



## **Annual Audit Letter on the 2018/19 External Audit Stroud District Council**

November 2019

# Contents

	Page
1 Letter to Members	3
2 Key Messages	4
3 Responsibilities and Scope	5
4 Audit of the Accounts	6
5 Value for Money	9
6 Other Matters	9

# 1. Letter to Members

The Members

Ebley Mill

Ebley Wharf

Stroud

GL5 4UB

1 November 2019

Dear Sirs

We have pleasure in setting out this Annual Audit Letter to summarise the key matters arising from the work that we have carried out in respect of the audit for the year ended 31 March 2019.

Although this letter is addressed to the Members of Stroud District Council ("the Council"), it is also intended to communicate the significant issues we have identified, in an accessible style, to key external stakeholders, including members of the public. The letter will be published on the Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) website at [www.psaa.co.uk](http://www.psaa.co.uk) and on the Council's website.

This letter has been prepared in the context of the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies issued by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd. This is available from [www.psaa.co.uk](http://www.psaa.co.uk).

This key contents of this letter have been discussed and agreed with the Council. A copy of the letter will be provided to all Members.

This is our first year as the external auditor of the Council following the transition of the PSAA contract in 2018/19. Our aim is to deliver a high standard of audit, delivering insights identified from our audit work to make a positive and practical contribution, which supports the Council's own agenda.



Ian Howse

Audit Partner

for and on behalf of Deloitte LLP

Cardiff, United Kingdom

## 2. Key Messages

Statement of Accounts	
<p><b>Unqualified opinion issued on 31 July 2019</b></p>	<p>In 2018/19 the Council was required to prepare its Statement of Accounts in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards (“IFRS”) as defined in the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2018/19 and other relevant legislation.</p> <p>The Statement of Accounts was prepared and audited in accordance with the agreed timetable.</p> <p>Through our audit planning we identified two significant risks of material misstatement which we addressed through our audit. These were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• completeness of expenditure; and</li> <li>• management override of controls.</li> </ul> <p>Materiality for the Council’s accounts was set at £1,958,000.</p> <p>We issued an unqualified audit opinion on the Statement of Accounts on 31 July 2019.</p>
Value for Money (VfM) conclusion	
<p><b>Unqualified opinion issued on 31 July 2019</b></p>	<p>We are required to base our statutory VfM conclusion on the criteria specified by the National Audit Office, namely whether the Council has in place proper arrangements to ensure it took properly informed decisions and deployed resources to achieve planned and sustainable outcomes for taxpayers and local people.</p> <p>We issued an unqualified opinion in respect of the VfM conclusion on 31 July 2019.</p>
Annual Governance Statement	
<p><b>All relevant governance matters were adequately and appropriately disclosed</b></p>	<p>We have considered the contents of the Annual Governance Statement and confirmed that the Statement complied with guidance and that it adequately and appropriately disclosed all relevant governance matters arising in the year that we are aware of.</p>
Whole of Government accounts	
<p><b>The Council is below the audit threshold</b></p>	<p>The Council prepares a consolidation pack to support the production of Whole of Government Accounts by HM Treasury. We are not required to review this pack as the Council falls below the threshold where an audit is required.</p> <p>As required we have confirmed this fact to the National Audit Office by the national deadline of 13 September 2019.</p>

Financial reporting systems	
<b>Weaknesses in internal control were identified</b>	During our audit we identified a number of areas for improvement in internal controls and procedures resulting in seven recommendations being raised, five of which were IT related and two which were reported provided scope for improvements to be made by management in relation to the preparation of the financial statements.

### 3. Responsibilities and Scope

Responsibilities of the Council and Auditors
<p>The Council is responsible for maintaining the control environment and accounting records and preparing the accounting statements in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2018/19 based on IFRS and other relevant legislation.</p> <p>We are appointed as the Council’s independent external auditors by PSAA, the body responsible for appointing auditors to local public bodies in England.</p> <p>As the Council’s appointed external auditor, we are responsible for planning and carrying out an audit that meets the requirements of the National Audit Office’s Code of Audit Practice (“the Code”). Under the Code, we have responsibilities in two main areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Council’s accounts; and</li> <li>• whether the Council has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources (the value for money conclusion).</li> </ul>
The scope of our work
<p>We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) as adopted by the UK Auditing Practices Board (“APB”). The audit opinion on the accounts reflects the financial reporting framework adopted by the Council, being the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2018/19 based on IFRS and other relevant legislation.</p> <p>We conducted our work on the value for money conclusion in line with guidance issued by the National Audit Office, in respect of local government bodies for the financial year ended 31 March 2019.</p>

## 4. Audit of the Accounts

Statement of Accounts	
<b>Unqualified opinion issued on 31 July 2019</b>	<p>Before we give our opinion on the accounts, we are required to Report to Those Charged with Governance any significant matters arising from the audit. A detailed report was discussed with the members of the Audit and Standards Committee on 25 July 2019.</p> <p>Materiality for the Council’s accounts was set at £1,958,000 which equated to 2% of gross expenditure. The level of materiality shapes and informs the extent of the audit work we undertook, including review of balances which are below this which exhibit particular characteristics. This assists in the identification of transactions and balances which were likely to give rise to material misstatements, and in determining the extent of work undertaken in respect of the areas we judged to contain such risks.</p> <p>Our Report to Those Charged with Governance, in the case of the Council, the Audit and Standards Committee, set out the details of any errors identified during the audit which were greater than £98,000, our clearly trivial threshold.</p> <p>Our audit work was designed to specifically address the following significant audit risks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether the Statement of Accounts contained all of the expenditure relating to the year ended 31 March 2019 (Completeness of expenditure) – We obtained an understanding of the design and implementation of the key controls in place in relation to recording completeness and valuation of accruals and provisions; we performed focused testing in relation to the completeness of expenditure including a detailed review of accruals and provisions; as part of this focused testing we challenged any assumptions made in relation to year-end accruals and provisions; we reviewed how accurate the Council has been in calculating its current year provisions and accruals; and we reviewed the year-on-year movement in accruals and provisions and investigated any significant downward movements.</li> <li>• Whether the Council’s controls had been bypassed by management in the preparation of the financial statements (Management override of controls) – We have tested the design and implementation of key controls in place around journal entries and management estimates; we risk assessed journals and selected items for detailed testing. The journal entries were selected using computer-assisted profiling based on areas which we consider to be of increased interest; we tested the appropriateness of journal entries recorded in the general ledger, and other adjustments made in the preparation of financial reporting; we reviewed accounting estimates for biases that could result in material misstatements due to fraud, specifically in relation to material provisions; and we have not become aware of any significant transactions that are outside the normal course of business for the Council, or that otherwise appear to be unusual, given our understanding of the entity and its environment.</li> </ul> <p>We issued an unqualified opinion on the Council’s 2018/19 accounts on 31 July 2019, in accordance with the deadline set for local government bodies. Our opinion confirms that the accounts present a true and fair view of the financial</p>

Statement of Accounts	
	position of the Council as at 31 March 2019 and its income and expenditure for the year then ended.
Key issues from work performed on the Statement of Accounts	
<b>We identified one uncorrected misstatement</b>	<p>We received a set of draft accounts in line with the agreed deadline, which were supported by working papers.</p> <p>The final Statement of Accounts upon which we issued our opinion contained one financial misstatement.</p> <p>This error concerned the McCloud pension scheme. In December 2018 the Court of Appeal ruled against the Government regarding pensions (McCloud) on the grounds of discrimination between scheme members based on their age. The Supreme Court has recently upheld that ruling. Deloitte are of the view that all Local Government Pension Scheme participating entities should increase their IAS19 pension liability at 31 March 2019 for the estimated impact of the McCloud judgement, which is £294,000.</p>
Annual Governance Statement	
<b>The Statement includes all appropriate disclosures and is consistent with our understanding of the Council's governance arrangements</b>	<p>As appointed auditors, we review the Annual Governance Statement ("AGS") and comment on any inconsistencies noted between the AGS and our audit work, other work relating to the Code of Audit Practice, and our understanding of the Council's Governance arrangements.</p> <p>We have concluded that the Statement includes all appropriate disclosures and is consistent with our understanding of the Council's governance arrangements and internal controls derived from our audit work.</p>
Powers and Duties	
<b>We did not receive any questions about the accounts or make any public interest reports</b>	<p>Under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, auditors have specific powers and duties, including to give electors the opportunity to raise questions about the accounts and to consider and decide upon objections received in relation to the accounts. We did not receive any such questions or objections.</p> <p>We have a duty to consider whether to issue a report in the public interest about something we believe the Council should consider, or if the public should know about.</p> <p>We have not identified any matters that would require us to issue a public interest report.</p>
Whole of Government accounts return	
<b>The Council is below the audit threshold</b>	The Council prepares a consolidation pack to support the production of Whole of Government Accounts by HM Treasury. We are not required to review this pack as the Council falls below the threshold where an audit is required. As required by the guidance we have confirmed this with the National Audit Office by the national deadline of 13 September 2019.
Audit Certificate	

## Statement of Accounts

**We have issued our certificate**

We issued our certificate on 31 July 2019. The certificate confirms that we have concluded the audit for 2018/19 in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014 and the Code of Audit Practice.



# 5. Value for Money

## Background and approach

The approach to our audit work in relation to value for money (“VFM”) was specified by the National Audit Office.

We are required to satisfy ourselves that the Council has made proper arrangements for securing financial resilience and economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

We would emphasise that it is the arrangements in place that we are required to assess, and not the actual decisions made by the Council.

We planned our local programme of work based on our risk assessment, which was informed by a series of risk factors determined by the National Audit Office.

We did not identify any significant risks as part of our risk assessment.

## The VFM conclusion

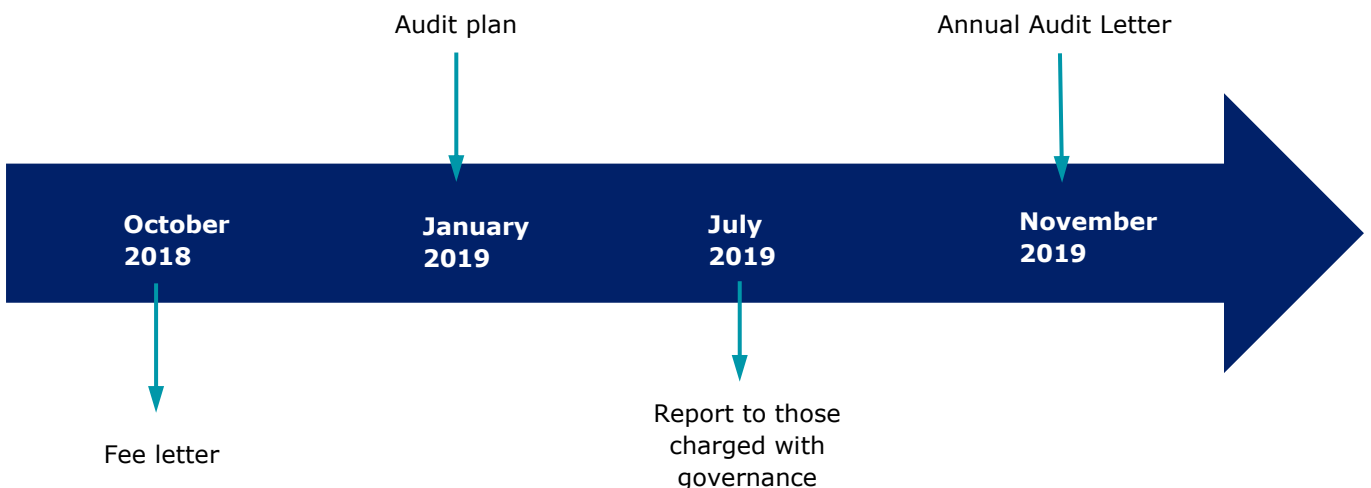
Having performed our work in line with guidance received from the National Audit Office we issued an unqualified value for money conclusion for the 2018/19 financial year.

# 6. Other Matters

## Reports issued

Reports issued during the course of the 2018/19 audit included:

- Audit Fee letter;
- Annual Audit Plan;
- The Report to Those Charged with Governance on the 2018/19 audit of the Council; and
- This Annual Audit Letter.



**Analysis of audit fees**

Audit fees charged are as follows:

	2018/19 £
Scale fees for the audit of the Council's annual accounts, VfM conclusion and whole of government accounts return	40,021

**Independence and objectivity**

In our professional judgement, our policies and safeguards that are in place ensure that we are independent within the meaning of all regulatory and professional requirements and that the objectivity of the audit partner and audit staff is not impaired.

We confirm that we comply with FRC’s Ethical Standards for Auditors and that, in our professional judgement, we and, where applicable, all Deloitte network firms are independent and our objectivity is not compromised.

In our opinion there are no inconsistencies between FRC’s Ethical Standards for Auditors and the Council’s policy for the supply of non-audit services or any apparent breach of that policy. We continue to review our independence and ensure that appropriate safeguards are in place including, but not limited to, the rotation of senior partners and professional staff and the involvement of additional partners and professional staff to carry out reviews of the work performed and to otherwise advise as necessary.

We are required to provide written details of all relationships (including the provision of non-audit services) between us and the organisation, its board and senior management and its affiliates, including all services provided by us and the DTTL network to the Council, its members and senior management and its affiliates, and other services provided to other known connected parties that we consider may reasonably be thought to bear on our objectivity and independence.

We are not aware of any relationships which are required to be disclosed.

No matters impacting our independence have arisen during the year.

**Statement of Responsibilities**

The Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies issued by PSAA explains the respective responsibilities of auditors and of the audited body and this report is prepared on the basis of, and our audit work is carried out in accordance with, that statement.

The matters raised in this report are only those that came to our attention during our audit and are not necessarily a comprehensive statement of all weaknesses that exist or of all improvements that might be made. You should assess recommendations for improvements for their full implications before they are implemented. In particular, we would emphasise that we are not responsible for the adequacy and appropriateness of the national data and methodology supporting our value for money conclusion as they are derived solely from the National Audit Office.

This report has been prepared for the Members, as a body, and we therefore accept responsibility to you alone for its contents. We accept no duty, responsibility or liability to any other party.

An audit does not provide assurance on the maintenance and integrity of the website, including controls used to achieve this, and in particular on whether any changes may have occurred to the

Annual Audit Letter since first published. These matters are the responsibility of the Council but no control procedures can provide absolute assurance in this area.



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