



WALES AUDIT OFFICE
SWYDDFA ARCHWILIO CYMRU

Archwilydd Cyffredinol Cymru
Auditor General for Wales

2017 Audit Plan – Powys Pension Fund

Audit year: 2016-17

Date issued: March 2017

Document reference: 259A2017



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This document was produced by Anthony Veale, Phil Pugh and Melanie Williams.

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2017 Audit Plan

Summary

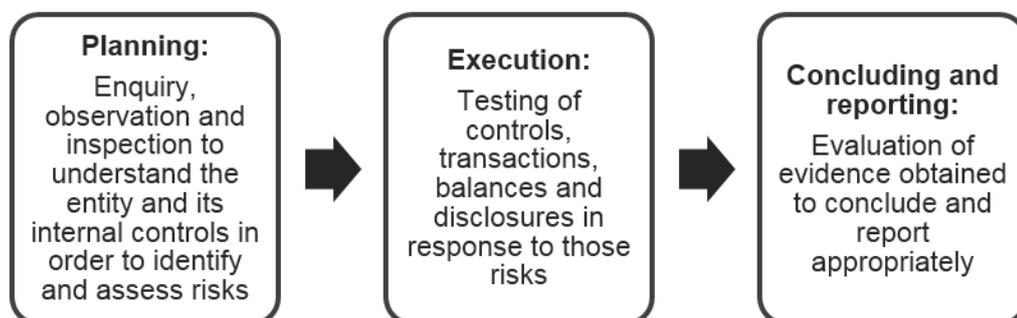
- 1 As your external auditor, my objective is to carry out an audit which discharges my statutory duties as Auditor General and fulfils my obligations under the Code of Audit Practice to examine and certify whether Powys Pension Fund (the Pension Fund) accounting statements are 'true and fair'.
- 2 The purpose of this plan is to set out my proposed work, when it will be undertaken, how much it will cost and who will undertake it.
- 3 There have been no limitations imposed on me in planning the scope of this audit.
- 4 My responsibilities, along with those of management and those charged with governance, are set out in [Appendix 1](#).

Audit of Pension Fund accounts

- 5 It is my responsibility to issue a report on the accounting statements which includes an opinion on their 'truth and fairness'. This provides assurance that the accounts:
 - are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error;
 - comply with statutory and other applicable requirements; and
 - comply with all relevant requirements for accounting presentation and disclosure.

[Appendix 1](#) sets out my responsibilities in full.
- 6 The audit work I undertake to fulfil my responsibilities responds to my assessment of risks. This understanding allows us to develop an audit approach which focuses on addressing specific risks whilst providing assurance for the Pension Fund accounts as a whole. My audit approach consists of three phases as set out in [Exhibit 1](#).

Exhibit 1: my audit approach



- 7 The risks of material misstatement which I consider to be significant and which therefore require special audit consideration, are set out in [Exhibit 2](#) along with the work I intend to undertake to address them.

Exhibit 2: financial audit risks

Financial audit risk	Proposed audit response
<p>Investment Managers</p> <p>The systems and records of the investment managers generate account entries made to the Pension Fund Account and Net Assets Statement.</p> <p>The investment managers provide internal controls reports on the investments held on behalf of the Pension Fund. These are independently audited and provide the Pension Fund with assurance on a wide range of controls, eg valuation of the investment portfolio held.</p> <p>There is a risk that the internal controls reports will not be available for assurance purposes, and/or cover all our required audit assertions.</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assess the investment managers as a service organisation; • check that investments have been made in accordance with the Statement of Investment principles; • obtain direct confirmation from the investment managers and custodian of year-end investment balances and holdings; and • assess whether the investment manager's internal control reports for all investment managers provide assurance over a wide range of relevant controls, including valuation of investments held.
<p>Private Equity Investments</p> <p>Year-end valuations of private equity investments within the draft financial statements are based upon valuations received from investment fund managers as at 31 December as a reasonable estimate of the 31 March value.</p> <p>In addition, as there is no quoted market price, there is a greater risk for the reasonableness of valuation bases of these investments.</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compare the investment valuations within the draft account to the actual valuations routinely received post production of the draft account, and where material differences in valuation arise, propose management amend the financial statements; and • seek additional assurance over the valuation basis from controls assurance reports where available.
<p>Triennial actuarial valuation</p> <p>In line with other UK public sector pension funds, the Pension Fund is subject to an actuarial valuation every three years. The 2016-17 Pension Fund financial statements will need to include relevant disclosures in respect of the latest triennial valuation as at 31 March 2016.</p>	<p>We will review the disclosures included within the 2016-17 Pension Fund financial statements to ensure they are in accordance with the latest valuation report.</p>

Financial audit risk	Proposed audit response
<p>Management Override</p> <p>The risk of management override of controls is present in all entities. Due to the unpredictable way in which such override could occur, it is viewed as a significant risk [ISA 240.31-33].</p>	<p>My audit team will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • test the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments made in preparing the financial statements; • review accounting estimates for biases; and • evaluate the rationale for any significant transactions outside the normal course of business;

- 8 I do not seek to obtain absolute assurance that the Pension Fund accounting statements are true and fair, but adopt a concept of materiality. My aim is to identify material misstatements, that is, those that might result in a reader of the accounts being misled. The levels at which I judge such misstatements to be material will be reported to the Audit Committee, as those charged with governance for Powys County Council (the Council), as the administering authority of the Pension Fund as a whole, prior to completion of the audit. My reports will also be sent to the Pensions and Investment Committee for information
- 9 For reporting purposes, I will treat any misstatements below a trivial level (set at 5% of materiality as not requiring consideration by those charged with governance and therefore I will not report them.
- 10 My fees are based on the following assumptions:
- information provided to support the financial statements is timely, to the quality expected and has been subject to quality assurance review;
 - appropriate accommodation and facilities are provided to enable my audit team to deliver my audit in an efficient manner;
 - all appropriate officials will be available during the audit;
 - you have all the necessary controls and checks in place to enable the Responsible Financial Officer to provide all the assurances that I require in the Letter of Representation addressed to me; and
 - Internal Audit's planned programme of work is complete and management has responded to issues that may have affected the financial statements.

Pension Fund annual report

- 11 In addition to including the pension fund accounts in their main accounting statements, administering authorities are required to publish a pension fund annual report which must include the pension fund accounts.
- 12 I am required to read the Pension Fund annual report and consider whether the information it contains is consistent with the audited Pension Fund accounts included in the Council's main accounting statements.
- 13 I also issue an audit statement confirming the consistency of the accounts included in the annual report with the audited Pension Fund accounts.

Fee, audit team and timetable

Fee

- 14 The Wales Audit Office does not generate profits on fees. Legislation requires that the fees charged may not exceed the full cost of exercising the function to which the fee relates. The fee rates are set at a level to recover that full cost. My fee rates have been held static for 2017 and my audit teams will continue to look for efficiencies in their audits and welcome working with you constructively on this.
- 15 Your estimated fee for 2017 is set out in [Exhibit 3](#). This is in line with the fee set out in the 2016 Audit Plan.

Exhibit 3: audit fee

Audit area	Proposed fee for 2017 (£)	Actual fee for 2016 (£)
Audit of pension fund accounts ¹	34,741	£34,741

¹ The fees shown in this document are exclusive of VAT, which is no longer charged to you.

- 16 Planning will be ongoing, and changes to my programme of audit work and therefore my fee, may be required if any key new risks emerge. I shall make no changes without first discussing them with the Director of Finance.
- 17 Further information on my [fee scales and fee setting](#) can be found on the Wales Audit Office website.

Audit team

18 The main members of my team, together with their contact details, are summarised in [Exhibit 4](#).

Exhibit 4: my team

Name	Role	Contact number	E-mail address
Anthony Veale	Engagement Lead – Financial Audit	02920 320585	Anthony.Veale@audit.wales
Phil Pugh	Financial Audit Manager	02920 320645	Phil.Pugh@audit.wales
Melanie Williams	Financial Audit Team Leader	02920 320639	Melanie.Williams@audit.wales

19 There is one potential conflict of interest that I wish to bring to your attention. This relates to a member of my financial audit team who holds a voluntary role as Treasurer of a charity which is an admitted body within the Pension Fund. I have introduced appropriate arrangements to ensure that this officer does not undertake any audit work in respect of contributions received from or benefits payable to any member of this charity. I can confirm that, with the exception of the above, all other members of my team are independent of the Council and your officers.

Timetable

20 I will provide reports, or other outputs as agreed, to the Audit Committee and Pension and Investment Committee, covering the areas of work identified in this document. My key milestones are set out in [Exhibit 5](#).

Exhibit 5: timetable

Planned output	Work undertaken	Report finalised
2017 Audit Plan	January to March 2017	March 2017
Financial accounts work:		
• Audit of Financial Statements Report	June to September 2017	September 2017
• Opinion on Financial Statements	June to September 2017	September 2017
• Opinion on the Annual Report of the Pension Fund	July to October 2017	November 2017

Future developments

Pooled Investment Vehicle

- 21 All eight Welsh Local Government Pension Scheme Funds are in the process of creating a pooled investment vehicle. In developing the proposals, the pension funds have been working under a memorandum of understanding which is not legally binding. To engage with an authorised contractual scheme operator which will invest the combined assets of the eight pension funds, a legally binding inter-authority agreement needs to be entered into. This will set out the rights and obligations of the eight participating pension funds as well as the legal powers and the responsibilities of a joint governance committee.
- 22 Pension fund auditors across the eight pension fund schemes in Wales will work collaboratively to monitor the progress of the pooled investment vehicle with a view to developing an appropriate and proportionate audit approach

Appendix 1

Respective responsibilities

The Council is the administering authority of the Pension Fund. This Audit Plan has been prepared to meet the requirements of auditing standards and proper audit practices. It provides the Council with an outline of the financial audit work required for the Pension Fund accounts.

As amended by the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2013, the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 sets out my powers and duties to undertake your financial audit. It is my responsibility to issue a certificate and report on the Pension Fund accounting statements which includes an opinion on their 'truth and fairness', providing assurance that they:

- are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error;
- comply with the statutory and other applicable requirements; and
- comply with all relevant requirements for accounting presentation and disclosure.

My audit work does not relieve management and those charged with governance of their responsibilities which include:

- the preparation of the financial statements and Annual Report in accordance with applicable accounting standards and guidance;
- the keeping of proper accounting records;
- ensuring the regularity of financial transactions; and
- securing value for money in the use of resources.

Management agrees to provide me with:

- access to all information of which management is aware that is relevant to the preparation of the financial statements such as records, documentation and other matters;
- additional information that I may request from management for the purpose of the audit; and
- unrestricted access to persons within the authority from whom I determine it necessary to obtain audit evidence.

Management will need to provide me with written representations to confirm:

- that it has fulfilled its responsibilities for the preparation of the financial statements;
- that all transactions have been recorded and are reflected in the financial statements;
- the completeness of the information provided to me for the purposes of the audit; and
- to support other audit evidence relevant to the financial statements or specific assertions in the financial statements if I deem it necessary or if required by ISAs.

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