



External Audit Plan 2017/18

London Borough of Islington and Islington Pension Fund

January 2018

Financial Statement Audit

There are no significant changes to the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting (“the Code”) in 2017/18, which provides stability. However the deadlines for producing and signing the accounts have advanced (see below). To meet the revised deadlines it is essential that the draft financial statements and all ‘prepared by client’ documentation is available in line with agreed timetables.

Significant risks

Those risks requiring specific audit attention and procedures to address the likelihood of a material financial statement error has been identified as:

- **Valuation of land and buildings (Authority only):** Whilst the Authority operates a cyclical revaluation approach, the Code requires that all land and buildings be held at fair value. We will consider the way in which the Authority ensures that assets not subject to in-year revaluation are not materially misstated;
- **Management override of controls (Authority and Pension Fund):** Our audit methodology incorporates the risk of management override as a default significant risk. In line with our methodology, we carry out appropriate controls testing and substantive procedures, including over journal entries, accounting estimates and significant transactions that are outside the normal course of business, or are otherwise unusual.

Other areas of audit focus

Those risks with less likelihood of giving rise to a material error but which are nevertheless worthy of audit understanding have been identified as:

- **Pension liabilities (Authority only):** The valuation of the Authority’s pension liability, as calculated by the Actuary, is dependent upon both the accuracy and completeness of the data provided and the assumptions adopted. We will review the processes to ensure accuracy of data provided to the Actuary and consider the assumptions used in determining the valuation;
- **Faster Close (Authority and Pension Fund):** The timetable for the production of the financial statements has been advanced with draft accounts having to be prepared by 31 May 2018 (2017: 30 June) and the final accounts signed by 31 July 2018 (2017: 30 September). We will work with the Authority in advance of our audit to understand the steps being taken to meet these deadlines and any impact on our work; and
- **Valuation of unquoted investments (Pension Fund only):** The Pension Fund held £1.25bn of investments at 31 March 2017. £32m of this balance was in unquoted investments which management valued at the year end using unaudited accounts.

Value for Money Audit

Our risk assessment regarding your arrangements to secure value for money have not identified any significant risks.

We have identified financial resilience as an area for audit focus, given the financial pressures the Authority is currently facing.

Other information

Logistics and team

Our team is led by Neil Hewitson, Director, and Paul Cuttle, Senior Manager. Our work will be completed in four phases from October to July and our key deliverables are this Audit Plan, and a Report to Those Charged With Governance.

Fees

Our fee for the 2017/18 audit is £202,830 (£202,830 2016/2017) and £21,000 (£21,000 in 2016/17) for the Pension Fund. This is in line with the scale fees published by PSAA.

Acknowledgement

We thank officers and Members for their continuing help and cooperation throughout our audit.

Content

The contacts at KPMG in connection with this report are:

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Appendices

- 1: Key elements of our financial statements audit approach
- 2: Independence and objectivity requirements
- 3: Quality framework

This report is addressed to The London Borough of Islington (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. PSAA issued a document entitled Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies summarising where the responsibilities of auditors begin and end and what is expected from audited bodies. We draw your attention to this document which is available on PSAA's website (www.psaa.co.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.

We are committed to providing you with a high quality service. If you have any concerns or are dissatisfied with any part of KPMG's work, in the first instance you should contact Neil Hewitson, the engagement lead to the Authority, who will try to resolve your complaint. If you are dissatisfied with your response please contact the national lead partner for all of KPMG's work under our contract with Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited, Andrew Sayers (0207 694 8981, andrew.sayers@kpmg.co.uk). After this, if you are still dissatisfied with how your complaint has been handled you can access PSAA's complaints procedure by emailing generalenquiries@psaa.co.uk, by telephoning 020 7072 7445 or by writing to Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited, 3rd Floor, Local Government House, Smith Square, London, SW1P 3H.

1. Introduction

Background and statutory responsibilities

This plan supplements our 2017/18 audit fee letter 2017/18 dated 30/04/2017, which set out details of our appointment by PSAA.

Our statutory responsibilities and powers are set out in the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the NAO's Code of Audit Practice and the PSAA Statement of Responsibilities.

Our audit has two key objectives, requiring us to audit / review and report on your:

- **Authority and Pension Fund Financial statements:** Providing an opinion on your accounts. We also review the Annual Governance Statement and Narrative Report and report by exception on these; 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 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. Any change to our identified risks will be reporting to the Audit Committee.

Financial statements audit

Our financial statements audit follows a four stage process:

- Financial statements audit planning
- Control evaluation
- Substantive procedures
- Completion

Appendix 1 provides more detail on these stages. This plan concentrates on the Financial Statements Audit Planning stage.

Value for Money

Our Value for Money (VFM) arrangements work follows a five stage process:

- Risk assessment
- Links with other audit work
- Identification of significant VFM risks
- Review work (by ourselves and other bodies)
- Conclude
- Report

Page 10 provides more detail on these stages. This plan concentrates on explaining the VFM approach for 2017/18 and the findings of our VFM risk assessment.

2. Financial statements audit planning: Authority

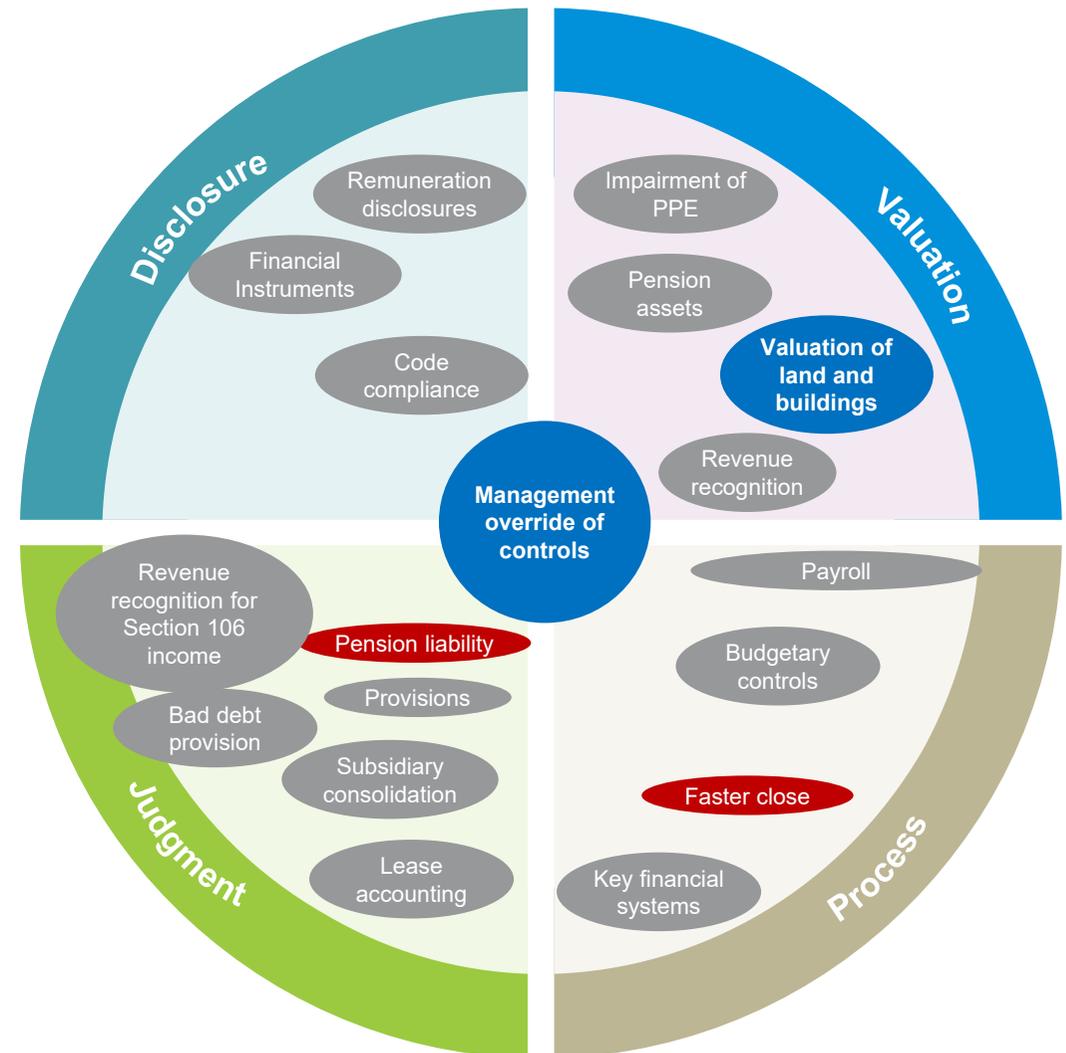
Financial statements audit planning

Our planning work takes place in December 2017 and January 2018 and involves: determining materiality; risk assessment; identification of significant risks; consideration of potential fraud risks; identification of key account balances and related assertions, estimates and disclosures; consideration of Management's use or experts; and issuing this plan to communicate our audit strategy.

Authority risk assessment

Professional standards require us to consider two standard risks. We are not elaborating on these standard risks in this plan but consider them as a matter of course and will include any findings arising from our work in our ISA 260 Report.

- **Management override of controls:** Management is typically in a powerful position to perpetrate fraud owing to its ability to manipulate accounting records and prepare fraudulent financial statements by overriding controls that otherwise appear to be operating effectively. Our audit incorporates the risk of Management override as a default significant risk. In line with our methodology, we carry out appropriate controls testing and substantive procedures, including over journal entries, accounting estimates and significant transactions that are outside the normal course of business, or are otherwise unusual.
- **Fraudulent revenue recognition:** We do not consider this to be a significant risk for the majority of the Authority's income as there are limited incentives and opportunities to manipulate the way income is recognised. We therefore rebut this risk for Council Tax, Business Rates, Housing rents, annual central Government grants and social services income and do not incorporate specific work into our audit plan in these areas over and above our standard fraud procedures.



Key: ● Significant risk ● Other area of audit focus ● Other areas considered

2. Financial statements audit planning: Authority

Authority significant audit risks

Those risks requiring specific audit attention and procedures to address the likelihood of a material financial statement error in relation to the Authority.

Valuation of land and buildings

Risk: In 2016/17 the Council reported Property, Plant and Equipment of with a total value of £3.9bn. Of this balance, £3.5bn relates to Council dwellings and other land and buildings which are valued at fair value. The Council therefore exercises judgement in determining the fair value of the assets held and the methods used to ensure the carrying values recorded each year reflect those fair values. Given the materiality in value and the judgement involved in determining the carrying amounts of assets we consider this to be a significant risk.

The approach the Council uses for valuing assets is:

- Operational property assets are valued by the Council as on the basis of market value for existing use or, if unable to be assessed, they are valued at replacement cost;
- Non-operational property assets are valued by the Council on a market value basis;
- Community and infrastructure assets are recorded at historical cost.

We have determined this to be a significant risk due to the size of the balance, the estimation required to determine the replacement cost, the complexity of measuring replacement cost and the assumptions.

Approach:

- We will review the approach to valuation, the qualifications, reports by the Authority's valuers and judgements made by the Authority' in respect to the value for 2017/18;
- Where valuations are made other than at year end, we will review the Authority's judgement in assessing movements from the valuation date;
- We will review the disclosures made to ensure they are complete as per the valuations on the financial statements for all assets valued;
- Where adjustments are required, we will review them to ensure they have been made in line with the Code;
- We will test a sample of properties to confirm they exist;
- We will review the rights and obligations to confirm the Authority owns the asset; and
- We will use our specialists to review the approach taken, the valuations and the assess the reasonableness of the outcomes.

2. Financial statements audit planning: Authority

Authority other areas of audit focus

Those risks with less likelihood of giving rise to a material error but which are nevertheless worthy of audit understanding.

Pension liabilities

Risk: The net pension liability represents a material element of the Authority's balance sheet. The Authority is an admitted body of London Borough of Islington Pension Fund, which had its last triennial valuation completed as at 31 March 2016. This forms an integral basis of the valuation as at 31 March 2018. Valuation of the Local Government Pension Scheme relies on assumptions, most notably actuarial assumptions, and actuarial methodology which results in the Authority's overall valuation.

There are financial assumptions and demographic assumptions used in the calculation of the Authority's valuation, such as the discount rate, inflation rates, mortality rates etc. Assumptions should reflect the profile of the Authority's employees and should be based on appropriate data. The basis of assumptions is derived on a consistent basis year to year, or updated to reflect any changes. There is a risk that the assumptions and methodology used in the valuation of the Authority's pension obligation are not reasonable. This could have a material impact to net pension liability accounted for in the financial statements.

Approach: We will review controls over information sent directly to the Scheme Actuary. We will consider the process and controls with respect to the assumptions used in the valuation. We will evaluate the competency, objectivity and independence of Mercers. We will review the appropriateness of key assumptions in the valuation, compare them to expected ranges, and consider the need to make use of a KPMG actuary. We will review the methodology applied in the valuation by Mercers. In addition, we will review the overall Actuarial valuation and consider the disclosure implications in the financial statements.

Faster close

Risk: In prior years, the Authority has been required to prepare draft financial statements by 30 June and then final signed accounts by 30 September. For years ending on and after 31 March 2018 revised deadlines apply which require draft accounts by 31 May and final signed accounts by 31 July. These changes represent a significant change to the timetable that the Authority has previously worked to. The time available to produce draft accounts has been reduced by one month and the overall time available for completion of both accounts production and audit is two months shorter than in prior years. To meet the revised deadlines, the Authority may need to make greater use of accounting estimates. In doing so, consideration will need to be given to ensuring that these estimates remain valid at the point of finalising the financial statements. In the event that the above areas are not effectively managed there is a significant risk that the audit will not be completed by the 31 July deadline. There is an increased likelihood that the Audit Certificate (which confirms that all audit work for the year has been completed) may be issued separately at a later date if work is still ongoing in relation to the Authority's Whole of Government Accounts return. This is not seen as a breach of deadlines.

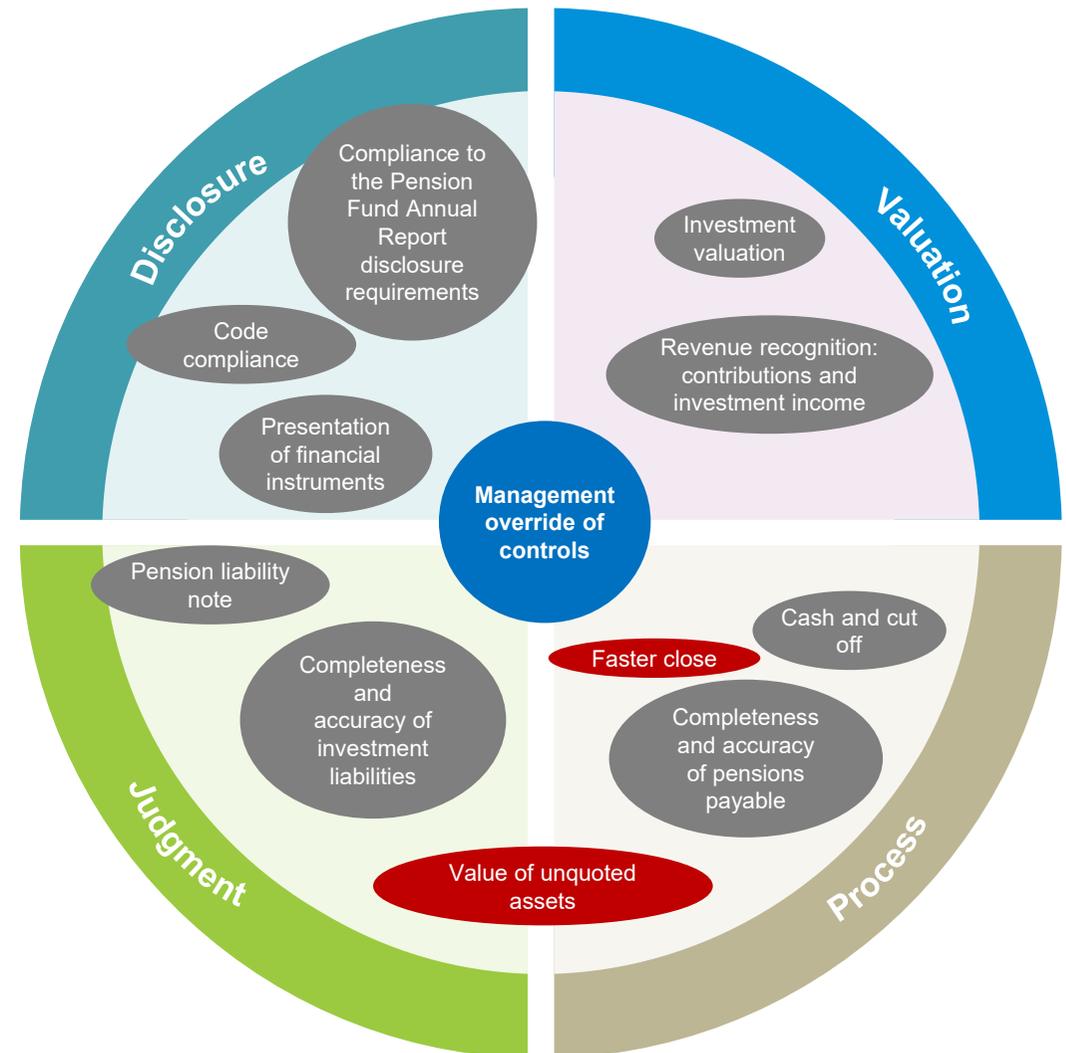
Approach: We will continue to liaise with officers in preparation for our audit to understand the steps the Authority is taking to meet the revised deadlines. We will look to advance audit work into the interim visit to streamline the year end audit work. Where there is greater reliance upon accounting estimates we will consider the assumptions used and challenge the robustness of those estimates.

2. Financial statements audit planning: Pension Fund

Pension Fund risk assessment

Professional standards require us to consider two standard risks. We are not elaborating on these standard risks in this plan but consider them as a matter of course and will include any findings arising from our work in our ISA 260 Report.

- **Management override of controls:** Management is typically in a powerful position to perpetrate fraud owing to its ability to manipulate accounting records and prepare fraudulent financial statements by overriding controls that otherwise appear to be operating effectively. Our audit incorporates the risk of Management override as a default significant risk. In line with our methodology, we carry out appropriate controls testing and substantive procedures, including over journal entries, accounting estimates and significant transactions that are outside the normal course of business, or are otherwise unusual.
- **Fraudulent revenue recognition:** We do not consider this to be a significant risk for local authority Pension Funds as there are limited incentives and opportunities to manipulate the way income is recognised. We therefore rebut this risk and do not incorporate specific work into our audit plan in this area over and above our standard fraud procedures.



Key: ● Significant risk ● Other area of audit focus ● Other areas considered

2. Financial statements audit planning: Pension Fund

Pension Fund other areas of audit focus

Those risks with less likelihood of giving rise to a material error but which are nevertheless worthy of audit understanding.

Valuation of unquoted investments

Risk: £1.25bn of investments at 31 March 2017. £32m of this balance was in unquoted investments which management valued at the year end using unaudited accounts.

Approach: We will obtain confirmations from the Fund managers and Custodians, and reconciliations between the two, as well as reviewing ISAE3402 compliance reports on each Fund Manager. For unquoted investments we will check the basis of the valuations and also to audited accounts as they become available.

Faster close

Risk: In prior years, the Pension Fund has been required to prepare draft financial statements by 30 June and then final signed accounts by 30 September. For years ending on and after 31 March 2018 revised deadlines apply which require draft accounts by 31 May and final signed accounts by 31 July. These changes represent a significant change to the timetable that has previously been worked to. The time available to produce draft accounts has been reduced by one month and the overall time available for completion of both accounts production and audit is two months shorter than in prior years. To meet the revised deadlines greater use of accounting estimates may be required. In doing so, consideration will need to be given to ensuring that these estimates remain valid at the point of finalising the financial statements. In the event that the above areas are not effectively managed there is a significant risk that the audit will not be completed by the 31 July deadline.

Approach: We will continue to liaise with officers in preparation for our audit to understand the steps the Pension Fund is taking to meet the revised deadlines. We will look to advance audit work into the interim visit to streamline the year end audit work. Where there is greater reliance upon accounting estimates we will consider the assumptions used and challenge the robustness of those estimates.

2. Financial statements audit planning

Materiality

We are required to plan our audit to determine with reasonable confidence whether or not the financial statements are free from material misstatement. An omission or misstatement is regarded as material if it would reasonably influence the user of financial statements. This therefore involves an assessment of the qualitative and quantitative nature of omissions and misstatements.

Generally, we would not consider differences in opinion in respect of areas of judgement to represent 'misstatements' unless the application of that judgement results in a financial amount falling outside of a range which we consider to be acceptable.

Materiality has been set to a level within the level of unearmarked Council General Fund reserves; based on the audited financial statements for 2016-17 this is currently limited to £8,676k. We have rounded to £8.6m. This equates to 0.8% of the audited gross expenditure for 2016/17.

For the Pension Fund, materiality for planning purposes has been set at £10m which equates to 1% of net assets. The level of materiality remains unchanged from 2016/17.

Reporting to the Audit Committee

Whilst our audit procedures are designed to identify misstatements which are material to our opinion on the financial statements as a whole, we nevertheless report to the Audit Committee any unadjusted misstatements of lesser amounts to the extent that these are identified by our audit work.

Under ISA 260(UK&I) 'Communication with those charged with governance', we are obliged to report uncorrected omissions or misstatements other than those which are 'clearly trivial' to those charged with governance.

ISA 260 (UK&I) defines 'clearly trivial' as matters that are clearly inconsequential, whether taken individually or in aggregate and whether judged by any quantitative or qualitative criteria.

In the context of the Authority we propose that an individual difference could normally be considered to be clearly trivial if it is less than £0.43m.

In the context of the Pension Fund we propose that an individual difference could normally be considered to be clearly trivial if it is less than £0.5m.

If Management has corrected material misstatements identified during the audit, we will consider whether those corrections should be communicated to Audit Committee to assist it in fulfilling its governance responsibilities.

3. Value for money arrangements work

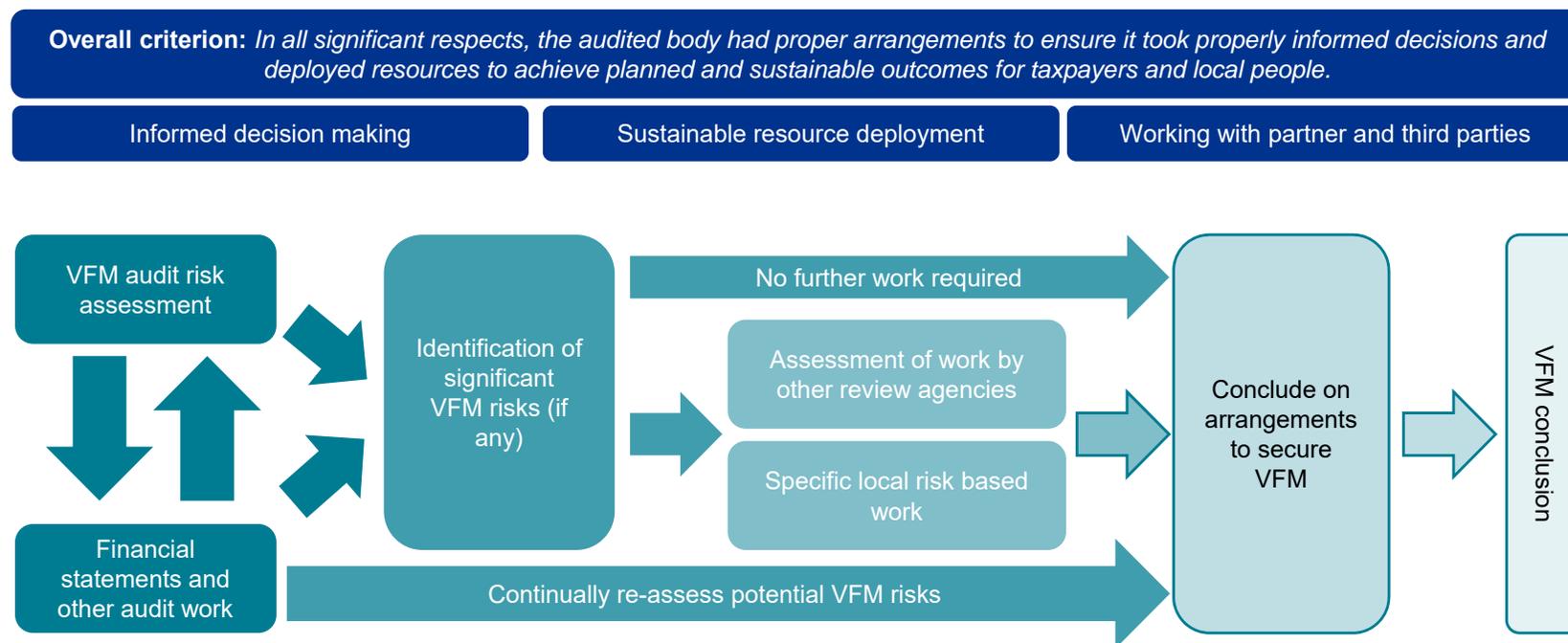
For our value for money conclusion we are required to work to the NAO Code of Audit Practice (issued in 2015 after the enactment of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014).

Our approach to VFM work follows the NAO's new guidance that was first introduced in 2015-16, is risk based and targets audit effort on the areas of greatest audit risk.

We have planned our audit to draw on our past experience of delivering this conclusion and have updated our approach as necessary. We will also consider reports from your regulators and review agencies.

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 requires auditors of local authorities to be satisfied that the organisation "has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its Value for Money". This is supported by the Code of Audit Practice, published by the NAO in April 2015, which requires auditors to "take into account their knowledge of the relevant local sector as a whole, and the audited body specifically, to identify any risks that, in the auditor's judgement, have the potential to cause the auditor to reach an inappropriate conclusion on the audited body's arrangements."

The VFM process is shown in the diagram below:



We have completed our initial VFM risk assessment and have not identified any significant risks for the VFM conclusion. We will keep this under review during our audit and notify Audit Committee of any change.

3. Value for money arrangements work

VFM other areas of focus

Those risks with less likelihood of giving rise to a significant VFM risk but which are nevertheless worthy of audit understanding.

Financial Resilience

Risk: Local Authorities are subject to an increasingly challenged financial regime, with reduced funding from Central Government, whilst having to maintain a statutory and quality level of services to local residents.

At the end of month 8 of the financial year, the Council has a potential general fund gross overspend of £6.2m which would need to be offset by contingency funds unless other actions can be identified.

Approach: We will review overall management arrangements that the Authority has for managing its financial position. This will include the processes to maintain a robust Medium Term Financial Strategy, ongoing monitoring of the annual budget, responsiveness to increasing costs of demand led services and changes in funding allocations the governance arrangements of how the figures are reported through to Executive.

VFM sub-criterion: Sustainable resource deployment

4. Other matters

Whole of government accounts (WGA)

We are required to review your WGA consolidation and undertake the work specified under the approach that is agreed with HM Treasury and the National Audit Office. Deadlines for production of the pack and the specified approach for 2017/18 have not yet been confirmed

Elector challenge

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 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 where we interview an officer and review evidence to form our decision to a more detailed piece where we have to interview a range of officers, review significant amounts of evidence and seek legal representations on the issues raised. Costs incurred responding to questions or objections raised by electors is not part of the fee. This work will be charged in accordance with PSAA's fee scales.

Our audit team

Your audit team has been drawn from our specialist public sector assurance department and is led by two key members of staff:

- **Neil Hewitson:** your Director has overall responsibility for the quality of the KPMG audit work and is the contact point within KPMG for the Audit Committee, the Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources.
- **Paul Cuttle:** your Senior Manager is responsible for delivery of all our audit work. She will manage the completion of the different elements of our work, ensuring that they are coordinated and delivered in an effective manner.

The core audit team will be assisted by other KPMG staff, such as risk, tax, clinical or information specialists as necessary to deliver the plan.

Reporting and communication

Reporting is a key part of the audit process, not only in communicating the audit findings for the year, but in ensuring that the audit team is 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 Audit Committee. Our communication outputs are included in Appendix 1.

Independence and Objectivity

Auditors are required to be independent and objective. Appendix 2 provides more details of our confirmation of independence and objectivity.

4. Other matters

Audit fee

Our Audit Fee Letter 2017/18 presented to you in April 2017 first set out our fees for the 2017/2018 audit. This letter also set out our assumptions. We have not considered it necessary to seek approval for any changes to the agreed fees at this stage.

Should there be a need to charge additional audit fees then this will be agreed with the S151 Officer and PSAA. If such a variation is agreed, we will report that to you in due course.

The planned audit fee for 2017/18 is £202,830 for the Authority (2016/17: £202,830). The planned audit fee for 2017/18 is £21,000 for the Pension Fund (2016/17: £21,000).

Grants and claims work

We undertake other grants and claims work for the Authority that does not fall under the PSAA arrangements:

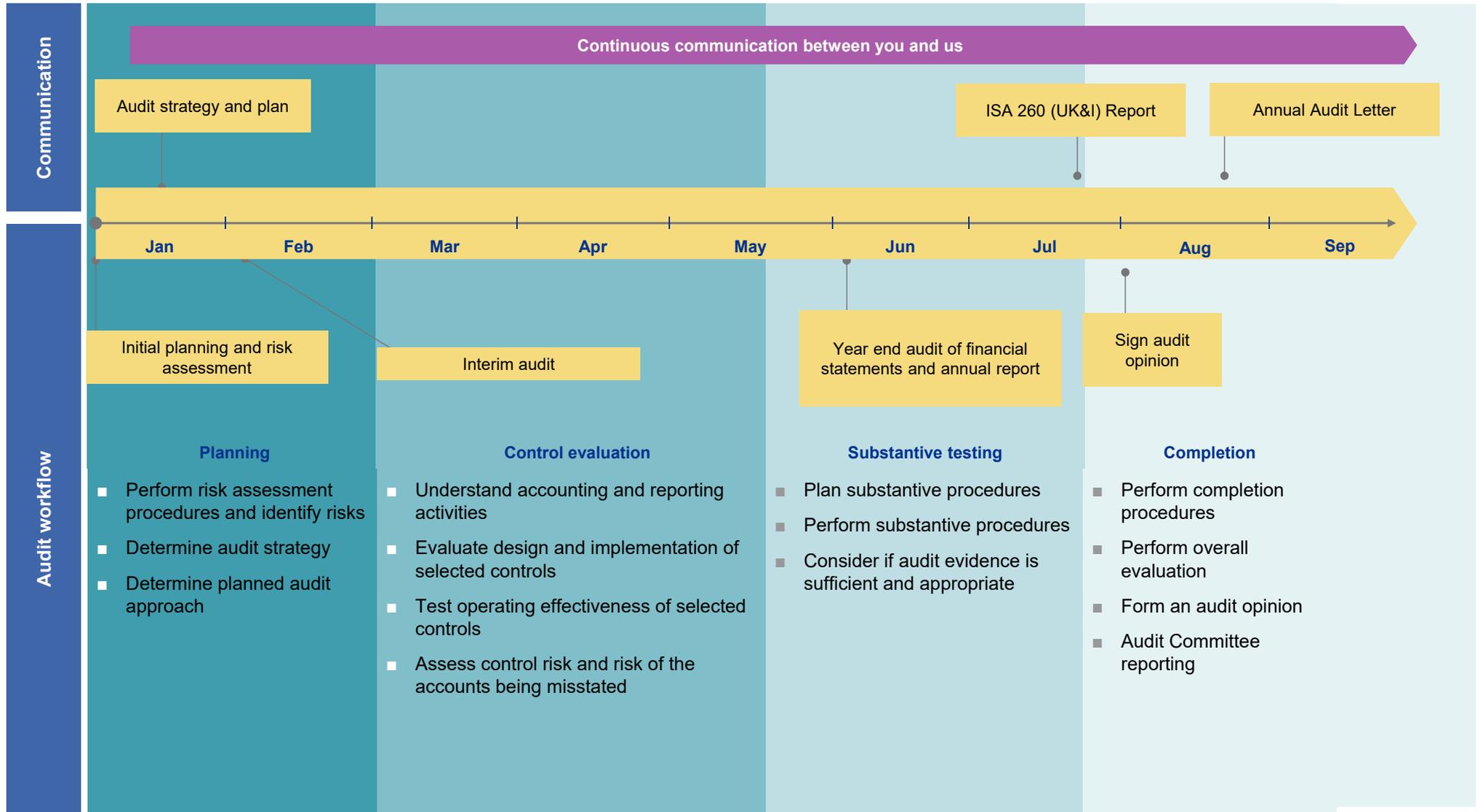
- Housing benefits grant claim: This audit is planned for October. Our fee for this work is £24,975; and
- Pooled housing capital receipts: This audit is planned for October. Our fee for this work is £3,000; and
- Teachers pension contribution return: This audit is planned for October. Our fee for this work is £3,000.

Public interest reporting

In auditing the accounts as your auditor we must consider whether, in the public interest, we should make a report on any matters coming to our notice in the course of our audit, in order for it to be considered by Members or brought to the attention of the public; and whether the public interest requires any such matter to be made the subject of an immediate report rather than at completion of the audit.

At this stage there are no matters that we wish to report.

Appendix 1: Key elements of our financial statements audit approach



Appendix 2: Independence and objectivity requirements

ASSESSMENT OF OUR OBJECTIVITY AND INDEPENDENCE AS AUDITOR OF LONDON BOROUGH OF ISLINGTON

Professional ethical standards require us to provide to you at the planning stage of the audit a written disclosure of relationships (including the provision of non-audit services) that bear on KPMG LLP's objectivity and independence, the threats to KPMG LLP's independence that these create, any safeguards that have been put in place and why they address such threats, together with any other information necessary to enable KPMG LLP's objectivity and independence to be assessed.

In considering issues of independence and objectivity we consider relevant professional, regulatory and legal requirements and guidance, including the provisions of the Code of Audit Practice, the provisions of Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd's ('PSAA's') Terms of Appointment relating to independence and the requirements of the FRC Ethical Standard and General Guidance Supporting Local Audit (Auditor General Guidance 1 – AGN01) issued by the National Audit Office ('NAO').

This Appendix is intended to comply with this requirement and facilitate a subsequent discussion with you on audit independence and addresses: General procedures to safeguard independence and objectivity; Breaches of applicable ethical standards; Independence and objectivity considerations relating to the provision of non-audit services; and Independence and objectivity considerations relating to other matters.

General procedures to safeguard independence and objectivity

KPMG LLP is committed to being and being seen to be independent. As part of our ethics and independence policies, all KPMG LLP partners, Audit Directors and staff annually confirm their compliance with our ethics and independence policies and procedures. Our ethics and independence policies and procedures are fully consistent with the requirements of the FRC Ethical Standard. As a result we have underlying safeguards in place to maintain independence through: Instilling professional values; Communications; Internal accountability; Risk management; and Independent reviews.

We are satisfied that our general procedures support our independence and objectivity.

Independence and objectivity considerations relating to other matters

There are no other matters that, in our professional judgment, bear on our independence which need to be disclosed to the Audit Committee.

Confirmation of audit independence

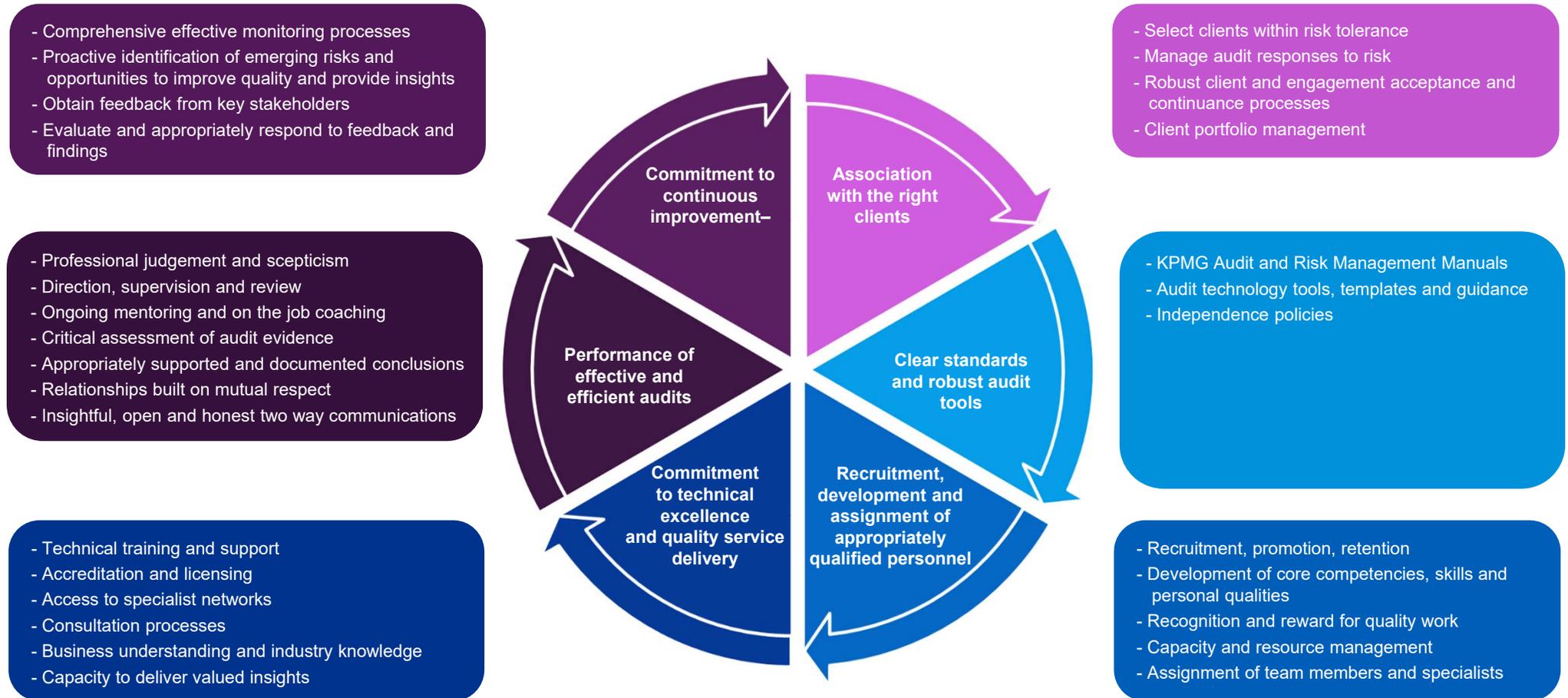
We confirm that as of the date of this report, in our professional judgment, KPMG LLP is independent within the meaning of regulatory and professional requirements and the objectivity of the Audit Director and audit staff is not impaired.

This report is intended solely for the information of the Audit Committee of the authority and should not be used for any other purposes.

We would be very happy to discuss the matters identified above (or any other matters relating to our objectivity and independence) should you wish to do so.

Appendix 3: Quality framework

Audit quality is at the core of everything we do at KPMG and we believe that it is not just about reaching the right opinion, but how we reach that opinion. To ensure that every partner and employee concentrates on the fundamental skills and behaviours required to deliver an appropriate and independent opinion, we have developed our global Audit Quality Framework





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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. We draw your attention to the Statement of Responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies, which is available on Public Sector Audit Appointment’s website (www.psa.co.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.

We are committed to providing you with a high quality service. If you have any concerns or are dissatisfied with any part of KPMG’s work, in the first instance you should contact Neil Hewitson, the engagement lead to the Authority, who will try to resolve your complaint. If you are dissatisfied with your response please contact the national lead partner for all of KPMG’s work under our contract with Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited, Andrew Sayers, by email to Andrew.Sayers@kpmg.co.uk. After this, if you are still dissatisfied with how your complaint has been handled you can access PSAA’s complaints procedure by emailing generalenquiries@psaa.co.uk by telephoning 020 7072 7445 or by writing to Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited, 3rd Floor, Local Government House, Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ.