

Audit plan

London Borough of Lewisham

Audit 2011/12



Contents

Introduction.....	3
Accounting statements and Whole of Government Accounts.....	4
Value for money.....	12
Key milestones and deadlines	13
The audit team	14
Independence and quality	15
Fees	16
Appendix 1 – Independence and objectivity.....	19
Appendix 2 – Basis for fee.....	21
Appendix 3 – Glossary.....	22

Introduction

This plan sets out the work for the 2011/12 audit. The plan is based on the Audit Commission's risk-based approach to audit planning.

Responsibilities

The Audit Commission's Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and of Audited Bodies sets out the respective responsibilities of the auditor and the audited body. The Audit Commission has issued a copy of the Statement to you.

The Statement summarises where the different responsibilities of auditors and of the audited body begin and end and I undertake my audit work to meet these responsibilities.

I comply with the statutory requirements governing my audit work, in particular:

- the Audit Commission Act 1998; and
- the Code of Audit Practice for local government bodies.

My audit does not relieve management or the Audit Panel, as those charged with governance, of their responsibilities.

Accounting statements and Whole of Government Accounts

I will carry out the audit of the accounting statements in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) issued by the Auditing Practices Board (APB). I am required to issue an audit report giving my opinion on whether the accounts give a true and fair view.

Materiality

I will apply the concept of materiality in planning and performing my audit, in evaluating the effect of any identified misstatements, and in forming my opinion.

Identifying audit risks

I need to understand the Authority to identify any risk of material misstatement (whether due to fraud or error) in the accounting statements. I do this by:

- identifying the business risks facing the Authority, including assessing your own risk management arrangements;
- considering the financial performance of the Authority;
- assessing internal control, including reviewing the control environment, the IT control environment and internal audit; and
- assessing the risk of material misstatement arising from the activities and controls within the Authority's information systems.

Identification of significant risks

I have considered the additional risks that are relevant to the audit of the accounting statements and have set these out below.

Table 1: Significant risks

Risk	Audit response
Heritage assets The 2011/12 IFRS Code adopts the requirements of FRS 30 Heritage Assets for the first time. These are assets held by the council with the intention of preserving them for future generations because of their cultural, environmental or historical associations. Typical examples in local government include memorials, mayoral regalia and paintings. The standard requires that where information on cost or value is available, heritage assets must be reported on the Council's balance sheet and accounted for in accordance with the Code and its disclosure requirements. There is a risk that due to the difficulty in identifying and valuing heritage assets, this change in accounting policy may not be implemented correctly.	I will carry out procedures to ensure correct accounting of Heritage assets. Specifically, I will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Assess whether the Council has put in place adequate arrangements to identify all potential heritage assets and has applied appropriate judgements with regard to their classification, valuation and disclosure.■ test the disclosures in the financial statements;
Valuation of property, plant and equipment (PPE) The Council is required to value PPE at fair value (with some exceptions). There is a risk that the valuation reported in the financial statements will be materially misstated due to the fact that the valuation is an estimate. As such, the figures are inherently subjective and the monetary values presented can mean that even relatively modest changes in the assumptions and variables informing the valuation can have a material impact on the financial statements.	I will carry out procedures to ensure correct accounting of the revaluation of PPE assets. Specifically, I will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ review Management's controls when using an expert (valuer) to carry out the valuations;■ undertake audit procedures for reliance on the work of the valuer;■ review reconciliations between the asset register and valuation reports;■ test valuations calculations and associated depreciation calculations.

Risk	Audit response
<p>Closure and transfer of Libraries</p> <p>In May 2011 the Council ceased to operate the libraries at Blackheath, Sydenham, Crofton Park, Grove Park and New Cross libraries.</p> <p>There may be a risk that the Council has incorrectly accounted or disclosed these libraries within the financial statements because the former council libraries are now being operated by third parties. Hence the Council needs to establish if the rights and obligations have transferred to the third party requiring the Council to derecognise the assets from the balance sheet.</p>	<p>I will carry out year end substantive procedures to ensure that the correct accounting of the former libraries has occurred and review Management's controls.</p>
<p>Housing Revenue Account – Revaluation of HRA Dwellings</p> <p>The value of the housing stock is one of the most significant balances on the Balance Sheet. The Housing Revenue Account (Accounting Practices) Direction 2011 requires authorities to use the specific bases and methods of valuation set out in the <u>Stock Valuation for Resource Accounting – Guidance for Valuers</u> issued by CLG.</p> <p>The value of the authority's housing stock may be materially misstated as a consequence of the Council failing to comply with the guidance when preparing HRA asset valuations. This is particularly relevant to the Council as there are a number of Housing and regeneration schemes where properties within estates are being decanted and redeveloped which impacts on the valuation of properties on estates such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Kender estate ■ Heathside and Lethbridge estates ■ Catford town centre (Milford towers estate) 	<p>I will carry out procedures to ensure correct accounting of the revaluation of HRA Dwellings. Specifically, I will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ review Management's controls when using the Borough Valuer to carry out the valuations. ■ undertake audit procedures for reliance on the work of the Borough Valuer. ■ review Council reconciliations between the asset register and valuation reports. ■ test valuations calculations and associated depreciation calculations ■ review the valuation methodology used by the Borough Valuer regarding the Kender, Heathside, Lethbridge and Milford towers estates.

Risk	Audit response
<p>Academy Schools</p> <p>In most local authorities schools are managed through a variety of governance arrangements. The difference is those arrangements have implications for the accounting treatment. During the year the Council has had schools transferring to Academy status and require derecognising from the Council's balance sheet. There may be risk that the Council has incorrectly accounted for or wrongly disclosed new academy schools within the financial statements.</p>	<p>I will carry out procedures to ensure correct accounting of Academy schools. Specifically, I will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ evaluate management controls; ■ test the disclosures in the financial statements; ■ test the value of assets and liabilities derecognised to the underlying records;
<p>Building schools for the future (PFI)</p> <p>The Council continues with the BSF programme and during the year schemes were approved or expenditure continued on the following schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Deptford Green ■ Addey and Stanhope ■ Prendergast Vale College ■ Bonus Pastor ■ a new ASD school ■ Prendergast Hillyfields <p>There is a risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a consequence of the Council failing to account for transactions relating to these schemes.</p>	<p>I will carry out procedures to ensure correct accounting of the BSF scheme. Specifically, I will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ evaluate management controls ■ test the disclosures in the financial statements to ensure that they are consistent with the financial model; ■ test the value of assets and liabilities recognised to the underlying records;
<p>Street Lighting (New PFI scheme)</p> <p>The Council has a joint PFI scheme with the London Borough of Croydon for the provision of street lighting for the two boroughs. The contract</p>	<p>I will carry out procedures to ensure correct accounting of the street lighting scheme. Specifically, I will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ review any external financial advice on the PFI scheme;

Risk	Audit response
<p>covers the replacement of existing street lights and the future maintenance . This could lead to material errors in the financial statements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ evaluate management controls. ■ test the disclosures in the financial statements to ensure that they are consistent with the financial model; ■ test the value of assets and liabilities recognised to the underlying records;
<p>Implementation of new financial systems (Asset register and Payroll system)</p> <p>There is a risk that Financial information is not migrated completely or accurately from the old ledger to the new systems and that the new systems are not operating effectively. This could lead to material errors in the financial statements.</p>	<p>I will carry out procedures to ensure the system has migrated completely and is operating effectively. Specifically, I will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ review management oversight of checking of opening balances in the new system agree to closing balances in old system ■ review management oversight of checking the operational effectiveness of the new systems ■ test the operational effectiveness of new ledger and the migration of financial information from the old to the new systems.
<p>Housing Revenue Account (HRA) reform</p> <p>The government has reformed local authority housing finance by adopting a self-financing model from 1 April 2012. This was through a one-off settlement payment of £136m from central government in March 2012. This will change the HRA debt of the Authority. Payment from the government has been used to redeem an equal percentage of PWLB debt held by the Authority. Due to the complexity, magnitude and timing of the HRA reform there is risk that the financial statements will be materially misstated.</p>	<p>I will carry out procedures to ensure correct accounting of the HRA reform. Specifically, I will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ review of management oversight of transactions required by the Council; ■ agree settlement payment or receipt to the amount specified in the Settlement Payments Determination 2012; ■ check that the settlement transaction has been accounted for in line with the requirements of CIPFA guidance; ■ agree details of loan redemptions to supporting documentation ■ Re-perform calculations supporting item 8 debit and item 8 credit to the HRA.

Risk	Audit response
<p>Preparation of financial statements and working papers</p> <p>In 2010/11 the audit opinion was delayed due to the volume of errors arising as a result of poor preparation of the financial statements and working papers. In particular.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Our review of the financial statements highlighted significant numbers of arithmetic, consistency and referencing errors. Amendments were made to the most significant items. ■ There were instances where the Council did not provide detailed working papers until the later stages of the financial audit. Examples of these were Non Current assets, Investments, PFI. ■ The Council has had serious problems in previous years producing an accurate, timely Cash flow statement, supported by working papers. ■ In previous years the Council has not been able to produce timely and accurate Whole of Government Accounts in order to achieve the deadline. <p>There is a risk to the opinion that the accounts will not be prepared to a good standard with comprehensive working papers for each area.</p>	<p>I will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ continue to liaise with officers regarding the Council's closedown arrangements. ■ test the financial statements to the underlying records.

Group accounts

I am responsible for the direction, supervision and performance of the group audit. I may contact the auditors of the following components as part of my audit procedures.

- Catford Regeneration Partnership
- Lewisham Homes

Please discuss with me any concerns about me contacting component auditors.

Testing strategy

My audit involves:

- review and re-performance of work of your internal auditors;
- testing of the operation of controls;
- reliance on the work of other auditors;
- reliance on the work of experts; and
- substantive tests of detail of transactions and amounts.

I have sought to:

- maximise reliance, subject to review and re-performance, on the work of your internal auditors; and
- maximise the work that can be undertaken before you prepare your accounting statements.

As in prior periods I will provide officers with a schedule of working papers required to support the entries in the accounting statements.

Whole of Government Accounts

Alongside my work on the accounting statements, I will also review and report to the National Audit Office on your Whole of Government Accounts return. The extent of my review and the nature of my report are specified by the National Audit Office.

Value for money

I am required to reach a conclusion on the Authority's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

My conclusion on the Authority's arrangements is based on two criteria, specified by the Commission. These relate to the Authority's arrangements for:

- securing financial resilience – focusing on whether the Authority is managing its financial risks to secure a stable financial position for the foreseeable future; and
- challenging how the Council secures economy, efficiency and effectiveness – focusing on whether the Authority is prioritising its resources within tighter budgets and improving productivity and efficiency.

Identification of significant risks

I have considered the risks that are relevant to my value for money conclusion. I have identified the following significant risks that I will address through my work.

Table 2: Significant risks

Risk	Audit response
The Local Government Finance Settlement reduced Central Government funding available to the Authority. In 2011/12 the Authority is targeting savings and the projected level of savings required will increase in future years.	I will carry out the following tasks. <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Monitor progress on identified savings in 2011/12.■ Review arrangements for challenging the value for money of services and progress in identifying savings for 2012/13.■ Review the latest medium term financial plan.

[

Key milestones and deadlines

The Authority is required to prepare the accounting statements by 30 June 2012. I aim to complete my work and issue my opinion and value for money conclusion by 30 September 2012.

Table 3: Proposed timetable and planned outputs

Activity	Date	Output
Interim financial statements audit visit	January – June 2012	Audit Plan
Final financial statements audit visit	July – September 2012	Annual governance report
Value for money conclusion: review of arrangements	January – September 2012	Annual governance report
Issue opinion and value for money conclusion	By 30 September 2012	Auditor's report
Summarise overall messages from the audit	BY 31 October 2012	Annual Audit Letter

The audit team

The key members of the audit team for the 2011/12 audit are as follows.

Table 4: Audit team

Name	Contact details	Responsibilities
Sue Exton	s-exton@auditcommission.gov.uk	Responsible for the overall delivery of the audit including quality of reports, signing the auditor's report and liaison with the Chief Executive.
District Auditor	0844 798 2307	
Geoffrey Banister	g-banister@auditcommission.gov.uk	Manages and coordinates the different elements of the audit work. Key point of contact for the Director of Finance.
Audit Manager	0844 798 2434 0781 587 8145	

Independence and quality

Independence

I comply with the ethical standards issued by the APB and with the Commission's additional requirements for independence and objectivity as summarised in appendix 1.

I am not aware of any relationships that may affect the independence and objectivity of the Audit Commission, the audit team or me, that I am required by auditing and ethical standards to report to you.

Quality of service

I aim to provide you with a fully satisfactory audit service. If, however, you are unable to deal with any difficulty through me and my team please contact Chris Westwood, Director – Standards & Technical, Audit Practice, Audit Commission, 1st Floor, Millbank Tower, Millbank, London SW1P 4HQ (c-westwood@audit-commission.gov.uk) who will look into any complaint promptly and to do what he can to resolve the position.

If you are still not satisfied you may of course take up the matter with the Audit Commission's Complaints Investigation Officer (The Audit Commission, Westward House, Lime Kiln Close, Stoke Gifford, Bristol BS34 8SR).

Fees

The fee for the audit is £425,074, as set out in my letter dated April 2011.

The audit fee

The Audit Commission has set a scale audit fee of £425,074 which represents a 10 per cent reduction on the 2010/11 audit fee communicated to you in April 2010.

The scale fee covers:

- my audit of your accounting statements and reporting on the Whole of Government Accounts return; and
- my work on reviewing your arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in your use of resources.

The scale fee reflects:

- the Audit Commission's decision not to increase fees in line with inflation;
- a reduction resulting from the new approach to local VFM audit work; and
- a reduction following the one-off work associated with the first-time adoption of International Financing Reporting Standards (IFRS).

Variations from the scale fee only occur where my assessments of audit risk and complexity are significantly different from those reflected in the 2010/11 fee. I have not identified significant differences and have therefore set the fee equal to the scale fee.

Assumptions

In setting the fee, I have made the assumptions set out in appendix 2. Where these assumptions are not met, I may be required to undertake more work and therefore increase the audit fee. Where this is the case, I will discuss this first with the Director of Resources and Regeneration and I will issue a supplement to the plan to record any revisions to the risk and the impact on the fee.

Specific actions you could take to reduce your audit fee

The Audit Commission requires me to inform you of specific actions you could take to reduce your audit fee. I have identified the following actions that you could take.

- improve the quality of the draft financial statements; and
- improve the quality of working papers.

Total fees payable

In addition to the fee for the audit, the Audit Commission will charge fees for:

- certification of claims and returns; and
- the agreed provision of non-audit services under the Audit Commission's advice and assistance powers.

Based on current plans the fees payable are as follows.

Table 5: Fees

	2011/12 proposed (£)	2010/11 actual (£)	Variance (£)
Audit	425,074	502,360	(77,286)
Certification of claims and returns	105,000	159,448	(54,448)
Total	530,074	661,808	131,734

2011/12 fee: The Audit Commission has issued a rebate on the 2011/12 fee of £34,000 reducing the amount payable to £391,074.

Appendix 1 – Independence and objectivity

Auditors appointed by the Audit Commission must comply with the Commission's Code of Audit Practice and Standing Guidance for Auditors. When auditing the accounting statements, auditors must also comply with professional standards issued by the Auditing Practices Board (APB). These impose stringent rules to ensure the independence and objectivity of auditors. The Audit Practice puts in place robust arrangements to ensure compliance with these requirements, overseen by the Audit Practice's Director – Standards and Technical, who serves as the Audit Practice's Ethics Partner.

Table 6: Independence and objectivity

Area	Requirement	How we comply
Business, employment and personal relationships	<p>Appointed auditors and their staff should avoid any official, professional or personal relationships which may, or could reasonably be perceived to, cause them inappropriately or unjustifiably to limit the scope, extent or rigour of their work or impair the objectivity of their judgement.</p> <p>The appointed auditor and senior members of the audit team must not take part in political activity for a political party, or special interest group, whose activities relate directly to the functions of local government or NHS bodies in general, or to a particular local government or NHS body.</p>	All audit staff are required to declare all potential threats to independence. Details of declarations are made available to appointed auditors. Where appropriate, staff are excluded from engagements or safeguards put in place to reduce the threat to independence to an acceptably low level.

Area	Requirement	How we comply
Long association with audit clients	<p>The appointed auditor responsible for the audit should, in all but the most exceptional circumstances, be changed at least once every seven years, with additional consideration of threats to independence after five years.</p>	<p>The Audit Practice maintains and monitors a central database of assignment of auditors and senior audit staff to ensure this requirement is met.</p>
Gifts and hospitality	<p>The appointed auditor and members of the audit team must abide by the Commission's policy on gifts, hospitality and entertainment.</p>	<p>All audit staff are required to declare any gifts or hospitality irrespective of whether or not they are accepted. Gifts and Hospitality may only be accepted with line manager approval.</p>
Non-audit work	<p>Appointed auditors should not perform additional work for an audited body (that is work above the minimum required to meet their statutory responsibilities) if it would compromise their independence or might result in a reasonable perception that their independence could be compromised.</p> <p>Auditors should not accept engagements that involve commenting on the performance of other auditors appointed by the Commission on Commission work without first consulting the Commission.</p> <p>Work over a specified value must only be undertaken with the prior approval of the Audit Commission's Director of Audit Policy and Regulation.</p>	<p>All proposed additional work is subject to review and approval by the appointed auditor and the Director – Standards and Technical, to ensure that independence is not compromised.</p>

Code of Audit Practice, Audit Commission Standing Guidance and APB Ethical Standards

Appendix 2 – Basis for fee

In setting the fee, I have assumed the following.

- The risk in relation to the audit of the accounting statements is not significantly different to that identified for 2010/11. For example:
 - internal controls are operating effectively;
 - I secure the co-operation of other auditors;
- The risk in relation to my value for money responsibilities is not significantly different to that identified for 2010/11.
- Internal Audit meets professional standards.
- Internal Audit undertakes sufficient appropriate work on all systems that provide material figures in the accounting on which I can rely.
- The Authority provides:
 - good quality working papers and records to support the accounting statements and the text of the other information to be published with the statements by 30 June 2012;
 - other information requested within agreed timescales; and
 - prompt responses to draft reports.
- There are no questions asked or objections made by local government electors.

Where these assumptions are not met, I will have to undertake more work which is likely to result in an increased audit fee.

Appendix 3 – Glossary

Accounting statements

The annual statement of accounts that the Authority is required to prepare, which report the financial performance and financial position of the Authority in accordance with the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 and the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom.

Annual Audit Letter

Report issued by the auditor to the Authority after the completion of the audit that summarises the audit work carried out in the period and significant issues arising from auditors' work.

Annual Governance Report

The auditor's report on matters arising from the audit of the accounting statements presented to those charged with governance before the auditor issues their opinion [and conclusion].

Annual Governance Statement

The annual report on the Authority's systems of internal control that supports the achievement of the Authority's policies aims and objectives.

Audit of the accounts

The audit of the accounts of an audited body comprises all work carried out by an auditor under the Code to meet their statutory responsibilities under the Audit Commission Act 1998.

Audited body

A body to which the Audit Commission is responsible for appointing the external auditor.

Auditing Practices Board (APB)

The body responsible in the UK for issuing auditing standards, ethical standards and associated guidance to auditors. Its objectives are to establish high standards of auditing that meet the developing needs of users of financial information and to ensure public confidence in the auditing process.

Auditing standards

Pronouncements of the APB that contain basic principles and essential procedures with which auditors must comply, except where otherwise stated in the auditing standard concerned.

Auditor(s)

Auditors appointed by the Audit Commission.

Code (the)

The Code of Audit Practice for local government bodies issued by the Audit Commission and approved by Parliament.

Commission (the)

The Audit Commission for Local Authorities and the National Health Service in England.

Ethical Standards

Pronouncements of the APB that contain basic principles relating to independence, integrity and objectivity that apply to the conduct of audits and with which auditors must comply, except where otherwise stated in the standard concerned.

Group accounts

Consolidated accounting statements of an Authority and its subsidiaries, associates and jointly controlled entities.

Internal control

The whole system of controls, financial and otherwise, that the Authority establishes to provide reasonable assurance of effective and efficient operations, internal financial control and compliance with laws and regulations.

Materiality

The APB defines this concept as 'an expression of the relative significance or importance of a particular matter in the context of the accounting statements as a whole. A matter is material if its omission would reasonably influence the decisions of an addressee of the auditor's report; likewise a misstatement is material if it would have a similar influence. Materiality may also be considered in the context of any individual primary statement within the accounting statements or of individual items included in them. Materiality is not capable of general mathematical definition, as it has both qualitative and quantitative aspects'.

The term 'materiality' applies only to the accounting statements. Auditors appointed by the Commission have responsibilities and duties under statute, as well as their responsibility to give an opinion on the accounting statements, which do not necessarily affect their opinion on the accounting statements.

Significance

The concept of 'significance' applies to these wider responsibilities and auditors adopt a level of significance that may differ from the materiality level applied to their audit of the accounting statements. Significance has both qualitative and quantitative aspects.

Those charged with governance

Those entrusted with the supervision, control and direction of the Authority. This term includes the members of the Authority and its Audit Panel.

Whole of Government Accounts

A project leading to a set of consolidated accounts for the entire UK public sector on commercial accounting principles. The Authority must submit a consolidation pack to the department for Communities and Local Government which is based on, but separate from, its accounting statements.

If you require a copy of this document in an alternative format or in a language other than English, please call:
0844 798 7070

© Audit Commission 2012.

Design and production by the Audit Commission Publishing Team.

Image copyright © Audit Commission.

The Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies issued by the Audit Commission explains the respective responsibilities of auditors and of the audited body. Reports prepared by appointed auditors are addressed to non-executive directors, members or officers. They are prepared for the sole use of the audited body. Auditors accept no responsibility to:

- any director/member or officer in their individual capacity; or
- any third party.

