



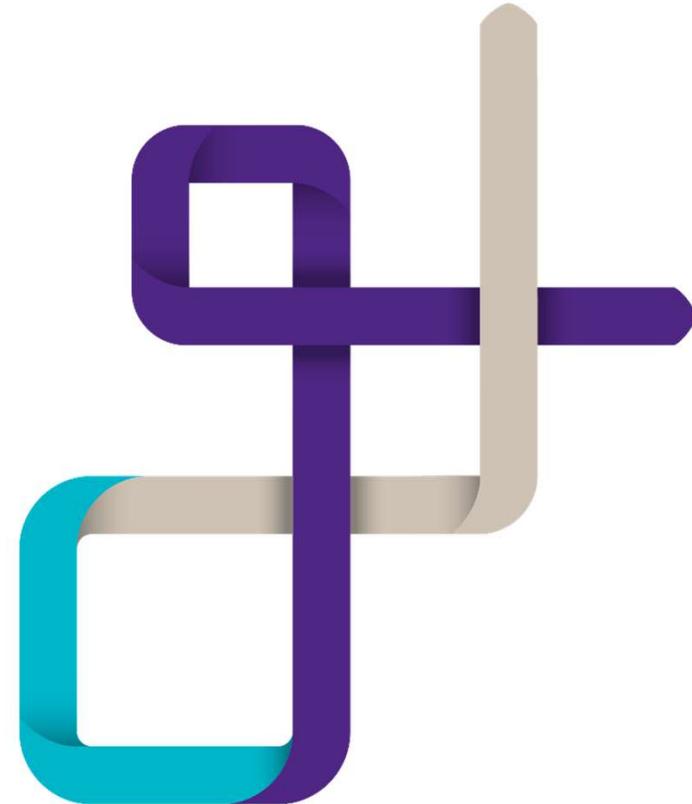
# External Audit Plan Addendum

*Year ending 31 March 2020*

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**Southwark Council**

3 June 2020



# Introduction & headlines

## Purpose

This document provides an update to the planned scope and timing of the statutory audit of Southwark Council (the Council) as reported in our Audit Plan dated 10 February 2020, for those charged with governance.

## The current environment

In addition to the audit risks communicated to those charged with governance in our Audit Plan on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2020, recent events have led us to update our planning risk assessment and reconsider our audit and Value for Money (VfM) approach to reflect the unprecedented global response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The significance of the situation cannot be underestimated and the implications for individuals, organisations and communities remains highly uncertain. For our public sector audited bodies, we appreciate the significant responsibility and burden your staff have to ensure vital public services are provided. The Council will also be specifically facing a number of tough challenges around funding, investment, governance and communications to members. As far we can, our aim is to work with you in these unprecedented times, ensuring up to date communication and flexibility where possible in our audit procedures.

## Impact on our audit and VfM work

Management and those charged with governance are still required to prepare financial statements in accordance with the relevant accounting standards and the Code of Audit Practice, albeit to an extended deadline for the preparation of the financial statements up to 31 August 2020 and the date for audited financials statements to 30 November 2020, however we will liaise with management to agree appropriate timescales. We continue to be responsible for forming and expressing an opinion on the Council's financial statements.

In order to fulfil our responsibilities under International Auditing Standards (ISA's (UK)) we have revisited our planning risk assessment. We may also need to consider implementing changes to the procedures we had planned and reported in our Audit Plan to reflect current restrictions to working practices, such as the application of technology to allow remote working. Additionally, it has been confirmed since our Audit Plan was issued that the implementation of IFRS 16 has been delayed for the public sector until 2020/21. We will consider the impact of Covid-19 on our testing throughout the audit and inform you of any additional costs as soon as practicable.

## Changes to our audit approach

To date we have:

- Identified two new significant risks, as described overleaf,
- Reviewed the materiality levels we determined for the audit we did not identify any changes to our materiality assessment as a result of the risk identified due to Covid-19.

## Changes to our VfM approach

We have updated our VfM risk assessment to document our understanding of your arrangements to ensure critical business continuity in the current environment. We have not identified any new VfM risks in relation to Covid-19.

## Conclusion

We will ensure any further changes in our audit and VfM approach and procedures are communicated with management and reported in our Audit Findings Report. We wish to thank management for their timely collaboration in this difficult time.

# Significant risks identified – Covid-19 Pandemic

Risk	Reason for risk identification	Key aspects of our proposed response to the risk
Covid-19	<p>The global outbreak of the Covid-19 virus pandemic has led to unprecedented uncertainty for all organisations, requiring urgent business continuity arrangements to be implemented. We expect current circumstances will have an impact on the production and audit of the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2020, including and not limited to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remote working arrangements and redeployment of staff to critical front line duties may impact on the quality and timing of the production of the financial statements, and the evidence we can obtain through physical observation</li> <li>• Volatility of financial and property markets will increase the uncertainty of assumptions applied by management to asset valuation and receivable recovery estimates, and the reliability of evidence we can obtain to corroborate management estimates</li> <li>• Financial uncertainty will require management to reconsider financial forecasts supporting their going concern assessment and whether material uncertainties for a period of at least 12 months from the anticipated date of approval of the audited financial statements have arisen; and</li> <li>• Disclosures within the financial statements will require significant revision to reflect the unprecedented situation and its impact on the preparation of the financial statements as at 31 March 2020 in accordance with IAS1, particularly in relation to material uncertainties.</li> </ul> <p>We therefore identified the global outbreak of the Covid-19 virus as a significant risk, which was one of the most significant assessed risks of material misstatement.</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with management to understand the implications the response to the Covid-19 pandemic has on the organisation’s ability to prepare the financial statements and update financial forecasts and assess the implications on our audit approach</li> <li>• Liaise with other audit suppliers, regulators and government departments to co-ordinate practical cross sector responses to issues as and when they arise</li> <li>• Evaluate the adequacy of the disclosures in the financial statements in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.</li> <li>• Evaluate whether sufficient audit evidence using alternative approaches can be obtained for the purposes of our audit whilst working remotely</li> <li>• Evaluate whether sufficient audit evidence can be obtained to corroborate significant management estimates such as asset valuations and recovery of receivable balances</li> <li>• Evaluate management’s assumptions that underpin the revised financial forecasts and the impact on management’s going concern assessment</li> <li>• Discuss with management any potential implications for our audit report if we have been unable to obtain sufficient audit evidence.</li> </ul>

# Significant risks identified – Valuation of Investment Properties

Risk	Reason for risk identification	Key aspects of our proposed response to the risk
<b>Valuation of Investment Properties</b>	<p>The Authority revalues its Investment Properties on an annual basis to ensure that the carrying value is not materially different from the current value or fair value (for surplus assets) at the financial statements date. This valuation represents a significant estimate by management in the financial statements due to the size of the numbers involved (£335 million) and the sensitivity of this estimate to changes in key assumptions.</p> <p>Management have engaged the services of a valuer to estimate the current value as at 31 March 2020.</p> <p>We therefore identified valuation of Investment Properties, particularly revaluations and impairments, as a significant risk, which was one of the most significant assessed risks of material misstatement.</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• evaluate management's processes and assumptions for the calculation of the estimate, the instructions issued to the valuation experts and the scope of their work</li> <li>• evaluate the competence, capabilities and objectivity of the valuation expert</li> <li>• write to the valuer to confirm the basis on which the valuations were carried out</li> <li>• challenge the information and assumptions used by the valuer to assess completeness and consistency with our understanding, which will include engaging our own valuer to assess the instructions to the Authority's valuer, the Authority's valuer's report and the assumptions that underpin the valuation.</li> <li>• test, on a sample basis, revaluations made during the year to ensure they have been input correctly into the Authority's asset register</li> <li>• evaluate the assumptions made by management for any assets not revalued during the year and how management has satisfied themselves that these are not materially different to current value.</li> </ul>



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