

Leicestershire County Council

Report to those charged with governance

Report to the Corporate Governance Committee of the authority on
the audit for the year ended 31 March 2014 (*ISA (UK&I) 260*)

Government and
Public Sector

September 2014

15

Contents

Code of Audit Practice and Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and of Audited Bodies

In April 2010 the Audit Commission issued a revised version of the 'Statement of responsibilities of auditors and of audited bodies'. It is available from the Chief Executive of each audited body. The purpose of the statement is to assist auditors and audited bodies by explaining where the responsibilities of auditors begin and end and what is to be expected of the audited body in certain areas. Our reports and management letters are prepared in the context of this Statement. Reports and letters prepared by appointed auditors and addressed to members or officers are prepared for the sole use of the audited body and no responsibility is taken by auditors to any Member or officer in their individual capacity or to any third party.

Executive summary	2
Audit approach	3
Significant audit and accounting matters	7
Internal controls	17
Risk of fraud	18
Fees update	22
Appendix 1: Summary of uncorrected misstatements	24
Appendix 2: Letter of representation	25

An audit of the Statement of Accounts is not designed to identify all matters that may be relevant to those charged with governance. Accordingly, the audit does not ordinarily identify all such matters.

We have issued a number of reports during the audit year, detailing the findings from our work and making recommendations for improvement, where appropriate.

This report contains a summary of the results of our audit and matters which we ask the Corporate Governance Committee to consider.

Executive summary

Background

This report tells you about the significant findings from our audit. We presented our plan to you in November 2013; we have reviewed the plan and concluded that it remains appropriate.

Audit Summary

- We have completed the majority of our audit work and expect to be able to issue an unqualified audit opinion on the Statement of Accounts.
- We will update you on progress at the Committee, but the key outstanding matters at the time of writing were:
 - review of the final adjustments within the Statement of Accounts;
 - receipt of outstanding bank account confirmations;
 - approval of the Statement of Accounts and letter of representation; and
 - completion procedures including subsequent events review.

- Your draft accounts (including the pension fund) were submitted to us by the June deadline and were of a high quality. Supporting working papers were good and provided on time in the majority of cases. Your use of our 'Client Connect' electronic working papers system helped the audit process run smoothly.
- Finance staff are always responsive and helpful. They are committed to the audit process and are always looking to improve.
- We did not identify any material audit and accounting issues during our work. However, the Corporate Governance Committee needs to confirm the proposed treatment of one unadjusted misstatement which is listed in Appendix 1.

Please note that this report will be sent to the Audit Commission in accordance with the requirements of its standing guidance.

We look forward to discussing our report with you on 23 September 2014. Attending the meeting from PwC will be Matthew Elmer.

Our Audit Approach is risk-based.

We utilise a range of technology to support what we do, including data auditing, bespoke delivery centres and our cutting edge auditing software 'Aura'.

Audit approach

Our audit approach was set in our audit plan which we presented to you in November 2013.

We have summarised below the significant risks we identified in our audit plan, the audit approach we took to address each risk and the outcome of our work.

Risk	Category	Audit approach
Fraud and Management Override of Controls ISA (UK&I) 240 requires that we plan our audit work to consider the risk of fraud, which is presumed to be a significant risk in any audit. This includes consideration of the risk that management may override controls in order to manipulate the financial statements.	Significant Risk	We focussed our work on the testing of journals and utilised data auditing audit techniques to do this. We also: • reviewed accounting estimates for biases and evaluate whether circumstances producing any bias, represent a risk of material misstatement due to fraud; • evaluated the business rationale underlying significant transactions; and • performed 'unpredictable' procedures – these are tests we have not carried out before to test the robustness of controls. More details on the results of our audit procedures are included later in this report.
Recognition of income and expenditure Under ISA (UK&I) 240 there is a (rebuttable) presumption that there are risks of fraud in revenue recognition. There is a risk that the Council could adopt accounting policies or treat income and expenditure transactions in such a way as to lead to material misstatement in the reported revenue and expenditure position.	Significant Risk	We updated our understanding of your revenue and expenditure controls, and evaluated your accounting policy for income and expenditure recognition. This is consistent with the requirements of the code of accounting for Local Government. We also performed detailed testing of revenue and expenditure transactions in your Statement of Accounts. More details on the results of our audit procedures are included later in this report.

The Valuation of Properties was an area of audit focus. This was due to the size of the Property, Plant and Equipment on your balance sheet.

You have been establishing the East Midlands Shared Service over the past three years. Joint operations were established in September 2012 and the 'go-live' date was at the start of the 2013/14 financial year.

Risk	Category	Audit approach
Valuation of properties Property, Plant and Equipment is the largest figure on your balance sheet. The economic conditions continue to be uncertain, which has a potential impact upon the valuation of your property, plant and equipment. <i>Specific areas of audit risk include:</i> • The accuracy and completeness of detailed information on assets. • Whether the assumptions underlying the classification of properties are appropriate. • The valuer's methodology, assumptions and underlying data, and our access to these.	Other Risk	For assets which were valued during the year, we: • agreed the source data used by your Valuer to supporting records; • assessed the work of your Valuer through use of our own internal specialists; and • agreed the outputs to your Fixed Asset Register and accounts. Where assets were not re-valued in year, we reviewed your impairment assessment, and evaluated whether your assets are held at an appropriate value in your accounts at the year-end. More details on the results of our audit procedures are included later in this report.
East Midlands Shared Services On 7 September 2010, the Cabinet considered proposals for a new East Midlands Shared Service centre with Nottingham City Council. This project involves shared services for HR, payroll and financial transaction services, utilising the Oracle ERP system currently used by the Council. The shared service went live at the start of the 2013/14 financial year.	Other Risk	We have kept up to date with your progress in implementing the East Midlands Shared Services (EMSS) project through discussions with management and review of relevant working papers. We continued to discuss your progress with management and have considered the work of Internal Audit in looking at the implementation of EMSS.

Local Government Pension Scheme

One of the most material estimates in the accounts is your share of the Leicestershire Pension Fund net liability.

The trend over the past five years has been an increase in the net liability. There has been a significant increase in the pension fund net liability, as estimated by the actuary, due to changing demographics and other assumptions. The fair value of the scheme assets has remained broadly flat.

The actuarial assumptions are primarily driven by the results of the triennial funding review of the Pension Scheme as at March 2010. This information is updated for using a “roll forward” approach (where previous balances are adjusted to account for known trends) until the next full valuation which will impact the 2013/14 accounts.



Other Risk

We have reviewed the assumptions you have used in your accounts to measure the pension fund liability, with assistance from our internal experts in Pension Funds.

We have also:

- tested the source data used by your Actuary to supporting records;
- assessed the work of your Actuary through use of our own internal specialists; and
- agreed the outputs of the Actuary to your accounts.

We have tested the value of the pension fund assets which you recognise in your accounts. More details on the results of our audit procedures are included later in this report.

Leicestershire Highways

The financial information associated with Leicestershire Highways will be migrated onto Oracle from 6 January 2014.



Other Risk

The financial information associated with Leicestershire Highways was migrated onto Oracle during the last quarter of 2013/14.

We identified no issues during our testing of financial information from Highways.

Medium Term Financial Strategy

The Authority has made significant strides over the past few years to identify savings and deliver more efficient services. The current MTFS is based upon a reduction in formula grant over the four year period 2013/14 to 2016/17. It includes savings of £79m. Growth of £24m has been included for service improvement, cost and demand pressures. Recent announcements on likely future funding mean that the total savings requirement for the next 5 year period starting in 2013/14 is likely to be around £110 million.

There is a well-established Change Management Programme and Organisational Efficiency Programme which has helped deliver demonstrable value for money. A 'Transformation Board' has also been introduced on an all party-basis for members to engage with officers around the medium term transformation of the way the Council operates.

During 2011/12 and 2012/13 you continued to deliver savings. The delivery of your savings plan has given you flexibility to direct resources towards 'invest to save' schemes. However, the environment continues to be challenging. You will need to ensure that a robust Medium Term Financial Strategy is approved before March 2014 so that you can demonstrate how you will be financially resilient in the years ahead.

Significant Risk

In forming our conclusion economy, efficiency and effectiveness, we have reviewed your Medium Term Financial Strategy. We have updated our understanding of how you develop the strategy and compared the assumptions you used to comparative benchmarks and best practice.

In particular, we have reviewed:

- the governance structure in place to deliver your plans ;
- how you have managed your 2013/14 savings programme;
- the key assumptions included in the MTFS, comparing them with best practice and those used by other Local Authorities;
- The sensitivity of key assumptions to change;
- the impact of potential changes to key assumptions and the rigour behind the MTFS;
- the prioritisation of resources as part of the MTFS;
- your arrangements to review the value for money which your services provide; and
- the adequacy of your planned level of reserves and contingencies against your stated policy and the level of future risk in delivering the MTFS.

The detailed findings from our work were presented separately to the Corporate Governance Committee at its meeting in June 2014.

A summary of the work to support our value for money opinion is included later in this report.

Significant audit and accounting matters

Auditing Standards require us to tell you about relevant matters relating to the audit of the Statement of Accounts sufficiently promptly to enable you to take appropriate action.

Accounts

We have completed our audit, subject to the following outstanding matters:

- review of the final adjustments within the Statement of Accounts;
- receipt of outstanding bank account confirmations;
- approval of the Statement of Accounts and letter of representation; and
- completion procedures including subsequent events review.

Subject to the satisfactory resolution of these matters, the finalisation of the Statement of Accounts and their approval of them we expect to issue an unqualified audit opinion.

As part of our work on the Statement of Accounts we also need to examine the Whole of Government Accounts schedules submitted to the Department for Communities and Local Government. We anticipate issuing an opinion stating in our view they are consistent with the Statement of Accounts, subject to final review and completion of this work.

Accounts Preparation

You completed your draft accounts by the end of June, and provided them to us in advance of the audit as agreed. The hard work you have put into your accounts process over the past few years gives you a strong base to work from. Our audit identified no material issues in the quality of the accounts presented for audit. Some minor disclosure issues were identified which have been discussed and have been amended appropriately.

We agreed in advance what we would need for our audit and this was mostly ready for us when we arrived. The working papers were provided to us electronically and your use of our 'Client Connect' electronic working papers system helped us perform our audit. The finance team worked hard to meet the timescales and were helpful in resolving our queries.

We would like to thank the team (and others) for their support and assistance during the audit.

There are no material accounting issues to draw to your attention. However, we have highlighted on the next few pages some of the key issues we have identified in our audit for you to consider.

Accounting issues

We identified the following key matters during our audit.

Valuation of Property, Plant and Equipment

Your draft accounts include property, plant and equipment with a net book value of £787.4 million, largely made up of land and buildings (£466.4 million) and infrastructure assets (£296.5 million). The total value of your land and buildings has increase slightly from £769.7 million in the prior year to £787.4 million. This is primarily due to new capital additions and upwards re-valuations of your existing assets, offset by the conversion of a number of schools to Academy status.

You have to keep the values of your own land and buildings up to date. The Council's accounting policy is to include land and buildings in the balance sheet at open market value for existing use or at depreciated replacement cost for specialised assets where there is no market. You review the top 20 assets every year, revaluing a fifth of your other assets every year and on completion of a capital scheme above £100,000. The work is completed internally to the Council.

We have engaged an internal PwC valuation specialist to review the work of your internal valuation team. We considered the applicable professional requirements and industry standard indices used to revalue specialised assets, and the steps taken by the Council to account for the full impact of these indices across all of its specialised assets. No issues have been identified to report.

East Midlands Shared Services

The East Midlands Shared Service (EMSS) went live from the start of the 2013/14 financial year. As part of our planning for the audit we asked for the Internal Auditors of EMSS to review the core financial processes – accounts receivable, accounts payable and payroll.

We experienced some delays in receiving the reports from the Internal Auditors of the EMSS. When we reviewed the work, we found that some of the key controls had not been tested, particularly in relation to testing starters and leavers in the Payroll system. The Leicestershire County Council Internal Auditors had to undertake additional testing to give us the assurance we needed in these areas.

We recommend that the Council reviews the processes in place for gaining assurance over the East Midlands Shared Service so that it is robust and gives the Authority, in addition to your External Auditors, the assurance which is needed. This will be increasingly important if the number of Councils involved in the shared service increases in the future.

Pensions liability

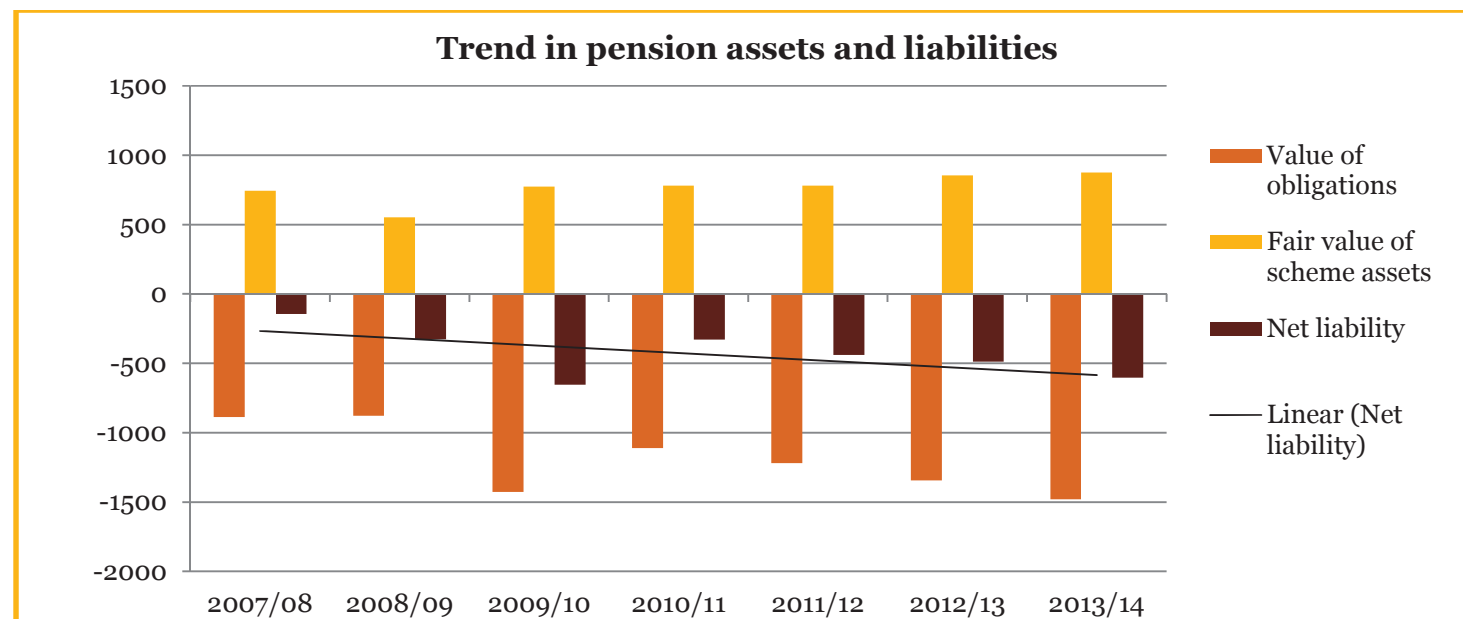
The most significant estimate in the Statement of Accounts is in the valuation of net pension liabilities for employees in the Leicestershire pension fund. Your net pension liability at 31 March 2014 was £603.3 million (2013 - £497.6 million).

The increase in your pension fund deficit reflects an increase in the net deficit for Local Government Pension Funds as a whole over the last few years. The 2013 triennial valuation increased the total deficit from £36 billion in 2010 to £46 billion, an increase of over 25%.

Although the trend for your scheme has been for assets to gradually increase in value over this period, the value of the liabilities has increased by more than 40% as these are linked to gilt yields which are running at an all-time high.

The chart below shows the significant movement in your net pension liability over the last few years, and illustrates the persistent and growing net liability in the pension fund since at least 2007.

Council Pension Liability between 2007/08 and 2013/14



We also reviewed the reasonableness of the assumptions underlying the pension liability, and we are comfortable that the assumptions are within an acceptable range. The key assumptions used are as follows:

Description	Assumption used
Duration of liabilities	15 – 20 years
Discount Rate	4.1% - 4.3%
Mortality	Club Vita analysis where available.
Inflation - RPI	3.4% - 3.6%
Inflation - CPI	2.6% - 2.8%
Salary increases	3.4% - 5.1% (with a lower short term assumption)

We utilised the work of PwC actuarial experts to assess the assumptions applied by the Council. We also validated the data supplied to the actuary on which to base their calculations.

We utilised the work of the PwC Pensions Team over the Leicestershire Pension Fund to gain assurance over the valuation of your pension fund assets. The work undertaken included obtaining confirmation letters directly from the managers of relevant investment funds.

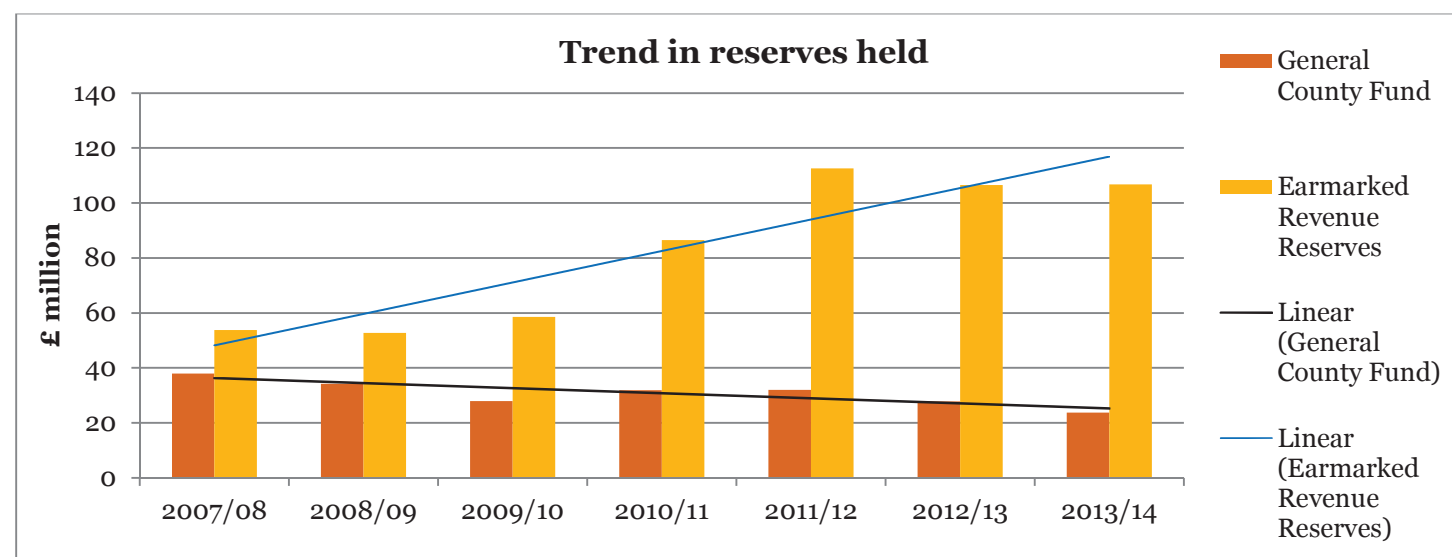
Changes to IAS 19: Employee Benefits

From 2013/14 there have been changes to the accounting for defined benefit schemes and termination benefits. For defined benefit schemes the net finance cost is used. The net scheme liabilities/assets are unwound using the discount rate for the pension liability and the costs of administering the scheme have been recognised directly in expenses.

The definition of termination benefits has changed and does not now include liabilities where there is a future service element. They do not include any 'voluntary' element. These changes have been reflected in the Authority's financial statements and have been dealt with appropriately.

Reserves

Your level of reserves continues to be strong. We have commented in more detail on this in our report on your Medium Term Financial Strategy which is presented to you earlier in the year. Your draft Statement of Accounts show that this trend has continued:



Of the reserves held at the end of 2013/14, £8.1 million of the General County Fund relates to delegated funding for schools. Significant earmarked reserves include £14.9 million for insurance purposes (£11.4 million in 2012/13) and £15 million for invest to save/severance projects (£11.6 million in 2012/13).

You hold a number of earmarked reserves to address emerging future costs. During 2013/14 you undertook a detailed review of your reserves requirements. Our review of these reserves identified no auditing or accounting issues; we are satisfied that they have been established in accordance with your accounting policies. The use of these reserves will continue to be considered in more detail as part of your financial planning procedures going forward.

From an audit perspective, we are satisfied that reserves have been accounted for correctly. We would comment that, with further reductions in Local Government funding likely and a number of policy reforms requiring implementation, you continue to face higher levels of risk in the short and medium term. You should continue to take this in account in your assessment of reserves requirements.

Misstatements and significant audit adjustments

We have to tell you about all uncorrected misstatements we found during the audit, other than those which are trivial. See Appendix 1.

There are no misstatements which have been corrected by management but which we consider you should be aware of in fulfilling your governance responsibilities.

Judgments and accounting estimates

The Authority is required to prepare its financial statements in accordance with the CIPFA Code. Nevertheless, there are still many areas where management need to apply judgement to the recognition and measurement of items in the financial statements. The following significant judgements and accounting estimates were used in the preparation of the financial statements:

i. Property, Plant and Equipment - Depreciation and Valuation - You charge

depreciation based on an estimate of the Useful Economic Lives for the majority of your Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE). This involves a degree of estimation. You also value your PPE in accordance with your accounting policies to ensure that the carrying value is true and fair. This involves some judgement and reliance on your internal valuers.

ii. Bad Debt Provision – Your Bad Debt Provision for sundry debtors is calculated on the basis of age and an assessment of the potential recoverability of invoices. There is an inherent level of judgement involved in calculating these provisions and you rely on the knowledge of the Departments for information on specific transactions.

iii. Accruals - You raise accruals for expenditure where an invoice has not been raised or received at the year end, but you know there is a liability to be met which relates to the current year. This involves a degree of estimation.

iv. Provisions: Provisions at 31 March 2014 total £9.7 million (£13.1 million as at 31 March 2013). Because provisions are liabilities of an uncertain timing or amount, there is an inherent level of judgement to be applied.

v. Pensions: See our comments above. You rely on the work of an actuary in calculating these balances.

vi. Provision for accumulated absences - You calculate your accrual for untaken holiday and employment benefits at the year-end based on a sample of returns completed by managers. You apply an average calculation based on these returns when you have had no response. Your 31st March 2014 balance is £5.8 million.

Overall we found your significant judgements and accounting estimates to be reasonable.

Management representations

The final draft of the representation letter that we ask management to sign is attached in Appendix 2.

Related parties

In forming an opinion on the financial statements, we are required to evaluate:

- whether identified related party relationships and transactions have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed; and
- whether the effects of the related party relationships and transactions cause the financial statements to be misleading.

We also considered the completeness of the information provided to us by considering our knowledge of the Council, undertaking internet searches and utilising 'Board Ex' information.

We did not identify any matters during the course of our work to report.

Audit independence

We are required to follow both the International Standard on Auditing (UK and Ireland) 260 (Revised) "Communication with those charged with governance", UK Ethical Standard 1 (Revised) "Integrity, objectivity and independence" and UK Ethical Standard 5 (Revised) "Non-audit services provided to audited entities" issued by the UK Auditing Practices Board.

Together these require that we tell you at least annually about all relationships between PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP in the UK and other PricewaterhouseCoopers' firms and

associated entities ("PwC") and the Authority that, in our professional judgement, may reasonably be thought to bear on our independence and objectivity.

Relationships between PwC and the Authority

We are aware of the following relationships that, in our professional judgement, may reasonably be thought to bear on our independence and objectivity and which represent matters that have occurred during the financial year on which we are to report or up to the date of this document.

Relationships and Investments

We have not identified any potential issues in respect of personal relationships with the Authority or investments in the Authority held by individuals.

Employment of PricewaterhouseCoopers staff by the Authority

We are not aware of any former PwC partners or staff being employed, or holding discussions in respect of employment, by the Authority as a director or in a senior management position covering financial, accounting or control related areas.

Business relationships

We have not identified any business relationships between PwC and the Authority.

Services provided to the Authority

The audit of the Statement of Accounts is undertaken in accordance with the UK Firm's internal policies. The audit is also subject to other internal PwC quality control procedures such as peer reviews by other offices.

In addition to the audit of the Statement of Accounts, PwC has also undertaken other work for the Council:

- VAT Helpline (£3,000) – we provide a VAT service to the Council giving unlimited access to a telephone helpline for routine VAT queries.
- VAT claim (£14,000) – you have requested administrative assistance with a VAT claim you are progressing.
- East Midlands Councils (estimated fee of £10,000) – we have been asked to undertake an audit of the East Midlands Councils 2013/14 accounts. We also undertook the audit of the East Midlands Council accounts covering the periods 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13 during the year. The fee for this work was £27,500 and we obtained the appropriate approval from the Audit Commission to undertake this work.

We identified the following potential threats to our independence, and put in place safeguards against these:

Self-review threat: This threat could arise if we undertake work which we later rely upon for our audit. Our non-audit work does not result in a material impact on the financial statements.

Self-interest threat: This threat could arise if we undertake significant levels of non-audit work. The size of the non-audit fees and the nature of the work does not give rise to a self-interest threat.

Management threat: This threat arises if PwC makes a management decision or assumes a management responsibility. The Council designated an appropriate officer to receive the results of our work and make all significant judgements connected with the services. The individuals nominated have a sufficient level of understanding of our services and has the responsibility for evaluating our work and determining what actions to take. We do not take management decisions.

Advocacy threat: Our non-audit services do not involve an advocacy role.

Familiarity threat: All of our members of staff are independent of Leicestershire County Council.

Intimidation threat: No intimidation threat has been identified.

In relation to the non-audit services provided, none included contingent fee arrangements. We are satisfied in all cases that the non-audit work does not compromise our independence as your external auditor

Fees

The analysis of our audit and non-audit fees for the year ended 31 March 2014 is included later in this report. In relation to the non-audit services provided, none included contingent fee arrangements.

Services to Directors and Senior Management

PwC does not provide any services e.g. personal tax services, directly to directors, senior management.

Rotation

It is the Audit Commission's policy that engagement leaders at an audited body at which a full Code audit is required to be carried out should act for an initial period of five years. The Commission's view is that generally the range of regulatory safeguards it applies within its audit regime is sufficient to reduce any threats to independence that may otherwise arise at the end of this period to an acceptable level. Therefore, to safeguard audit quality, and in accordance with APB Ethical Standard 3, it will subsequently approve engagement leaders for an additional period of up to no more than two years, provided that there are no considerations that compromise, or could be perceived to compromise, the auditor's independence or objectivity.

The 2013/14 financial year is Richard Bacon's 5th year as your Engagement Leader. In March 2014, we requested an extension to his appointment to cover the 2014/15 financial

year, the last for which PwC will be your auditors. This request was approved in April 2014.

Gifts and hospitality

We have not identified any significant gifts or hospitality provided to, or received from, a member of Authority's Cabinet, senior management or staff.

Conclusion

We hereby confirm that in our professional judgement, as at the date of this document:

- we comply with UK regulatory and professional requirements, including the Ethical Standards issued by the Auditing Practices Board; and
- our objectivity is not compromised.

We would ask the Corporate Governance Committee to consider the matters in this document and to confirm that they agree with our conclusion on our independence and objectivity.

Annual Governance Statement

Local Authorities are required to produce an Annual Governance Statement (AGS), which is consistent with guidance issued by CIPFA / SOLACE: "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government". The AGS was included in the Statement of Accounts.

We reviewed the AGS to consider whether it complied with the CIPFA / SOLACE "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government" framework and whether it is misleading or inconsistent with other information known to us from our audit work.

We found no areas of concern to report in this context.

Economy, efficiency and effectiveness

Our value for money code responsibility requires us to carry out sufficient and relevant work in order to conclude on whether the Authority has put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources.

The Audit Commission guidance includes two criteria:

- The organisation has proper arrangements in place for securing financial resilience; and
- The organisation has proper arrangements for challenging how it secures economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

We determine a local programme of audit work based on our audit risk assessment, informed by these criteria and our statutory responsibilities.

Medium Term Financial Strategy

Our audit plan highlighted specific value for money risk in relation to your savings requirement and financial plans over the next few years. We agreed in the audit plan that we would review your Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), comparing it to others, and also review your management arrangements.

We have already reported to members on the results of this work in a separate communication. However a summary of the key points are reported here for you information:

- You have demonstrated in the past that you have robust programme management arrangements in place and that you achieve the savings targets which you have set yourself. However, the scale of the challenge in the medium term, particularly during 2015/16, is more significant than what you have faced to date. This is something you recognise

through the establishment of the Transformation Board and the additional resources you have put in place;

- You have applied a number of prudent assumptions in setting your MTFS. In some cases these were more prudent than in our benchmark average. However, we believe these are realistic assumptions which will help you to meet manage the financial risks which exist over the plan period;
- The Audit Commission value for money profile, whilst backwards looking, continues to show a number of key areas where the Authority is providing services which can demonstrate value for money when compared with other County Councils;
- You have set aside a significant level of earmarked reserves and a level of contingency to manage future cost pressures. Whilst these are larger than in other similar Local Authorities, we believe that you have taken a prudent approach in setting your MTFS. These reserves will be required to effectively deliver the transformation you require.

Given the scale of the changes you are making, there are inevitably a range of risks which are largely unchanged since we last reported:

- **Slippage:** you may not be able to identify or achieve the savings you want either from a service reduction or through efficiencies.
- **Timing:** The timing of savings, service reductions and funding announcements will impact how you deliver against your MTFS.
- **Assumptions:** We have gone some way above to assess the assumptions you have applied in your MTFS. If these assumptions turn out to be false, this

would have a significant impact on your ability to deliver a balanced budget over 4 years.

- **Policy:** Current and future changes in government policy have the potential to fundamentally alter the framework within which the MTFS has been developed. Examples may include further integration of Health and Social Care, the impact of the Care Bill and future Comprehensive Spending Reviews.

We have reviewed your MTFS and the assumptions which lie behind it. We have compared you with other, similar Local Authorities and taken into account our wider understanding of the Local Government sector. Funding announcements have shown that there is likely to be a continuing reduction in the amount you have to spend in the medium term. This will make it increasingly challenging to identify and deliver savings which do not result in service reductions.

In conclusion, our work in this particular area has not identified any issues which would lead to a qualified value for money conclusion.

Reports in the public interest

In auditing the accounts of a Local Authority, the auditors must consider:

- Whether, in the public interest, they should make a report on any matter coming to their notice in the course of the audit, in order for it to be considered by the body concerned or brought to the attention of the public; and
- Whether the public interest requires any such matter to be made the subject of an immediate report rather than of a report to be made at the conclusion of the audit.

No public interest report has been issued.

Other reporting requirements

In auditing the accounts of a Local Authority, the auditors must consider:

- Whether we need to make written recommendations for the consideration of the Council under s11(3) of the 1998 Act;
- Whether we need to report on any questions or objections made to us as auditors;
- Whether we believe that the Council or one of its officers:
 - is about to make or has made a decision which involves or would involve the authority incurring expenditure which is unlawful,
 - is about to take or has begun to take a course of action which, if pursued to its conclusion, would be unlawful and likely to cause a loss or deficiency, or
 - is about to enter an item of account, the entry of which is unlawful and we need to issue an advisory notice under s19A of the 1998 Act;
- Whether there is any item of account for which we need to make an application to the court under s17 of the 1998 Act for a declaration that the item is contrary to law; and
- Whether we need to apply under s24 of the 1998 Act for judicial review of any decision or failure to act by the Council which it is reasonable to believe would have an effect on the accounts.

None of these actions has been necessary.

Internal controls

Accounting systems and systems of internal control

Management are responsible for developing and implementing systems of internal financial control and to put in place proper arrangements to monitor their adequacy and effectiveness in practice. As auditors, we review these arrangements for the purposes of our audit of the Statement of Accounts and our review of the annual governance statement.

We report internal control issues separately to management and action plans have been agreed with officers.

Reporting requirements

We have to report to you any deficiencies in internal control that we found during the audit which we believe should be brought to your attention. No such deficiencies were identified.

Risk of fraud

International Standards on Auditing (UK&I) state that we, as auditors, are responsible for obtaining reasonable assurance that the financial statements taken as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. The respective responsibilities of auditors, management and those charged with governance are summarised below:

Auditors' responsibility

Our objectives are:

- to identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements due to fraud;
- to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding the assessed risks of material misstatement due to fraud, through designing and implementing appropriate responses; and
- to respond appropriately to fraud or suspected fraud identified during the audit.

Management's responsibility

Management's responsibilities in relation to fraud are:

- to design and implement programmes and controls to prevent, deter and detect fraud;
- to ensure that the entity's culture and environment promote ethical behaviour; and
- to perform a risk assessment that specifically includes the risk of fraud addressing incentives and pressures, opportunities, and attitudes and rationalisation.

Responsibility of the Corporate Governance Committee

Your responsibility as part of your governance role is:

- to evaluate management's identification of fraud risk, implementation of anti-fraud measures and creation of appropriate "tone at the top"; and
- to investigate any alleged or suspected instances of fraud brought to your attention.

Your views on fraud

In our audit plan presented to the Corporate Governance Committee in November 2013 we enquired:

- Whether you have knowledge of fraud, either actual, suspected or alleged, including those involving management?
- What fraud detection or prevention measures (e.g. whistle-blower lines) are in place in the entity?
- What role you have in relation to fraud?
- What protocols / procedures have been established between those charged with governance and management to keep you informed of instances of fraud, either actual, suspected or alleged?

In presenting this report to you we ask for your confirmation that there have been no changes to your view of fraud risk and that no additional matters have arisen that should be brought to our attention. A specific confirmation from management in relation to fraud is included in the letter of representation.

Conditions under which fraud may occur

Management or other employees have an incentive or are under pressure

Incentive / pressure

**Why
commit
fraud?**

Opportunity

Circumstances exist that provide opportunity – ineffective or absent control, or management ability to override controls

Rationalisation/attitude

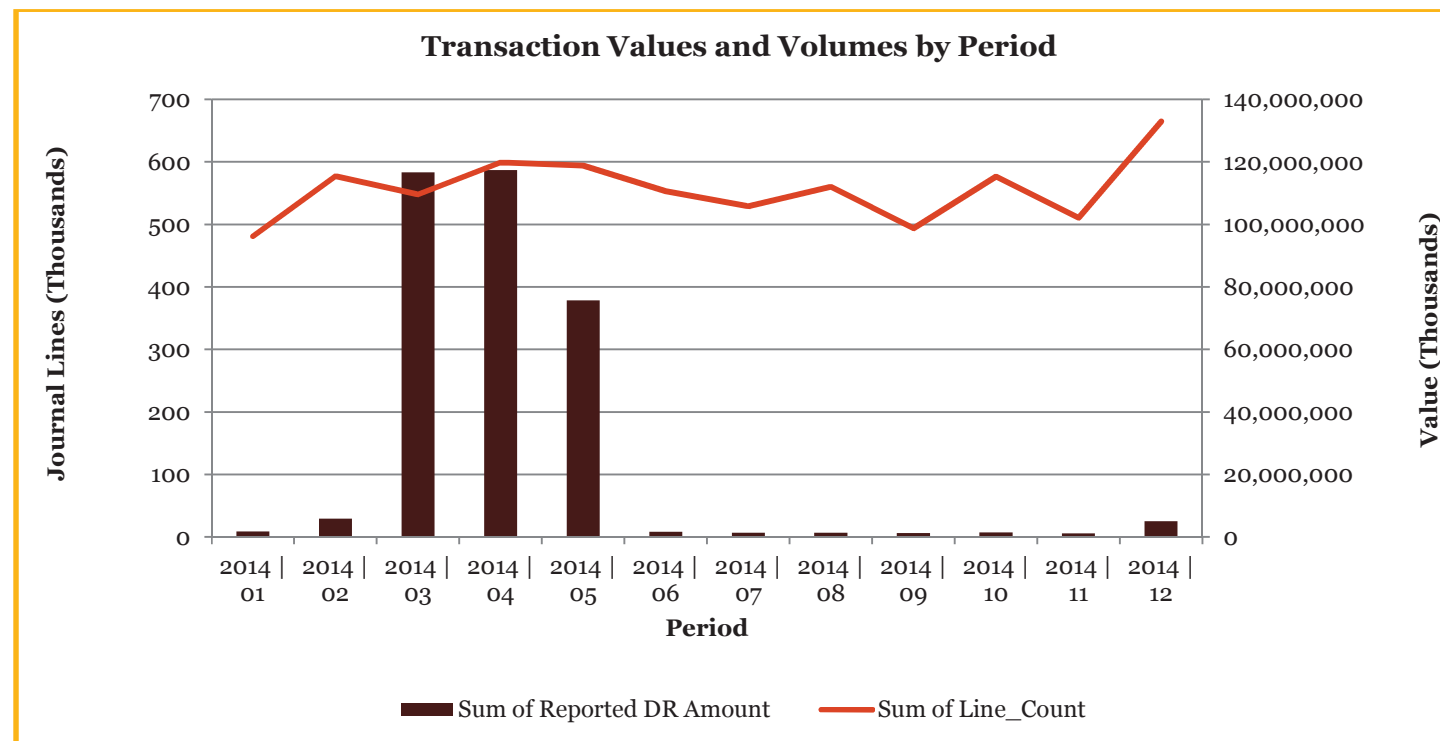
Culture or environment enables management to rationalise committing fraud – attitude or values of those involved, or pressure that enables them to rationalise committing a dishonest act

Journals

Journals are transactions put through your accounts system which can be of any value and affect any account. Your main processing systems, including purchasing and payroll, produce automatic journals covering the bulk of transactions, but these cannot cover all the various accounting requirements, particularly capital accounting and year end estimates. Your staff have to prepare and enter manual journals for these.

Journals are inherently risky because of their ability to affect any account, and we address this risk in your organisation by using a computer program to interrogate the journals in the ledger system. This helped us direct our detailed audit checks on specific journals which appeared more unusual and therefore riskier.

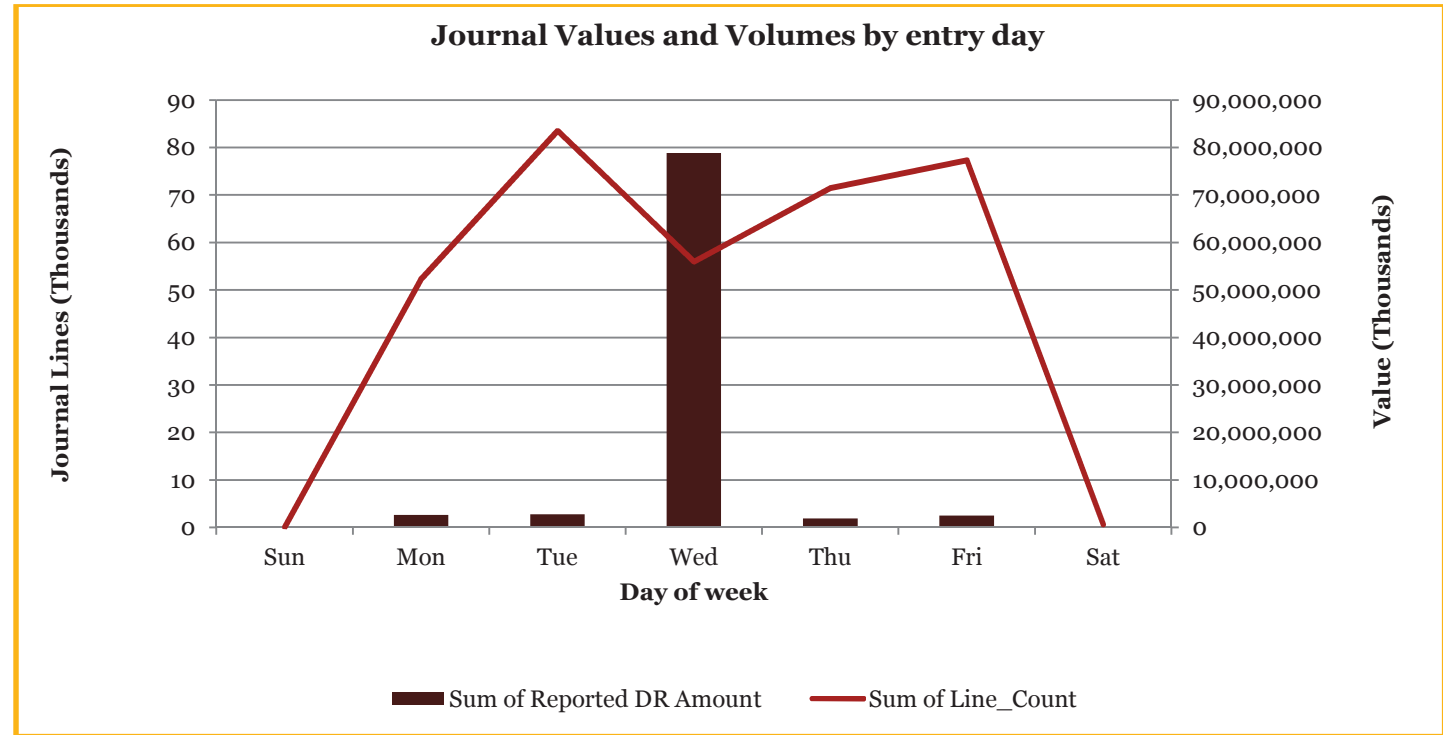
We are pleased to report that our work on journals identified no significant concerns or issues. Our work did however identify some interesting statistics which we include below for your information.



Over 341,000 journals were posted manually in the year including the close down period to the value of over £88 billion (excluding a one off set of transactions in Months 3 and 4, which are shown by the graph above).

Journals posted out of hours or at weekends, when there is less obvious supervision, present a higher risk of management override of controls. A total of 13 journals (39 in 2012/13) were posted at the weekend. We targeted our testing to look at material journals posted at unusual times and dates.

A summary of this information is presented below. The significant peak in the value of transactions on a Wednesday is due to a single significant transaction which was processed in Months 3 and 4. The peak in the volume of transactions is on Tuesday; in previous years this peak was on a Wednesday:



We did not identify any significant issues from this work. We have shared the detail above with management to consider further.

Fees update

Fees update for 2013/14

We reported our fee proposals in our plan. Our actual fees were in line with our proposals.

Our fees charged were therefore:

	2013/14 outturn	2013/14 fee proposal
Accounts	90,000	90,000
Use of Resources/ Value for Money Conclusion	12,600	12,600
Sub-total	102,600	102,600
Certification of claims and returns (estimated)	6,700*	6,700
Total Audit Fee	109,300	109,300

We have performed work which fell outside of the Code of Audit Practice requirements. Details are included in the section on independence earlier in this report.

*Our fee for certification of grants and claims is yet to be finalised for 2013/14 and will be reported to those charged with governance later in the year within the Certification Report to Management.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Summary of uncorrected misstatements

We found the following misstatements during the audit that have not been adjusted by management. You are requested to consider these formally and determine whether you would wish the accounts to be amended. If the misstatements are not adjusted we will need a written representation from you explaining your reasons for not making the adjustments.

The level we agreed with you for reporting misstatements, as part of agreeing our audit plan, is £100,000.

No	Description of misstatement (factual, judgemental, projected – F, J, P)		Income statement		Balance sheet	
			Dr	Cr	Dr	Cr
1	Unrecorded liabilities	F	£2,072			£2,072
	We sampled unpaid invoices outstanding as at 30 June 2014 and found one item which related to 2013/14 and had not been accrued for. This totalled £2,072. This was because it had not been receipted in i-procurement on a timely basis. Using our non-statistical sampling methodology there is an extrapolated error of £789,839:	P	£789,839			£789,839
	Dr Service Expenditure Cr Accruals					
Total uncorrected misstatements			£791,911			£791,911

Appendix 2: Letter of representation

PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP

Cornwall Court
19 Cornwall Street
Birmingham
B3 2DT

Dear Sirs,

Representation letter – audit of Leicestershire County Council’s (the Authority) Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2014

Your audit is conducted for the purpose of expressing an opinion as to whether the Statement of Accounts of the Authority give a true and fair view of the affairs of the Authority as at 31 March 2014 and of its surplus/deficit and cash flows for the year then ended and have been properly prepared in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2013/14 supported by the Service Reporting Code of Practice 2013/14.

I acknowledge my responsibilities as Chief Financial Officer for preparing the Statement of Accounts as set out in the Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts. I also acknowledge my responsibility for the administration of the financial affairs of the authority and that I am responsible for making accurate representations to you.

I confirm that the following representations are made on the basis of enquiries of other chief officers and members of the Authority with relevant knowledge and experience and, where appropriate, of inspection of supporting documentation sufficient to satisfy myself that I can properly make each of the following representations to you.

I confirm, to the best of my knowledge and belief, and having made the appropriate enquiries, the following representations:

Statement of Accounts

- I have fulfilled my responsibilities for the preparation of the Statement of Accounts in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2013/14 supported by the Service Reporting Code of Practice 2013/14; in particular the Statement of Accounts give a true and fair view in accordance therewith.
- All transactions have been recorded in the accounting records and are reflected in the Statement of Accounts.

Leicestershire County Council

PwC • 25

- Significant assumptions used by the Authority in making accounting estimates, including those surrounding measurement at fair value, are reasonable.
- All events subsequent to the date of the Statement of Accounts for which the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2013/14 requires adjustment or disclosure have been adjusted or disclosed.
- The effects of uncorrected misstatements are immaterial, both individually and in the aggregate, to the Statement of Accounts as a whole. A list of the uncorrected misstatements is attached below:

No	Description of misstatement (factual, judgemental, projected – F, J, P)		Income statement		Balance sheet	
			Dr	Cr	Dr	Cr
1	Unrecorded liabilities	F	£2,072			£2,072
	We sampled unpaid invoices outstanding as at 30 June 2014 and found one item which related to 2013/14 and had not been accrued for. This totalled £2,072. This was because it had not been receipted in i-procurement on a timely basis. Using our non-statistical sampling methodology there is an extrapolated error of £789,839:	P	£789,839			£789,839
	Dr Service Expenditure Cr Accruals					
Total uncorrected misstatements			£791,911			£791,911

- The restatement made to correct a material misstatement in the prior period Statement of Accounts that affects the comparative information has been appropriately accounted for and disclosed in accordance with the requirements of the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2013/14.
- The Statement of Accounts disclose all matters of which we are aware that are relevant to the Authority's ability to continue as a going concern, including all significant conditions and events, mitigating factors and the Authority's plans. The Authority also has the intent and ability to take actions necessary to continue as a going concern.

Information Provided

- I have taken all the steps that I ought to have taken in order to make myself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that you, the authority's auditors, are aware of that information.
- I have provided you with:
 - access to all information of which I am aware that is relevant to the preparation of the Statement of Accounts such as records, documentation and other matters, including minutes of the Authority and its committees, and relevant management meetings;
 - additional information that you have requested from us for the purpose of the audit; and
 - unrestricted access to persons within the Authority from whom you determined it necessary to obtain audit evidence.
- So far as I am aware, there is no relevant audit information of which you are unaware.

Accounting policies

I confirm that I have reviewed the Authority's accounting policies and estimation techniques and, having regard to the possible alternative policies and techniques, the accounting policies and estimation techniques selected for use in the preparation of Statement of Accounts are appropriate to give a true and fair view for the authority's particular circumstances.

Fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations

I acknowledge responsibility for the design, implementation and maintenance of internal control to prevent and detect fraud.

I have disclosed to you:

- the results of our assessment of the risk that the Statement of Accounts may be materially misstated as a result of fraud.
- all information in relation to fraud or suspected fraud that we are aware of and that affects the Authority and involves:
 - management;
 - employees who have significant roles in internal control; or
 - others where the fraud could have a material effect on the Statement of Accounts.
- all information in relation to allegations of fraud, or suspected fraud, affecting the Authority's Statement of Accounts communicated by employees, former employees, analysts, regulators or others.

- all known instances of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations whose effects should be considered when preparing Statement of Accounts.

I am not aware of any instances of actual or potential breaches of or non-compliance with laws and regulations which provide a legal framework within which the Authority conducts its business and which are central to the authority's ability to conduct its business or that could have a material effect on the Statement of Accounts.

I am not aware of any irregularities, or allegations of irregularities including fraud, involving members, management or employees who have a significant role in the accounting and internal control systems, or that could have a material effect on the Statement of Accounts.

The Authority pension fund has not made any reports to the Pensions Regulator nor am I aware of any such reports having been made by any of our advisors. I confirm that I am not aware of any late contributions or breaches of the payment schedule that have arisen which I considered were not required to be reported to the Pensions Regulator. I also confirm that I am not aware of any other matters which have arisen that would require a report to the Pensions Regulator.

There have been no other communications with the Pensions Regulator or other regulatory bodies during the year or subsequently concerning matters of non-compliance with any legal duty.

Related party transactions

I confirm that the attached appendix to this letter is a complete list of the Authority's related parties. All transfer of resources, services or obligations between the Authority and these parties have been disclosed to you, regardless of whether a price is charged. We are unaware of any other related parties, or transactions between disclosed related parties.

Related party relationships and transactions have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed in accordance with the requirements of Section 3.9 of the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2013/14.

We confirm that we have identified to you all senior officers, as defined by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011, and included their remuneration in the disclosures of senior officer remuneration.

Employee Benefits

I confirm that we have made you aware of all employee benefit schemes in which employees of the authority participate.

Contractual arrangements/agreements

All contractual arrangements (including side-letters to agreements) entered into by the Authority have been properly reflected in the accounting records or, where material (or potentially material) to the statement of accounts, have been disclosed to you.

The Authority has complied with all aspects of contractual agreements that could have a material effect on the Statement of Accounts in the event of non-compliance. There has been no non-compliance with requirements of regulatory authorities that could have a material effect on the Statement of Accounts in the event of non-compliance.

I have disclosed all material agreements that have been undertaken by the Authority in carrying on its business.

Litigation and claims

I have disclosed to you all known actual or possible litigation and claims whose effects should be considered when preparing the statement of accounts and such matters have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2013/14.

Taxation

I have complied with UK taxation requirements and have brought to account all liabilities for taxation due to the relevant tax authorities whether in respect of any direct tax or any indirect taxes. I am not aware of any non-compliance that would give rise to additional liabilities by way of penalty or interest and I have made full disclosure regarding any Revenue Authority queries or investigations that we are aware of or that are ongoing.

In particular:

- In connection with any tax accounting requirements, I am satisfied that our systems are capable of identifying all material tax liabilities and transactions subject to tax and have maintained all documents and records required to be kept by the relevant tax authorities in accordance with UK law or in accordance with any agreement reached with such authorities.
- I have submitted all returns and made all payments that were required to be made (within the relevant time limits) to the relevant tax authorities including any return requiring us to disclose any tax planning transactions that have been undertaken to the authority's benefit or any other party's benefit.
- I am not aware of any taxation, penalties or interest that are yet to be assessed relating to either the authority or any associated company for whose taxation liabilities the authority may be responsible.

Pension fund assets and liabilities

All known assets and liabilities including contingent liabilities, as at the 31 March 2014, have been taken into account or referred to in the Statement of Accounts.

Details of all financial instruments, including derivatives, entered into during the year have been made available to you. Any such instruments open at the 31 March 2014 have been properly valued and that valuation incorporated into the Statement of Accounts.

The pension fund has satisfactory title to all assets and there are no liens or encumbrances on the pension fund's assets, except for those that are disclosed in the statement of accounts.

The value at which assets and liabilities are recorded in the net assets statement is, in the opinion of the authority, the market value. We are responsible for the reasonableness of any significant assumptions underlying the valuation, including consideration of whether they appropriately reflect our intent and ability to carry out specific courses of action on behalf of the pension fund. Any significant changes in those values since the date of the Statement of Accounts have been disclosed to you.

Pension fund registered status

I confirm that the Leicestershire Pension Fund is a Registered Pension Scheme. We are not aware of any reason why the tax status of the scheme should change.

Bank accounts

I confirm that I have disclosed all bank accounts to you including those that are maintained in respect of the pension fund.

Subsequent events

There have been no circumstances or events subsequent to the period end which require adjustment of or disclosure in the statement of accounts or in the notes thereto.

Accounting Estimates

I confirm the Authority has used appropriate measurement processes, including related assumptions and models, in determining the accounting estimate in the context of the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2013/14:

- Measurement processes were consistently applied from year to year.
- The assumptions appropriately reflect our intent and ability to carry out specific courses of action on behalf of the authority, where relevant to the accounting estimates and disclosures.
- Disclosures related to accounting estimates are complete and appropriate under the CIPFA/ CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2013/14.
- No subsequent event requires adjustment to the accounting estimates and disclosures included in the Statement of Accounts.

Using the work of experts – pension fund

I agree with the findings of Hymans Robertson, experts in evaluating the liabilities connected with the Local Government Pension Scheme. I have adequately considered the competence and capabilities of the experts in determining the amounts and disclosures used in the preparation of the Statement of Accounts and underlying accounting records. The Authority did

not give or cause any instructions to be given to experts with respect to the values or amounts derived in an attempt to bias their work, and I am not otherwise aware of any matters that have had an impact on the objectivity of the experts.

Using the work of experts – valuation of Property, Plant and Equipment

I agree with the findings of our internal Leicestershire County Council valuers, who are experts in evaluating the valuation of Property, Plant and Equipment. I have adequately considered the competence and capabilities of the experts in determining the amounts and disclosures used in the preparation of the Statement of Accounts and underlying accounting records. The Authority did not give or cause any instructions to be given to experts with respect to the values or amounts derived in an attempt to bias their work, and I am not otherwise aware of any matters that have had an impact on the objectivity of the experts.

Assessment of indication of impairment regarding valuation of Property, Plant and Equipment

I confirm that we have conducted an appropriate assessment of whether or not there was any indication that our Property, Plant and Equipment may be impaired. Our assessment did not reveal any impairment indicators.

Assets and liabilities

The Authority has no plans or intentions that may materially alter the carrying value and where relevant the fair value measurements or classification of assets and liabilities reflected in the Statement of Accounts.

In my opinion, on realisation in the ordinary course of the business the current assets in the balance sheet are expected to produce no less than the net book amounts at which they are stated.

The Authority has satisfactory title to all assets and there are no liens or encumbrances on the Authority's assets, except for those that are disclosed in the Statement of Accounts.

I confirm that we have carried out impairment reviews appropriately, including an assessment of when such reviews are required, where they are not mandatory. I confirm that we have used the appropriate assumptions with those reviews.

Details of all financial instruments, including derivatives, entered into during the year have been made available to you. Any such instruments open at the year-end have been properly valued and that valuation incorporated into the statement of accounts.

Financial Instruments

All embedded derivatives have been identified and appropriately accounted for under the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2013/14.

Retirement benefits

All significant retirement benefits that the Authority is committed to providing, including any arrangements that are statutory, contractual or implicit in the authority's actions, wherever they arise, whether funded or unfunded, approved or unapproved, have been identified and properly accounted for and/or disclosed.

All settlements and curtailments in respect of retirement benefit schemes have been identified and properly accounted for.

The following actuarial assumptions underlying the valuation of retirement benefit scheme liabilities are consistent with my knowledge of the business and in my view would lead to the best estimate of the future cash flows that will arise under the scheme liabilities:

Description	Assumption used
Duration of liabilities	15 – 20 years
Discount Rate	4.1% - 4.3%
Mortality	Club Vita analysis where available.
Inflation - RPI	3.4% - 3.6%
Inflation - CPI	2.6% - 2.8%
Salary increases	3.4% - 5.1% (with a lower short term assumption)

The authority participates in the Teachers' Pension Scheme that is a defined benefit scheme. I confirm that the authority's share of the underlying assets and liabilities of this scheme cannot be identified and as a consequence the scheme has been accounted for as a defined contribution scheme.

As minuted by the Corporate Governance Committee at its meeting on 23 September 2014.

.....
(Chief Financial Officer)

For and on behalf of Leicestershire County Council

Date



Appendix 1 - Related parties and related party transactions

The Council is to include a complete list of related parties and the transactions in the final signed letter here.



In the event that, pursuant to a request which Leicestershire County Council has received under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, it is required to disclose any information contained in this report, it will notify PwC promptly and consult with PwC prior to disclosing such report. Leicestershire County Council agrees to pay due regard to any representations which PwC may make in connection with such disclosure and Leicestershire County Council shall apply any relevant exemptions which may exist under the Act to such report. If, following consultation with PwC, Leicestershire County Council discloses this report or any part thereof, it shall ensure that any disclaimer which PwC has included or may subsequently wish to include in the information is reproduced in full in any copies disclosed.

This document has been prepared only for Leicestershire County Council and solely for the purpose and on the terms agreed through our contract with the Audit Commission. We accept no liability (including for negligence) to anyone else in connection with this document, and it may not be provided to anyone else.

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