and objectivity confirmation

Professional standards require auditors to communicate to those charged with governance, at least annually, all relationships that may bear on the firm's independence and the objectivity of the audit engagement partner and audit staff. The standards also place requirements on auditors in relation to integrity, objectivity and independence.

The standards define 'those charged with governance' as 'those persons entrusted with the supervision, control and direction of an entity'. In your case this is the Authority Board.

KPMG LLP is committed to being and being seen to be independent. APB Ethical Standard 1 Integrity, Objectivity and Independence requires us to communicate to you in writing all significant facts and matters, including those related to the provision of non-audit services and the safeguards put in place, in our professional judgement, may reasonably be thought to bear on KPMG LLP's independence and the objectivity of the Engagement Lead and the audit team.

Confirmation statement

We confirm that as of March 2013 in our professional judgement, KPMG LLP is independent within the meaning of regulatory and professional requirements and the objectivity of the Engagement Lead and audit team is not impaired.

Our approach to VFM work follows guidance provided by the Audit Commission.

Background to approach to VFM work

In meeting their statutory responsibilities relating to economy, efficiency and effectiveness, the Commission's *Code of Audit Practice* requires auditors to:

- plan their work based on consideration of the significant risks of giving a wrong conclusion (audit risk); and
- carry out only as much work as is appropriate to enable them to give a safe VFM conclusion.

To provide stability for auditors and audited bodies, the Audit Commission has kept the VFM audit methodology unchanged from last year. For 2012/13 the scope of work on value for money at the Authority is limited to:

- reviewing the Annual Governance Statement;
- reviewing the results of the work of other relevant regulatory bodies or inspectorates, to consider whether there is any impact on our responsibilities; and
- other risk-based work as appropriate or any work mandated by the Audit Commission

Our work this year will mainly comprise a review of your Annual Governance Statement. As part of this review we will consider:

- your progress in addressing the recommendations included in the Audit Commission's 2011/12 Annual Governance Report; and
- any changes to your arrangements in 2012/13.

We will also keep a watching brief over the Authority's key procurement process. We will agree with the Authority in advance any specific work we wish to undertake.

We will report the results of the VFM audit in our report to those charged with governance. The key output from the work will be the VFM conclusion (i.e. our opinion on the Authority's arrangement for securing value for money) which forms part of our audit report.

Your audit team has been drawn from our specialist public sector assurance department.

The Director and Manager have been involved in your audit for a number of years and will provide continuity with KPMG as your appointed auditor.

Contact details are shown on page 1.

The audit team will be assisted by other KPMG specialists as necessary.



Philip Johnstone
Director

“My role is to lead our team and ensure the delivery of a high quality external audit opinion. I will be the main point of contact for the Authority and Managing Director.”



Rich Clarke
Manager

“I am responsible for the management, review and delivery of the whole audit and providing quality assurance for any technical accounting areas. I will work closely with Philip to ensure we add value. I will liaise with the Head of Finance.”



David Bevan
Assistant Manager

“I will be responsible for the on-site delivery of our work. I will liaise with the finance team. I will also supervise the work of our audit assistants.”

At the end of each stage of our audit we issue certain deliverables, including reports and opinions.

Our key deliverables will be delivered to a high standard and on time.

We will discuss and agreed each report with the Authority's officers prior to publication.

Deliverable	Purpose	Committee dates
Planning		
External Audit Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Outline audit approach. ■ Identify areas of audit focus and planned procedures. 	April 2013
Control evaluation		
Interim Report (to be issued as part of our progress update)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Details and resolution of control and process issues. ■ Identify improvements required prior to the issue of the draft financial statements and the year-end audit. 	June 2013
Substantive procedures		
Report to Those Charged with Governance (ISA 260 Report)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Details the resolution of key audit issues. ■ Communication of adjusted and unadjusted audit differences. ■ Performance improvement recommendations identified during our audit. ■ Commentary on the Authority's value for money arrangements. 	September 2013
Completion		
Auditor's report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Providing an opinion on your accounts (including the Annual Governance Statement). ■ Concluding on the arrangements in place for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in your use of resources (the VFM conclusion). 	September 2013
Annual Audit Letter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Summarises the outcomes and the key issues arising from our audit work for the year. 	December 2013

We will be in continuous dialogue with you throughout the audit.

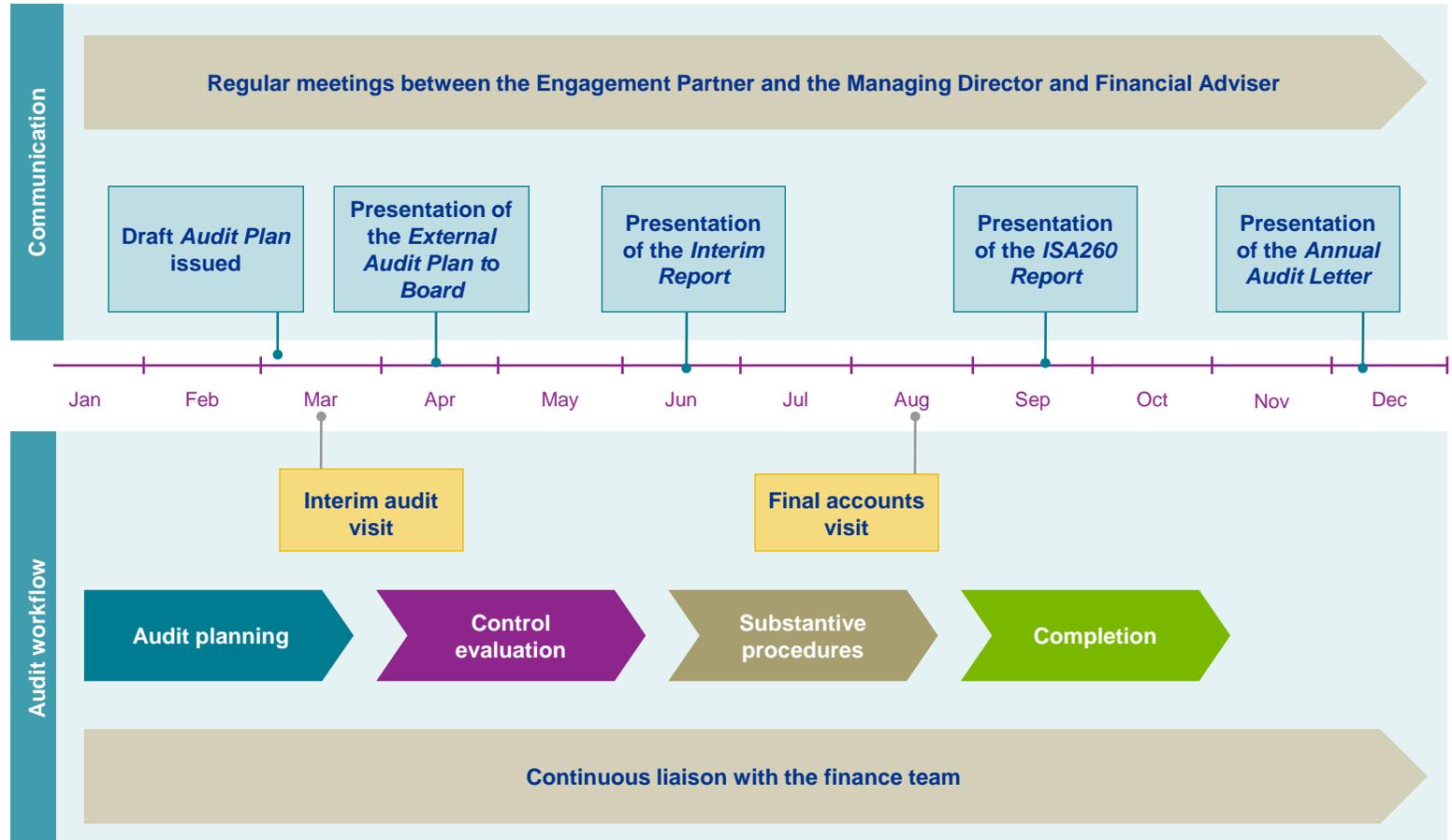
Key formal interactions with the Authority are:

- April– External Audit Plan;
- June– Interim Report;
- September – ISA 260 Report, and
- November – Annual Audit Letter.

We work with the finance team throughout the year.

Our main work on site will be our:

- Interim audit visits during March.
- Final accounts audit during August.



Key: ● Authority meetings.

The main fee for 2012/13 audit of the Authority is £18,270. The fee has not changed from that set out in our *Audit Fee Letter 2012/13* issued in September 2012.

Our audit fee remains indicative and based on you meeting our expectations of your support.

Meeting these expectations will help the delivery of our audit within the proposed audit fee.

Audit fee

Our *Audit Fee Letter 2012/13* presented to you in September 2012 first set out our fees for the 2011/12 audit. We have not considered it necessary to make any changes to the agreed fees at this stage.

Element of the audit	2012/13 (planned)	2011/12 (actual)
Gross audit fee	£18,270	£30,450

Our audit fee includes our work on the VFM conclusion and our audit of the Authority's financial statements. The fee for 2012/13 is £18,270. This is a reduction of 40 percent compared to the 2011/12 fee.

Audit fee assumptions

The fee is based on a number of assumptions, including that you will provide us with complete and materially accurate financial statements, with good quality supporting working papers, within agreed timeframes. It is imperative that you achieve this. If this is not the case and we have to complete more work than was envisaged, we will need to charge additional fees for this work. In setting the fee, we have assumed:

- the level of risk in relation to the audit of the financial statements is not significantly different from that identified for 2011/12;
- you will inform us of any significant developments impacting on our audit;
- you will identify and implement any changes required under the *CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the UK 2012/13* within your 2012/13 financial statements;
- you will comply with our expectations on providing information including:
 - the financial statements are made available for audit in line with the agreed timescales;
 - good quality working papers and records will be provided at the start of the final accounts audit;

- requested information will be provided within the agreed timescales;
- prompt responses will be provided to queries and draft reports; and
- additional work will not be required to address questions or objections raised by local government electors.

Meeting these expectations will help ensure the delivery of our audit within the agreed audit fee.

The Audit Commission requires us to inform you of specific actions you could take to keep the audit fee low. Future audit fees can be kept to a minimum if the Authority achieves an efficient and well-controlled financial closedown and accounts production process which complies with good practice and appropriately addresses new accounting developments and risk areas.

Changes to the audit plan

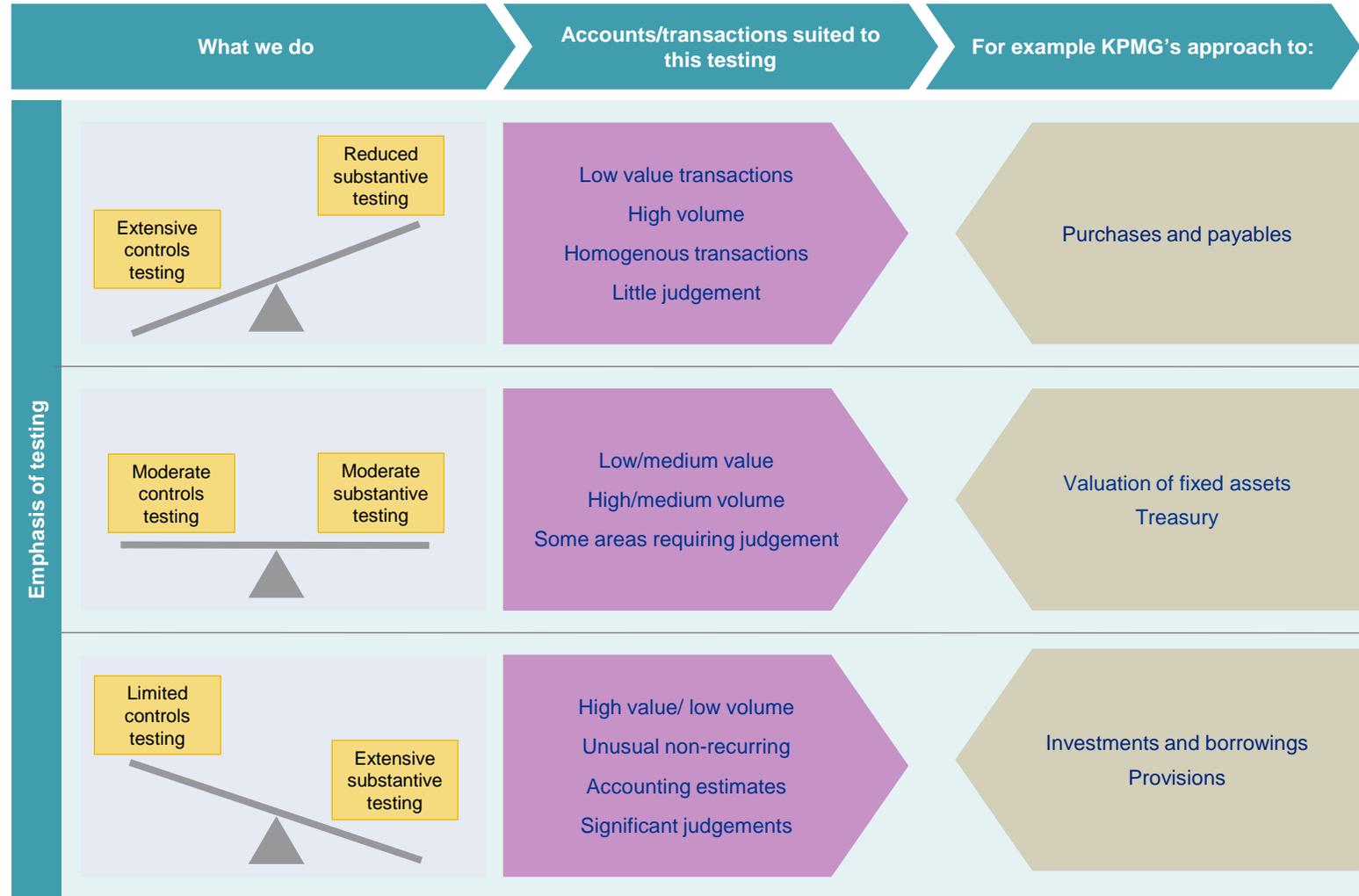
Changes to this plan and the audit fee may be necessary if:

- new significant audit risks emerge;
- additional work is required of us by the Audit Commission or other regulators; and
- additional work is required as a result of changes in legislation, professional standards or financial reporting requirements.

If changes to this plan and the audit fee are required, we will discuss and agree these initially with the Head of Finance and Financial Adviser.

Appendix 1: Balance of internal controls and substantive testing

This appendix illustrates how we determine the most effective balance of internal controls and substantive audit testing.



This appendix summarises auditors' responsibilities regarding independence and objectivity.

Independence and objectivity

Auditors are required by the Code to:

- carry out their work with independence and objectivity;
- exercise their professional judgement and act independently of both the Commission and the audited body;
- maintain an objective attitude at all times and not act in any way that might give rise to, or be perceived to give rise to, a conflict of interest; and
- resist any improper attempt to influence their judgement in the conduct of the audit.

In addition, the Code specifies that auditors should not carry out work for an audited body that does not relate directly to the discharge of the auditors' functions under the Code. If the Authority invites us to carry out risk-based work in a particular area, which cannot otherwise be justified to support our audit conclusions, it will be clearly differentiated as work carried out under section 35 of the Audit Commission Act 1998.

The Code also states that the Commission issues guidance under its powers to appoint auditors and to determine their terms of appointment. The Standing Guidance for Auditors includes several references to arrangements designed to support and reinforce the requirements relating to independence, which auditors must comply with. These are as follows:

- Any staff involved on Commission work who wish to engage in political activity should obtain prior approval from the Partner.
- Audit staff are expected not to accept appointments as lay school inspectors.
- Firms are expected not to risk damaging working relationships by bidding for work within an audited body's area in direct competition with the body's own staff without having discussed and agreed a local protocol with the body concerned.

- Auditors are expected to comply with the Commission's statements on firms not providing personal financial or tax advice to certain senior individuals at their audited bodies, auditors' conflicts of interest in relation to PFI procurement at audited bodies, and disposal of consultancy practices and auditors' independence.
- Auditors appointed by the Commission should not accept engagements which involve commenting on the performance of other Commission auditors on Commission work without first consulting the Commission.
- Auditors are expected to comply with the Commission's policy for the Engagement Lead to be changed on each audit at least once every five years (subject to agreed transitional arrangements). Audit suppliers are required to obtain the Commission's written approval prior to changing any Engagement Lead in respect of each audited body.
- Audit suppliers are required to obtain the Commission's written approval prior to changing any Engagement Lead in respect of each audited body.
- The Commission must be notified of any change of second in command within one month of making the change. Where a new Engagement Lead or second in command has not previously undertaken audits under the Audit Commission Act 1998 or has not previously worked for the audit supplier, the audit supplier is required to provide brief details of the individual's relevant qualifications, skills and experience.

Appendix 3: KPMG Audit Quality Framework

We continually focus on delivering a high quality audit.

This means building robust quality control procedures into the core audit process rather than bolting them on at the end, and embedding the right attitude and approaches into management and staff.

KPMG's Audit Quality Framework consists of seven key drivers combined with the commitment of each individual in KPMG.

The diagram summarises our approach and each level is expanded upon.

At KPMG we consider audit quality is not just about reaching the right opinion, but how we reach that opinion. KPMG views the outcome of a quality audit as the delivery of an appropriate and independent opinion in compliance with the auditing standards. It is about the processes, thought and integrity behind the audit report. This means, above all, being independent, compliant with our legal and professional requirements, and offering insight and impartial advice to you, our client.

KPMG's Audit Quality Framework consists of seven key drivers combined with the commitment of each individual in KPMG. We use our seven drivers of audit quality to articulate what audit quality means to KPMG.

We believe it is important to be transparent about the processes that sit behind a KPMG audit report, so you can have absolute confidence in us and in the quality of our audit.

Tone at the top: We make it clear that audit quality is part of our culture and values and therefore non-negotiable. Tone at the top is the umbrella that covers all the drives of quality through a focused and consistent voice. Philip Johnstone as the Engagement Lead sets the tone on the audit and leads by example with a clearly articulated audit strategy and commits a significant proportion of his time throughout the audit directing and supporting the team.

Association with right clients: We undertake rigorous client and engagement acceptance and continuance procedures which are vital to the ability of KPMG to provide high-quality professional services to our clients.

Clear standards and robust audit tools: We expect our audit professionals to adhere to the clear standards we set and we provide a range of tools to support them in meeting these expectations. The global rollout of KPMG's eAudIT application has significantly enhanced existing audit functionality. eAudIT enables KPMG to deliver a highly

technically enabled audit. All of our staff have a searchable data base, Accounting Research Online, that includes all published accounting standards, the KPMG Audit Manual Guidance as well as other relevant sector specific publications, such as the Audit Commission's *Code of Audit Practice*.



Recruitment, development and assignment of appropriately qualified personnel: One of the key drivers of audit quality is assigning professionals appropriate to the Authority's risks. We take great care to assign the right people to the right clients based on a number of factors including their skill set, capacity and relevant experience.

We have a well developed technical infrastructure across the firm that puts us in a strong position to deal with any emerging issues. This includes:

- A national public sector technical director who has responsibility for co-ordinating our response to emerging accounting issues, influencing accounting bodies (such as CIPFA) as well as acting as a sounding board for our auditors.
- A national technical network of public sector audit professionals is established that meets on a monthly basis and is chaired by our national technical director.
- All of our staff have a searchable data base, Accounting Research Online, that includes all published accounting standards, the KPMG Audit Manual Guidance as well as other relevant sector specific publications, such as the Audit Commission's *Code of Audit Practice*.
- A dedicated Department of Professional Practice comprised of over 100 staff that provide support to our audit teams and deliver our web-based bi-monthly technical training.

We continually focus on delivering a high quality audit.

This means building robust quality control procedures into the core audit process rather than bolting them on at the end, and embedding the right attitude and approaches into management and staff.

Quality must build on the foundations of well trained staff and a robust methodology.

Commitment to technical excellence and quality service delivery:

Our professionals bring you up- the-minute and accurate technical solutions and together with our specialists are capable of solving complex audit issues and delivering valued insights.

Our audit team draws upon specialist resources including Forensic, Corporate Finance, Transaction Services, Advisory, Taxation, Actuarial and IT. We promote technical excellence and quality service delivery through training and accreditation, developing business understanding and sector knowledge, investment in technical support, development of specialist networks and effective consultation processes.

Performance of effective and efficient audits: We understand that how an audit is conducted is as important as the final result. Our drivers of audit quality maximise the performance of the engagement team during the conduct of every audit. We expect our people to demonstrate certain key behaviors in the performance of effective and efficient audits. The key behaviors that our auditors apply throughout the audit process to deliver effective and efficient audits are outlined below:

- timely Engagement Lead and manager involvement;
- critical assessment of audit evidence;
- exercise of professional judgment and professional scepticism;
- ongoing mentoring and on the job coaching, supervision and review;
- appropriately supported and documented conclusions;
- if relevant, appropriate involvement of the Engagement Quality Control reviewer (EQC review);
- clear reporting of significant findings;
- insightful, open and honest two-way communication with those charged with governance; and
- client confidentiality, information security and data privacy.

Commitment to continuous improvement: We employ a broad range of mechanisms to monitor our performance, respond to feedback and understand our opportunities for improvement.

Our quality review results

We are able to evidence the quality of our audits through the results of National Audit Office and Audit Commission reviews. The results of the Audit Commission's annual quality review process is made publicly available each year (http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/audit-regime/Pages/qualityreviewprocess_copy.aspx). The latest report dated October 2012 showed that we performed highly against all the Commission's criteria.



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