

## **Item: 9**

### **Orkney and Shetland Valuation Joint Board: 18 February 2021.**

#### **Annual Audit Plan.**

#### **Report by Treasurer to the Board.**

### **1. Purpose of Report**

To consider the Audit Plan for financial year 2020/21.

### **2. Recommendations**

#### **It is recommended:**

That the contents of the Audit Plan, prepared by Deloitte LLP, as the appointed auditors to the Orkney and Shetland Joint Valuation Board, for financial year 2020/21, attached as Appendix 1 to this report, be considered and noted.

### **3. Background**

#### **3.1.**

The annual Audit Plan provides information on the work that the Orkney and Shetland Joint Valuation Board's appointed external auditors will undertake to review and assess the governance and performance of the Board.

#### **3.2.**

It is considered that the audit process plays a key role in helping the Board to maintain good governance and accountability and provides assurance around financial stewardship. This includes a clear focus on identifying and assessing the key challenges and risks to the Board in order to mitigate future risks.

### **4. Annual Audit Plan for 2020/21**

#### **4.1.**

The Annual Audit Plan, attached as Appendix 1 to this report, presents the planned audit work by the Board's appointed external auditors, Deloitte LLP, for financial year 2020/21. This is the fifth year of the original five-year term of appointment, and their core audit work includes:

- Auditing the annual accounts – perform an audit of the annual accounts and express a specified audit opinion.

- Audit dimensions (restricted to Governance and Transparency and Financial Sustainability), Best Value, Statutory Performance Information and Strategic Audit Priorities – consider and report on the audit dimensions of financial sustainability, financial management, governance and transparency and best value.
- Contributing to performance audits – share audit intelligence with audit Scotland including highlighting potential statutory reports.
- Other wider scope audit work – provide information on current issues and cases of fraud.

#### **4.2.**

The term of the audit appointment has since been extended from five to six years.

#### **4.3.**

Despite the application of a small body's exemption with regard to the scope of the audit work, additional work can be attributed to the need to follow up on issues identified in the previous year's audit. This included uncertainty over key roles and responsibilities, the provision of support services and discussions around administration of the Board transferring to Orkney Islands Council.

#### **4.4.**

The Treasurer to the Board has been consulted in the development of the Annual Audit Plan. Any implications identified from the audit work will be duly considered before being taken forward and actioned as appropriate.

## **5. Financial Implications**

#### **5.1.**

The audit fee for the programme of work as set out in the Annual Audit Plan for financial year 2020/21 has been proposed at £8,603. On a comparable basis, this represents an increase of £1,474 or 21% on the previous year and will be met from within existing budgets.

#### **5.2.**

It should be noted that, as a wider scope audit was required for financial year 2019/20, the audit fee was subsequently increased to £20,198. This represented an additional cost of £13,069 for the Board when compared to the reduced scope audit that would normally be appropriate for an entity of this size.

## **6. Legal Aspects**

The Board's external auditors are appointed under statute by the Accounts Commission for Scotland and are required to conduct an audit in accordance with Part VII of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 and the Commission's approved Code of Audit Practice.

## **7. Contact Officer**

Colin Kemp, Treasurer to the Board, Email [colin.kemp@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:colin.kemp@orkney.gov.uk).

## **8. Appendix**

Appendix 1: Orkney and Shetland Valuation Joint Board – Planning Report to the Members of the Board on the 2020/21 audit.



**Orkney and Shetland Valuation Joint Board**

**Planning report to the Members of the Board on the 2020/21 audit**

Issued on 9 February 2021 for the meeting on 18 February 2021

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# Planning report



# Introduction

## The key messages in this report

Audit quality is our number one priority. We plan our audit to focus on audit quality and have set the following audit quality objectives for this audit:

- A robust challenge of the key judgements taken in the preparation of the annual accounts.
- A strong understanding of your internal control environment.
- A well planned and delivered audit that raises findings early with those charged with governance.

I have pleasure in presenting our planning report to the Board of the Orkney and Shetland Valuation Joint Board ('the VJB') for the 2020/21 audit. I would like to draw your attention to the key messages of this paper:

### **Audit plan**

We have updated our understanding of the VJB, including discussion with management and review of relevant documents. This has included consideration of the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the VJB. Based on these procedures, we have developed this plan in collaboration with the VJB to ensure that we provide an effective audit service that meets your expectation and focuses on the most significant areas of importance and risk to the VJB.

### **Key risks**

We have taken an initial view as to the significant audit risks the VJB faces. These are presented as a summary dashboard on page 12.

### **Audit dimensions**

The Code of Audit Practice sets out four audit dimensions which set a common framework for all public sector audits in Scotland. In line with previous years, we have concluded that the full application of the wider scope is not appropriate and applied the "small body" clause set out in the Code which allows narrower scope work to be carried out. The rationale for this is discussed further on page 24.

In carrying out our annual risk assessment, we have considered the arrangements in place for each dimension, building on our findings and conclusions from previous years' audits as well as planning guidance published by Audit Scotland. Our significant risks are presented on page 24.



# Introduction (continued)

## The key messages in this report (continued)

### **Regulatory change**

The implementation of the new standard on leases, IFRS 16, has been deferred again for another year, with a revised implementation date of 2022/23 and will require adjustments to recognise on balance sheet arrangements currently treated as operating leases.

Our audit approach reflects changes to International Standards on Auditing (UK) on going concern (ISA (UK) 570) and management estimates (ISA (UK) 540), and Practice Note 10, effective for this year.

### **Our commitment to quality**

We are committed to providing the highest quality audit, with input from our market leading specialists, sophisticated data analytics and our wealth of experience.

As part of our planning discussions with management, we have shared our *“Key Lessons from 2019/2020 Audits”* to help prepare for the 2020/21 audit, ensuring a focus on quality.

### **Added value**

Our aim is to add value to the VJB through our external audit work by being constructive and forward looking, by identifying areas of improvement and by recommending and encouraging good practice. In this way, we aim to help the VJB promote improved standards of governance, better management and decision making and more effective use of resources.

We have also shared our recent research, informed perspectives and best practice from our work across the wider public sector on pages 28 to 34 of this paper.

**Pat Kenny**  
**Audit Director**



# Responsibilities of the Board

## Helping you fulfil your responsibilities

Why do we interact with the Board?

To communicate audit scope

To provide timely and relevant observations

To provide additional information to help you fulfil your broader responsibilities

We use this symbol to highlight areas of our audit where the Board needs to focus attention.



As a result of regulatory change in recent years, the role of the Board has significantly expanded. We set out here a summary of the core areas of Board responsibility to provide a reference in respect of these broader responsibilities and highlight throughout the document where there is key information which helps the Board in fulfilling its remit.

- At the start of each annual audit cycle, ensure that the scope of the external audit is appropriate.

- Implement a policy on the engagement of the external auditor to supply non-audit services.

Oversight of external audit

Integrity of reporting

- Review the internal control and risk management systems (unless expressly addressed by separate risk committee).

- Explain what actions have been, or are being taken to remedy any significant failings or weaknesses.

Internal controls and risks

Oversight of internal audit

Whistle-blowing and fraud

- Ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for the proportionate and independent investigation of any concerns raised by staff in connection with improprieties.

- Impact assessment of key judgements and level of management challenge.

- Review of external audit findings, key judgements, level of misstatements.

- Assess the quality of the internal team, their incentives and the need for supplementary skillsets.

- Assess the completeness of disclosures, including consistency with disclosures on business model and strategy and, provide advice in respect of the fair, balanced and understandable statement.

- Consider annually whether the scope of the internal audit programme is adequate.

- Monitor and review the effectiveness of the internal audit activities.

# Your control environment

## What we consider when we plan the audit

We expect management and those charged with governance to recognise the importance of a strong control environment and take proactive steps to deal with deficiencies identified on a timely basis.

### Responsibilities of management

Auditing standards require us to only accept or continue with an audit engagement when the preconditions for an audit are present. These preconditions include obtaining the agreement of management and those charged with governance that they acknowledge and understand their responsibilities for, amongst other things, internal control as is necessary to enable the preparation of annual accounts that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

As stakeholders tell us that they wish to understand how external audit challenges and responds to the quality of an entity's control environment, we are seeking to enhance how we plan and report on the results of the audit in response. We will be placing increased focus on how the control environment impacts the audit, from our initial risk assessment, to our testing approach and how we report on misstatements and control deficiencies.

### Responsibilities of the Board

As explained further in the Responsibilities of the Board slide on the previous page, the Board is responsible for:

- Reviewing the internal control and risk management systems (unless expressly addressed by a separate risk committee).
- Explaining what actions have been, or are being taken to remedy any significant failings or weaknesses.

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#### Reliance on controls



We will seek to undertake design and implementation testing on controls in respect of our identified significant risk areas. In accordance with forthcoming revisions to ISAs, we will assess inherent risk and control risk associated with accounting estimates.

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#### Performance materiality

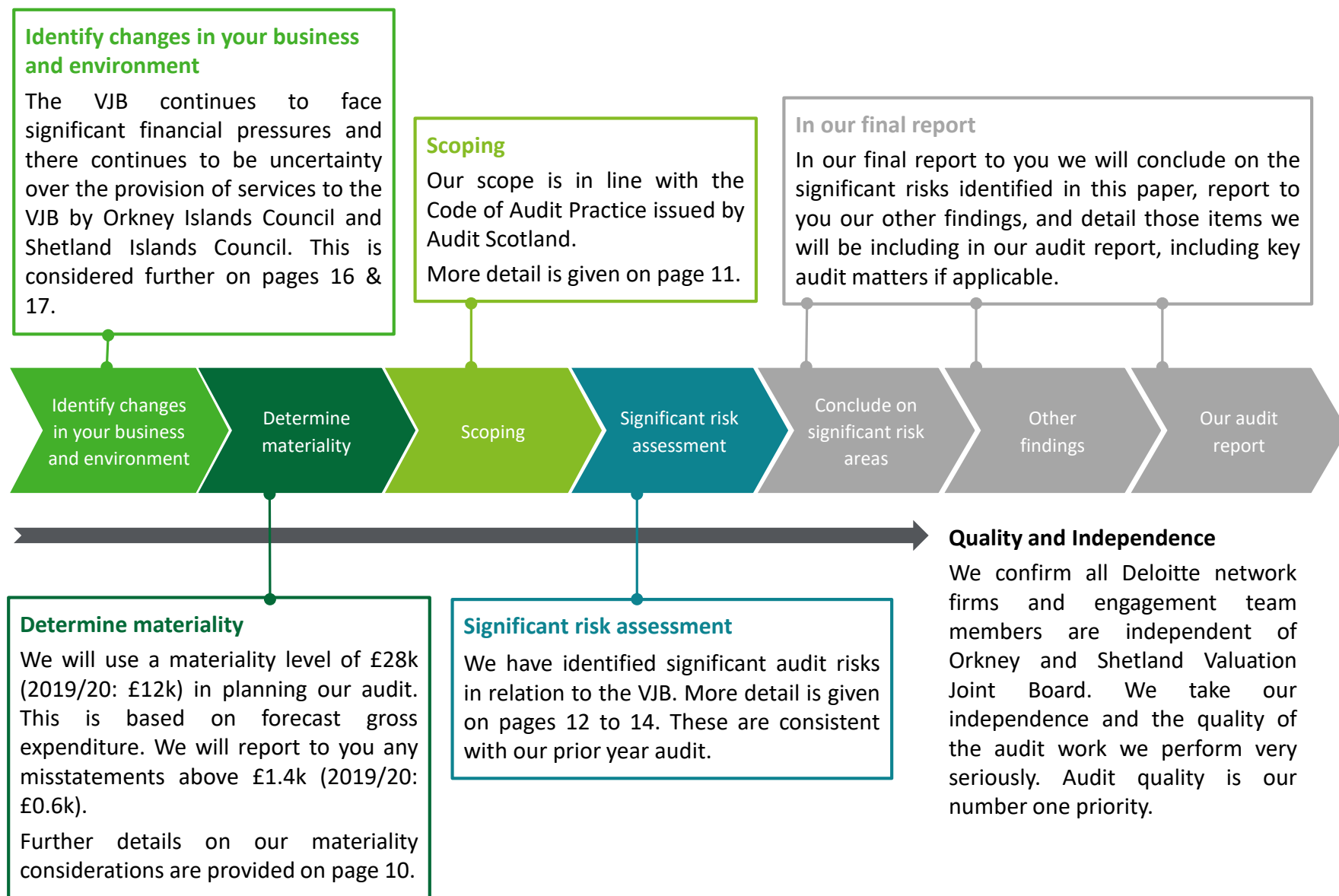


We set performance materiality as a percentage of materiality to reduce the probability that, in aggregate, uncorrected and undetected misstatements exceed materiality. We determine performance materiality, with reference to factors such as the quality of the control environment and the historical error rate. Where we are unable to rely on controls, we may use a lower level of performance materiality.

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# Our audit explained

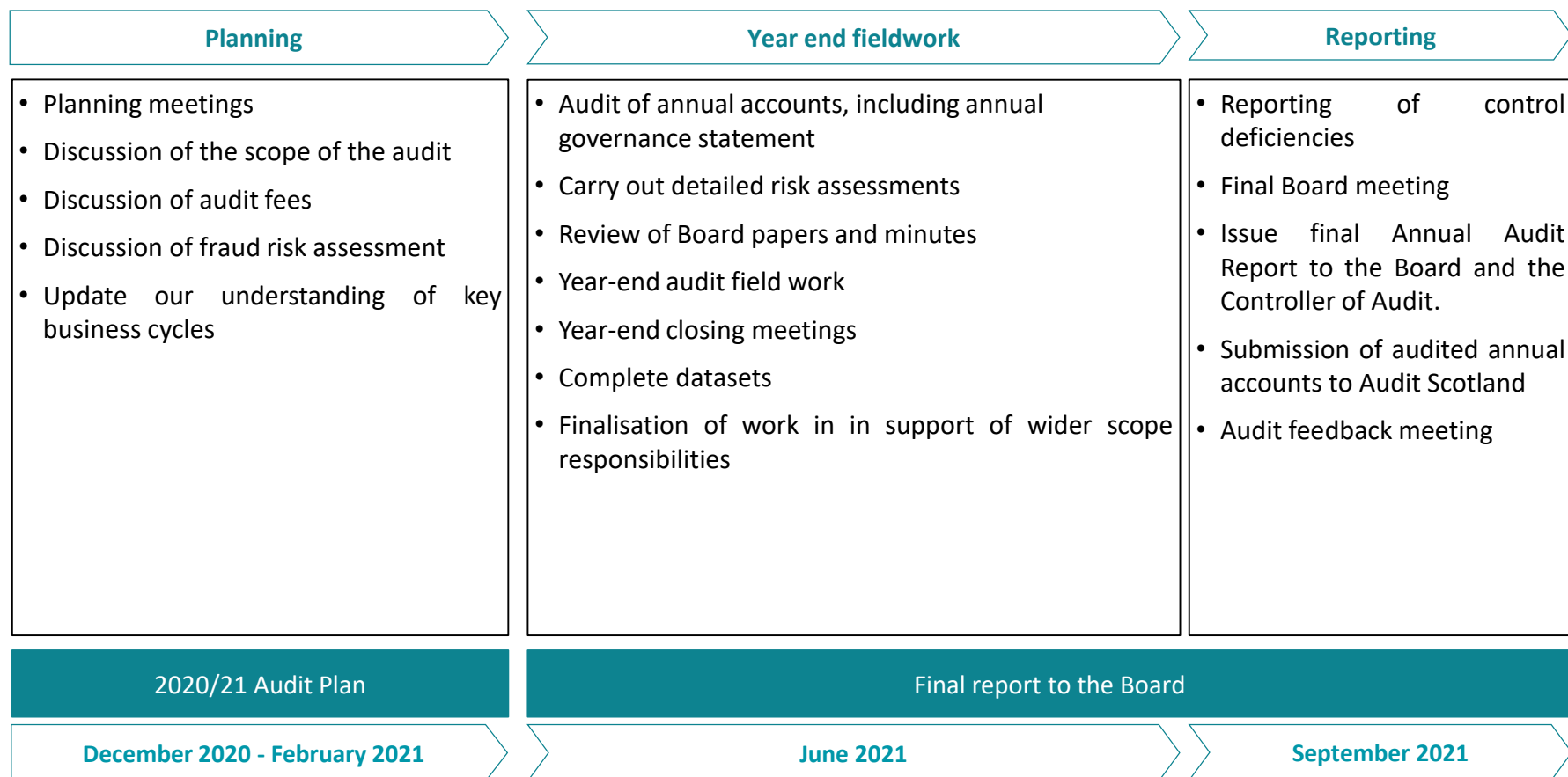
We tailor our audit to your business and your strategy



# Continuous communication and reporting

## Planned timing of the audit

As the audit plan is executed throughout the year, the results will be analysed continuously and conclusions (preliminary and otherwise) will be drawn. The following sets out the expected timing of our reporting to and communication with you.



Ongoing communication and feedback

# Materiality

## Our approach to materiality

### Basis of our materiality benchmark

- The Audit Director has determined materiality £28k (2019/20: £12k) and performance materiality as £19k (2019/20: £9k) , based on professional judgement, the requirements of auditing standards and the financial measures most relevant to users of the annual accounts.
- We have used 3.5% of forecast gross expenditure as the benchmark for determining materiality and applied 68% as performance materiality. We have judged expenditure to be the most relevant measure for the users of the accounts.
- The approach is consistent with previous years. However, the percentages applied have been revisited to take into account our knowledge of the VJB and our understanding of the control environment, including the increased fraud risks as a result of the pandemic, and due to changes in the finance function in the year.

### Reporting to those charged with governance

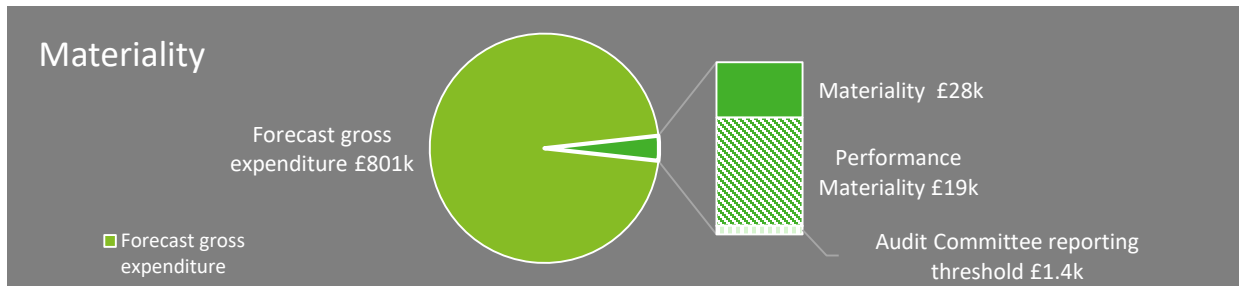
- We will report to you all misstatements found in excess of £1.4k (2019/20: £0.6k).
- We will report to you misstatements below this threshold if we consider them to be material by nature.

- Our approach to determining the materiality benchmark is consistent with Audit Scotland guidance which states that the threshold for clearly trivial above which we should accumulate misstatements for reporting and correction to the Board must not exceed £250k.

### Our Annual Audit Report

We will:

- Report the materiality benchmark applied in the audit of the VJB;
- Provide comparative data and explain any changes in materiality compared to prior year;
- Explain any normalised or adjusted benchmarks we use; and
- Explain the concept of performance materiality and state what percentage of materiality we used, with our rationale.



Although materiality is the judgement of the Audit Director, the Board must satisfy themselves that the level of materiality chosen is appropriate for the scope of the audit.



# Scope of work and approach

## Our key areas of responsibility under the Code of Audit Practice

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Core audit work	Planned output	Timeline
1. Auditing the annual accounts	Annual Audit Plan	18 February 2021
	Independent auditor's report	30 September 2021
2. Audit dimensions, Best Value, Statutory Performance Information and Strategic Audit Priorities	Annual Audit Plan	18 February 2021
	Annual Audit Report	30 September 2021
3. Contributing to performance audits	Dataset for overview report	March 2021 (submission deadline 8 May 2021)
4. Other wider scope audit work	Current issues returns	15 January, 26 March, 23 July and 22 October 2021
	Fraud Returns	Quarterly (30 November 2020, 28 February 2021, 31 May 2021 and 31 August 2021)

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# Significant risks

## Significant risk dashboard

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Risk	Fraud risk	Planned approach to controls	Level of management judgement	Page no
Occurrence of income				13
Management override of controls				14

### Level of management judgement



High degree of management judgement



Some degree of management judgement



Limited management judgement

### Controls approach adopted



Assess design and implementation



# Significant risks (continued)

## Occurrence of Income



### Risk identified and key judgements

ISA 240 states that when identifying and assessing the risks of material misstatement due to fraud, the auditor shall, based on a presumption that there are risks of fraud in income recognition, evaluate which types of income, income transactions or assertions give rise to such risks.

The main components of income for the VJB are requisitions from Orkney Islands Council ('OIC') and Shetland Islands Council ('SIC'). The significant risk is pinpointed to the recognition of this income, being occurrence of income received from the Councils given the reliance of the VJB on this income and the potential that funding partners may not provide additional income to cover overspends.



### Deloitte response and challenge

We will perform the following procedures:

- Assessing the design and implementation of the controls around recognition of income;
- Test the income to ensure that the correct contributions have been input and received in accordance with that agreed as part of the budget setting process and that any reductions have been appropriately applied;
- Test the reconciliations performed by the VJB at 31 March 2021 to confirm all income is correctly recorded in the ledger; and
- Confirm that the reconciliations performed during 2020/21 have been reviewed on a regular basis.

# Significant risks (continued)

## Management override of controls



### Risk identified

Management is in a unique position to perpetrate fraud because of their ability to manipulate accounting records and prepare fraudulent annual accounts by overriding controls that otherwise appear to be operating effectively.

Although management is responsible for safeguarding the assets of the entity, we planned our audit so that we had a reasonable expectation of detecting material misstatements to the annual accounts and accounting records.



### Deloitte response and challenge

In considering the risk of management override, we plan to perform the following audit procedures that directly address this risk:

**Test the appropriateness of journal entries** recorded in the general ledger and other adjustments made in the preparation of the annual accounts. In designing and performing audit procedures for such tests, we plan to:

- Test the design and implementation of controls over journal entry processing;
- Make inquiries of individuals involved in the financial reporting process about inappropriate or unusual activity relating to the processing of journal entries and other adjustments;
- Select journal entries and other adjustments made at the end of a reporting period; and
- Consider the need to test journal entries and other adjustments throughout the period.

**Review accounting estimates for biases** and evaluate whether the circumstances producing the bias, if any, represent a risk of material misstatement due to fraud. In performing this review, we plan to:

- Evaluate whether the judgments and decisions made by management in making the accounting estimates included in the annual accounts, even if they are individually reasonable, indicate a possible bias on the part of the entity's management that may represent a risk of material misstatement due to fraud. If so, we will re-evaluate the accounting estimates taken as a whole; and
- Perform a retrospective review of management judgements and assumptions related to significant accounting estimates reflected in the annual accounts of the prior year.

**For significant transactions that are outside the normal course of business** for the entity, or that otherwise appear to be unusual given our understanding of the entity and its environment and other information obtained during the audit, we shall evaluate whether the business rationale (or the lack thereof) of the transactions suggests that they may have been entered into to engage in fraudulent financial reporting or to conceal misappropriation of assets.

# Other areas of focus

## Pension liability



### Risk identified and key judgements

The VJB participates in the Shetland Islands Council Pension Fund, administered by Shetland Islands Council.

The net pension liability has decreased from £2.257m in 2018/19 to £1.925m in 2019/20. The decrease is as a result of changes in assumptions, specifically driven by reduced inflation assumptions, resulting in a reduction in the value of pension liabilities, partly offset by a reduction in the return on Scheme assets, resulting in the change in the value of the pension assets. The liability also continues to be affected by the McCloud and Goodwin legal cases.

Hymans Robertson LLP are the Council's appointed actuary, who produce a detailed report outlining the estimated liability at the year-end along with the associated disclosure requirements.

The pension liability valuation is an area of audit focus due to the material value and significant assumptions used in the calculation of the liability. The valuations are prepared by a reputable actuary using standard methodologies which have been considered as appropriate in previous years and no significant changes in the membership of the scheme or accrued benefits are expected in the current year. As a result, we have not identified this as a significant risk.



### Deloitte response and challenge

We will perform the following procedures to address the risk:

- Assess the independence and expertise of the actuary supporting the basis of reliance upon their work;
- Review and challenge the assumptions made by Hymans Robertson;
- Obtain assurance from the auditor of the pension fund over the controls for providing accurate data to the actuary;
- Consider the impact of the Triennial Review of the pension fund;
- Assess the reasonableness of the Board's share of the total assets of the scheme with the Pension Fund annual accounts;
- Review and challenge the calculation of the impact of the McCloud and Goodwin cases on pension liabilities; and
- Review the disclosures within the annual accounts against the Code.

# Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak

## Impact on our audit

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The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the 2019/20 audit process, despite impacting relatively late in the year. We would expect there to be guidance as we approach year-end on accounting and disclosure requirements for 2020/21, where the impact has been much more extensive on all organisations.

### Requirements

A key element of this will be communicating risks and governance impacts in narrative reporting, consistent with the Financial Reporting Council's guidance to organisations on the importance of communicating the impact of COVID-19 and related uncertainties, including their impact on resilience and going concern assessments.

Entity-specific explanations of the current and expected effects of COVID-19 and the Board's plans to mitigate those effects should be included in the narrative reporting (including where relevant the Annual Governance Statement), including in the discussion on Risks and Uncertainties impacting the organisation.

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### Actions

While there may be greater clarity as we approach year-end, we would expect the Board as part of their reporting within the "Risks and Uncertainties" section of the annual accounts, to conduct a thorough assessment of the current and potential future effects of the COVID-19 pandemic including:

- Consideration of the impact across the Board's operations, including on its income streams, supply chains and cost base, and the consequent impacts on financial position;
  - The scenarios assumed in making forecasts and on the sensitivities arising should other potential scenarios materialise (including different funding scenarios); and
  - The effect of events after the reporting date, including the nature of non-adjusting events and an estimate of their financial effect, where possible.
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# Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak (continued)

## Impact on our audit (continued)

Impact on the VJB and management actions	Impact on annual accounts	Impact on our audit
<p>We will consider the key impacts on the VJB such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Interruptions to service provision</li><li>• Supply chain disruptions</li><li>• Unavailability of personnel</li><li>• Reductions in income</li></ul>	<p>We have considered the impact of the outbreak on the annual accounts, discussed further on the next slide including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Narrative reporting, including disclosures on financial sustainability</li><li>• Principal risk disclosures</li><li>• Events after the reporting period and relevant disclosure</li><li>• Impact on property, plant and equipment valuations</li></ul>	<p>We will continue to assess the impact on the audit including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Resource planning</li><li>• Timetable of the audit</li><li>• Impact on our risk assessment</li><li>• Logistics including meetings with entity personnel</li></ul>

### Impact on annual accounts

#### Narrative and other reporting issues

The following areas will need to be considered by the VJB:

- Narrative reporting as well as the usual reporting requirements will need to cover the effects of the pandemic on services, operations, performance, strategic direction, resources and financial sustainability.
- Reporting judgements and estimation uncertainty, the VJB will need to report the impact on material transactions including decisions made on the measurements of assets and liabilities.

#### Going concern assessment

The annual accounts should include disclosure on the basis of the VJB's going concern assessment, including related uncertainties.

The VJB also needs to report on the impact of financial pressures and its financial sustainability in the narrative report, as well as any relevant liquidity reporting requirements under IFRS 7 Financial Instruments: Disclosures.

#### Events after the reporting period and relevant disclosures

Events are likely to continue to move swiftly, and the VJB will need to consider the events after the reporting period and whether these events will be adjusting or non-adjusting and make decisions on a transaction by transaction basis.

# Reporting hot topics

## Increased focus on quality reporting



### Deloitte view

The expectations of corporate reporting, reflected in the Financial Reporting Council's ('the FRC') monitoring and enforcement priorities, are increasing. While the focus is primarily on corporate entities, we highlight these areas where improved disclosures would help meet stakeholder expectations.



### The potential impacts of Brexit

Depending upon events, organisations may be preparing annual reports against the backdrop of continued uncertainty around the UK's future relationship with the EU. Even with a deal, the future basis of UK-EU trade will affect the longer-term viability period of 3-5 years and a longer consideration of prospects.

**ACTION:** Depending upon events through to the date of signing, we would expect to see annual reports reflecting at least:

- relevant risks and uncertainties, and actions taken to manage those risks; and
- consideration of whether there is any impact on critical accounting judgements and areas of estimation uncertainty.

We will discuss with the VJB closer to the time areas where disclosures may be appropriate.



### Climate-related risks

The report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has made it clear that prompt and decisive action on climate change is required from governments, businesses and individuals alike.

The recommendations of the Taskforce on Climate-related Financial Disclosure (TCFD) are gaining momentum. The government has proposed mandatory TCFD disclosures by 2022, and the FRC is undertaking a major review of how organisations assess and report the impact of climate change. The FRC expects organisations to disclose how they have taken climate change into account in assessing the resilience of the business model, its risks, uncertainties and viability both in immediate and longer term.

Investors are challenging companies that are not factoring the effects of the Paris Climate Agreement into their critical accounting judgements and are not disclosing comprehensively these judgements, assumptions, sensitivities and uncertainties.

**ACTION:** Clearly articulate how your organisation is addressing climate change e.g.

- whether this is a principal risk and how it is being managed; and
- its impact on the business model, the viability statement and the key assumptions and projections in impairment reviews and valuations (including in assessing remaining asset lives).

# Revisions to auditing standards coming into effect

## ISA (UK) 570 – Going concern

The FRC issued a revised going concern standard in September 2019, that takes effect for periods commencing on or after 15 December 2019. For public sector bodies, this will be March 2021 year ends and later.

The revision was made in response to recent enforcement cases and well-publicised corporate failures where the auditor's report failed to highlight concerns about the prospects of entities which collapsed shortly after.

We have summarised below the key areas of change in the standard – however, the Public Audit Forum is also consulting on changes to Practice Note 10, with the intention of reflecting public sector considerations in the approach to going concern, and so the ultimate impact of ISA (UK) 570 changes will be affected by this.

The key changes affect:

- Risk assessment procedures and related activities, increasing consideration of the entity's business model, operations and financing;
- The auditor's evaluation of management's assessment of the going concern assumption (which therefore requires a clearly documented assessment to be prepared by management);
- Enhanced professional scepticism requirements, including around the evaluation of the sufficiency and appropriateness of audit evidence;
- Considering the appropriateness of disclosures; and
- Reporting in enhanced audit reports.

*"The revised standard means UK auditors will follow significantly stronger requirements than those required by current international standards."*

FRC's press release, 30 September 2019



# Revisions to auditing standards coming into effect (continued)

## ISA (UK) 540 – Auditing Accounting Estimates and Related Disclosures

Since 2015, the International Auditing and Assurance Standards Board (IAASB) has sought to identify audit issues relating to accounting estimates for financial institutions and other entities. Initially, this focused on the impact of IFRS 9 *Financial Instruments*, because it would fundamentally change the way that banks and other entities account for loan assets and other credit exposures.

However, the IAASB concluded that most, if not all, issues identified for expected credit losses would be equally relevant when auditing other complex accounting estimates. Accordingly, a holistic revision of ISA 540 was undertaken and the new standard takes effect for periods commencing on or after 1 January 2020. For public sector bodies, this will be March 2021 year ends and later.

We summarise on the next few slides how this will impact our audit.

*“There is a clear need to update ISA 540 to support better quality audits of increasingly complex accounting estimates”*

FRC letter to the IAASB, July 2017

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### Area of change

### Impact on our audit

### Impact on the VJB

Assessment of oversight and governance relating to estimates

In connection with our planning work to understand the entity and its environment, including internal control, we will specifically enquire regarding management’s processes, and the oversight and governance of those processes relating to accounting estimates.

You will need to consider the adequacy of your processes and controls over estimates, and documentation thereof.

# Revisions to auditing standards coming into effect (continued)

## ISA (UK) 540 – Auditing Accounting Estimates and Related Disclosures (continued)

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Area of change	Impact on our audit	Impact on the VJB
Identification of inherent risk factors; separate assessment of inherent risk and control risk	Recognising a spectrum of inherent risk, we will assess risks of material misstatement in estimates with reference not only to estimation uncertainty, but also complexity, subjectivity or other inherent risk factors, and the interrelationship among them.	You will need to provide clear documented rationale for (a) the selection and application of the method, assumptions and data in making the accounting estimate, including any changes in the current year, and controls relating to those aspects; and/or (b) the selection of a point estimate and related disclosures for inclusion in the annual accounts.
Objectives-based work effort requirements	We will specifically assess control risk relating to estimates, which may require us to evaluate the design and determine implementation of an increased number of internal controls. Our subsequent audit procedures will be responsive to this assessment, and designed to obtain evidence around the methods, significant assumptions, data and (where applicable) the selection of a point estimate and related disclosures about estimation uncertainty.	
Enhanced “stand back” requirement, to evaluate the audit evidence obtained	We will specifically design our procedures, to enhance our application of professional scepticism, so that they are not biased towards finding corroborative evidence; our overall evaluation of the evidence obtained will weigh both corroborative and contradictory evidence.	You should expect more challenge of the evidence provided in support of accounting estimates, use of external data sources and your consideration of contradictory evidence.

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# Revisions to auditing standards coming into effect (continued)

## ISA (UK) 540 – Auditing Accounting Estimates and Related Disclosures (continued)

Area of change	Impact on our audit	Impact on the VJB
Enhanced requirements about whether disclosures are “reasonable”	The extant ISA 540 required us to evaluate whether disclosures were “adequate”. The change to “reasonable” will involve greater consideration of the overall meaning conveyed through disclosures. For example, where estimation uncertainty associated with an estimate is multiple times materiality, we will consider whether the disclosures appropriately convey the high degree of estimation uncertainty and the range of possible outcomes.	You should expect more challenge on disclosures relating to estimates, particularly for where you have selected a point estimate from a range and those with high estimation uncertainty.
New requirements when communicating with those charged with governance	In accordance with ISA (UK) 260 and ISA (UK) 265, our communications from the audit have included significant qualitative aspects of your accounting practices and significant deficiencies in internal control. With the revised ISA (UK) 540, these communications will specifically include matters regarding accounting estimates and take into account whether the reasons for our risk assessment relate to estimation uncertainty, or the effects of complexity, subjectivity or other inherent risk factors.	You should expect increased reporting in relation to accounting estimates which may be mirrored in our Annual Audit Report.

### Areas where we consider the impact to be greatest:

The key area impacted will be pension valuations.

- The net pension asset valuations are provided by the VJB’s appointed actuary, Hymans Robertson LLP, who produce a detailed report outlining the estimated liability at the year-end along with the associated disclosure requirements. The valuations are prepared by a reputable actuary using standard methodologies which have been considered as appropriate in previous years. We expect to receive similar reports as last year, setting out the basis for the valuations, including the assumptions and methodologies.

Management should ensure that this information is available in advance of the 2020/21 audit fieldwork.

# Audit Quality

## Our commitment to audit quality



Our objective is to deliver a distinctive, quality audit to you. Every member of the engagement team will contribute, to achieve the highest standard of professional excellence.

In particular, for your audit, we consider that the following steps will contribute to the overall quality:

We will apply professional scepticism on material issues and significant judgements by using our expertise in the local government sector and elsewhere to provide robust challenge to management.

We have obtained a deep understanding of your business, its environment and of your processes in income and expenditure recognition and payroll expenditure enabling us to develop a risk-focused approach tailored to the VJB.

Our engagement team is selected to ensure that we have the right subject matter expertise and industry knowledge. We will involve pensions specialists to support the audit team in our work on work undertaken in relation to the VJB's pension scheme.

In order to deliver a quality audit to you, each member of the core audit team has received tailored learning to develop their expertise in audit skills, delivered by Pat Kenny (Audit Director) and other sector experts. This includes sector specific matters and audit methodology updates.



### **Engagement Quality Control Review**

We have developed a tailored Engagement Quality Control approach. Our dedicated Professional Standards Review (PSR) function will provide a 'hot' review before any audit or other opinion is signed. PSR is operationally independent of the audit team, and supports our high standards of professional scepticism and audit quality by providing a rigorous independent challenge.

# Wider scope requirements

## Overview

The Code of Audit Practice sets out four audit dimensions that frame the wider scope of the audit of the accounts. These are financial sustainability, financial management, governance and transparency and value for money. The audit dimensions provide a common framework for all the audit work conducted for the Auditor General and for the Accounts Commission.

Due to the relative size and scale of the functions delivered by the VJB, we have concluded that the full wider scope audit is not appropriate. The VJB has a budget of £0.852m, mainly comprising payroll costs. Transactions are generally routine in nature and the majority of funding is from both Shetland Islands Council and Orkney Islands Council. We have updated our risk assessment which included consideration of the VJB's risk registers and have concluded that the "small body" exemption is still appropriate. In accordance with the Code, our work in this area will therefore be restricted to concluding on the following:

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Audit dimension	Significant risk identified	Planned audit response
Governance statement	There is a risk that the disclosures in the governance statement do not meet the requirements of the guidance note issued by CIPFA "Delivering good governance in local government: framework 2016" or are inconsistent with our knowledge of the Board.	We will review the draft governance statement and assess whether there are any inconsistencies or omissions based on other audit evidence obtained throughout the audit.
Financial sustainability	<p>Given the financial pressures across the public sector, in addition to the uncertainty created by EU withdrawal and the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a significant risk that robust medium to long-term planning arrangements are not in place. This creates a risk that the body is unable to manage its finances sustainably and deliver services effectively, identify issues and challenges early and act on them promptly.</p> <p>The VJB has long-standing vacancies in key positions, and there are ongoing reviews into the VJB's workforce and the provision of services by SIC and OIC. These issues create a risk that the VJB does not have the necessary resources to discharge its responsibilities and achieve its stated objectives.</p>	<p>We will review and monitor progress in relation to the publication of a Medium-Term Financial Plan to ensure the key principles of public service reform – prevention, performance, partnership and people – have been incorporated into the VJB's financial planning. There should be clear links to the Scottish Government Medium-Term Financial Strategy and the Board's strategy and outcomes.</p> <p>We will also review progress in addressing the workforce and resourcing issues identified in the prior year annual audit report.</p>

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# Purpose of our report and responsibility statement

Our report is designed to help you meet your governance duties

## What we report

Our report is designed to establish our respective responsibilities in relation to the annual accounts audit, to agree our audit plan and to take the opportunity to ask you questions at the planning stage of our audit. Our report includes:

- Our audit plan, including key audit judgements and the planned scope; and
- Key regulatory and corporate governance updates, relevant to you

## Use of this report

This report has been prepared for the Board, as a body, and we therefore accept responsibility to you alone for its contents. We accept no duty, responsibility or liability to any other parties, since this report has not been prepared, and is not intended, for any other purpose. Except where required by law or regulation, it should not be made available to any other parties without our prior written consent.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss our report with you and receive your feedback.

## What we don't report


As you will be aware, our audit is not designed to identify all matters that may be relevant to the Board.

Also, there will be further information you need to discharge your governance responsibilities, such as matters reported on by management or by other specialist advisers.

Finally, the views on internal controls and business risk assessment in our final report should not be taken as comprehensive or as an opinion on effectiveness since they will be based solely on the audit procedures performed in the audit of the annual accounts and the other procedures performed in fulfilling our audit plan.

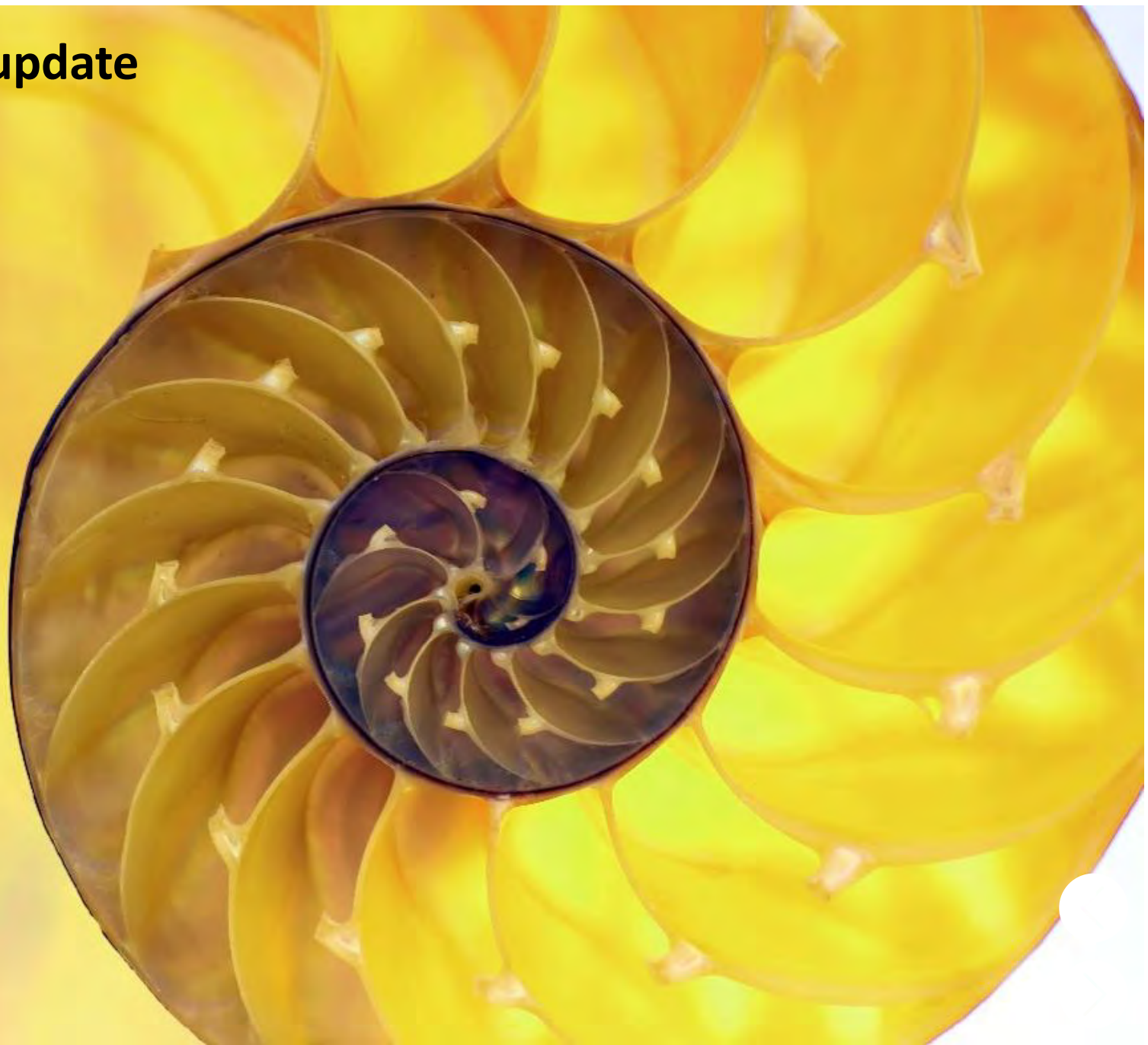
## Other relevant communications

We will update you if there are any significant changes to the audit plan.



**Pat Kenny**  
for and on behalf of Deloitte LLP  
Glasgow | 9 February 2021

# Technical update





# What does climate change mean for business?

New website – learning, interviews and resources

Climate change is likely to drive some of the most profound changes to businesses in our lifetimes.

Impacts on products and services, supply chains, loss of asset values and market dislocation are already being caused by more frequent and severe climate-related events.

Discover how to think through the challenges and futureproof your business.

**The time to act is now!**

The screenshot shows the Deloitte website page. At the top left is the Deloitte logo. To the right, it says 'IN COLLABORATION WITH ICAEW' with a small icon of a person holding a red flag. Below the navigation bar are links for 'Learning | Interviews | Resources | Contact us'. The main content area features a large image of the Earth. Below the image is the title 'What does climate change mean for business?' and the subtitle 'Understanding the role of finance professionals'. The main text reads: 'Climate change is likely to drive some of the most profound changes to businesses in our lifetimes. Impacts on products and services, supply chains, loss of asset values and market dislocation are already being caused by more frequent and severe climate-related events. These effects are now compounded by the accelerating pace of policy and regulatory change as humanity recognises the challenge we face and the drastic and rapid actions we all must take in order to protect our planet and our own livelihoods. Discover how to think through the challenges and futureproof your business through [learning](#), [interviews](#) and [resources](#). The time to act is now!'. At the bottom, it says 'Supported by' followed by logos for AAS (Accounting for Sustainability), CIBI, CDSB (Climate Disclosure Standards Board), Centre for Climate Change Engagement (with a '100' logo), and SASB (Sustainability Accounting Standards Board).

Visit: [www.deloitte.co.uk/climatechange](http://www.deloitte.co.uk/climatechange)

# Changes to the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting

2020/21

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## Background

The accounting code has been issued by the CIPFA/LASAAC Local Authority Code Board and its financial reporting framework is based on International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) as adopted by the European Union, adapted for the local government context where necessary.

The 2020/21 accounting code has been prepared on the basis of accounting standards and other pronouncements in effect for accounting periods commencing on or before 1 January 2020 (except for IFRS 16 Leases).

The changes in the 2020/21 accounting code are summarised in the Foreword. The most significant changes impacting the VJB are:

- ***The total line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement*** – the line description used now needs to provide clarity regarding the use of positive and negative signage. For example, where brackets are used to represent an overall surplus the description “Total comprehensive (income) and expenditure” may be used.
- ***Amendments to reflect changes to the definition of material in IAS 8*** – it now states that information is material if omitting, misstating or obscuring it could reasonably be expected to influence decisions that users make on the basis of those annual accounts.

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## Next steps

We recommend that management review the changes to the accounting code at the earliest opportunity. We are happy to have early discussions on this to agree and apply the required changes.

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# The State of the State 2020-21 (continued)

## Government in the pandemic and beyond (continued)

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### The state according to the public

A survey of more than 5,000 members of the public shows how people feel about tax, spending and public service priorities amid the COVID-19 pandemic. We also explore attitudes towards data sharing with and across government, and unpick what the public across each nation and region wants to see levelled up

**58%** of the public believe opportunities for young people will be worse as a result of coronavirus.

**42%** of the public believe that community spirit will have improved after the pandemic



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### The state according to the people who run it

Over 40 senior public sector figures in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland talked with us about the issues that matter to them. We explore their views on the legacy of COVID-19, levelling up, EU Exit and creating a data-driven government.

Our interviews of **40** senior public sector figures found that many want to retain the agility of new ways of working however, many sense a gravitational pull back to normality.

# Fast forward to the past

## Is automation making organisations less diverse?

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### Background and overview

Robotics and intelligent automation are in the process of transforming the nature of work and the skills required to do it. Whilst there is a clear risk of reinforcing structural inequalities there is also an opportunity to address diversity issues within automation programmes to ensure public sector organisations can capitalise on the benefits that both automation and diversity bring to business outcomes.

**For many public sector organisations implementing automation whilst considering diversity is new and uncharted territory. We would like to encourage our public sector clients to consider and discuss this crucial issue.**

Based on exclusive client interviews, insight from public sector projects and extensive desk research, our report explores the potential risks of not considering the implications of automation on workforce diversity and inequality. It also identifies the barriers to embedding diversity in automation programmes.

The report provides a practical four stage framework to integrate diverse groups to not only survive but thrive in a new automated and digital world.

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### Next steps

The full report is available at <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/uk/Documents/public-sector/deloitte-uk-diversity-and-automation-brochure-landscape.pdf>



# The future unmasked

## Predicting the future of healthcare and life science in 2025

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### Background and overview

**What does the future hold for the life sciences and healthcare industry? Our latest predictions report looks ahead to the year 2025 to help you see what's coming and to keep your organisation moving forward.**

Each prediction is brought to life through snapshots of how patients, healthcare and life science companies and their staff might behave and operate in this new world. We explore the major trends and the key constraints to be overcome; and identify the evidence today to predict how near that future might be.

This year, inevitably, our predictions have been informed by the unparalleled impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on society in general and more specifically on how people perceive health risks. We have seen a new public appreciation of the contribution that healthcare and life sciences companies are making to each country's response and how these companies are paving the way for a new era of collaboration to identify and implement solutions. A key stand out has been the huge acceleration in the pace and scale of technology-enabled transformation across the whole health ecosystem.



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### Next steps

Explore the individual predictions or download the full series below to learn more <https://www2.deloitte.com/uk/en/pages/life-sciences-and-healthcare/articles/life-sciences-and-health-care-predictions.html>

# Changes to accounting standards

## IFRS 16 - Leases

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### Background

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The implementation of the new standard has been deferred again for another year, with a revised implementation date of 2022/23 and will require adjustments to recognise on balance sheet arrangements currently treated as operating leases.

For 2021/22, the VJB will need to include disclosures on the expected impact of the standard, but not make any adjustments in the annual accounts in respect of IFRS 16. However, many organisations have identified previously unidentified leases (or arrangements that contain a lease, such as service contracts) as part of their transition project, and so there may be some impact in 2021/22.

In the local government context relatively small effects from standards can have a significant impact against performance metrics and targets, and so it is important to clearly understand the impact of the standards.

While the deferral of implementation means there is no direct impact on the 2020/21 annual accounts, finance teams should use this additional time to continue their preparation for implementation.

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### Next steps

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We recommend that the VJB review the impact of IFRS 16, including calculating any adjustments that will be required as at 31 March 2022 for transition. We would suggest that the Board receive reporting from management on the implementation of the new standard, and we will report specifically on the findings from our audit work in this area.

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# Appendices





# Prior year audit adjustments

## Uncorrected misstatements

The following uncorrected misstatements were identified during the course of our prior year audit:

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		Debit/(Credit) CIES £'k	Debit/(Credit) MIRS £'k	Debit/(Credit) in net assets £'k	Debit/(Credit) reserves £'k
<b>Judgemental misstatements</b>					
McCloud – Current Service Cost	(1)	1.93	(1.93)	(1.93)	1.93
<b>Total</b>		<b>1.93</b>	<b>(1.93)</b>	<b>(1.93)</b>	<b>1.93</b>

(1) Due to the McCloud judgement - which resulted in transitional pension arrangements due to government changes being ruled unlawful - and the subsequent consultation by the SPPA, the pension liability required to be adjusted to account for the judgement. The adjustment by the actuary did not include an adjustment for the current service cost impact.

We obtained written representations from the Board confirming that after considering these uncorrected items, both individually and in aggregate, in the context of the annual accounts taken as a whole, no adjustments were required.

# Our other responsibilities explained

## Fraud responsibilities



### Your Responsibilities:

The primary responsibility for the prevention and detection of fraud rests with management and those charged with governance, including establishing and maintaining internal controls over the reliability of financial reporting, effectiveness and efficiency of operations and compliance with applicable laws and regulations.



### Our responsibilities:

- We are required to obtain representations from your management regarding internal controls, assessment of risk and any known or suspected fraud or misstatement.
- As auditors, we obtain reasonable, but not absolute, assurance that the annual accounts as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error.
- As set out in the significant risks section of this document, we have identified risks of material misstatement due to fraud in relation to occurrence of income, and management override of controls.
- We will explain in our audit report how we considered the audit capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud. In doing so, we will describe the procedures we performed in understanding the legal and regulatory framework and assessing compliance with relevant laws and regulations.

Whilst this requirement has been in place for a few years for public interest entities (as defined by the EU Audit Regulation), recent changes to ISAs (UK) mean it will apply to **all** entities for periods **commencing on or after 15 December 2019**.



### Fraud Characteristics:

- Misstatements in the annual accounts can arise from either fraud or error. The distinguishing factor between fraud and error is whether the underlying action that results in the misstatement of the annual accounts is intentional or unintentional.
- Two types of intentional misstatements are relevant to us as auditors – misstatements resulting from fraudulent financial reporting and misstatements resulting from misappropriation of assets.

# Our other responsibilities explained (continued)

## Fraud responsibilities (continued)

We will make the following inquiries regarding fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations:



### Management:

- Management's assessment of the risk that the annual accounts may be materially misstated due to fraud, including the nature, extent and frequency of such assessments.
- Management's process for identifying and responding to risks of fraud.
- Management's communication, if any, to those charged with governance regarding its processes for identifying and responding to the risks of fraud.
- Management's communication, if any, to employees regarding its views on business practices and ethical behaviour.
- Whether management has knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud affecting the entity.
- We plan to involve management from outside the finance function in our inquiries, in particular Dennis M Stevenson (Assessor)



### Internal audit

- Whether internal audit has knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud affecting the entity, and to obtain its views about the risks of fraud.



### Those charged with governance

- How those charged with governance exercise oversight of management's processes for identifying and responding to the risks of fraud in the entity and the internal control that management has established to mitigate these risks.
- Whether those charged with governance have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud affecting the entity.
- The views of those charged with governance on the most significant fraud risk factors affecting the entity.



# Independence and fees

As part of our obligations under International Standards on Auditing (UK), we are required to report to you on the matters listed below:

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## Independence confirmation

We confirm the audit engagement team, and others in the firm as appropriate, Deloitte LLP and, where applicable, all Deloitte network firms are independent of the VJB and will reconfirm our independence and objectivity to the VJB for the year ending 31 March 2021 in our final report to the Board.

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## Fees

The proposed audit fee for 2020/21, which utilises the flexibility permitted within the expected fee issued by Audit Scotland due to additional procedures in relation to the audit dimensions, is £8,603 as analysed below:

	£
Auditor remuneration	7,613
Audit Scotland fixed charges:	
Pooled costs	630
Audit support costs	360
<b>Total proposed audit fee</b>	<b>8,603</b>

There are no non-audit services fees proposed for the period.

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## Non-audit services

In our opinion there are no inconsistencies between the FRC's Ethical Standard and the company'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.

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## Relationships

We have no other relationships with the VJB, its directors, senior managers and affiliates, and have not supplied any services to other known connected parties.

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# Our approach to quality

## AQR team report and findings

Audit quality remains our number one priority and we have a relentless commitment to it. We continue to invest in and enhance our Audit Quality Monitoring and Measuring programme.

In July 2020 the Financial Reporting Council (“FRC”) issued individual reports on each of the seven largest firms, including Deloitte, on Audit Quality Inspections providing a summary of the findings of its Audit Quality Review (“AQR”) team for the 2019/20 cycle of reviews.

We greatly value the FRC reviews of our audit engagements and firm wide quality control systems, a key aspect of evaluating our audit quality.

We are pleased with our results for the inspections of FTSE 350 entities achieving 90% assessed as good or needing limited improvement, which included some of our highest risk audits. Our objective is for 100% of our audits to be assessed as good or needing limited improvement and we know we still have work to do in order to meet this standard. We are however, extremely disappointed one engagement received a rating of significant improvements required during the period. This is

viewed very seriously within Deloitte and we have worked with the AQR to agree a comprehensive set of swift and significant firm wide actions.

We are also pleased to see the impact of our previous actions on prior year adjustments is reflected in the results of current year inspections with no findings in this areas. In addition the FRC identified good practice examples including in: risk assessment, group oversight, our comprehensive IFRS9 expected credit loss audit programme and our audit committee reporting.

Embedding a culture of challenge in our audit practice underpins the key pillars of our audit strategy. We invest continually in our firm wide processes and controls, which we seek to develop globally, to underpin consistency in delivering high quality audits whilst ensuring engagement teams exercise professional scepticism through robust challenge.

All the AQR public reports are available on its website. <https://www.frc.org.uk/auditors/audit-quality-review/audit-firm-specific-reports>



# Our approach to quality (continued)

## AQR team report and findings (continued)

### The AQR's 2019/20 Audit Quality Inspection Report on Deloitte LLP

“We reviewed 17 individual audits this year and assessed 13 (76%) as requiring no more than limited improvements. Of the ten FTSE 350 audits we reviewed this year, we assessed nine (90%) as achieving this standard.”

“We have highlighted in this report aspects of firm-wide procedures which should be improved, including strengthening the monitoring of the firm’s audit quality initiatives.”

#### “Our key findings related principally to the need to:

- Improve the extent of challenge over cash flow forecasts in relation to the impairment of goodwill and other assets.
- Enhance the effectiveness of substantive analytical review and other testing for revenue.
- Improve the assessment and extent of challenge regarding management’s estimates, particularly for model testing.”

**“The firm has taken steps to address the key findings in our 2019 public reports, with actions that included focused training and standardising the firm’s audit work programs.** We have identified improvements, for example in the audit of potential prior year adjustments and related disclosures, a key finding last year. We also identified good practice in a number of areas of the audits we reviewed (including effective group oversight and robust risk assessment) and in the firm-wide procedures (including the firm’s milestone program, with expected dates for the phasing of the audit monitored by the firm).”





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