

# The Audit Findings for Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

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**Year ended 31 March 2016**

September 2016

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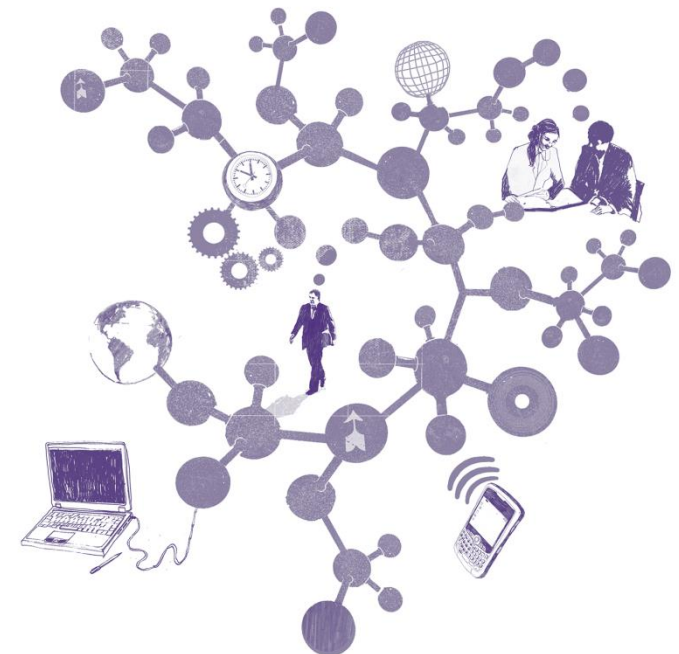
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29 September 2016

Dear Members of the Audit Committee

**Audit Findings for Lancashire Combined Fire Authority for the year ending 31 March 2016**

This Audit Findings report highlights the key findings arising from the audit for the benefit of those charged with governance (in the case of Lancashire Combined Fire Authority, the Audit Committee), as required by International Standard on Auditing (UK & Ireland) 260, the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the National Audit Office Code of Audit Practice. Its contents have been discussed with officers.

As auditors we are responsible for performing the audit, in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland), which is directed towards forming and expressing an opinion on the financial statements that have been prepared by management with the oversight of those charged with governance. The audit of the financial statements does not relieve management or those charged with governance of their responsibilities for the preparation of the financial statements.

The contents of this report relate only to those matters which came to our attention during the conduct of our normal audit procedures which are designed primarily for the purpose of expressing our opinion on the financial statements and giving a value for money conclusion. Our audit is not designed to test all internal controls or identify all areas of control weakness. However, where, as part of our testing, we identify any control weaknesses, we will report these to you. In consequence, our work cannot be relied upon to disclose defalcations or other irregularities, or to include all possible improvements in internal control that a more extensive special examination might identify. We do not accept any responsibility for any loss occasioned to any third party acting, or refraining from acting on the basis of the content of this report, as this report was not prepared for, nor intended for, any other purpose.

We would like to take this opportunity to record our appreciation for the kind assistance provided by the finance team and other staff during our audit.

Yours faithfully

Karen Murray

**Chartered Accountants**

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# Section 1: Executive summary

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**05. Communication of audit matters**

## Purpose of this report

This report highlights the key issues affecting the results of Lancashire Combined Fire Authority ('the Authority') and the preparation of the Authority's financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2016. It is also used to report our audit findings to management and those charged with governance in accordance with the requirements of International Standard on Auditing (UK & Ireland) 260, and the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 ('the Act').

Under the National Audit Office (NAO) Code of Audit Practice ('the Code'), we are required to report whether, in our opinion, the Authority's financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Authority and its income and expenditure for the year and whether they have been properly prepared in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting.

We are also required consider other information published together with the audited financial statements, whether it is consistent with the financial statements and in line with required guidance.

We are required to carry out sufficient work to satisfy ourselves on whether the Authority has made proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources ('the value for money (VFM) conclusion').

Auditor Guidance Note 7 (AGN07) clarifies our reporting requirements in the Code and the Act. We are required to provide a conclusion whether in all significant respects, the Authority has put in place proper arrangements to secure value for money through economic, efficient and effective use of its resources for the relevant period.

The Act also details the following additional powers and duties for local government auditors, which we are required to report to you if applied:

- a public interest report if we identify any matter that comes to our attention in the course of the audit that in our opinion should be considered by the Authority or brought to the public's attention (section 24 of the Act);

- written recommendations which should be considered by the Authority and responded to publicly (section 24 of the Act);
- application to the court for a declaration that an item of account is contrary to law (section 28 of the Act);
- issue of an advisory notice (section 29 of the Act); and
- application for judicial review (section 31 of the Act).

We are also required to give electors the opportunity to raise questions about the accounts and consider and decide upon objections received in relation to the accounts under sections 26 and 27 of the Act.

## Introduction

In the conduct of our audit we have not had to alter or change our audit approach, which we communicated to you in our Audit Plan dated 31 March 2016.

Our audit is substantially complete although we are finalising our procedures in the following areas:

- review of the final version of the financial statements
- obtaining and reviewing the management letter of representation and
- updating our post balance sheet events review, to the date of signing the opinion

We received draft financial statements and accompanying working papers at the commencement of our work, in accordance with the agreed timetable.

## **Key audit and financial reporting issues**

### **Financial statements opinion**

We have identified no adjustments affecting the Authority's reported general fund balance. However, the draft financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2016 recorded net expenditure of £48,658k at the net cost of services; the audited financial statements show net expenditure of £41,963k. This change is primarily driven by changes made to the classification of pension costs incorrectly classified as non distributed costs. We have also agreed a number of adjustments to improve the presentation of and disclosure in the financial statements.

The key message arising from our audit of the Authority's financial statements is that overall the accounts prepared were of good quality which were supported by high quality working papers.

Further details are set out in section two of this report.

We anticipate providing a unqualified audit opinion in respect of the financial statements (see Appendix B).

### **Other financial statement responsibilities**

As well as an opinion on the financial statements, we are required to give an opinion on whether other information published together with the audited financial statements is consistent with the financial statements. This includes:

- if the Annual Governance Statement does not meet the disclosure requirements set out in the CIPFA/SOLACE guidance or is misleading or inconsistent with the information of which we are aware from our audit.

## **Controls**

### **Roles and responsibilities**

The Authority's management is responsible for the identification, assessment, management and monitoring of risk, and for developing, operating and monitoring the system of internal control.

Our audit is not designed to test all internal controls or identify all areas of control weakness. However, where, as part of our testing, we identify any control weaknesses, we report these to the Authority.

### **Findings**

Our work has not identified any control weaknesses which we wish to highlight for your attention.

Further details are provided within section two of this report.

## **Value for Money**

Based on our review, we are satisfied that, in all significant respects, the Authority had proper arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

Further detail of our work on Value for Money are set out in section three of this report.

## **Other statutory powers and duties**

We have not identified any issues that have required us to apply our statutory powers and duties under the Act

### **The way forward**

Matters arising from the financial statements audit and our review of the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources have been discussed with the Director of Finance

### **Acknowledgement**

We would like to take this opportunity to record our appreciation for the assistance provided by the finance team and other staff during our audit.

**Grant Thornton UK LLP**  
September 2016

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## Section 2: Audit findings

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# Materiality

In performing our audit, we apply the concept of materiality, following the requirements of International Standard on Auditing (UK & Ireland) (ISA) 320: Materiality in planning and performing an audit. The standard states that 'misstatements, including omissions, are considered to be material if they, individually or in the aggregate, could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial statements'.

As we reported in our audit plan, we determined overall materiality to be £970k (being 2% of gross revenue expenditure). We have considered whether this level remained appropriate during the course of the audit and have made no changes to our overall materiality.

We also set an amount below which misstatements would be clearly trivial and would not need to be accumulated or reported to those charged with governance because we would not expect that the accumulated effect of such amounts would have a material impact on the financial statements. We have defined the amount below which misstatements would be clearly trivial to be £48k. This remains the same as reported in our audit plan.

As we reported in our audit plan, we identified the following items where we would expect the disclosures in the accounts to be correct. These remain the same as reported in our audit plan

Balance/transaction/disclosure	Explanation
Disclosures of officers' remuneration, salary bandings and exit packages in notes to the statements	Due to public interest in these disclosures and the statutory requirement for them to be made.
Disclosure of auditors' remuneration in notes to the statements	Due to public interest in these disclosures and the statutory requirement for them to be made.

# Audit findings against significant risks

"Significant risks often relate to significant non-routine transactions and judgmental matters. Non-routine transactions are transactions that are unusual, either due to size or nature, and that therefore occur infrequently. Judgmental matters may include the development of accounting estimates for which there is significant measurement uncertainty" (ISA (UK&I) 315).

In this section we detail our response to the significant risks of material misstatement which we identified in the Audit Plan. As we noted in our plan, there are two presumed significant risks which are applicable to all audits under auditing standards.

	Risks identified in our audit plan	Work completed	Assurance gained and issues arising
1.	<p><b>The revenue cycle includes fraudulent transactions</b></p> <p>Under ISA (UK&amp;I) 240 there is a presumed risk that revenue may be misstated due to the improper recognition of revenue.</p>	<p>Having considered the risk factors set out in ISA240 and the nature of the revenue streams at Lancashire Combined Fire Authority, we have determined that the risk of fraud arising from revenue recognition can be rebutted, because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there is little incentive to manipulate revenue recognition</li> <li>• opportunities to manipulate revenue recognition are very limited; and</li> <li>• the culture and ethical frameworks of local authorities, including Lancashire Combined Fire Authority, mean that all forms of fraud are seen as unacceptable.</li> </ul>	<p>Our audit work has not identified any issues in respect of revenue recognition.</p>
2.	<p><b>Management over-ride of controls</b></p> <p>Under ISA (UK&amp;I) 240 it is presumed that the risk of management over-ride of controls is present in all entities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• review of entity controls</li> <li>• testing of journal entries</li> <li>• review of accounting estimates, judgements and decisions made by management</li> <li>• review of unusual significant transactions</li> </ul>	<p>Our audit work has not identified any evidence of management over-ride of controls. In particular the findings of our review of journal controls and testing of journal entries has not identified any significant issues.</p> <p>We set out later in this section of the report our work and findings on key accounting estimates and judgements.</p>

# Audit findings against significant risks continued

We have also identified the following significant risks of material misstatement from our understanding of the entity. We set out below the work we have completed to address these risks.

	Risks identified in our audit plan	Work completed	Assurance gained and issues arising
3.	<p><b>Valuation of pension fund net liability</b></p> <p>The Authority's pension fund asset and liability as reflected in its balance sheet represent significant estimates in the financial statements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation of the key controls that were put in place by management to ensure that the pension fund liability was not materially misstated.</li> <li>• Review of the competence, expertise and objectivity of the actuary who carried out the Authority's pension fund valuation.</li> <li>• Gaining an understanding of the basis on which the IAS 19 valuation was carried out, undertaking procedures to confirm the reasonableness of the actuarial assumptions made.</li> <li>• Review of the consistency of the pension fund asset and liability and disclosures in notes to the financial statements with the actuarial report from your actuary.</li> </ul>	<p>Our audit work has not identified any issues in respect of the pension fund liability.</p> <p>Within non distributed costs there was an element of the pension valuation which related to a change in valuation rather than an amendment to the scheme. This has been amended within the classification within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and has no overall effect on the general fund balance.</p>
4.	<p><b>Valuation of property, plant and equipment</b></p> <p>The Authority revalues its property assets on a rolling basis over a five year period.</p> <p>The Code requires that the Authority ensures that the carrying value at the balance sheet date is not materially different from current value. This represents a significant estimate by management in the financial statements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of management's processes and assumptions for the calculation of the estimate.</li> <li>• Review of the competence, expertise and objectivity of any management experts used.</li> <li>• Review of the instructions issued to valuation experts and the scope of their work</li> <li>• Confirming the basis on which the valuation is carried out and challenge of the key assumptions.</li> <li>• Review and challenge of the information used by the valuer to ensure it is robust and consistent with our understanding.</li> <li>• Testing of revaluations made during the year to ensure they are input correctly into the asset register</li> <li>• Evaluation of the assumptions made by management for those assets not revalued during the year and how management has satisfied themselves that these are not materially different to current value.</li> </ul>	<p>Upon review of the assets which had been revalued in the year it was identified that there had been a significant change in the value of your asset base.</p> <p>Management reviewed the assets that had not been valued in the year, and following discussions with your valuer agreed a percentage indexation to apply to the rest of your assets. This has been amended in the accounts.</p>



# Audit findings against other risks

In this section we detail our response to the other risks of material misstatement which we identified in the Audit Plan. Recommendations, together with management responses are attached at appendix A.

Transaction cycle	Description of risk	Work completed	Assurance gained & issues arising
<b>Employee remuneration</b>	Employee remuneration accruals understated (Remuneration expenses not correct)	We have undertaken the following work in relation to this risk: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• documented our understanding of processes and key controls over the transaction cycle</li> <li>• undertaken walkthrough of the key controls to assess the whether those controls were in line with our documented understanding</li> <li>• Reconciled your payroll costs to the general ledger</li> <li>• Undertaken a trend analysis to identify if there are any variances which needed further explanation</li> <li>• Tested a sample of payments made to employees</li> </ul>	Our audit work has not identified any significant issues in relation to the risk identified
<b>Operating expenses</b>	Creditors understated or not recorded in the correct period (Operating expenses understated)	We have undertaken the following work in relation to this risk: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• documented our understanding of processes and key controls over the transaction cycle</li> <li>• undertaken walkthrough of the key controls to assess the whether those controls were in line with our documented understanding</li> <li>• Tested a sample of payments made in the year</li> <li>• Tested new year payments to confirm they have been included in the correct financial year.</li> </ul>	Our audit work has not identified any significant issues in relation to the risk identified
<b>Firefighters Pensions Benefit Payments</b>	Benefits improperly computed/ claims liability understated  Payments to retiring officers are low in volume but high in value and the service is reliant on effective controls both within and outside the organisation to ensure that payments made are valid and accurate.	We have undertaken the following work in relation to this risk: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• documented our understanding of processes and key controls over the transaction cycle</li> <li>• undertaken walkthrough of the key controls to assess the whether those controls were in line with our documented understanding</li> <li>• Tested a sample of benefits coming into payment to confirm correctly calculated.</li> </ul>	Our audit work has not identified any significant issues in relation to the risk identified



# Accounting policies, estimates and judgements

In this section we report on our consideration of accounting policies, in particular revenue recognition policies, and key estimates and judgements made and included with the Authority's financial statements.

Accounting area	Summary of policy	Comments	Assessment
<p><b>Revenue recognition</b></p>	<p>The Authority's policy for revenue recognition is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activity is accounted for in the year that it takes place, not simply when cash payments are made or received. In particular:</li> <li>• Where income and expenditure have been recognised but cash has not been received or paid, a debtor or a creditor for the relevant amount is recorded in the Balance Sheet. Where debts may not be settled, the balance of debtors is written down and a charge made to revenue for the income that might not be collected.</li> </ul>	<p>The policy is disclosed in line with the requirements of the CIPFA code.</p> <p>Our testing of income found that the Council recognises income in line with its accounting policy.</p>	
<p><b>Judgements and estimates</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key estimates and judgements include:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Useful life of PPE</li> <li>– Revaluations</li> <li>– Impairments</li> <li>– Accruals</li> <li>– Valuation of pension fund net liability</li> <li>– Provision for NNDR appeals</li> <li>– Other provisions</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>We have reviewed the estimates and judgements made in the accounts with no matters arising.</p>	

**Assessment**

# Accounting policies, estimates and judgements continued

Accounting area	Summary of policy	Comments	Assessment
<b>Going concern</b>	The Director of Corporate Services, as 151 officer has a reasonable expectation that the services provided by the Authority will continue for the foreseeable future. Members concur with this view. For this reason, the Authority continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements.	We have reviewed the Authority's assessment and are satisfied with management's assessment that the going concern basis is appropriate for the 2015/16 financial statements.	
<b>Other accounting policies</b>		We have reviewed the Authority's policies against the requirements of the CIPFA Code of Practice. The Authority's accounting policies are appropriate and consistent with previous years.	

**Assessment**

## Other communication requirements

We set out below details of other matters which we, as auditors, are required by auditing standards and the Code to communicate to those charged with governance.

	Issue	Commentary
1.	<b>Matters in relation to fraud</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have previously discussed the risk of fraud with the Audit Committee. We have not been made aware of any other incidents in the period and no other issues have been identified during the course of our audit procedures</li> </ul>
2.	<b>Matters in relation to related parties</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From the work we carried out, we have not identified any related party transactions which have not been disclosed</li> </ul>
3.	<b>Matters in relation to laws and regulations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You have not made us aware of any significant incidences of non-compliance with relevant laws and regulations and we have not identified any incidences from our audit work.</li> </ul>
4.	<b>Written representations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A standard letter of representation has been requested from the Authority.</li> </ul>
5.	<b>Confirmation requests from third parties</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We requested from management permission to send confirmation requests to your bank and to confirm your investments. This permission was granted and the requests were sent. These requests were returned with positive confirmation.</li> </ul>
6.	<b>Disclosures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our review found no material omissions in the financial statements</li> </ul>

## Other communication requirements continued

	Issue	Commentary
7.	<b>Matters on which we report by exception</b>	<p>We have not identified any issues we would be required to report by exception in the following areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the Annual Governance Statement does not meet the disclosure requirements set out in the CIPFA/SOLACE guidance or is misleading or inconsistent with the information of which we are aware from our audit</li> <li>• The information in the Narrative Report is materially inconsistent with the information in the audited financial statements or our knowledge of the Group/Authority acquired in the course of performing our audit, or otherwise misleading.</li> </ul>
8.	<b>Specified procedures for Whole of Government Accounts</b>	<p>We are required to carry out specified procedures (on behalf of the NAO) on the Whole of Government Accounts (WGA) consolidation pack under WGA group audit instructions.</p> <p>We do not have to undertake any detailed work as the Authority does not exceed the threshold.</p>



## Internal controls

The purpose of an audit is to express an opinion on the financial statements.

Our audit included consideration of internal controls relevant to the preparation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control. We considered and walked through the internal controls for Employee Remuneration and Operating Expenses as set out above.

The controls were found to be operating effectively and we have no matters to report to the Audit Committee

# Adjusted misstatements

A number of adjustments to the draft accounts have been identified during the audit process. We are required to report all non trivial misstatements to those charged with governance, whether or not the accounts have been adjusted by management. The table below summarises the adjustments arising from the audit which have been processed by management.

## Impact of adjusted misstatements

All adjusted misstatements are set out in detail below along with the impact on the key statements and the reported net expenditure for the year.

Detail	Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement £'000	Balance Sheet £'000	Impact on General Fund £'000
1 Within non distributed costs there was an element of the pension valuation related to a change in valuation rather than an amendment to the scheme. This is an amendment to the classification within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and has no overall effect on the general fund balance.	6,695	0	0
2 In line with the CIPFA code, management need to review the value of the property plant and equipment on a regular basis. Upon review of the assets which had been revalued in the year it was identified that there had been a significant change in the value of your property assets  Management reviewed the assets that had not been valued in the year, and following discussions with your valuer agreed a percentage indexation to apply to the rest of your assets. This has been amended in the accounts.	0	1,457	0
<b>Overall impact</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

## Misclassifications and disclosure changes

The table below provides details of misclassification and disclosure changes identified during the audit which have been made in the final set of financial statements.

Adjustment type	Value £'000	Account balance	Impact on the financial statements
1 Amendment to the fair value	6,913	Note 8 financial instruments	The method by which fair value can be calculated has changed in the 2015/16 CIPFA Code. The Authority have amended their disclosure to comply with the Code. This is a change to the fair value disclosure in the accounts only.

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## Section 3: Value for Money

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## Background

We are required by section 21 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (the Act) and the NAO Code of Audit Practice (the Code) to satisfy ourselves that the Authority has put in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. This is known as the Value for Money (VFM) conclusion.

We are required to carry out sufficient work to satisfy ourselves that proper arrangements are in place at the Authority. The Act and NAO guidance state that for local government bodies, auditors are required to give a conclusion on whether the Authority has put proper arrangements in place.

In carrying out this work, we are required to follow the NAO's Auditor Guidance Note 3 (AGN 03) issued in November 2015. AGN 03 identifies one single criterion for auditors to evaluate:

*In all significant respects, the audited body had proper arrangements to ensure it took properly informed decisions and deployed resources to achieve planned and sustainable outcomes for taxpayers and local people.*

AGN03 provides examples of proper arrangements against three sub-criteria but specifically states that these are not separate criteria for assessment purposes and that auditors are not required to reach a distinct judgement against each of these.

## Risk assessment

We carried out an initial risk assessment in February 2016 and identified no significant risks. We communicated this to you in our Audit Plan dated 31 March 2016.

We considered risks in respect of specific areas of proper arrangements using the guidance contained in AGN03.

We have continued our review of relevant documents up to the date of giving our report, and have not identified any further significant risks where we need to perform further work.

### **Significant qualitative aspects**

AGN 03 requires us to disclose our views on significant qualitative aspects of the Authority's arrangements for delivering economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

We have focused our work on the identifying whether there were any significant risks to our VFM that we identified in the Authority's arrangements. We reported to you in our audit plan that we had identified no risks at that stage.

We ensured that we updated our review of your arrangements to ensure that there were no additional risks identified

Our work included reviewing key documents and discussing issues with your officers.

### **Informed decision making**

You have sound arrangements in place to support your decision making. Budget information is taken to the Authority on an annual basis. The reporting and the updating of the medium term financial plan means that the Authority is maintaining a sound financial position.

The Authority's risk management process includes the regular reporting of the risk register to the Audit Committee. The register is well developed and kept up to date with the key strategic risks to the Authority, considered and updated regularly. Changes in risks are clearly explained to members and scrutinised by the Audit Committee.

The risk register considers the key risks to, mitigations and actions by the Authority around staff and appliance deployment.

### **Resource deployment**

The Authority recognises the importance of staff as its key resource. It has recently refreshed its workforce strategy and reported this to the Authority. As a result, there has been planned recruitment of firefighters. Efforts continue to support and recruit retained firefighters.

In setting the 2016/17 budget, decisions were made based on the best estimates of the likely funding settlement. The budget was then updated once the final settlement was confirmed. This revised budget identified that the net budget position is £27.6m which is an improvement of circa £1.1m on the position that had originally been forecast by the Authority. This provides the Authority with greater financial resilience as it seeks to deliver savings across the service.

### **Working with partners**

The Authority has a good track record of working with partners and has continued this in 2015/16. The Authority understands those areas where it can best deliver in partnership with other organisations. Key relationships include the Prince's Trust and other "blue light" services. The Authority has been proactive in piloting both co-responding and shared premises with North West Ambulance Service with the aim of maintaining public safety and reducing costs.

The Authority is also a key partner in the control centre with Greater Manchester, Cheshire and Cumbria Fire services. This is now fully operational and provides a control function across the north west footprint.

### **Overall conclusion**

Based on the work we performed to address the significant risks, we concluded that: the Authority had proper arrangements in all significant respects to ensure it delivered value for money in its use of resources. The text of our report, which confirms this can be found at Appendix B.

### **Significant difficulties in undertaking our work**

We did not identify any significant difficulties in undertaking our work on your arrangements which we wish to draw to your attention.

### **Significant matters discussed with management**

There were no matters where no other evidence was available or matters of such significance to our conclusion or that we required written representation from management or those charged with governance.

### **Any other matters**

There were no other matters from our work which were significant to our consideration of your arrangements to secure value for money in your use of resources.

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## Section 5: Fees, non-audit services and independence

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We confirm below our final fees charged for the audit and confirm there were no fees for the provision of non audit services.

### Fees

	Proposed fee £	Final fee £
Authority audit	30,739	30,739
<b>Total audit fees (excluding VAT)</b>	<b>30,739</b>	<b>30,739</b>

The proposed fees for the year were in line with the scale fee set by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA)

### Independence and ethics

We confirm that there are no significant facts or matters that impact on our independence as auditors that we are required or wish to draw to your attention. We have complied with the Auditing Practices Board's Ethical Standards and therefore we confirm that we are independent and are able to express an objective opinion on the financial statements.

We confirm that we have implemented policies and procedures to meet the requirements of the Auditing Practices Board's Ethical Standards.

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## Section 6: Communication of audit matters

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# Communication to those charged with governance

International Standards on Auditing ISA (UK&I) 260, as well as other ISAs, prescribe matters which we are required to communicate with those charged with governance, and which we set out in the table opposite.

The Audit Plan outlined our audit strategy and plan to deliver the audit, while this Audit Findings report presents the key issues and other matters arising from the audit, together with an explanation as to how these have been resolved.

## Respective responsibilities

The Audit Findings Report has been prepared in the context of the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies issued by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited (<http://www.psa.co.uk/appointing-auditors/terms-of-appointment/>)

We have been appointed as the Authority's independent external auditors by the Audit Commission, the body responsible for appointing external auditors to local public bodies in England at the time of our appointment. As external auditors, we have a broad remit covering finance and governance matters.

Our annual work programme is set in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice ('the Code') issued by the NAO (<https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/about-code/>). Our work considers the Authority's key risks when reaching our conclusions under the Code.

It is the responsibility of the Authority to ensure that proper arrangements are in place for the conduct of its business, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for. We have considered how the Authority is fulfilling these responsibilities.

Our communication plan	Audit Plan	Audit Findings
Respective responsibilities of auditor and management/those charged with governance	✓	
Overview of the planned scope and timing of the audit. Form, timing and expected general content of communications	✓	
Views about the qualitative aspects of the entity's accounting and financial reporting practices, significant matters and issues arising during the audit and written representations that have been sought		✓
Confirmation of independence and objectivity	✓	✓
A statement that we have complied with relevant ethical requirements regarding independence, relationships and other matters which might be thought to bear on independence. Details of non-audit work performed by Grant Thornton UK LLP and network firms, together with fees charged Details of safeguards applied to threats to independence	✓	✓
Material weaknesses in internal control identified during the audit		✓
Identification or suspicion of fraud involving management and/or others which results in material misstatement of the financial statements		✓
Non compliance with laws and regulations		✓
Expected modifications to auditor's report		✓
Uncorrected misstatements		✓
Significant matters arising in connection with related parties		✓
Significant matters in relation to going concern		✓

# Appendix

# Appendix B: Audit opinion

**We anticipate we will provide the Authority with an unmodified audit report**

## **INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF LANCASHIRE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY**

We have audited the financial statements of Lancashire Combined Fire Authority (the "Authority") for the year ended 31 March 2016 under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (the "Act"). The financial statements comprise the Movement in Reserves Statement, the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and the related notes and include the firefighters' pension fund financial statements comprising the Fund Account, the Net Assets Statement and the related notes. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2015/16.

This report is made solely to the members of the Authority, as a body, in accordance with Part 5 of the Act and as set out in paragraph 43 of the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies published by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Authority and the Authority's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

### **Respective responsibilities of the Treasurer and auditor**

As explained more fully in the Statement of the Treasurer's Responsibilities, the Treasurer is responsible for the preparation of the Statement of Accounts, which includes the financial statements, in accordance with proper practices as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2015/16, which give a true and fair view. Our responsibility is to audit and express an opinion on the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland). Those standards require us to comply with the Auditing Practices Board's Ethical Standards for Auditors.

### **Scope of the audit of the financial statements**

An audit involves obtaining evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. This includes an assessment of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the Authority's circumstances and have been consistently applied and adequately disclosed; the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by the Treasurer's; and the overall presentation of the financial statements. In addition, we read all the financial and non-financial information in the Narrative Report and the Annual Governance Statement to identify material inconsistencies with the audited financial statements and to identify any information that is apparently materially incorrect based on, or materially inconsistent with, the knowledge acquired by us in the course of performing the audit. If we become aware of any apparent material misstatements or inconsistencies we consider the implications for our report.

### **Opinion on financial statements**

In our opinion the financial statements: present a true and fair view of the financial position of the Authority as at 31 March 2016 and of its expenditure and income for the year then ended; and have been prepared properly in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2015/16 and applicable law.

### **Opinion on other matters**

In our opinion, the other information published together with the audited financial statements in the Narrative Report and the Annual Governance Statement is consistent with the audited financial statements.

### **Matters on which we are required to report by exception**

We are required to report to you if: in our opinion the Annual Governance Statement does not comply with the guidance included in 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: a Framework' published by CIPFA/SOLACE in June 2007; or we issue a report in the public interest under section 24 of the Act; or we make a written recommendation to the Authority under section 24 of the Act; or we exercise any other special powers of the auditor under the Act.

We have nothing to report in these respects.

**Conclusion on the Authority's arrangements to secure value for money through economic, efficient and effective use of its resources**

**Respective responsibilities of the Authority and auditor**

The Authority is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources, to ensure proper stewardship and governance, and to review regularly the adequacy and effectiveness of these arrangements.

We are required under Section 20(1)(c) of the Act to be satisfied that the Authority has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. We are not required to consider, nor have we considered, whether all aspects of the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources are operating effectively.

**Scope of the review of the Authority's arrangements to secure value for money through economic, efficient and effective use of its resources**

We have undertaken our review in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice prepared by the Comptroller and Auditor General as required by the Act (the "Code"), having regard to the guidance on the specified criteria issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General in November 2015, as to whether the Authority had proper arrangements to ensure it took properly informed decisions and deployed resources to achieve planned and sustainable outcomes for taxpayers and local people. The Comptroller and Auditor General determined these criteria as those necessary for us to consider under the Code in satisfying ourselves whether the Authority put in place proper arrangements to secure value for money through the economic, efficient and effective use of its resources for the year ended 31 March 2016.

We planned our work in accordance with the Code. Based on our risk assessment, we undertook such work as we considered necessary to form a view on whether in all significant respects the Authority has put in place proper arrangements to secure value for money through economic, efficient and effective use of its resources.

**Conclusion**

On the basis of our work, having regard to the guidance on the specified criteria issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General in November 2015, we are satisfied that in all significant respects *the Authority* has put in place proper arrangements to secure value for money through economic, efficient and effective use of its resources for the year ended 31 March 2016.

**Certificate**

We certify that we have completed the audit of the accounts of the Authority in accordance with the requirements of the Act and the Code.

*Karen Murray*

Karen Murray  
for and on behalf of Grant Thornton UK LLP, Appointed Auditor

4 Hardman Square  
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29 September 2016



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