

St Edmundsbury Borough Council Year ending 31 March 2013

Audit Plan

January 2013

UERNST&YOUNG

The Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee St Edmundsbury Borough Council West Suffolk House Western Way Bury St Edmunds Suffolk IP33 3YU

January 2013

Dear Members

Audit Plan

We are pleased to attach our Audit Plan which sets out how we intend to carry out our responsibilities as auditor. The purpose of this report is to provide the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee with a basis to review our proposed audit approach and scope for the 2012/13 audit. We will undertake our audit in accordance with the requirements of the Audit Commission Act 1998, the Code of Audit Practice, the Standing Guidance, auditing standards and other professional requirements. We will also ensure that our audit is aligned with the Committee's service expectations.

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

We welcome the opportunity to discuss this report with you on 29 April 2013 as well as understand whether there are other matters which you consider may influence our audit.

Yours faithfully

Neil Harris, Director For and behalf of Ernst & Young LLP

Contents

1.	Overview	/	2
2.	Financial	Statement Risks	6
3.	Economy	v, Efficiency & Effectiveness	8
4.	Our audi	process and strategy	9
5.	Independ	lence	13
Арр	oendix A	Fees	16
Арр	endix B	UK required communications with those charged with governance.	17

1. Overview

Context for the audit

This audit plan covers the work that we plan to perform in order to provide you with:

- Our audit opinion on whether the financial statements of St Edmundsbury Borough Council give a true and fair view of the financial position as at 31 March 2013 and of the income and expenditure for the year then ended; and
- ► A statutory conclusion on the Council's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

We will also review and report to the National Audit Office ('NAO'), to the extent and in the form required by them, on your Whole of Government Accounts return.

When planning the audit we take into account several key inputs:

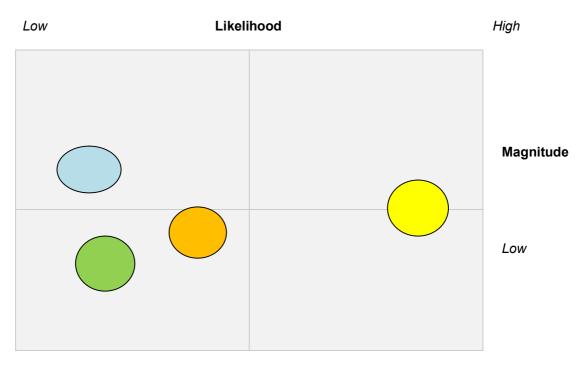
- ► Strategic, operational and financial risks relevant to the financial statements.
- ► Developments in financial reporting and auditing standards.
- ► The quality of systems and processes.
- ► Changes in the business and regulatory environment.
- ► Management's views on all of the above.

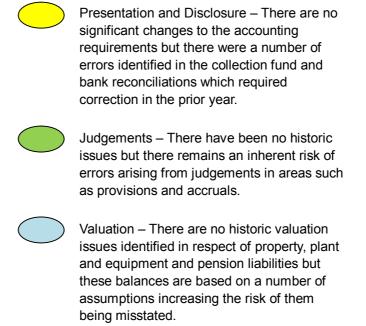
By considering these inputs, our audit is focused on the areas that matter. And by focusing on the areas that matter, our feedback is more likely to be relevant to the Council.

Our audit will also include the mandatory procedures that we are required to perform in accordance with applicable laws and auditing standards.

In part 2 and 3 of this report we provide more detail on the areas which we believe present significant risk to the financial statements audit, and outline our plans to address these risks.

There are four areas of risk which we consider for the audit in terms of the likelihood of the risk arising and the magnitude of the impact of that risk. The Council's position is set out below:







Value for Money risk – The Council continues to face financial challenges going forwards but has managed these challenges well to date through the 'DRIVE' process.

We will provide an update to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee on the results of our work in these areas in our report to those charged with governance scheduled for delivery in September 2013.

Our process and strategy

- Financial Statement Audit
 - ► We set our materiality based on the Council's level of gross expenditure. There is also consideration of the size of useable reserves, the financial position of the entity, it's, public profile and the reporting and challenge history. Our audit is designed to identify errors above materiality.
 - ► We aim to rely on the Council's internal controls in the key financial systems to the fullest extent permissible by auditing standards. We identify the controls we consider important and seek to place reliance on internal audit's testing. Where control failures are identified we consider the most appropriate steps to take.
 - ► Internal audit will complete controls testing for all the key financial systems in 2012/13. We have liaised with internal audit to agree a timetable to provide the results of their work to us.
 - Although this is our first year as your Appointed Auditor our team includes two team members who have worked on your audit for a number of years with The Audit Commission.
 - ▶ There has been no change to the scope of our audit compared to previous audits.
- Arrangements for securing Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness

We adopt an integrated audit approach such that our work on the financial statement audit feeds into our consideration of the arrangements in place for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

Specified criteria for auditor's VFM conclusion		
The organisation has proper arrangements in place for securing financial resilience.	The organisation has proper arrangements for challenging how it secures economy, efficiency and effectiveness.	
Focus of the criteria		
The organisation has robust systems and processes to manage financial risks and opportunities effectively, and to secure a stable financial position that enables it to continue to operate for the foreseeable future.	The organisation is prioritising its resources within tighter budgets, for example by achieving cost reductions and by improving efficiency and productivity.	

2. Financial Statement Risks

We outline below our assessment of the key strategic or operational risks and the financial statement risks facing the Council, identified through our knowledge of the entity's operations and discussion with members and officers.

At our meeting, we will seek to validate these with you.

Significant risks (including fraud risks)	Our audit approach		
Capacity of the Finance Team			
A restructuring of the finance team is planned to coincide	Our approach will focus on:		
with our audit visit. This is likely to impact on the delivery of the audit work within agreed timescales. The 2011/12 audit also highlighted the need for good quality working papers and the requirement for a specific point of contact to take responsibility for the resolution of audit issues.	Regular liaison with management to understand the latest position on the project.		
	An agreed audit liaison point of contact for each audit visit with responsibility for the resolution of audit issues.		
	An agreed schedule of audit deliverables.		
	Regular update meetings between management and the audit team.		
	Timely reporting of any issues arising.		
Pensions Accounting			
The Council operates a defined benefit pension scheme. Accounting for the scheme involves significant	Our approach will focus on:		
estimation and judgement. The Council has a history of	The actuarial expertise used by the Council.		
accounting for the pension scheme in accordance with standards.	The reasonableness of the estimations and judgements used.		
	The extent to which the Council has met the extensive disclosure requirements.		
Other financial statement risks	Our audit approach		
Collection Fund			
There were issues identified in reconciling the council	Our approach will focus on:		
tax and non-domestic rates (VDR) charge payers accounts. There were also conversion issues on these accounts arising from a system change.	Early review of the process in place and action taken in response to previous audit comments.		
	Discussion to identify if there have been any further system issues arising in2012/13.		
	A detailed review of the reconciliation of the NDR and council tax charge payers account.		
Bank Reconciliation Process			
There were identified issues with the bank reconciliation	Our approach will focus on:		
process in 2011/12. Initial discussions suggest there remain issues in this area	Early review of the process in place and action taken in response to previous audit comments.		
	Detailed testing as part of the final accounts audit.		
Senior officer Remuneration			
Senior management are now shared between the	Our approach will focus on:		
Council and Forest Heath District Council. The costs of	Reviewing the pooled costs between the Councils.		
the shared management need to be split on a reasonable basis to account for the costs correctly and ensure the senior officer remuneration disclosure note is	Review of the method of apportionment of the costs to ensure this is reasonable.		
not materially misstated.	Consideration of the requirements of the Code of Practice.		
Risk of misstatement due to fraud and error			
Management has the primary responsibility to prevent and detect fraud. It is important that management, with	Based on the requirements of auditing standards our approach will focus on:		
the oversight of those charged with governance, has put in place a culture of ethical behaviour and a strong	Identifying fraud risks during the planning stages.		

Our responsibility is to plan and perform audits to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free of material misstatements whether caused by error or fraud. As auditors, we approach each engagement with a questioning mind that accepts the possibility that a material misstatement due to fraud could occur, and design the appropriate procedures to consider such risk. controls put in place to address those risks.

- Understanding the oversight given by those charged with governance of management's processes over fraud.
- Consideration of the effectiveness of management's controls designed to address the risk of fraud.
- Determining an appropriate strategy to address those identified risks of fraud.
- Performing mandatory procedures regardless of specifically identified fraud risks.

We will consider the results of the National Fraud Initiative and may make reference to it in our reporting to you.

3. Economy, Efficiency & Effectiveness

Our work will focus on:

- 1. Whether there are proper arrangements in place for securing financial resilience at St Edmunds bury Borough Council; and
- 2. Whether there are proper arrangements in place at the Council to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources.

There are no specific risks identified from the work undertaken in previous periods and based on our discussions to date.

4. Our audit process and strategy

4.1 **Objective and scope of our audit**

Under the Audit Commission's Code of Audit Practice ('the Code'), dated March 2010, our principle objectives are to review and report on, to the extent required by the relevant legislation and the requirements of the Code, the Council's:

I) Financial statements; and

ii) Arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

We issue a two-part audit report covering both of these objectives.

I) Financial statement audit

Our objective is to form an opinion on the financial statements under International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland).

We will also review and report to the National Audit Office ('NAO'), to the extent and in the form required by them, on your Whole of Government Accounts return

ii) Arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness

The Code sets out our responsibility to satisfy ourselves that the Council has put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. In arriving at our conclusion, to the fullest extent possible we will place reliance on the reported results of the work of other statutory inspectorates in relation to corporate or service performance. In examining the Council's corporate performance management and financial management arrangements we have regard to the following criteria and areas of focus specified by the Audit Commission:

- Arrangements for securing financial resilience whether the Council has robust systems and processes to manage financial risks and opportunities effectively, and to secure a stable financial position that enables it to continue to operate for the foreseeable future; and
- Arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness whether the Council is prioritising its resources within tighter budgets, for example by achieving cost reductions and by improving efficiency and productivity.

4.2 Audit process overview

Processes

Our initial assessment of the key processes across the entity has identified the following key processes where we will seek to test key controls for at least part of the year, both manual and IT:

- Accounts Receivable
- Accounts Payable
- Payroll
- Council Tax

- National Non-Domestic Rates
- Housing Benefits

Property, plant and equipment, investments, loans and cash balances will be tested substantively at year end. If we identify control weaknesses in other systems we may need to test substantively.

Analytics

We will use our computer-based analytics tools to enable us to capture whole populations of your financial data, in particular in respect of payroll, accounts payable and receivable and journal entries. These tools:

- help identify specific exceptions and anomalies which can then be subject to more traditional substantive audit tests; and
- give greater likelihood of identifying errors than random sampling techniques.

We will report the findings from our process and analytics work, including any significant weaknesses or inefficiencies identified and recommendations for improvement, to management and the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee.

Internal audit

As in prior years, we will review internal audit plans and the results of work undertaken. We will reflect the findings from these reports, together with reports from other work completed in the year, in our detailed audit plan, where issues are raised that could impact the year-end financial statements.

Use of experts

We will utilise specialist Ernst & Young resource, as necessary, to help us to form a view on judgements made in the financial statements. Our plan currently includes the involvement of specialists in pensions and valuations.

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

Mandatory procedures required by auditing standards on:

- Addressing the risk of fraud and error.
- Significant disclosures included in the financial statements.
- Entity-wide controls.
- Reading other information contained in the financial statements and reporting whether it is inconsistent with our understanding and the financial statements.
- Auditor independence.

Procedures required by the Code

- Reviewing, and reporting on as appropriate, other information published with the financial statements, including the Annual Governance Statement.
- Reviewing and reporting on the Whole of Government accounts return, in line with the instructions issued by the NAO.

Reviewing, and where appropriate, examining evidence that is relevant to the Council's corporate performance management and financial management arrangements and reporting on these arrangements.

4.3 Materiality

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

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

ISA (UK & Ireland) 450 (revised) requires us to record all misstatements identified except those that are "clearly trivial". We intend to treat misstatements less than £66,000 as clearly trivial. All uncorrected misstatements found above this amount will be presented to you in our year-end report.

4.4 Fees

The Audit Commission has published a scale fee for all authorities. The scale fee is defined as the fee required by auditors to meet statutory responsibilities under the Audit Commission Act in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice 2010. The indicative fee scale for the audit of the Council is £57,456.

Please see appendix A for more information on the fee.

4.5 Your audit team

The engagement team is led by Neil Harris who has significant experience on St Edmundsbury Borough Council. Neil is supported by Jonathan Wilson who is responsible for the day-to-day direction of audit work, and who is the key point of contact for the audit. Mark Russell will be team leading the audit onsite supported by Mary Springer – an audit executive with previous experience of the Council.

4.6 Timetable of communication, deliverables and insights

We have set out below a timetable showing the key stages of the audit, including the value for money work and the whole of government accounts; and the deliverables we have agreed to provide to you through the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee cycle in 2013. These dates are determined to ensure our alignment with the Audit Commission's rolling calendar of deadlines.

We will provide a formal report to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee in September. From time to time matters may arise that require immediate communication with the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee and we will discuss them with the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee Chairman as appropriate.

Following the conclusion of our audit we will prepare an annual audit letter in order to communicate to the Council and external stakeholders, including members of the public, the key issues arising from our work.

Audit phase	Timetable	Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee timetable	Deliverables
High level planning:	December- January		Audit Fee letter
Risk assessment and setting of scopes	January- February	Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee	Audit Plan
Testing of routine processes and controls	December- June		
Year-end audit	July – September		
		Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee	Report to those charged with governance Audit report (including our opinion on the financial statements and a conclusion as to whether the Council has put in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources).
			Audit completion certificate
	October		Annual Audit Letter

In addition to the above formal reporting and deliverables we will seek to provide practical business insights and updates on regulatory matters.

5. Independence

5.1 Introduction

The APB Ethical Standards and ISA (UK and Ireland) 260 "Communication of audit matters with those charged with governance", requires us to communicate with you on a timely basis on all significant facts and matters that bear upon our independence and objectivity. The Ethical Standards, as revised in December 2010, require that we communicate formally both at the planning stage and at the conclusion of the audit, as well as during the course of the audit if appropriate. The aim of these communications is to ensure full and fair disclosure by us to those charged with your governance on matters in which you have an interest.

Required communications			
Planning stage	Final stage		
 The principal threats, if any, to objectivity and independence identified by Ernst & Young (EY) including consideration of all relationships between the you, your affiliates and directors and us; The safeguards adopted and the reasons why they are considered to be effective, including any Engagement Quality review; 	A written disclosure of relationships (including the provision of non-audit services) that bear on our objectivity and independence, the threats to our independence that these create, any safeguards that we have put in place and why they address such threats, together with any other information necessary to enable our objectivity and independence to be assessed;		
 The overall assessment of threats and safeguards; 	 Details of non-audit services provided and the fees charged in relation thereto; 		
Information about the general policies and process within EY to maintain objectivity and independence.	 Written confirmation that we are independent; 		
	Details of any inconsistencies between APB Ethical Standards, the Audit Commission's Standing Guidance and your policy for the supply of non-audit services by EY and any apparent breach of that policy; and		
	An opportunity to discuss auditor independence issues.		

In addition, during the course of the audit, we are required to communicate with you whenever any significant judgements are made about threats to objectivity and independence and the appropriateness of safeguards put in place, for example, when accepting an engagement to provide non-audit services.

We also provide information on any contingent fee arrangements, the amounts of any future services that have been contracted, and details of any written proposal to provide non-audit services that has been submitted;

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

5.2 Relationships, services and related threats and safeguards

We highlight the following significant facts and matters that may be reasonably considered to bear upon our objectivity and independence, including the principal threats, if any. However we have adopted the safeguards noted below to mitigate these threats along with the reasons why they are considered to be effective.

Self interest threats

A self interest threat arises when EY has financial or other interests in your entity. Examples include where we receive significant fees in respect of non-audit services; where we need to recover long outstanding fees; or where we enter into a business relationship with you.

We believe that it is appropriate for us to undertake permissible non-audit services and we will comply with the policies that you have approved and that are in compliance with the Audit Commission's Standing Guidance.

A self interest threat may also arise if members of our audit engagement team have objectives or are rewarded in relation to sales of non-audit services to you. We confirm that no member of our audit engagement team, including those from other service lines, has objectives or is rewarded in relation to sales to you, in compliance with Ethical Standard 4.

There are no other self interest threats at the date of this report.

Self review threats

Self review threats arise when the results of a non-audit service performed by EY or others within the EY network are reflected in the amounts included or disclosed in the financial statements.

There are no self review threats at the date of this report.

Management threats

Directors and employees of EY are prohibited from taking decisions on behalf of management of your entity. Management threats may also arise during the provision of a non-audit service in relation to which management is required to make judgements or decision based on that work.

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

Other threats

Other threats, such as advocacy, familiarity or intimidation, may arise.

There are no other threats at the date of this report

Overall Assessment

Overall, we consider that the safeguards that have been adopted appropriately mitigate the principal risks identified and we therefore confirm that EY is independent and the objectivity and independence of Neil Harris, your audit engagement Director and the audit engagement team have not been compromised.

5.3 Other required communications

Ernst & Young (EY) has policies and procedures that instil professional values as part of firm culture and ensure that the highest standards of objectivity, independence and integrity are maintained.

Details of the key policies and processes in place within EY for maintaining objectivity and independence can be found in our annual Transparency Report which the firm is required to publish by law. The most recent version of this Report is for the year ended 29 June 2012 and can be found here:

http://www.ey.com/UK/en/About-us/About-EY---Transparency-Report

Appendix A Fees

A breakdown of our agreed fee is shown below.

	Planned Fee 2012/13	Actual Fee 2011/12	Explanation of variance
	£'000	£'000	
Total Audit Fee – Code work	57,456	N/A	N/A
Certification of claims and returns*	29,500	N/A	N/A
Non-audit work (provide details)	0	0	N/A

The agreed fee presented above is based on the following assumptions:

- Officers meeting the agreed timetable of deliverables;
- We are able to place reliance, as planned, on the work of internal audit;
- The level of risk in relation to the audit of accounts is consistent with that in the prior year (where we have prior year experience);
- No significant changes being made by the Audit Commission to the use of resources criteria on which our conclusion will be based;
- Our accounts opinion and use of resources conclusion being unqualified;
- Appropriate quality of documentation is provided by the audited body; and
- Effective control environment and system controls.

If any of the above assumptions prove to be unfounded, we will seek a variation to the agreed fee. This will be discussed with you in advance.

Fees for the auditor's consideration of correspondence from the public and formal objections will be charged in addition to the scale fee.

*Our fee for the certification of grant claims is based on the indicative scale fee set by the Audit Commission.

Appendix B UK required communications with those charged with governance

There are certain communications that we must provide to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee of audited clients. These are detailed here:

Required communication	Reference
Planning and audit approach Communication of the planned scope and timing of the audit including any limitations.	Audit Plan
Significant findings from the audit	Report to those charged with
Our view about the significant qualitative aspects of accounting practices including accounting policies, accounting estimates and financial statement disclosures	governance
Significant difficulties, if any, encountered during the audit	
Significant matters, if any, arising from the audit that were discussed with management	
Written representations that we are seeking	
Expected modifications to the audit report	
• Other matters if any, significant to the oversight of the financial reporting process	
Findings and issues regarding the opening balance on initial audits	
Wisstatements Uncorrected misstatements and their effect on our audit opinion	Report to those charged with governance
The effect of uncorrected misstatements related to prior periods	
A request that any uncorrected misstatement be corrected	
In writing, corrected misstatements that are significant Fraud	Report to those charged with
 Enquiries of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee to determine whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud affecting the entity 	governance
Any fraud that we have identified or information we have obtained that indicates that a fraud may exist	
A discussion of any other matters related to fraud	
Related parties Significant matters arising during the audit in connection with the entity's related parties including, when applicable:	Report to those charged with governance
Non-disclosure by management	
Inappropriate authorisation and approval of transactions	
Disagreement over disclosures	
Non-compliance with laws and regulations	
Difficulty in identifying the party that ultimately controls the entity	
External confirmations	Report to those charged with
Management's refusal for us to request confirmations	governance
Inability to obtain relevant and reliable audit evidence from other procedures	
Consideration of laws and regulations	Report to those charged with
Audit findings regarding non-compliance where the non-compliance is material and believed to be intentional. This communication is subject to compliance with legislation on tipping off	governance
Enquiry of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee into possible instances of non- compliance with laws and regulations that may have a material effect on the financial statements and that the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee may be aware of	
ndependence Communication of all significant facts and matters that bear on Ernst & Young's objectivity and ndependence Communication of key elements of the audit engagement Director's consideration of independence	Audit Plan Report to those charged with governance
and objectivity such as:	
The principal threats	
Safeguards adopted and their effectiveness	
An overall assessment of threats and safeguards	
 An overall assessment of threats and sareguards Information about the general policies and process within the firm to maintain objectivity and 	

Required communication	Reference
independence For listed companies, communication of minimum requirements as detailed in the ethical standards:	
Relationships between Ernst & Young, the audited body and senior management	
Services provided by Ernst & Young that may reasonably bear on the auditors' objectivity and independence	
Related safeguards	
Fees charged by Ernst & Young analysed into appropriate categories such as statutory audit fees tax advisory fees, other non-audit service fees	,
A statement of compliance with the ethical standards	
The Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee should also be provided an opportunity to discuss matters affecting auditor independence	
Going concern Events or conditions identified that may cast significant doubt on the entity's ability to continue as a going concern, including:	Report to those charged with governance
Whether the events or conditions constitute a material uncertainty	
Whether the use of the going concern assumption is appropriate in the preparation and presentation of the financial statements	
The adequacy of related disclosures in the financial statements	
Significant deficiencies in internal controls identified during the audit	Report to those charged with governance
Opening Balances (initial audits)	Report to those charged with
Findings and issues regarding the opening balance of initial audits	governance
Certification work	Annual Report to those charged
Summary of certification work undertaken	with governance summarising
	grant certification, and Annual
	Audit Letter if considered
Fee Information	necessary
Breakdown of fee information at the agreement of the initial audit plan	
 Breakdown of fee information at the completion of the audit 	Audit Plan
P Dreakdown of ree mornation at the completion of the addit	Report to those charged with
	governance and Annual Audit
	Letter if considered necessary