



LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Telford & Wrekin Council

Financial Statements Audit Plan

March 2010

PUBLIC SECTOR AUDIT

Contents

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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.

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 Michael McDonagh, who is the engagement partner to the Authority, telephone 0121 335 2440, email michael.a.mcdonagh@kpmg.co.uk who will try to resolve your complaint. If you are dissatisfied with your response please contact Trevor Rees on 0161 236 4000, email 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 Investigation Officer, Westward House, Lime Kiln Close, Stoke Gifford, Bristol, BS34 8SR or by e mail to: complaints@audit-commission.gov.uk. Their telephone number is 0844 798 3131, textphone (minicom) 020 7630 0421

Summary

This document describes how we will deliver our financial statements audit work for Telford & Wrekin Council.

We have identified a number of key risks that we will focus on during the audit of the 2009/10 financial statements.

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)*.

The Audit Commission's Code 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 .

This document describes how we will deliver our financial statements audit work for Telford & Wrekin Council (the Authority). It supplements our Audit Fee Letter presented to you in April 2009.

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.

The table below summarises the key risks identified this year for the financial statements audit. The remainder of this document provides further details on these risks as well information on our audit approach, our audit team, our proposed work, timescales and fees for our work on the financial statements audit.

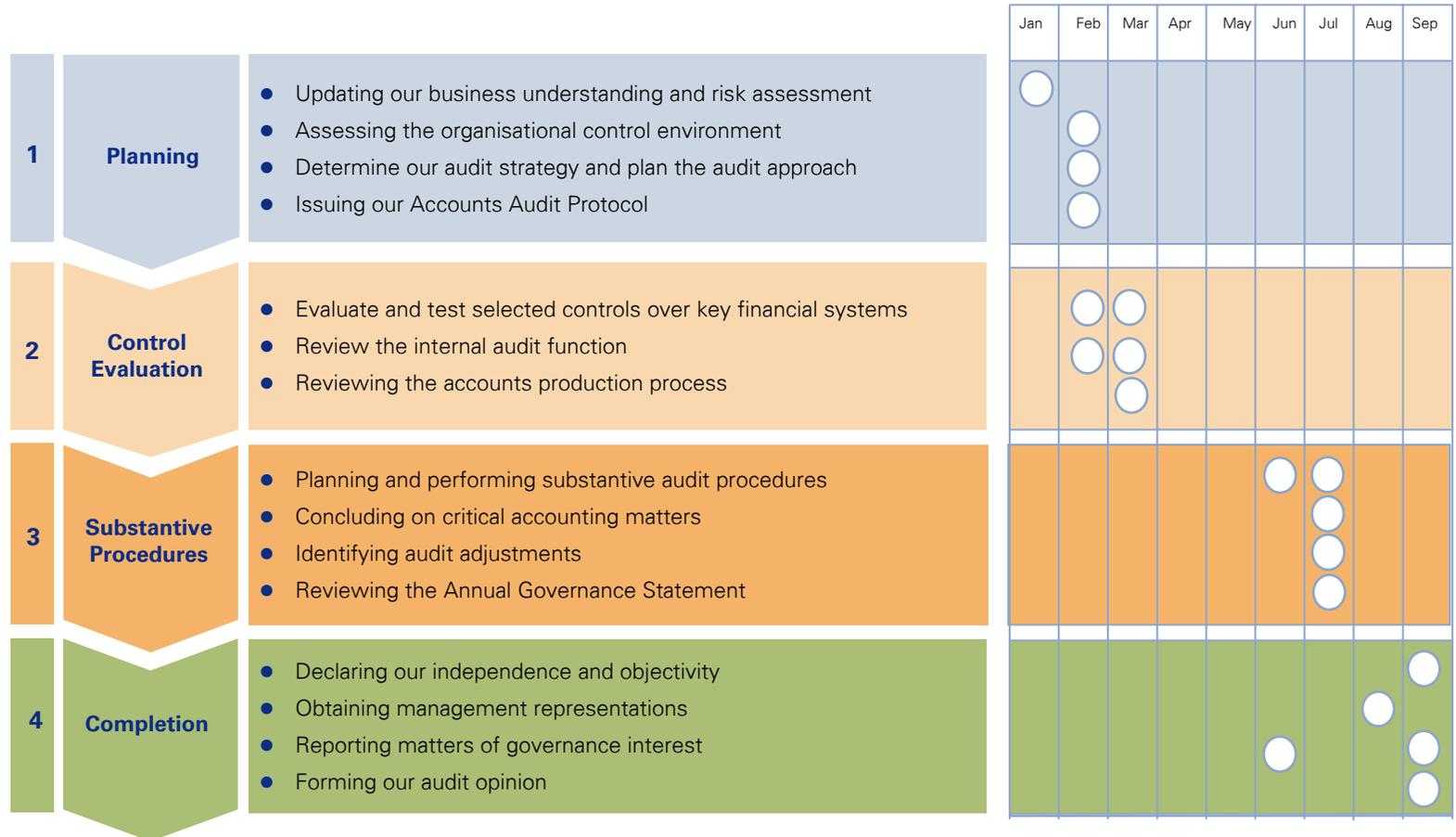
| Risk area | Risk |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Private Finance Initiative | The 2009 Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom: A Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) introduces new accounting requirements for Private Finance Initiative schemes based on International Financial Reporting Standards. The Authority will need to review its existing scheme. |
| Single Status | The Authority has yet to implement Single Status and is currently undertaking pay modelling having completed job evaluation at the end of 2009. Implementation is likely to result in increased recurring pay costs for the Authority. The Authority will also need to make a provision in its 2009/10 accounts for backdated pay. |
| Fixed Asset Valuation | The Authority is required to ensure that the valuation of its asset base is not materially misstated. The Authority will need to review current market values for assets shown in the Balance sheet and have a robust mechanism for assessing the impact of the current economic climate. |
| Accounts production | The 2009/10 accounts are to be prepared by a different member of finance staff from previous years. The Authority will need to ensure that the closedown process is effectively managed and high quality accounts are produced. |
| SORP Changes | The Authority will need to review and appropriately address all changes introduced by the 2009 SORP. These include changes to the accounting treatment for Business Rates and Council Tax and changes to disclosure requirements. |

Our audit approach

We undertake our work on your financial statements in four key stages during 2010:

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

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



Our audit approach – planning

During January and February 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.

We agree a protocol for the accounts audit and specify what evidence we expect from the Authority to support the financial statements.

Our planning work takes place in January and February 2010. This involves the following aspects:

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 on a monthly basis to support them 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 have implications for our audit. Most of the organisational controls we assess are linked to our use of resources work, which also considers the Authority's system of internal control. In particular, the areas risk management, internal control and ethics and conduct also have implications for our financial statements audit.
- 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.

Audit strategy and approach

- The Engagement Partner 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 Partner.

Accounts audit protocol

- At the end of our planning work we will issue our Accounts Audit Protocol. This important document sets out our audit approach and timetable. It also summarises the working papers and other evidence we require the Authority to provide during our interim and final accounts visits.
- We met with the Finance Manager on 18 November 2009 to discuss learning points from the 2008/09 audit and identify areas for development. These will be incorporated into our work plan for 2009/10.

Our audit approach – control evaluation

During February and March we complete our interim work.

Our interim work focuses on testing if controls over key financial systems were effective during 2009/10.

We work with your internal audit team to avoid duplication.

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

We will assess the Authority's progress in addressing the recommendations in our 2008/09 ISA 260 Report.

We will present our Interim Report to the Audit Committee in June.

Our interim visit on site will be completed in two stages during the week commencing 1 February and the two weeks commencing 8 March. During this time we will complete work in the following areas:

Controls over key financial systems

- We update our understanding of the Authority's key financial processes where these are relevant to our final accounts audit. 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.
- We work with the Authority's internal auditors to assess the control framework for key financial systems and seek to rely on any relevant work they have completed to minimise unnecessary duplication of work. Our audit fee is set on the assumption that we can place reliance on their work. We have a joint working protocol and have met with the Head of Internal Audit to discuss the principles and timetables for the managed audit process for 2009/10.

Review of internal audit

- Where we intend to rely on internal audit's work in respect of the Authority's key financial systems, auditing standards require us to review aspects of their work. This includes re-performing a sample of tests completed by internal audit. We will provide detailed feedback to the Audit and Risk Manager at the end of our interim visit. We will also update our assessment of the internal audit function against the CIPFA *Code of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government*.

Accounts production process

- The accounts production process is to project-managed by a different member of staff from previous years. We will meet with the Finance Team on a monthly basis to discuss progress, issues and changes to accounting requirements.

Following our interim visit we will issue our **2009/10 Interim Report** which will set out the findings of our planning and interim work. This will be discussed at the Audit Committee meeting in June 2010.

Our audit approach – substantive procedures

During July 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 agree any audit adjustments required to the financial statements.

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

We will present our ISA 260 Report to the Audit Committee in September.

Our final accounts visit on site is currently scheduled for the period 5 to 30 July 2010. During these four weeks, we will complete the following work:

Substantive audit procedures

- We complete detailed testing on significant balances and disclosures. The extent of our work is determined by the Engagement Partner 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.

Audit adjustments

- During our on-site work we will meet with the Finance team on a weekly basis 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 Audit Committee. 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 annual **2009/10 Report to those Charged with Governance (ISA 260 Report)**.

In addition to auditing 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 on the progress of our audit, 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, Internal Audit and the Audit Committee. Our deliverables are included on page 13.

Key audit risks

For each key audit risk area we have outlined the impact on our audit plan.

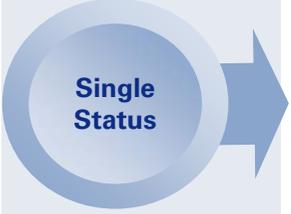
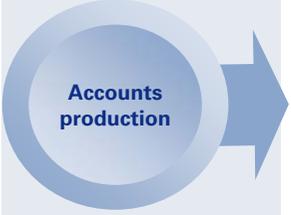
We will provide an update on how the Authority is managing these risks in our Interim Audit Report.

| Key audit risk | Impact on the accounts | Issue | Impact on our audit plan |
|---|--|---|--|
|  <p>Private Finance Initiative</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fixed assets ● Liabilities ● Disclosures | <p>All local authority accounts will be based on International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) from 2010/11. As part of the transition process, the revised accounting requirements for Private Finance Initiative (PFI) schemes are applied early under the 2009 Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom: A Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP), to the 2009/10 financial statements. This is a technically complex change and may result in some assets being accounted for in the Authority's balance sheet that previously were not.</p> <p>The Authority has one operational PFI contract, the Hadley Learning Community and JIGSAW. The Authority will need to re-evaluate this contract under IFRS and potentially model the payments over the life of the contract to calculate assets and liabilities to be accounted for. There are also changes to the disclosure requirements.</p> <p>In addition, there may be other schemes that are similar in nature to PFI schemes and the Authority will need to demonstrate that it has sufficiently considered such schemes.</p> | <p>As part of our interim work we will review the Authority's assessment of its pre-existing and new PFI contracts under IFRS and review the financial modelling and any assumptions used.</p> <p>We will also review how the Authority has satisfied itself that all arrangements have been identified that are similar in nature to PFI schemes and therefore have to be accounted for using the same accounting standards.</p> <p>As part of our final accounts audit we will assess if assets and liabilities have been correctly calculated, accounted for and disclosed in the financial statements.</p> |
|  <p>Fixed Asset Valuation</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Impairments ● Fixed Assets ● Disclosures | <p>The Authority is required to consider if there is a risk that the valuation of its asset base is materially misstated.</p> <p>The Authority conducted an exercise in 2008/09 in response to the economic climate and revalued its assets accordingly. It will need to review these valuations in light of current market conditions.</p> | <p>We will review the Authority's update to its valuation in 2008/09 in light of the risks posed through the current economic climate and property market.</p> |

Key audit risks (continued)

For each key audit risk area we have outlined the impact on our audit plan.

We will provide an update on how the Authority is managing these risks in our Interim Audit Report.

| Key audit risk | Impact on the accounts | Issue | Impact on our audit plan |
|---|--|--|--|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provisions ● Disclosures | <p>The Authority has yet to implement Single Status and has postponed its implementation date. It completed the job evaluation stage of the process towards the end of 2009 and is currently undertaking pay modelling. It hopes to have concluded the process by October 2010.</p> <p>The Authority will need to ensure that any provision in its accounts for back pay costs is made on the basis of the most accurate and up to date information.</p> | <p>We will monitor the progress the Authority is making in respect of the implementation of Single Status, and equal pay back pay in particular.</p> <p>As part of our final accounts work we will review the Authority's provision, including the methodology, assumptions and calculations supporting the provision.</p> |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Income from Council Tax ● Collection Fund assets and liabilities ● Disclosures | <p>In addition to the changes to the accounting for PFI schemes, the 2009 SORP introduces a number of other changes, which take effect in 2009/10, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Changes to the accounting treatment for Business Rates (NNDR) and Council Tax in England; and ● Changes to disclosure requirements. <p>The Authority needs to review and appropriately address these changes in the 2009/10 financial statements.</p> | <p>As part of our interim work we will review the Authority's approach to addressing the SORP changes.</p> <p>As part of our final accounts audit we will review the appropriateness of the accounting entries and disclosures in the accounts.</p> |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Financial statements | <p>The accounts production process is to be project-managed by a different member of staff from previous years, with support from the officer who has undertaken this role in previous years.</p> <p>The Authority has previously produced draft accounts of a good standard. It will need to ensure that this transfer of responsibility does not impact on the quality of the draft accounts.</p> | <p>We will meet with the Finance team on a monthly basis to discuss progress and new accounting requirements.</p> |

Audit team

Our audit team is unchanged from last year. Contact details are shown on the contents page of this report.

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



Mike McDonagh
Partner

“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 Audit Committee and the Chief Executive.”



Andy Cardoza
Senior Manager

“I will direct and help coordinate the audit and will work closely with Michael to ensure we add value.

I will be the main contact for the Chief Financial Officer/s151 and other senior officers.”



Peter Evans
Assistant Manager

“I will be your day to day contact and will work closely with Andy to deliver a coordinated and efficient audit.

I will liaise with Finance and Internal AuditTeams”

Audit fees

The audit fee has not changed from that set out in our Audit Fee Letter.

Our 2009/10 Audit Fee Letter presented to you in June 2009 first set out our fees for the 2009/10 audit. We have not considered it necessary to make any changes to the agreed fees.

Our fee is calculated with reference to a number of factors including your gross expenditure and our assessment of audit risk and control environment.

The main fee for 2009/10 audit of Telford & Wrekin Council is £255,000, which includes our use of resources assessment and audit of the Council's financial statements.

| Element of the audit | 2009/10 |
|---|-----------------|
| Audit of Financial Statements | £161,300 |
| Use of Resources assessment/ VFM Conclusion | £86,800 |
| National Fraud Initiative | £2,700 |
| Whole of Government Accounts | £4,200 |
| TOTAL | £255,000 |

The fee for our grants work will be confirmed through our summary report on the certification of grants and returns which will be issued in February 2010.

To enable you to benchmark our agreed fee we provide below some comparative information. Please note that the nature of the locally determined work changes each year so that direct comparison between years may not be valid.

| Source of fee comparative / benchmark | £ |
|--|----------|
| Audit Commission suggested mid-point fee | £271,000 |
| 2009/10 audit fee | £255,000 |

Audit fees (continued)

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 assumptions

The audit fee is indicative and based on you meeting our expectations. 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 2008/09;
- you will inform us of any significant developments impacting on our audit;
- you will appropriately address the risk areas identified in this document and implement any changes required under the 2009 SORP within your 2009/10 financial statements;
- you will comply with the expectations set out in our Accounts Audit Protocol, 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;
- internal audit meets appropriate professional standards;
- internal audit adheres to our joint working protocol and completes appropriate work on all systems that provide material figures for the financial statements and we can place reliance on them for our audit; 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 reduce the audit fee. Future audit fees can be decreased 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 Chief Financial Officer/s151 or his representative.

Audit deliverables

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 | Timing |
|---|--|-----------------------|
| Planning | | |
| Financial statements audit plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline audit approach Identify areas of audit focus and planned procedures Confirm plan with Audit Committee | February 2010 |
| | | March 2010 |
| Control Evaluation | | |
| Interim report | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Details and resolution of control and process issues | June 2010 |
| Substantive Procedures | | |
| Report to those charged with governance (ISA 260) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detail the resolution of key audit issues Communication of adjusted and unadjusted audit differences Performance improvement recommendations identified during our audit Summarise our assessment of the Authority's arrangements to secure value for money in its use of resources | September 2010 |
| Completion | | |
| Opinion on the financial statements and value for money conclusion | <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 value for money conclusion) | September 2010 |
| Annual audit letter | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summarise the key issues arising from our 2009/10 audit at Telford & Wrekin Council. | December 2010 |

Audit timeline

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

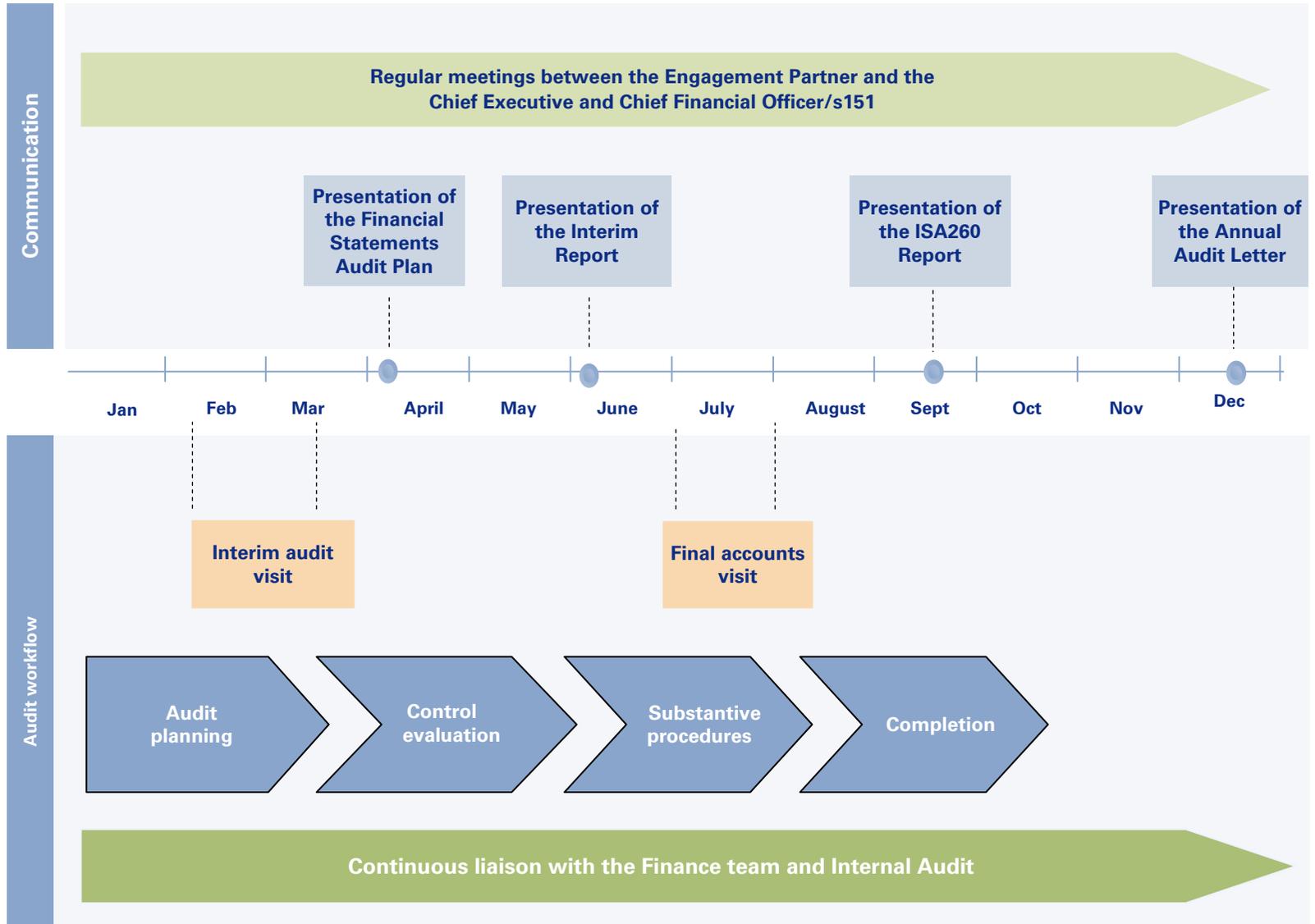
Key formal interactions with the Audit Committee are:

- March – Financial Statements Audit Plan
- June – Interim Report
- September – ISA 260 Report
- December – Annual Audit Letter

We work with the Finance and Systems team and Internal Audit throughout the year.

Our main work on site will be our:

- Interim audit visits during February and March
- Final accounts audit during July



● = Audit Committee meetings

Appendix 1: Independence and objectivity requirements

This appendix summarises our responsibilities regarding 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 2: Sustainability

This appendix summarises our commitment to sustainability.

We are taking steps to improve our environmental performance. Achievements to date include:

- All our offices are ISO14001 certified, the leading international standard for environmental management systems.
- Our Responsible Consumption programme enables our people to actively contribute to the firm being environmentally responsible.
- More than 40 percent of paper purchased is recycled paper.
- Over 90 percent of the electricity used in buildings is now from renewable sources.
- Some 1.8 million travel miles have been saved through car sharing schemes and 1.5 million miles have been saved through audio and video conferencing.