



WALES AUDIT OFFICE
SWYDDFA ARCHWILIO CYMRU

Archwilydd Cyffredinol Cymru
Auditor General for Wales

2017 Audit Plan – **Bridgend County Borough Council**

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This document is also available in Welsh.

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2017 Audit Plan

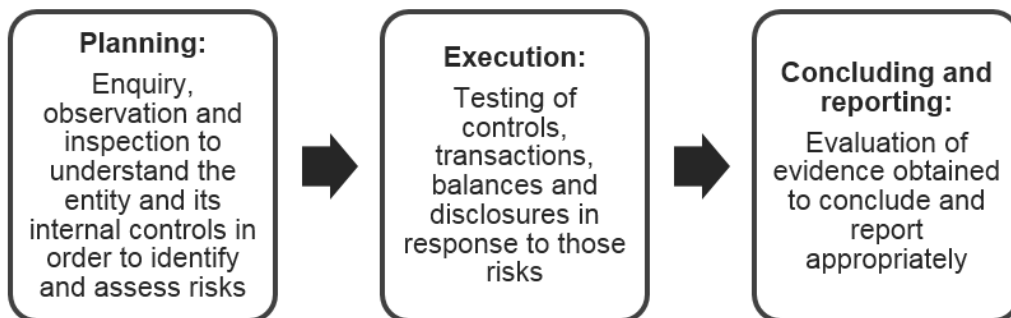
Summary

- 1 As your external auditor, my objective is to carry out an audit which discharges my statutory duties as Auditor General and fulfils my obligations under the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004, the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (the Measure), the Local Government Act 1999, and the Code of Audit Practice, namely to:
 - examine and certify whether your financial statements are ‘true and fair’;
 - assess whether you have made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources;
 - audit and assess whether you have discharged duties and met requirements of the Measure; and
 - undertake studies to enable me to make recommendations for improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness or for improving financial or other management arrangements.
- 2 The purpose of this plan is to set out my proposed work, when it will be undertaken, how much it will cost and who will undertake it. I can confirm that there have been no limitations imposed on me in planning the scope of this audit. My responsibilities, along with those of management and those charged with governance, are set out in [Appendix 1](#).

Audit of accounts

- 3 It is my responsibility to issue a certificate and report on the financial statements which includes an opinion on their ‘truth and fairness’.
- 4 I also consider whether or not Bridgend County Borough Council (the Council) has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources and report by exception if the Annual Governance Statement does not comply with requirements.
- 5 The audit work I undertake to fulfil my responsibilities responds to my assessment of risks. This understanding allows me to develop an audit approach which focuses on addressing specific risks whilst providing assurance for the financial statements as a whole. My audit approach consists of three phases as set out in [Exhibit 1](#).

Exhibit 1: my audit approach



6 The risks of material misstatement which I consider to be significant and which therefore require special audit consideration, are set out in [Exhibit 2](#) along with the work I intend to undertake to address them. Within [Exhibit 2](#) I have not replicated my formal observations, recommendations, and management responses, from last year’s audit. I can confirm however that my audit team will review the Council’s progress with the implementation of my recommendations.

Exhibit 2: financial audit risks

Financial audit risk	Proposed audit response
<p>Financial Challenges</p> <p>The Council continues to face significant financial challenges in common with the rest of the public sector. These financial pressures increase the risk of the manipulation of transactions and balances within the financial statements in order to achieve the projected year-end position.</p>	<p>My audit team will reflect the Council’s financial position in planning the audit and will direct audit testing to the areas of greatest risk.</p>
<p>Cardiff Capital Region City Deal</p> <p>City deals are arrangements negotiated with government that give greater accountability for actions in return for new powers to help encourage growth and jobs. The Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (the City Deal) involves ten South Wales local authorities. The City Deal was ratified by all participating authorities on 1 March 2017. The authorities have established a joint committee (the Regional Cabinet) to oversee delivery of a range of programmes designed to increase connectivity and to improve physical and digital infrastructure over the course of 20 years. The City Deal includes funding of £734 million for the South Wales Metro, of which over</p>	<p>Liaising closely with the external auditors of the other nine Local Authorities, my audit team will monitor progress with the City Deal project and carry out early work as necessary to assess the existing and proposed financial and governance arrangements. We will also take into account the work undertaken by HM Treasury to scrutinise the effectiveness of the region’s governance arrangements.</p>

Financial audit risk	Proposed audit response
<p>£500 million is provided by the Welsh Government and £125 million from the UK Government. In addition, the UK Government has provided a £375 million contribution, and the ten local authorities have agreed a commitment to borrow a combined total of £120 million as part of the Wider Investment Fund. This significant programme will have financial, governance and delivery risks that need to be managed. There will be a number of accounting issues to address.</p>	
<p>Changes to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES) and new disclosures</p> <p>The 2016-17 Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting (The Code) introduced changes to disclosures within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES) for 2016-17 to align the analysis of income and expenditure with the Council's directorate structure. It also introduced the requirement to produce an expenditure and funding analysis. There is a risk that disclosures do not comply with the requirements of the Code.</p>	<p>My audit team will undertake testing to ensure that the analysis of income and expenditure within the CIES and all new notes and disclosures have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Code.</p>
<p>We have identified certain disclosures within the financial statements as being 'material by nature' given the sensitivities around their disclosure.</p> <p>Specific risk areas include the accuracy and completeness of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • significant transactions with related parties; and • Officers' remuneration disclosures, including any exit packages, and Members' allowances and expenses. 	<p>My audit team will undertake focused testing in these areas.</p>
<p>The risk of management override of controls is present in all entities. Due to the unpredictable way in which such override could occur, it is viewed as a significant risk [ISA 240.31-33].</p>	<p>My audit team will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • test the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments made in preparing the financial statements; • review accounting estimates for biases; and • examine the rationale for any significant transactions that our audit identifies that could potentially be outside the normal course of business.

Financial audit risk	Proposed audit response
<p>Significant capital projects</p> <p>Our planning work has identified a number of significant capital projects in the early stages of development. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the relocation of Pencoed Primary school; • Garw Valley South new schools; and • Brynmenyn Primary new school. <p>While these are all in the early stages of development there is a risk that accounting entries and disclosures are not complete and accurate.</p>	<p>My audit team will undertake testing to ensure that appropriate accounting entries and disclosures are made.</p>

- 7 I do not seek to obtain absolute assurance on the truth and fairness of the financial statements and related notes, but adopt a concept of materiality. My aim is to identify material misstatements, that is, those that might result in a reader of the accounts being misled. The levels at which I judge such misstatements to be material will be reported to the Audit Committee prior to completion of the audit.
- 8 For reporting purposes, I will treat any misstatements below a 'trivial' level (set at 5% of materiality) as not requiring consideration by those charged with governance and therefore I will not report them.
- 9 My fees are based on the following assumptions:
- information provided to support the financial statements is timely, to the quality expected and has been subject to quality assurance review;
 - appropriate accommodation and facilities are provided to enable my audit team to deliver the audit in an efficient manner;
 - all appropriate officials will be available within reasonable notice during the audit;
 - management has implemented their agreed actions in respect of the 2015-16 audit recommendations, by the agreed dates;
 - you have all the necessary controls and checks in place to enable the Responsible Financial Officer to provide all the assurances that I require in the Letter of Representation addressed to me; and
 - Internal Audit's planned programme of work is complete and management has responded to issues that may have affected the financial statements.
- In addition to my responsibilities in respect of the audit of the Council's statutory financial statements set out above, I am also required to certify a return to the Welsh Government which provides information about the Council to support preparation of Whole of Government Accounts.

Certification of grant claims and returns

- 10 I have been requested to undertake certification work on the Council's grant claims and returns for 2016-17. We are not aware of any significant changes to the grants programme for 2016-17.
- 11 With regard to my audit of the Council's 2015-16 grant claims, I have reported the findings within my report entitled 'Certification of Grants and Returns 2015-16 – Bridgend County Borough Council', which I issued in March 2017 and is due to be considered in April by the Council's Audit Committee.
- 12 My audit fee for this work is set out in [Exhibit 7](#).

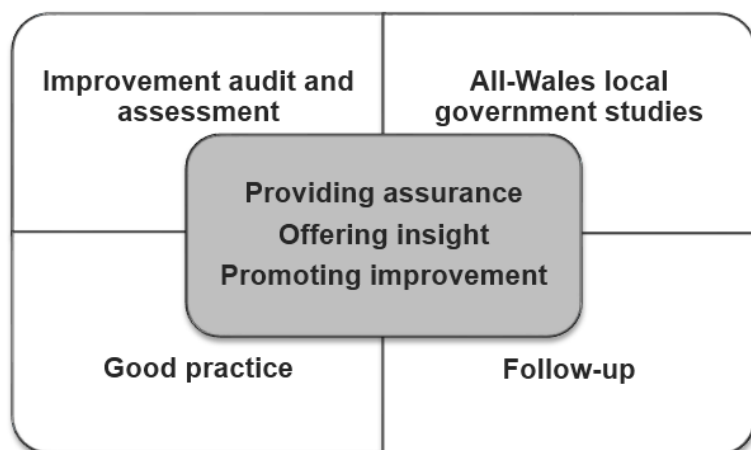
Other certification work undertaken

- 13 I am also responsible for the audit of the Catalogue Supplies Service Joint Committee, which will be the final audit following its closure, Coychurch Crematorium Joint Committee and Porthcawl Harbour. My audit fees for this work are set out in [Exhibit 7](#).

Performance audit

- 14 The components of my performance audit work are shown in [Exhibit 4](#).

[Exhibit 4: components of my performance audit work](#)



- 15 Local government in Wales is going through an unprecedented period of change. Austerity continues to bite, audited bodies are required to adopt the principle of sustainable development from April 2016, and local government reform remains under consideration.

- 16 For 2017-18 the Measure will still be in place, and I will still need to examine whether authorities will meet their duty to make arrangements for continuous improvement. The challenge for me in these uncertain times is to balance my existing, new and proposed statutory duties with the need to continue to undertake meaningful, risk-based and proportionate audits and assessments.
- 17 During 2016 I consulted with public service bodies on how I can best discharge my various duties whilst striking the most appropriate balance and adding value by:
- providing assurance on the governance and stewardship of public money and assets;
 - offering insight on the extent to which resources are used wisely in meeting people's needs; and
 - identifying and promoting ways by which the provision of public services may be improved.
- 18 In addition to the annual programme of audit and assessment work, the Wales Audit Office also undertakes a programme of local government studies. This work is included within the Wales Audit Office estimates for funding from the Welsh Consolidated Fund and not local fees. **Exhibit 5** summarises the present position on the current programme of studies. These studies primarily lead to a national report augmented by good practice and shared learning outputs rather than by local reports. Local findings, where relevant, will be captured in improvement assessment work and reported in annual improvement reports depending on the timing and the focus of conclusions.

Exhibit 5: local government studies

Study	Status
2015-16 studies	
Community safety	Published October 2016
Income generation and charging	Published November 2016
Council funding of third sector services	Published January 2017
2016-17 studies	
How local government manages demand	Fieldwork
Strategic commissioning	Fieldwork
Improving well-being through housing adaptations	Fieldwork

19 Taking all these factors into consideration, my 2017-18 programme of work will comprise:

Exhibit 6: performance audit programme

Performance audit programme	Brief description
Improvement audit and assessment work including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement planning and reporting audit. 	Audit of discharge of duty to publish an improvement plan, and to set improvement objectives.
Local risk-based work for 2017-18 has yet to be agreed with the Council.	To be confirmed. We will provide an update to the Audit Committee once this work has been agreed
Service User Perspective review	A user-focused review. Specific area to be agreed with the Council
Well-being of Future Generations baseline assessment	The Year One Commentary: We will gather evidence on how the 44 bodies are beginning to respond to the requirements of the WFG Act and identify examples of notable emerging practice. The work will be designed to support improvement and inform future audit work under the Act.
WFG Scrutiny review	This review will examine the impact of the WFG Act on the work of scrutiny committees, including PSB scrutiny, facilitating improvement and the sharing of good practice
2017-18 Local Government Studies	Funded by Welsh Government
Services to rural communities	To be confirmed
Use of data	To be confirmed
Intermediate care fund	To be confirmed

20 The performance audit projects included in last year’s Audit Plan, which are either still underway or which have been substituted for alternative projects in agreement with you, are set out in [Appendix 3](#).

Fee, audit team and timetable

Fee

- 21 The Wales Audit Office does not generate profits on fees. Legislation requires that the fees charged may not exceed the full cost of exercising the function to which the fee relates. The fee rates are set at a level to recover that full cost. My fee rates have been held static for a further year and my audit teams will continue to look for efficiencies in their audits and welcome working with you constructively on this.
- 22 Your estimated fee for 2017 is set out in **Exhibit 7**. The total fee represents a 3% decrease compared to the fees charged for 2016.

Exhibit 7: audit fee

Audit area	Proposed fee (£) ¹	Actual fee last year (£)
Audit of accounts ²	195,700	199,869
Performance audit work ³	97,400	97,400
Grant certification work ⁴	58,220	58,220
Other financial audit work:		
Catalogue Supplies Service Joint Committee ⁵	875	8,000
Coychurch Crematorium Joint Committee	2,100	2,100
Porthcawl Harbour	679	650
Total fee	354,930	366,237

Notes:

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

² Payable November 2016 to October 2017. This fee includes the audit of the Whole of Government Accounts

³ Payable April 2017 to March 2018.

⁴ Payable as work is undertaken. Last year's proposed fee, in the 2016 Audit Plan, was £38,724. Further information is available in our report 'Certification of Grants and Returns 2015-16'.

⁵ This audit fee has reduced significantly as I will be auditing the residual figure in an annual return rather than a full set of accounts, as the last full year was 2015-16.

- 23 Planning will be ongoing, and changes to my programme of audit work and therefore my fee, may be required if any key new risks emerge. I shall make no changes without first discussing them with the Council.
- 24 Further information on my can be found on the Wales Audit Office website at <http://www.audit.wales/publication/fee-scheme-2017-18>.

Audit team

- 25 The main members of my team, together with their contact details, are summarised in **Exhibit 8**.

Exhibit 8: my team

Name	Role	Contact number	E-mail address
Derwyn Owen	Engagement Director	02920 320500	Derwyn.Owen@audit.wales
Huw Rees	Engagement Lead – Performance Audit	02920 320500	Huw.Rees@audit.wales
Mark Jones	Financial Audit Manager	02920 320500	Mark.Jones@audit.wales
John Llewellyn	Financial Audit Team Leader	07973 699076	John.Llewellyn@audit.wales
Steve Barry	Performance Audit Manager	029 2082 9323 / 07786 190210	Steve.Barry@audit.wales
Samantha Clements	Performance Audit Lead	029 2032 0163 / 07837 825175	Samantha.Clements@audit.wales

- 26 I can confirm that my team members are all independent of the Council and your officers. In addition, I am not aware of any potential conflicts of interest that I need to bring to your attention.

Timetable

- 27 I will provide reports, or other outputs as agreed, to the Council covering the areas of work identified in this document. My key milestones are set out in **Exhibit 9**.

Exhibit 9: timetable

Planned output	Work undertaken	Report finalised
2017 Audit Plan	January –February 2017	March 2017
Financial accounts work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit of Financial Statements Report • Opinion on Financial Statements • Financial Accounts Memorandum 	February to September 2017	September 2017 September 2017 October 2017
Performance work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement Plan Audit • Assessment of Performance Audit • Service user perspective review • Local risk based work 	March-April 2017 November 2017 To be confirmed To be confirmed	April 2017 December 2017 To be confirmed To be confirmed
Annual Improvement Report	April 2017 – May 2018	June 2018
2018 Audit Plan	January –February 2018	March 2018
Well-being of Future Generations: baseline assessment	To be confirmed	Not applicable
Well-being of Future Generations: scrutiny review	To be confirmed	To be confirmed

* Subject to timely clearance of draft findings with the Council.

Future developments to my audit work

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

28 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (the Act) became law in April 2015. The Act requires me to report before the next National Assembly election on how public bodies are acting in accordance with the sustainable development principle when setting their well-being objectives and taking steps to meet them. In 2017 I will conduct my first work under the Act – the Year One Commentary – to understand how bodies are beginning to respond to the requirements. I will also work collaboratively with a small number of public bodies on a pilot basis to develop an audit approach that is meaningful and proportionate and can be adopted in subsequent years. My pilot work does not involve the Council.

Other

- 29 Details of other future developments including changes to key IFRS and of the Wales Audit Office's Good Practice Exchange (GPX) seminars are set out in [Appendix 5](#).
- 30 The Wales Audit Office's GPX programme seeks to support the improvement of public services across Wales by identifying and sharing good practice. The GPX seminars bring a range of public sector bodies together to share their practical experiences and learning in areas we consider would benefit from sharing good practice. The seminars are provided free of charge to delegates. Forthcoming events include:
- the challenges posed by indirectly provided, publicly funded services in Wales;
 - how you manage risk around organisation change, service transformation and innovation; and
 - measuring outcomes: who's doing it and how (linked to Well-Being of Future Generations Act).

Appendix 1

Respective responsibilities

Audit of accounts

As amended by the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2013, the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 sets out my powers and duties to undertake your financial audit. It is my responsibility to issue a certificate and report on the financial statements which includes an opinion on:

- Their 'truth and fairness', providing assurance that they:
 - are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error;
 - comply with the statutory and other applicable requirements; and
 - comply with all relevant requirements for accounting presentation and disclosure.
- The consistency of information in the Annual Report with the financial statements.

I must also state by exception if the Annual Governance Statement does not comply with requirements, if proper accounting records have not been kept, if disclosures required for remuneration and other transactions have not been made or if I have not received all the information and explanations I require.

The Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 requires me to assess whether Bridgend County Borough Council has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources. To achieve this, I consider:

- the results of the audit work undertaken on the financial statements;
- Bridgend County Borough Council's system of internal control, as reported in the Annual Governance Statement and my report thereon;
- the results of other work carried out including work carried out under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (the Measure), certification of claims and returns, and data-matching exercises;
- the results of the work of other external review bodies where relevant to my responsibilities; and
- any other work that addresses matters not covered by the above, and which I consider necessary to discharge my responsibilities.

The Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 sets out the rights of the public and electors to inspect Bridgend County Borough Council's financial statements and related documents, to ask me, as the Appointed Auditor, questions about the accounts and, where appropriate, to challenge items in the accounts. I must also consider whether in the public interest, I should make a report on any matter which comes to my notice in the course of the audit.

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

- the preparation of the financial statements and Annual Report in accordance with applicable accounting standards and guidance;

- the keeping of proper accounting records;
- ensuring the regularity of financial transactions; and
- securing value for money in the use of resources.

Management agrees to provide me with:

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

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

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

Performance audit

The Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 requires auditors, by examination of the accounts or otherwise, to satisfy themselves that the body has made proper arrangements for:

- securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources; and
- that the body, if required to publish information in pursuance of a direction under section 47 (performance information) has made such arrangements for collecting and recording the information and for publishing it as are required for the performance of its duties under that section.

The Measure places a general duty on improvement authorities to 'make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of [their] functions'. It also places specific requirements on authorities to set improvement objectives, and to publish annual improvement plans and assessments of performance. Improvement authorities are defined as county and county borough councils, national park authorities, and fire and rescue authorities.

The Measure also requires me to carry out an improvement assessment for each improvement authority every year, to determine whether the authority is likely to comply with its general duty and requirements of the Measure. The Auditor General must also carry out an audit of whether the authority has discharged its improvement planning and reporting duties.

The Auditor General may also in some circumstances carry out special inspections (under section 21), in respect of which he will provide a report to the relevant authorities and Ministers, and which he may publish (under section 22). The Auditor General will summarise audit and assessment reports in his published Annual Improvement Report (under section 24). This will also summarise any reports of special inspections.

Appendix 2

Performance work in last year's audit outline still in progress

Exhibit 10: performance work in last year's audit outline still in progress

Performance audit project	Status	Comment
Governance	Draft report due to be issued March 2017.	This review will provide councils with a baseline from which to plan improvements to governance following the introduction of CIPFA's revised framework and the requirement for councils to adopt the sustainable development principle from April 2016.
Aligning the levers for change	Researching the Council's response to challenges facing local government.	Scoping.
Corporate Assessment follow up	In progress	Draft report May 2017
Annual Improvement Report (AIR)	Scheduled for June 2017	Annual report summarising the audit work undertaken in the last year which also includes a summary of the key findings from reports issued by 'relevant regulators'.

Appendix 3

National value-for-money studies

The Council may also be interested in the national value-for-money examinations which I undertake, some of which will be of particular relevance to, and may involve evidence gathering across, local government. These studies are supported by funds approved by the National Assembly. Reports are presented to the National Assembly's Public Accounts Committee to support its scrutiny of public expenditure and potentially support scrutiny by other National Assembly committees.

Exhibit 11 covers all of the value-for-money studies work currently programmed.

The programme includes all-Wales summaries of audit work undertaken locally in the NHS and reactive examinations into specific issues of public concern that have been raised with me. In addition to the work outlined below, I may decide during the year to prepare other national reports summarising local audit work or based on the findings of reactive examinations.

I am also currently consulting with the Public Accounts Committee and other stakeholders about the inclusion in my programme of a number of new value-for-money studies to be rolled out during 2017-18. For example, I have already indicated to the committee that, following my July 2016 report on the Welsh Government's funding of Kancoat Ltd, I am considering a broader examination of the Welsh Government's support for business.

Further updates on my programme of value-for-money studies will be provided to you within the regular progress reports prepared by my team.

Exhibit 11: national value-for-money studies

Topic	Anticipated publication (as at 3 January 2017)
Outpatient follow-up appointments	February 2017
Governance and oversight of arms-length bodies (discussion paper)	February 2017
Welsh Government oversight of further education institutions' finances and delivery	March 2017
Circuit of Wales	February 2017
Emergency ambulance services commissioning	February 2017
21st century schools and education programme	March 2017
Public procurement landscape review	April to July 2017
Waste management (waste prevention)	April to July 2017
Waste management (municipal recycling) ²	April to July 2017

² In addition to the work on waste prevention and municipal recycling, I will be taking forward a review of waste treatment infrastructure in early 2017.

Topic	Anticipated publication (as at 3 January 2017)
Implementation of the NHS Finances (Wales) Act 2014 (integrated medium-term planning)	April to July 2017
Supporting People programme	April to July 2017
NHS Wales informatics services	April to July 2017
Access to public services with the support of specialist interpretation and translation	August to October 2017
Preparations for the implementation of fiscal devolution in Wales (follow-on report)	August to October 2017
Early intervention and behaviour change	TBC ³

³ My programme of good practice work has included a project exploring behaviour change work across Welsh public services and opportunities to improve practice, deliver better outcomes for citizens, and achieve better value for money. I still anticipate that the information and evidence gathered through this work will support the production of a report on this topic, although this is unlikely to be a traditional audit report and plans for its production are still to be confirmed.

Appendix 4

Other future developments

Forthcoming key IFRS changes

Exhibit 12: forthcoming key IFRS changes

Standard	Effective date	Further details
IFRS 9 Financial instruments	2018-19	IFRS 9 financial instruments will replace IAS 39 and includes a new principles-based approach for the classification and measurement of financial assets. It also introduces a new impairment methodology for financial assets based on an expected losses rather than incurred losses. This will result in earlier and more timely recognition of expected credit losses. The accounting requirements for financial liabilities are almost all carried forward unchanged from IAS 39.
IFRS 15 Revenue from contracts with customers	2018-19	IFRS 15 revenue from contracts with customers introduces a principles-based five-step model for recognising revenue arising from contracts with customers. It is based on a core principle requiring revenue recognition to depict the transfer of promised goods or services to the customer in an amount that reflects the consideration the body expects to be entitled to, in exchange for those goods or services. It will also require more extensive disclosures than are currently required.
IFRS 16 Leases	2019-20	IFRS 16 will replace the current leases standard IAS 17. The key change is that it largely removes the distinction between operating and finance leases for lessees by introducing a single lessee accounting model that requires a lessee to recognise assets and liabilities for all leases with a term of more than 12 months, unless the underlying asset is of low value. It will lead to all leases being recognised on balance sheet as an asset based on a 'right of use' principle with a corresponding liability for future rentals. This is a significant change in lessee accounting.

Good Practice Exchange

The Wales Audit Office's GPX helps public services improve by sharing knowledge and practices that work. Events are held where knowledge can be exchanged face-to-face and resources shared online.

The focus of GPX events include financial management, public sector staff and governance.

Further information, including details of forthcoming GPX events and outputs from past seminars, can be found on the [GPX section of the Wales Audit Office website](#).

Registration for all events will open two months prior to the event.

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