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Annual Audit Letter 2014/15

Lancaster City Council

October 2015

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This report is addressed to the Authority and has been prepared for the sole use of the Authority. We take no responsibility to any member of staff acting in their individual capacities, or to third parties. The Audit Commission issued a document entitled *Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies* summarising where the responsibilities of auditors begin and end and what is expected from audited bodies. We draw your attention to this document which is available on Public Sector Audit Appointment's website (www.psa.co.uk).

External auditors do not act as a substitute for the audited body's own responsibility for putting in place proper arrangements to ensure that public business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

We are committed to providing you with a high quality service. If you have any concerns or are dissatisfied with any part of KPMG's work, in the first instance you should contact Tim Cutler, the engagement lead to the Authority, who will try to resolve your complaint. If you are dissatisfied with your response please contact the national lead partner for all of KPMG's work under our contract with Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited, Trevor Rees (on 0161 246 4000, or by email to trevor.rees@kpmg.co.uk). After this, if you are still dissatisfied with how your complaint has been handled you can access PSA's complaints procedure by emailing generalenquiries@psaa.co.uk, by telephoning 020 7072 7445 or by writing to Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited, 3rd Floor, Local Government House, Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ.

This report summarises the key findings from our 2014/15 audit of Lancaster City Council (the Authority).

Although this letter is addressed to the Members of the Authority, it is also intended to communicate these issues to key external stakeholders, including members of the public.

Our audit covers the audit of the Authority's 2014/15 financial statements and the 2014/15 VFM conclusion.

<p>VFM conclusion</p>	<p>We issued an unqualified conclusion on the Authority's arrangements to secure value for money (VFM conclusion) for 2014/15 on 21 September 2015. This means we are satisfied that that Authority had proper arrangements for securing financial resilience and challenging how it secures economy, efficiency and effectiveness.</p> <p>To arrive at our conclusion we looked at the Authority's financial governance, financial planning and financial control processes, as well as the arrangements for prioritising resources and improving efficiency and productivity.</p> <p>We undertook a risk assessment as part of our VFM audit work to identify the key areas impacting on our VFM conclusion and considered the arrangements you have put in place to mitigate these risks.</p> <p>We did not identify any specific risks during these risk assessment processes which would impact on our VFM conclusion for 2014/15.</p>
<p>Audit opinion</p>	<p>We issued an unqualified opinion on the Authority's financial statements on 21 September 2015. This means that we believe the financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Authority and of its expenditure and income for the year.</p>
<p>Financial statements audit</p>	<p>During the audit, one adjustment with a value of £1.9 million was identified relating to the impairment of the Lancaster Science Park Land. This was omitted from the Authority's revaluation schedule and was therefore not reflected in the financial statements. There was no net impact on the General Fund and HRA as a result of this amendment. In addition to the adjustment we raised one medium priority recommendation on this issue within our report to those charged with governance, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ In future years, at the time of accounts preparation, the finance team should confirm that its revaluations schedule agrees completely to all revaluation certificates held by Property Services. The finance team should also ensure that once any strategic decisions are made, any required amendments to asset carrying values are undertaken on a timely basis, rather than waiting until the year end closedown. <p>We agreed with management a small number of presentational amendments to the accounts during the course of our audit which were corrected in the final version.</p>
<p>Annual Governance Statement</p>	<p>We reviewed your <i>Annual Governance Statement</i> and concluded that it was consistent with our understanding.</p>

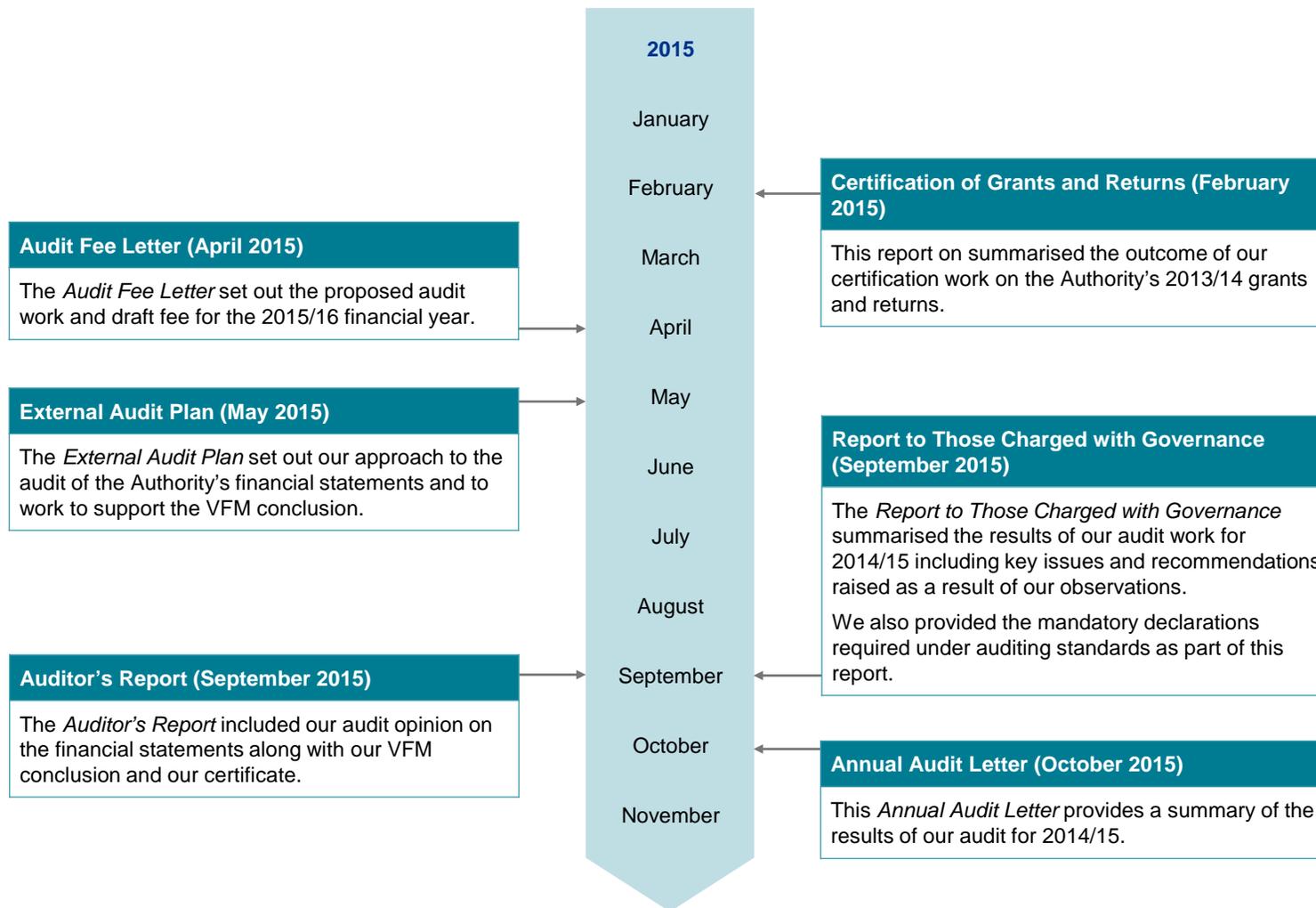
All the issues in this Annual Audit Letter have been previously reported. The detailed findings are contained in the reports we have listed in Appendix 1.

Whole of Government Accounts	The Authority prepares a consolidation pack to support the production of Whole of Government Accounts by HM Treasury. We are not required to review your pack in detail as the Authority falls below the threshold where an audit is required. As required by the guidance we have confirmed this with the National Audit Office.
High priority recommendations	We raised no high priority recommendations as a result of our 2014/15 audit work. The medium priority recommendation we made has been outlined on page 2 of this report.
Certificate	We issued our certificate on 21 September 2015. The certificate confirms that we have concluded the audit for 2014/15 in accordance with the requirements of the <i>Audit Commission Act 1998</i> and the Audit Commission's <i>Code of Audit Practice</i> .
Audit fee	Our fee for 2014/15 was £77,850, excluding VAT. This is in line with the agreed scale fee for 2014/15. Further detail is contained in Appendix 2.

Appendix 1: Summary of reports issued

This appendix summarises the reports we issued since our last *Annual Audit Letter*.

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This appendix provides information on our final fees for the 2014/15 audit.

To ensure transparency about the extent of our fee relationship with the Authority we have summarised below the outturn against the 2014/15 planned audit fee.

External audit

Our fee for 2014/15 was £77,850, excluding VAT. This is in line with the agreed scale fee for 2014/15.

Our fees are still subject to final determination by Public Sector Audit Appointments.

Certification of grants and returns

Under our terms of engagement with Public Sector Audit Appointments we undertake prescribed work in order to certify the Authority's housing benefit grant claim. This certification work is still ongoing. The final fee will be confirmed through our reporting on the outcome of that work in January 2016.



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