



Local Pension Board

Date: 30th March 2017

External Audit Plan for 2016/17 Accounts

Report of the Corporate Director Business and Resources

1. Ernst & Young will undertake the 2016/17 external audit of the Fund.
2. The audit plan is attached.
3. Representatives from Ernst & Young will attend the meeting to brief the Board on the audit of the accounts.
4. The Local Pension Board is recommended;
 - to consider the presentation and the audit plan
 - to note the approach to the 2016/17 external audit.

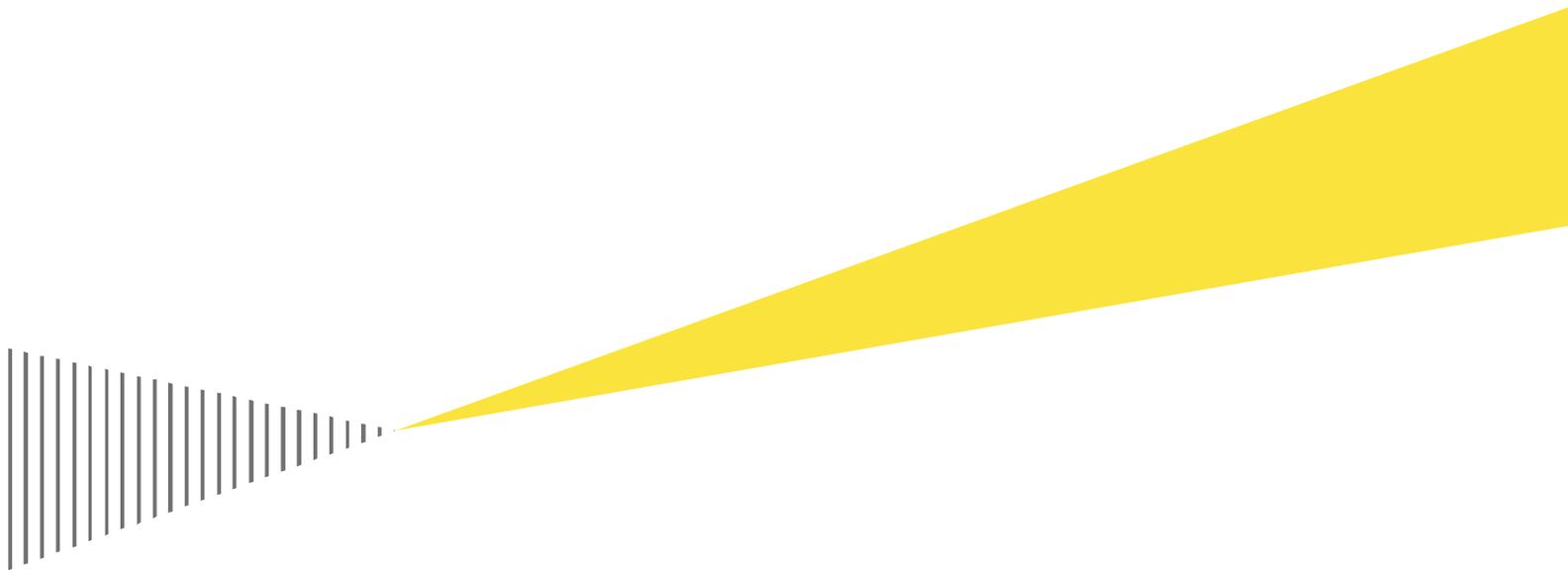
Tyne and Wear Pension Fund

Year ending 31 March 2017

Audit Plan

February 2017

Ernst & Young LLP



EY

Building a better
working world

Pensions Committee
Tyne and Wear Pension Fund
Town Hall and Civic Offices
Westoe Road
South Shields
Tyne and Wear
NE33 2RL

15 February 2017

Dear Committee Members

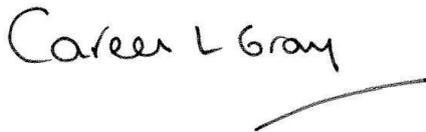
Audit Plan

We are pleased to attach our Audit Plan which sets out how we intend to carry out our responsibilities as auditor. Its purpose is to provide the Pensions Committee (the Committee) with a basis to review our proposed audit approach and scope for the 2016/17 audit in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the National Audit Office's 2015 Code of Audit Practice, the Statement of Responsibilities issued by Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) Ltd, auditing standards and other professional requirements. It is also to ensure that our audit is aligned with the Committee's service expectations.

This plan summarises our initial assessment of the key risks driving the development of an effective audit for Tyne and Wear Pension Fund (the Pension Fund) and outlines our planned audit strategy in response to those risks.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss this Audit Plan with you on 7 March 2017 and to understand whether there are other matters which you consider may influence our audit.

Yours faithfully



Careen Gray
Executive Director
For and on behalf of Ernst & Young LLP

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In April 2015 Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) issued “Statement of responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies.” It is available from the Chief Executive of each audited body and via the PSAA website (www.psaa.co.uk).

The Statement of responsibilities serves as the formal terms of engagement between appointed auditors and audited bodies. It summarises where the different responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies begin and end, and what is to be expected of the audited body in certain areas.

The ‘Terms of Appointment from 1 April 2015’ issued by PSAA sets out additional requirements that auditors must comply with, over and above those set out in the National Audit Office Code of Audit Practice (the Code) and statute, and covers matters of practice and procedure which are of a recurring nature.

This Audit Plan is prepared in the context of the Statement of responsibilities. It is addressed to the Pensions Committee, and is prepared for the sole use of the audited body. We, as appointed auditor, take no responsibility to any third party.

Our Complaints Procedure – If at any time you would like to discuss with us how our service to you could be improved, or if you are dissatisfied with the service you are receiving, you may take the issue up with your usual partner or director contact. If you prefer an alternative route, please contact Steve Varley, our Managing Partner, 1 More London Place, London SE1 2AF. We undertake to look into any complaint carefully and promptly and to do all we can to explain the position to you. Should you remain dissatisfied with any aspect of our service, you may of course take matters up with our professional institute. We can provide further information on how you may contact our professional institute.

1. Overview

This Audit Plan covers the work that we plan to perform to provide you with:

- ▶ Our audit opinion on whether the financial statements of the Pension Fund give a true and fair view of the financial transactions of the Pension Fund during the year ended 31 March 2017 and the amount and disposition of the fund's assets and liabilities as at 31 March 2017; and
- ▶ Our opinion on the consistency of the Pension Fund's financial statements within the Pension Fund's annual report with the published financial statements of South Tyneside Council.

Our audit will also include the mandatory procedures that we are required to perform in accordance with applicable laws and auditing standards.

When planning the audit we take into account several key inputs:

- ▶ Strategic, operational and financial risks relevant to the financial statements
- ▶ Developments in financial reporting and auditing standards
- ▶ The quality of systems and processes
- ▶ Changes in the business and regulatory environment
- ▶ Management's views on all of the above

By considering these inputs, our audit focuses on the areas that matter and our feedback is more likely to be relevant to the Pension Fund.

We will provide an update to the Pensions Committee on the results of our work in these areas in our report to those charged with governance scheduled for delivery in September 2017.

We met with the Head of Pensions, Principal Investment Manager and the Investment Manager on 23 January 2017 to discuss the latest developments at the Pension Fund. Following these discussions we did not identify any significant changes to the Pension Fund which will impact the scope of our work in 2016/17.

2. Financial statement risks

We outline below our current assessment of the financial statement risks facing the Pension Fund, identified through our knowledge of the Pension Fund's operations and discussion with those charged with governance and officers.

We seek to validate this with you at our meeting in March.

| Significant risks (including fraud risks) | Our audit approach |
|---|---|
| <p>Risk of management override</p> <p>As identified in ISA (UK and Ireland) 240, management is in a unique position to perpetrate fraud because of its ability to manipulate accounting records directly or indirectly and prepare fraudulent financial statements by overriding controls that otherwise appear to be operating effectively. We identify and respond to this fraud risk on every audit engagement.</p> | <p>Our approach will focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Testing the appropriateness of journal entries recorded in the general ledger and other adjustments made in the preparation of the financial statements ▶ Reviewing accounting estimates for evidence of management bias ▶ Evaluating the business rationale for significant unusual transactions |
| <p>Valuation of Unquoted investments</p> <p>The Fund's investments include unquoted pooled investment vehicles and private equity funds.</p> <p>Judgements are taken by the Investment Managers to value those investments whose prices are not publically available. The material nature of investments means that any error in judgement could result in a material valuation error.</p> <p>Current market volatility means such judgments can quickly become outdated, especially when there is a significant time period between the latest available audited information and the fund year end. Such variations could have a material impact on the financial statements.</p> <p>We have identified the Pension Fund's investments in unquoted pooled investment vehicles and private equity funds as a significant risk, as even a small movement in these assumptions could have a material impact on the financial statements.</p> | <p>Our approach will focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Document and walkthrough the process and design and implementation of controls over the valuation of unquoted investments ▶ Obtain third party confirmations of the unquoted investments at the Pension Fund's year end ▶ Review relevant controls' reports for qualifications or exceptions that may affect the audit risk ▶ Review the basis of valuation for unquoted investments to be satisfied that it was in line with the accounting policy ▶ Perform tests of valuation such as reviewing transactions around the year end, performing 'look through' testing or obtaining latest available audited accounts and auditing any subsequent cash movements between the date of the audited accounts and the Fund's year end ▶ Perform sales and purchases testing |
| <p>Valuation of directly held properties</p> <p>The Fund has a significant portfolio of directly held property investments. The valuation of land and buildings is subject to a number of assumptions and judgements. A small movement in these assumptions could have a material impact on the financial statements.</p> | <p>Our approach will focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Document and walkthrough the process and design and implementation of controls over the valuation of directly held properties ▶ Assess the property valuer as an expert of management ▶ Review the output of the property valuer ▶ Where appropriate consider the reasonableness of the assumptions used by the property valuer by reference to external evidence ▶ Where appropriate our internal real estate team to help us gain assurance over a sample of valuations |

2.1 Responsibilities in respect of fraud and error

We would like to take this opportunity to remind you that management has the primary responsibility to prevent and detect fraud. It is important that management, with the oversight of those charged with governance, has a culture of ethical behaviour and a strong control environment that both deters and prevents fraud.

Our responsibility is to plan and perform audits to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free of material misstatements whether caused by error or fraud. As auditors, we approach each engagement with a questioning mind that accepts the possibility that a material misstatement due to fraud could occur, and design the appropriate procedures to consider such risk.

Based on the requirements of auditing standards our approach will focus on:

- ▶ Identifying fraud risks during the planning stages;
- ▶ Enquiry of management about risks of fraud and the controls to address those risks;
- ▶ Understanding the oversight given by those charged with governance of management's processes over fraud;
- ▶ Consideration of the effectiveness of management's controls designed to address the risk of fraud;
- ▶ Determining an appropriate strategy to address any identified risks of fraud, and
- ▶ Performing mandatory procedures regardless of specifically identified risks.

3. Our audit process and strategy

3.1 Objective and scope of our audit

Under the Code of Audit Practice (the 'Code') our principal objectives are to review, and report on, the Pension Fund's financial statements to:

- ▶ Form an opinion on the financial statements under International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland); and
- ▶ Form an opinion on the consistency of the pension fund financial statements within the pension fund annual report with the published financial statements of South Tyneside Council.

3.2 Audit process overview

We will start our audit work by reviewing internal processes and controls for the Pension Fund's financial reporting process. We plan to review your key systems and assess your internal controls, as part of our March interim audit visit. Where we believe there is a control weakness we will provide feedback, as part of our Audit Results Report.

As in 2015/16, we will not rely upon a controls approach, as we consider it more effective and efficient to complete a fully substantive audit approach. To reduce the amount of work required at year end, we plan to commence this work in early March. We will complete top up testing as part of our year end audit visit in June. We plan to report our findings to you at the Pensions Committee Meeting in September.

Analytics

Where we can, we plan to use our computer-based analytics tools to enable us to capture whole populations of your financial data. In particular we expect to be able to use these for journal entries.

These tools:

- ▶ Help identify specific exceptions and anomalies which can then be subject to more traditional substantive audit tests; and
- ▶ Give greater likelihood of identifying errors than random sampling techniques.

Internal audit

As in the prior year, we will review internal audit plans and the results of their work. We consider these when designing our overall audit approach and when developing in our detailed testing strategy. We may also reflect relevant findings from their work in our reporting, where it raises issues that we assess could have a material impact on the year-end financial statements.

Use of specialists

When auditing key judgements, we are often required to rely on the input and advice provided by specialists who have qualifications and expertise not possessed by the core audit team. The areas where either EY or third party specialists may provide input for the current year audit are:

| Area | Specialists |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Pensions liability | Pension Fund actuary EY actuary |
| Valuation of property portfolio | Fund Property Valuation experts EY real estate valuation team |

In accordance with Auditing Standards, we will evaluate each specialist's professional competence and objectivity, considering their qualifications, experience and available resources, together with the independence of the individuals performing the work.

We also consider the work performed by the specialist in light of our knowledge of the Pension Fund's environment and processes and our assessment of audit risk in the particular area. For example, we would typically perform the following procedures:

- ▶ Analyse source data and make inquiries as to the procedures used by the specialist to establish whether the source data is relevant and reliable;
- ▶ Assess the reasonableness of the assumptions and methods used;
- ▶ Consider the appropriateness of the timing of when the specialist carried out the work; and
- ▶ Assess whether the substance of the specialist's findings are properly reflected in the financial statements.

3.3 Mandatory audit procedures required by auditing standards and the Code

As well as the financial statement risks outlined in Section two, we must perform other procedures as required by auditing, ethical and independence standards, the Code and other regulations. We outline below the procedures we will undertake during the course of our audit.

Procedures required by standards

- ▶ Addressing the risk of fraud and error
- ▶ Significant disclosures included in the financial statements
- ▶ Entity-wide controls
- ▶ Reading other information contained in the financial statements and reporting whether it is inconsistent with our understanding and the financial statements
- ▶ Auditor independence

Procedures required by the Code

- ▶ Reviewing, and reporting on as appropriate, other information published with the financial statements, including the Annual Governance Statement.

We are also required to discharge our statutory duties and responsibilities as established by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and Code of Audit Practice.

3.4 Materiality

For the purposes of determining whether the financial statements are free from material error, we define materiality as the magnitude of an omission or misstatement that, individually or in aggregate, could reasonably be expected to influence the users of the financial statements. Our evaluation requires professional judgement and so takes into account qualitative as well as quantitative considerations implied in the definition.

We have determined our initial assessment of overall materiality for the financial statements of the Pension Fund is £64.2 million based on 1% of net assets as at 31 March 2016. This materiality amount will be re-assessed and where necessary updated on receipt of the draft

2017 financial statements. We are required to communicate uncorrected audit misstatements greater than £3.2 million to you.

The amount we consider material at the end of the audit may differ from our initial determination. At this stage, however, it is not feasible to anticipate all the circumstances that might ultimately influence our judgement. At the end of the audit we will form our final opinion by reference to all matters that could be significant to users of the financial statements, including the total effect of any audit misstatements, and our evaluation of materiality at that date.

3.5 Fees

The duty to prescribe fees is a statutory function delegated to Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. PSAA has published a scale fee for all relevant bodies. This is defined as the fee required by auditors to meet statutory responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 in accordance with the NAO Code.

Our fees for the 2016/17 audit will be £35,648.

3.6 Your audit team

The engagement team continues to be led by Caren Gray, who is an Executive Director in EY's Pensions Assurance Team.

Caren continues to be supported by Stuart Kenny who is responsible for the day-to-day direction of audit work and is the key point of contact for your finance and pension teams.

3.7 Timetable of communication, deliverables and insights

We have set out below a timetable showing the key stages of the audit. The timetable includes the deliverables we have agreed to provide to the Pension Fund through the Committee's cycle in 2016/17. These dates are determined to ensure our alignment with PSAA's rolling calendar of deadlines.

From time to time matters may arise that require immediate communication with the Committee and we will discuss them with the Chair as appropriate.

Following the conclusion of our audit of the Council and Pension Fund, we will prepare an Annual Audit Letter to communicate the key issues arising from our work to the Pension Fund and external stakeholders, including members of the public.

| Audit phase | Timetable | Pensions Committee timetable | Deliverables |
|---|---------------------------|------------------------------|---|
| Risk assessment and setting of scopes | February 2017 | March 2017 | Audit Plan |
| Completion of walkthroughs of key financial systems | March 2017 | September 2017 | Report to those charged with governance via the Audit Results Report |
| Year-end audit | June – August 2017 | | Audit report , including our opinion on the financial statements |
| Completion of audit | August 2017 | | Audit report on our opinion on the consistency of the financial statements within the pension fund annual report with the published financial statements. |

4. Independence

4.1 Introduction

The APB Ethical Standards and ISA (UK and Ireland) 260 'Communication of audit matters with those charged with governance', requires us to communicate with you on a timely basis on all significant facts and matters that bear on our independence and objectivity. The Ethical Standards, as revised in December 2010, require that we do this formally both at the planning stage and at the conclusion of the audit, as well as during the audit if appropriate. The aim of these communications is to ensure full and fair disclosure by us to those charged with your governance on matters in which you have an interest.

| Required communications | |
|--|--|
| Planning stage | Final stage |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The principal threats, if any, to objectivity and independence identified by EY including consideration of all relationships between you, your affiliates and directors and us ▶ The safeguards adopted and the reasons why they are considered to be effective, including any Engagement Quality Review ▶ The overall assessment of threats and safeguards ▶ Information about the general policies and process within EY to maintain objectivity and independence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ A written disclosure of relationships (including the provision of non-audit services) that bear on our objectivity and independence, the threats to our independence that these create, any safeguards that we have put in place and why they address such threats, together with any other information necessary to enable our objectivity and independence to be assessed ▶ Details of non-audit services provided and the fees charged in relation thereto ▶ Written confirmation that we are independent ▶ Details of any inconsistencies between APB Ethical Standards, the PSAA Terms of Appointment and your policy for the supply of non-audit services by EY and any apparent breach of that policy ▶ An opportunity to discuss auditor independence issues |

During the course of the audit we must also communicate with you whenever any significant judgements are made about threats to objectivity and independence and the appropriateness of our safeguards, for example when accepting an engagement to provide non-audit services.

We also provide information on any contingent fee arrangements, the amounts of any future contracted services, and details of any written proposal to provide non-audit services.

We ensure that the total amount of fees that EY and our network firms have charged to you and your affiliates for the provision of services during the reporting period are disclosed, analysed in appropriate categories.

4.2 Relationships, services and related threats and safeguards

We highlight the following significant facts and matters that may be reasonably considered to bear upon our objectivity and independence, including any principal threats. However we have adopted the safeguards below to mitigate these threats along with the reasons why they are considered to be effective.

Self-interest threats

A self-interest threat arises when EY has financial or other interests in your entity. Examples include where we have an investment in your entity; where we receive significant fees in respect of non-audit services; where we need to recover long outstanding fees; or where we enter into a business relationship with the Pension Fund.

We are the appointed auditors for South Tyneside Council. We have no other business relationship with the Pension Fund or Council. At the time of writing, there are no long outstanding fees.

We believe that it is appropriate for us to undertake permissible non-audit services, and we will comply with the policies that the Pension Fund has approved and that are in compliance with the PSAA Terms of Appointment.

At the time of writing, there are no planned non-audit fees.

A self-interest threat may also arise if members of our audit engagement team have objectives or are rewarded in relation to sales of non-audit services to the Pension Fund. We confirm that no member of our audit engagement team, including those from other service lines, is in this position, in compliance with Ethical Standard 4.

There are no other self-interest threats at the date of this report.

Self-review threats

Self-review threats arise when the results of a non-audit service performed by EY or others within the EY network are reflected in the amounts included or disclosed in the financial statements.

There are no other self-review threats at the date of this report.

Management threats

Partners and employees of EY are prohibited from taking decisions on behalf of management of your entity. Management threats may also arise during the provision of a non-audit service where management is required to make judgements or decisions based on that work.

There are no management threats at the date of this report.

Other threats

Other threats, such as advocacy, familiarity or intimidation, may arise.

There are no other threats at the date of this report.

Overall Assessment

Overall we consider that the adopted safeguards appropriately mitigate the principal threats identified, and we therefore confirm that EY is independent and the objectivity and independence of Careen Gray, the audit engagement Director and the audit engagement team have not been compromised.

4.3 Other required communications

EY has policies and procedures that instil professional values as part of firm culture and ensure that the highest standards of objectivity, independence and integrity are maintained.

Details of the key policies and processes within EY for maintaining objectivity and independence can be found in our annual Transparency Report, which the firm is required to publish by law. The most recent version of this report is for the year ended June 2016 and can be found here:

<http://www.ey.com/uk/en/about-us/ey-uk-transparency-report-2016>

Appendix A Fees

A breakdown of our agreed fee is shown below.

| | Planned Fee 2016/17 £ | Scale fee 2016/17 £ | Outturn fee 2015/16 £ |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Total Audit Fee – Code work | 35,648 | 35,648 | 35,648 |
| Non-audit work | 0 | 0 | 0 |

All fees exclude VAT.

We base the agreed fee presented above on the following assumptions:

- ▶ Officers meeting the agreed timetable of deliverables;
- ▶ Appropriate quality of documentation is provided by the Pension Fund Team; and
- ▶ The Pension Fund has an effective control environment.

If any of the above assumptions prove to be unfounded, we will seek a variation to the agreed fee. We will discuss and agree any variation with the Pension Fund officers in advance.

Fees for the auditor's consideration of correspondence from the public and formal objections will be charged in addition to the scale fee.

Appendix B UK required communications with those charged with governance

There are certain communications that we must provide to the Pensions Committee. These are detailed here:

| Required communication | Reference |
|---|------------------------|
| <p>Planning and audit approach</p> <p>Communication of the planned scope and timing of the audit including any limitations.</p> | ▶ Audit Plan |
| <p>Significant findings from the audit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Our view about the significant qualitative aspects of accounting practices including accounting policies, accounting estimates and financial statement disclosures ▶ Significant difficulties, if any, encountered during the audit ▶ Significant matters, if any, arising from the audit that were discussed with management ▶ Written representations that we are seeking ▶ Expected modifications to the audit report ▶ Other matters if any, significant to the oversight of the financial reporting process | ▶ Audit Results Report |
| <p>Misstatements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Uncorrected misstatements and their effect on our audit opinion ▶ The effect of uncorrected misstatements related to prior periods ▶ A request that any uncorrected misstatement be corrected ▶ In writing, corrected misstatements that are significant | ▶ Audit Results Report |
| <p>Fraud</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Enquiries of the Pensions Committee to determine whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud affecting the entity ▶ Any fraud that we have identified or information we have obtained that indicates that a fraud may exist ▶ A discussion of any other matters related to fraud | ▶ Audit Results Report |
| <p>Related parties</p> <p>Significant matters arising during the audit in connection with the entity's related parties including, when applicable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Non-disclosure by management ▶ Inappropriate authorisation and approval of transactions ▶ Disagreement over disclosures ▶ Non-compliance with laws and regulations ▶ Difficulty in identifying the party that ultimately controls the entity | ▶ Audit Results Report |
| <p>External confirmations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Management's refusal for us to request confirmations ▶ Inability to obtain relevant and reliable audit evidence from other procedures | ▶ Audit Results Report |
| <p>Consideration of laws and regulations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Audit findings regarding non-compliance where the non-compliance is material and believed to be intentional. This communication is subject to compliance with legislation on tipping off ▶ Enquiry of the Pensions Committee into possible instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations that may have a material effect on the financial statements and that the Pensions Committee may be aware of | ▶ Audit Results Report |

| Required communication | Reference |
|--|---|
| <p>Independence</p> <p>Communication of all significant facts and matters that bear on EY's objectivity and independence</p> <p>Communication of key elements of the audit engagement director's consideration of independence and objectivity such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The principal threats ▶ Safeguards adopted and their effectiveness ▶ An overall assessment of threats and safeguards ▶ Information about the general policies and process within the firm to maintain objectivity and independence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Audit Plan ▶ Audit Results Report |
| <p>Going concern</p> <p>Events or conditions identified that may cast significant doubt on the entity's ability to continue as a going concern, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Whether the events or conditions constitute a material uncertainty ▶ Whether the use of the going concern assumption is appropriate in the preparation and presentation of the financial statements ▶ The adequacy of related disclosures in the financial statements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Audit Results Report |
| <p>Significant deficiencies in internal controls identified during the audit</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Audit Results Report |
| <p>Fee Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Breakdown of fee information at the agreement of the initial audit plan ▶ Breakdown of fee information at the completion of the audit | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Audit Plan ▶ Audit Results Report ▶ Annual Audit Letter if considered necessary |

EY | Assurance | Tax | Transactions | Advisory

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External Audit Plan for 2016/17 Accounts

The following is a list of the background papers (excluding exempt papers) relied upon in the preparation of the above report:

| Background Paper | File Ref: | File Location |
|---|------------------|--|
| Annual Report and Accounts File 2016/17 | | Investments Office, South Shields Town Hall |