



# Annual Audit Letter 2017/18

**City of Stoke-on-Trent Council**

August 2018

A group of business professionals in a meeting, looking at documents. The image is a close-up, slightly blurred, showing several people in business attire. A woman with dark hair is on the left, looking down. A man with grey hair is in the center, also looking down. Another woman is on the right, partially visible. They are all looking at documents or a screen. The image has a blue horizontal band across the middle with text.

**Section one**

# Summary for Audit Committee

# Summary for Audit Committee

This Annual Audit Letter summarises the outcome from our audit work at City of Stoke-on-Trent Council (“the Authority”) in relation to the 2017-18 audit year.

Although it is addressed to Members of the Authority, it is also intended to communicate these key messages to key external stakeholders, including members of the public, and will be placed on the Authority’s website.

This is KPMG’s last Annual Audit Letter to the Authority. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Authority’s officers and the members of the Audit Committee for their support throughout the three years of our audit appointment.

## Audit opinion

We issued an unqualified opinion on the Authority’s financial statements on 30 July 2018. This means that we believe the financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Authority and of its expenditure and income for the year.

## Financial statements audit

Our audit procedures are designed to identify misstatements which are material to our opinion on the financial statements as a whole. Materiality for the Authority’s accounts was set at £8 million which equates to around 1% of gross expenditure. We design our procedures to detect errors in specific accounts at a lower level of precision.

We report to the Audit Committee any misstatements of lesser amounts, other than those that are “clearly trivial”, to the extent that these are identified by our audit work. In the context of the Authority, an individual difference is considered to be clearly trivial if it is less than £400k.

We did not identify any material misstatements and there were not adjusted misstatements identified during our audit that we are required to report to you.

The working papers provided this year have been of a high standard and were available at the start of the audit visit. The finance team responded promptly to any requests for additional information or explanation and were available throughout the audit visit to answer. We thank the finance team for their co-operation throughout the visit which allowed the audit to progress within the allocated timeframe.

Our audit work was designed to specifically consider and address the following significant risks:

- **Management Override of Controls** – our audit methodology incorporates the risk of management override as a default significant risk. We did not identify any specific additional risks of management override relating to the audit.
- **Valuation of PPE** –we have reviewed the accounting and presentation of the revaluation of PPE assets. In year the Council have revalued assets leading to an increase in the value of assets held by the Council of £6.9m;
- **Pensions Liabilities** –we have reviewed the presentation of the pensions costs and liabilities included within the financial statements. We have agreed a presentational change to how the early payment of pension costs have been shown within the financial statements.

We did not identify any evidence of material misstatement as a result of our audit work on these significant risk areas.

## Section one:

# Summary for Audit Committee (cont.)

## Other information accompanying the financial statements

Whilst not explicitly covered by our audit opinion, we review other information that accompanies the financial statements to consider its material consistency with the audited accounts. This year we reviewed the Annual Governance Statement and Narrative Report. We concluded that they were consistent with our understanding and did not identify any significant issues.

## Whole of Government Accounts

The Authority prepares a consolidation pack to support the production of Whole of Government Accounts by HM Treasury. We have reviewed your pack as you are above the threshold where an audit is required. We have concluded this work and reported our conclusions to the National Audit Office. We did not have any concerns to raise.

## Value for Money conclusion

We issued an unqualified conclusion on the Authority's arrangements to secure value for money (VFM conclusion) for 2017-18 on 30 July 2018. This means we are satisfied that during the year the Authority had appropriate arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of its resources. To arrive at our conclusion we looked at the Authority's arrangements to make informed decision making, sustainable resource deployment and working with partners and third parties.

## Value for Money risk areas

We undertook a risk assessment as part of our VFM audit work to identify the key areas impacting on our VFM conclusion and considered the arrangements you have put in place to mitigate these risks. Our work identified the following significant risk:

- **Delivery of Budgets** –due to the underlying financial challenges being faced by all local government bodies we have included this a significant risk across our client base. We have reviewed the arrangements in place for the preparation and reporting of budgets and financial information at the Council for this year and looking forward to the medium term and have no immediate concerns to raise. However there remains a difficult challenge ahead and as such have raised a recommendation that the Council continues to maintain a high focus on this issue;
- **Working with Partners** –due to the new models of service delivery being used by the Council we have reviewed the governance arrangements in place to oversee the establishment and operation of these new ventures. We have no concerns to report however the governance arrangements should continue to be reviewed should the nature and scope of the services delivered via partners change.

We were satisfied that there were adequate arrangements in place during 2017-18 and there were no significant matters relating to these risk areas which prevented us from giving an unqualified VFM conclusion.

## High priority recommendations

We raised no high priority recommendations as a result of our 2017-18 work.

## Certificate

We issued our certificate on 16 August 2018. The certificate confirms that we have concluded the audit for 2017-18 in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014 and the Code of Audit Practice.

## Section one:

# Summary for Audit Committee (cont.)

### Audit fee

The scale fee set by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited (PSAA) for the 2017-18 audit is £186,536 plus VAT. The PSAA scale fee for 2016-17 was £186,536 plus VAT.

Further detail is contained in Appendix 2.

### Exercising of audit powers

We have a duty to consider whether to issue a report in the public interest about something we believe the Authority should consider, or if the public should know about.

We have not identified any matters that would require us to issue a public interest report.

In addition, we have not had to exercise any other audit powers under the Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014.



# Appendices



## Appendix 1:

# Summary of reports issued

This appendix summarises the reports we issued since our last Annual Audit Letter.

### Certification of Grants and Returns

This report summarised the outcome of our certification work on the Authority's 2016-17 grants and returns.

### External Audit Plan

The External Audit Plan set out our approach to the audit of the Authority's financial statements and to support the VFM conclusion.

### Report to Those Charged with Governance

The Report to Those Charged with Governance summarised the results of our audit work for 2017-18 including key issues and recommendations raised as a result of our observations.

We also provided the mandatory declarations required under auditing standards as part of this report.

### Auditor's Report

The Auditor's Report included our audit opinion on the financial statements along with our VFM conclusion. We issued our certificate following completion of our WGA work.

### Annual Audit Letter

This Annual Audit Letter provides a summary of the results of our audit for 2017-18.

2018

January

February

March

April

May

June

July

August

September

October

## Appendix 2:

# Audit fees

This appendix provides information on our final fees for the 2017-18 audit.

### External audit

The scale fee set by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited (PSAA) for the 2017-18 audit is £186,536 plus VAT. The PSAA scale fee for 2016-17 was £186,536 plus VAT.

### Certification of grants and returns

Under our terms of engagement with PSAA we undertake prescribed work in order to certify the Authority's 2017-18 housing benefit grant claim. This certification work is still ongoing, and the certification deadline is 30 November 2018. The PSAA scale fee for this work is £20,089 and the final fee will be confirmed through our reporting on the outcome of that work in January 2019.

### Other services

We charged £3,750 for the independent assurance report on the 2016-17 Teacher's Pension Return and £3,500 for the independent assurance report on the 2016-17 Pooling of Housing Capital Receipts. This work was not related to our responsibilities under the Code of Audit Practice and was agreed through a separate Engagement Letter.





The key contacts in relation to our audit are:

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This report is addressed to the Authority and has been prepared for the sole use of the Authority. We take no responsibility to any member of staff acting in their individual capacities, or to third parties. We draw your attention to the Statement of Responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies, which is available on Public Sector Audit Appointment's website ([www.psa.co.uk](http://www.psa.co.uk)).

External auditors do not act as a substitute for the audited body's own responsibility for putting in place proper arrangements to ensure that public business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

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

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