Audit Findings for Northamptonshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority

Year ended 31 March 2026

24 November 2026

Grant Thornton

Northamptonshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority

Darby House
Darby Close
Wellingborough
NN8 6GS

Grant Thornton UK LLP

17th Floor
103 Colmore Row
Birmingham
B3 3AG

T +44 (0)121 212 4000

ww.grantthornton.co.uk

24 November 2026

Dear Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner

Audit Findings for Northamptonshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority for the 31 March 2026

This Audit Findings presents the observations arising from the audit that are significant to the responsibility of those charged with governance to oversee the financial reporting process and confirmation of auditor independence, as required by International Standard on Auditing (UK) 260. Its contents have been discussed with management.

As auditor we are responsible for performing the audit, in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK), 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 for the purpose of expressing our opinion on the financial statements. 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 control weaknesses, we will report these to you. In consequence, our work cannot be relied upon to disclose all defalcations or other irregularities, or to include all possible improvements in internal control that a more extensive special examination might identify. This report has been prepared solely for your benefit and should not be quoted in whole or in part without our prior written consent. 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.

© 2026 Grant Thornton UK LLP. All rights reserved.

We encourage you to read our transparency report which sets out how the firm complies with the requirements of the Audit Firm Governance Code and the steps we have taken to manage risk, quality and internal control particularly through our Quality Management Approach. The report includes information on the firm's processes and practices for quality control, for ensuring independence and objectivity, for partner remuneration, our governance, our international network arrangements and our core values, amongst other things. This report is available at transparency-report-2025-.pdf (grantthornton.co.uk).

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.

Laurelin Griffiths

Director
For Grant Thornton UK LLP

Chartered Accountants

Grant Thornton UK LLP is a limited liability partnership registered in England and Wales: No.OC307742. Registered office: 8 Finsbury Circus, London EC2M 7EA. A list of members is available from our registered office. Grant Thornton UK LLP is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Grant Thornton UK LLP is a member firm of Grant Thornton International Ltd (GTIL). GTIL and the member firms are not a worldwide partnership. Services are delivered by the member firms. GTIL and its member firms are not agents of, and do not obligate, one another and are not liable for one another's acts or omissions. Please see grantthornton.co.uk for further details.

© 2026 Grant Thornton UK LLP. All rights reserved.



Contents

Section	Page
Headlines	5
Materiality	8
Overview of significant risks identified	9
Other findings	13
Communication requirements and other responsibilities	14
Audit Adjustments	17
Value for Money	22
Independence considerations	23
Fees	24
Appendices	25

© 2026 Grant Thornton UK LLP. All rights reserved.

Headlines

This page and the following summarises the key findings and other matters arising from the statutory audit of Northamptonshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority (the 'Authority') and the preparation of the Authority's financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2026 for the attention of those charged with governance.

Financial statements

Under International Standards of Audit (UK) (ISAs) and 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 Authority's income and expenditure for the year
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting and prepared in accordance with the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

We are also required to report whether other information published together with the audited financial statements (including the Annual Governance Statement (AGS), Narrative Report, is materially consistent with the financial statements and with our knowledge obtained during the audit, or otherwise whether this information appears to be materially misstated.

Our audit work was completed during July-October as planned. Our findings are summarised on pages 17 to 19 of this report. We have identified one adjustment to the financial statements, which does not impact the Authority's Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. There has been no impact on the level of the Authority's usable reserves.

We have also raised two recommendations for management, set out on page 20, and reported our follow up of prior year recommendation on page 21.

Our work is substantially complete and there are no matters of which we are aware that would require modification of our audit opinion, subject to the following outstanding matters:

- receipt of management representation letter; and
- review of the final sets of financial statements.

We have concluded that the other information to be published with the financial statements, including the Annual Governance Statement, is consistent with our knowledge of the Authority and with the audited financial statements.

Our anticipated financial statements audit report opinion will be unmodified. We anticipate issuing the auditors report on 25 November 2026.

© 2026 Grant Thornton UK LLP. All rights reserved.

Headlines

Value for money (VFM) arrangements

Under the National Audit Office (NAO) Code of Audit Practice (the 'Code'), we are required to consider whether the Authority has put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. Auditors are required to report in more detail on the Authority's overall arrangements, as well as key recommendations on any significant weaknesses in arrangements identified during the audit.

Auditors are required to report their commentary on the Authority's arrangements under the following specified criteria:

- Governance
- Financial sustainability
- Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness

We have completed our VFM work. A summary is provided on page 22, with detailed commentary in the separate Auditor's Annual Report presented alongside this report. We are satisfied that the Authority has made proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

© 2026 Grant Thornton UK LLP. All rights reserved.

Headlines

Statutory duties

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (the 'Act') also requires us to:

- report to you if we have applied any of the additional powers and duties ascribed to us under the Act
- certify the closure of the audit.

We have completed the majority of our work required under the Code. However, we cannot formally conclude the audit and issue an audit certificate in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Code of Audit Practice until confirmation has been received from the NAO that the group audit (Whole of Government Accounts) has been certified by the Comptroller and Audit General.

We are satisfied that this work does not have a material effect on the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2026.

Significant matters

We did not encounter any significant difficulties or identify any significant matters arising during our audit.

© 2026 Grant Thornton UK LLP. All rights reserved.

Our approach to materiality

A summary of our approach to determining materiality is set out below.

	Threshold	Qualitative factors considered
Materiality for the financial statements	£1,100,000	Our materiality threshold equates to approximately 2.5% of the prior year gross operating costs for the Authority. This assessment reflects the fact that the Authority operates in a stable, publicly funded environment, and no significant control deficiencies have been identified in the prior year or in the course of our audit planning.
Performance materiality	£825,000	Performance materiality has been set at 75% of financial statements materiality. This reflects our risk-assessed knowledge of potential for errors occurring. Performance materiality is used for the purposes of assessing the risks of material misstatement and determining the nature, timing, and extent of further audit procedures. This is the amount we set at less than materiality for the financial statements as a whole, to reduce to an appropriately low level the probability that the aggregate of uncorrected and undetected misstatements exceeds materiality for the financial statements as a whole.
Specific materiality for senior officer remuneration	£10,000	Due to the public interest in senior officer remuneration disclosures, we design our procedures to detect errors in specific accounts at a lower level of precision, which we have determined to be applicable for senior officer remuneration disclosures. We applied headline materiality of 2.5% to the total senior officer remuneration, at an individual officer level.
Reporting threshold	£55,000	The reporting threshold has been set at 5% of financial statements materiality.

© 2026 Grant Thornton UK LLP. All rights reserved.

Overview of audit risks

The below table summarises the significant risks discussed in more detail on the subsequent pages.

Significant risks are defined by ISAs (UK) as an identified risk of material misstatement for which the assessment of inherent risk is close to the upper end of the spectrum due to the degree to which risk factors affect the combination of the likelihood of a misstatement occurring and the magnitude of the potential misstatement if that misstatement occurs.

Other risks are, in the auditor's judgement, those where the risk of material misstatement is lower than that for a significant risk, but they are nonetheless an area of focus for our audit.

Risk title	Risk level	Change in risk since Audit Plan	Fraud risk	Level of judgement or estimation uncertainty	Status of work
Management override of controls	Significant	↔	✓	Low	G
Valuation of land and buildings	Significant	↔	×	High	G
Valuation of the gross pension fund liability	Significant	↔	×	High	G

↑ Assessed risk increase since Audit Plan
↔ Assessed risk consistent with Audit Plan
↓ Assessed risk decrease since Audit Plan

G Not likely to result in material adjustment or change to disclosures within the financial statements
A Potential to result in material adjustment or significant change to disclosures within the financial statements
R Likely to result in material adjustment or significant change to disclosures within the financial statements

© 2026 Grant Thornton UK LLP. All rights reserved.

Significant risks

Risk identified	Audit procedures performed	Key observations
Management override of controls Under ISA (UK) 240, there is a non-rebuttable presumption that the risk of management override of controls is present in all entities.	We have: • evaluated the design and implementation of management's controls over journals • analysed the journals listing and determined the criteria for selecting high risk unusual journals • identified and tested unusual journals made during the year and the accounts production stage for appropriateness and corroboration • gained an understanding of the accounting estimates and critical judgements applied by management and considered their reasonableness and • reviewed accounting policies and any changes to those policies	We have not identified any issues through our testing of unusual journals. Our audit work has not identified any issues in respect of management override of controls. We are satisfied that judgements made by management are appropriate and have been determined using consistent methodology. Having assessed management judgements and estimates individually and in aggregate we are satisfied that there is no material misstatement arising from management bias across the financial statements.

© 2026 Grant Thornton UK LLP. All rights reserved.

Significant risks

Risk identified	Audit procedures performed	Key observations
Valuation of land and buildings This valuation represents a significant estimate by management in the financial statements due to the size of the numbers involved (£37.992m as at 31 March 2026 draft accounts) and the sensitivity of the estimate to changes in key assumptions. The valuation also depends on the completeness and accuracy of source data such as floor areas and subjective inputs such as obsolescence factors. We therefore have identified that the accuracy of the key inputs and assumptions driving the valuation of land and buildings, and surplus assets, as a significant risk.	We have: • documented our understanding management's process and controls for the calculation of the estimate • evaluated the competence, capabilities and objectivity of management's expert • evaluated the consistency of the disclosure with the valuation report • evaluated the basis on which the valuations have been carried out • evaluated the information and assumptions used by the valuer • evaluated the accounting entries for the valuation • evaluated the reasonableness of the assumptions used to form the estimate • tested, on a sample basis, revaluations made during the year, agreeing key source data used such as floor areas and build costs to suitable independent evidence and confirming that the valuation methodology has been correctly applied; and • tested revaluations made during the year to see if they had been input correctly into the asset register.	The CIPFA Code has been updated for 2025/26 and requires land and buildings to be revalued every five years, supported by indexation in the intervening years. Our review of the Authority's approach identified that all land and buildings have been revalued during the year, which is not in accordance with the requirements of the Code. This does not result in any misstatement within the financial statements, but we have included a recommendation on page 20 that going forward the requirements of the Code in relation to the revaluation of land and buildings are followed. We have noted no significant issues in relation to valuation of land and buildings. Having assessed management judgements and estimates individually and in aggregate we are satisfied that there is no material misstatement arising from management bias across the financial statements.

© 2026 Grant Thornton UK LLP. All rights reserved.

Significant risks

Risk identified	Audit procedures performed	Key observations
Valuation of gross pension liability for LGPS and Fire Fighters Pension Schemes The Authority's gross pension liability, made up of both the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) and Fire Fighters Pension Scheme (FFPS) represents a significant estimate in the financial statements. The gross pension liability is considered a significant estimate due to the size of the numbers involved and sensitivity of the estimate to changes in the key assumptions. A small change in the key assumptions (discount rate, inflation rate, salary increase and life expectancy) can have a significant impact on the estimated IAS 19 liability. With regard to these assumptions, we have therefore identified the valuation of the gross liability as a significant risk.	We have: • updated our understanding of the processes and controls put in place by management to ensure that the pension fund net liability is not materially misstated and evaluate the design of the associated controls; • evaluated the instructions issued by management to their management experts (the actuaries for the LGPS and FFPS) for this estimate and the scope of the actuaries' work; • assessed the competence, capabilities and objectivity of the actuaries who carried out the pension fund valuations; • assessed the accuracy and completeness of the information provided to the actuaries to estimate the liabilities; • evaluated the consistency of the disclosure with the actuarial reports; • undertaken procedures to confirm the reasonableness of the actuarial assumptions made by reviewing the report of the consulting actuary (as auditor's expert) and performing any additional procedures suggested within the report; and • obtained assurances from the pension fund auditor of the Northamptonshire Pension Fund on the underlying data shared by the fund to the actuary which has been used in the calculation of this estimate.	Our audit work has not identified any issues in respect of valuation of the pension liability for either the LGPS or Fire Fighters Pension Schemes. We have received IAS19 assurances from the auditor of the Northamptonshire Pension Fund, which did not identify any issues. We have identified minor disclosure amendments and details of these amendments can be found on pages 18 and 19 respectively.

© 2026 Grant Thornton UK LLP. All rights reserved.

Other findings – Information Technology

This section provides an overview of results from our assessment of the Information Technology (IT) environment and controls therein which included identifying risks from IT related business process controls relevant to the financial audit. This table below includes an overall IT General Control (ITGC) rating per IT application and details of the ratings assigned to individual control areas.

			ITGC control area rating			
	Level of assessment performed	Overall ITGC rating	Security management	Technology acquisition, development and maintenance	Technology infrastructure	Related significant risks/other risks
Unit 4 Agresso	ITGC assessment (design effectiveness and implementation only)	G	G	G	G	Management override of controls

Assessment:

- R - Significant deficiencies identified in IT controls relevant to the audit of financial statements
- A - Non-significant deficiencies identified in IT controls relevant to the audit of financial statements/significant deficiencies identified but with sufficient mitigation of relevant risk
- G - IT controls relevant to the audit of financial statements judged to be effective at the level of testing in scope
- B - Not in scope for assessment

© 2026 Grant Thornton UK LLP. All rights reserved.

Other communication requirements

Issue	Commentary
Matters in relation to fraud	We have previously discussed the risk of fraud with the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, and the Joint Independent Audit Committee. We have not been made aware of any incidents in the period, and no issues have been identified during the course of our audit procedures.
Matters in relation to related parties	We are not aware of any related parties or related party transactions which have not been disclosed.
Matters in relation to laws and regulations	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.
Written representations	A letter of representation will be requested from management.
Confirmation requests from third parties	We requested from management permission to send confirmation requests to the to the Authority's banking and treasury partners. This permission was granted and the requests were sent.
Disclosures	Our review found no material omissions in the financial statements
Audit evidence and explanations	All information and explanations requested from management was provided.
Significant difficulties	No significant difficulties have been noted.

© 2026 Grant Thornton UK LLP. All rights reserved.

Other responsibilities

Issue	Commentary
Going concern	In performing our work on going concern, we have had reference to Statement of Recommended Practice – Practice Note 10: Audit of financial statements of public sector bodies in the United Kingdom (Revised 2024). The Financial Reporting Council recognises that for particular sectors, it may be necessary to clarify how auditing standards are applied to an entity in a manner that is relevant and provides useful information to the users of financial statements in that sector. Practice Note 10 provides that clarification for audits of public sector bodies. Practice Note 10 sets out the following key principles for the consideration of going concern for public sector entities: • The use of the going concern basis of accounting is not a matter of significant focus of the auditor's time and resources because the applicable financial reporting frameworks envisage that the going concern basis for accounting will apply where the entity's services will continue to be delivered by the public sector. In such cases, a material uncertainty related to going concern is unlikely to exist, and so a straightforward and standardised approach for the consideration of going concern will often be appropriate for public sector entities • For many public sector entities, the financial sustainability of the reporting entity and the services it provides is more likely to be of significant public interest than the application of the going concern basis of accounting. Our consideration of the Authority's financial sustainability is addressed by our value for money work, which is covered elsewhere in this report. Practice Note 10 states that if the financial reporting framework provides for the adoption of the going concern basis of accounting on the basis of the anticipated continuation of the provision of a service in the future, the auditor applies the continued provision of service approach set out in Practice Note 10. The financial reporting framework adopted by the Authority meets this criteria, and so we have applied the continued provision of service approach. In doing so, we have considered and evaluated: • the nature of the Authority and the environment in which it operates • the Authority's financial reporting framework • The Authority's system of internal control for identifying events or conditions relevant to going concern • management's going concern assessment. On the basis of this work, we have obtained sufficient appropriate audit evidence to enable us to conclude that: • a material uncertainty related to going concern has not been identified; and • management's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

© 2026 Grant Thornton UK LLP. All rights reserved.

Other responsibilities

Issue	Commentary
Other information	We are required to give an opinion on whether the other information published together with the audited financial statements (including the Narrative Report and Annual Governance Statement), is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. No inconsistencies have been identified. We plan to issue an unmodified opinion in this respect.
Matters on which we report by exception	We are required to report on matters by exception in a number of areas: • if the Annual Governance Statement does not comply with disclosure requirements set out in CIPFA/SOLACE guidance or is misleading or inconsistent with the information of which we are aware from our audit • if we have applied any of our statutory powers or duties • where we are not satisfied in respect of arrangements to secure value for money and have reported [a] significant weakness/es. We have nothing to report in this regard.
Specified procedures for Whole of Government Accounts	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. Note that work is not expected to be required as the Authority is not expected to exceed the threshold.
Certification of the closure of the audit	We intend to delay the certification of the closure of the 2025/26 audits of Northamptonshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority in the audit reports as confirmation has not been received from the NAO that the group audit (Whole of Government Accounts) has been certified by the C&AG and therefore no further work is required to be undertaken in order to discharge the auditor's duties in relation to consolidation returns under paragraph 2.11 of the Code.

© 2026 Grant Thornton UK LLP. All rights reserved.

Audit adjustments

We are required to report all non-trivial misstatements to those charged with governance, whether or not the accounts have been adjusted by management.

Impact of adjusted misstatements

We have identified one misstatement that have been adjusted by management.

Detail	Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement £'000	Balance Sheet £'000	Impact on general fund £'000
Historical Depreciation Adjustment Paragraph 4.1.3.2 of CIPFA Code requires, for revalued assets, a transfer between the revaluation reserve and capital adjustment account for the difference between the depreciation based on the revalued carrying amount of the asset and the depreciation based on the asset's historic cost. The transfer has not been occurring for a number of years. This is a technical accounting adjustment and there is no impact on the Authority's General Fund balance.		Dr Revaluation Reserve 116 Cr Capital Adjustment Account (116)	
Overall impact	0	0	0

Impact of unadjusted misstatements

We have identified no misstatements that have not been adjusted by management. Any such misstatements would require the approval of those charged with governance.

© 2026 Grant Thornton UK LLP. All rights reserved.

Audit adjustments

Misclassification 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.

Disclosure	Misclassification or change identified	Adjusted?
Cashflow Statement and supporting notes	In Note 34 - Cash Flow from Operating Activities, the prior year comparatives do not cast appropriately (£7,029k) with the draft accounts disclosure stating a value of £2,733k.	✓
	As per paragraph 4.2.2.68 of the CIPFA Code, the Authority is required to classify the cash payments relating to the principal portion of the lease liability within the financing activities line in the Cash Flow Statement. Following our review of Note 35 the relevant supporting workings, we noted that only repayments of short- and long-term borrowings had been included, whilst the lease liability principal repayments had not been included in the calculation.	✓
	Line items as per the indirect method for adjust net surplus/deficit on the provision of services for non-cash movements, items included in the net surplus/deficit on the provision of services that are investing and financing activities and other receipts from investing activities are to be included.	✓
Note 37 - Pension Schemes Accounted for as Defined Contribution Schemes	As per paragraph 6.4.3.42 of the CIPFA Code, the Authority is required to disclose: - information regarding the maturity profile of the defined benefit obligation, including the weighted average duration of the obligation or equivalent information. - the expected employer contributions to the Local Government Pension Scheme and Fire Fighters Pension Scheme for the next annual reporting period. These disclosures are missing from the Authority's draft financial statements for both the Local Government Pension Scheme and the Fire Pension Scheme. In addition, Note 37.2 does not include narrative regarding the valuation approach to the Fire fighters pension scheme.	✓
Financial Instruments Note 38	The PWLB loan fair value for 2025/26 is overstated and should be amended from £3,922k to £1,922k, in Notes 38.4 and 38.5.	✓
Throughout	A number of other more minor amendments have been agreed to address typographical errors and to improve the clarity of the financial statements for the reader.	✓

© 2026 Grant Thornton UK LLP. All rights reserved.

Action plan

We set out here our recommendations for the Authority which we have identified as a result of issues identified during our audit. The matters reported here are limited to those deficiencies that we have identified during the course of our audit and that we have concluded are of sufficient importance to merit being reported to you in accordance with auditing standards

Assessment	Issue and risk	Recommendations
● Low	**Property valuations** The CIPFA Code has been updated for 2025/26 and requires land and buildings to be revalued at least every five years, supported by indexation in the intervening years. Our review of the Authority's approach identified that all land and buildings have been revaluation during the year, which is not in accordance with the requirements of the Code.	We recommend that the Authority follows the requirements of the CIPFA code and revalues its assets at least every five years and adopts an indexation approach in the intervening years. **Management Response** We maintain that full annual valuations would be preferable given the size of the organisation but respect the need to be compliant with Code requirements and will move to the new approach forthwith.
● Medium	**Other services expenditure** As part of our testing of expenditure we identified an item that related to the 2024/25 financial year, but which the Authority did not accrue for in that year. The cost was recognised as an expense upon receipt of the invoice on in April 2025. The value and recurring nature of the cost indicate that it would have been reasonable for an accrual to be made in the previous year, therefore we consider that this is indicative of a control deficiency in the Authority's year-end accruals processes.	We recommend that the Authority reviews and improves its procedures to identify and accrue for known or expected costs at each year end. **Management Response** We will take on board this recommendation and take appropriate action to improve procedures relating to year-end accruals.

Key
- High – Significant effect on control system and/or financial statements
- Medium – Limited impact on control system and/or financial statements
- Low – Best practice for control systems and financial statements

© 2026 Grant Thornton UK LLP. All rights reserved.

Action plan

Assessment	Issue and risk	Recommendations
● Medium	**Capitalisation of Expenditure** As part of our testing property, plant and equipment additions we identified inappropriate capitalisation of subscriptions fees. A subsequent review of the population identified similar items capitalised in 2025/26 (£115k) and a total of potentially similar items included in the Fixed Asset Register (£268k).	We recommend that the Authority reviews it procedures for capitalising expenditure and the Fixed Asset Register to ensure that only items that meet the recognition criteria of the Code and IAS16 are capitalised. **Management Response** We will take on board this recommendation and take appropriate action to improve procedures relating to capitalisation of expenditure

Key
- High – Significant effect on control system and/or financial statements
- Medium – Limited impact on control system and/or financial statements
- Low – Best practice for control systems and financial statements

© 2026 Grant Thornton UK LLP. All rights reserved.

Follow up of prior year recommendations

We identified the following issues in the audit of the Authority's 2024/25 financial statements, which resulted in two recommendations being reported in our 2024/25 Audit Findings Report. We are pleased to report that management have implemented our recommendation.

Assessment	Issue and risk previously communicated	Update on actions taken to address the issue
✓	**Journal authorisation** During our detailed testing of journal transactions we identified one journal where, although the poster and approver were different individuals according to the transaction details, the poster had been asked to post the transaction by the individual who then approved it. We recommended management to ensure appropriate segregation of duties exists and all journals should be approved by member of staff who was not involved in the journal's creation.	Our testing of journals posted in 2025/26 did not identify any further instances of this issue.
✓	**Undisclosed Interests** Our testing on related parties identified potential undisclosed directorships for multiple individuals. Although we are satisfied no transactions have taken place with the entities, there is a risk the declarations of interest forms are not accurate and complete. We recommend that once a year the Authority should undertake a completeness review of related parties and undertake searches on Companies House to identify undeclared directorships.	From work completed this year we are satisfied that this recommendation has been addressed.

Assessment

✓ Action completed

X Not yet addressed

© 2026 Grant Thornton UK LLP. All rights reserved.

Value for Money arrangements

Approach to Value for Money work for the year ended 31 March 2026

The National Audit Office issued its latest Value for Money guidance to auditors in March 2026. The Code requires auditors to consider whether a body has put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. Additionally, The Code requires auditors to share a draft of the Auditor's Annual Report (AAR) with those charged with governance by 30 November each year from 2025-26. Our AAR accompanies this audit findings report.

In undertaking our work, we are required to have regard to three specified reporting criteria. These are as set out below.



Governance

How the body ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks.



Financial sustainability

How the body plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services.



Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness

How the body uses information about its costs and performance to improve the way it manages and delivers its services.

In undertaking this work we have not identified any significant weaknesses in arrangements.

© 2026 Grant Thornton UK LLP. All rights reserved.

Independence considerations

Ethical Standards and ISA (UK) 260 require us to give you timely disclosure of all significant matters that may bear upon the integrity, objectivity and independence of the firm or covered persons (including its partners, senior managers, managers). In this context, there are no independence matters that we would like to report to you. We confirm that we have implemented policies and procedures to meet the requirement of the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard

Further, we have complied with the requirements of the National Audit Office's Auditor Guidance Note 01 issued in February 2025 which sets out supplementary guidance on ethical requirements for auditors of local public bodies and the Terms of Appointment and further guidance issued by the Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA)

As part of our assessment of our independence, we note the following matters:

Matter	Conclusions
Relationships with Grant Thornton	We are not aware of any relationships between Grant Thornton and the Authority that may reasonably be thought to bear on our integrity, independence and objectivity.
Relationships and Investments held by individuals	We have not identified any potential issues in respect of personal relationships with the Authority or investments in the group held by individuals.
Employment of Grant Thornton staff	We are not aware of any former Grant Thornton partners or staff being employed, or holding discussions in respect of employment, by the Authority as a director or in a senior management role covering financial, accounting or control related areas.
Business relationships	We have not identified any business relationships between Grant Thornton and the Authority.
Contingent fees in relation to non-audit services	No contingent fee arrangements are in place for non-audit services provided.
Gifts and hospitality	We have not identified any gifts or hospitality provided to, or received from, a member of the Authority, senior management or staff (that would exceed the threshold set in the Ethical Standard).

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 and consider that an objective reasonable and informed third party would take the same view. The firm and each covered person have complied with the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard and confirm that we are independent and are able to express an objective opinion on the financial statements.

Following this consideration, we can confirm that we are independent and are able to express an objective opinion on the financial statements. In making the above judgement, we have also been mindful of the quantum of non-audit fees compared to audit fees disclosed in the financial statements and estimated for the current year.

© 2026 Grant Thornton UK LLP. All rights reserved.

Fees and non-audit services

The table below sets out the total fees for audit. No non-audit or audited related services have been undertaken for the Authority.

Audit fees	£
Scale fee	108,886
IFRIC 14 – Fee Variation	3,000
Total	**111,886**

The above fees are exclusive of VAT.
The fees in the financial statements agree to the scale fee above.

This covers all services provided by us and our network to the Authority, its senior officers and its affiliates, and other services provided to other known connected parties that may reasonably be thought to bear on our integrity, objectivity or independence.

© 2026 Grant Thornton UK LLP. All rights reserved.

Appendices

A. Communication of audit matters with those charged with governance

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 including significant risks	●	
• 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	●	●
• Significant matters in relation to going concern	●	●
• Significant findings from the audit		●
• Significant matters and issue arising during the audit and written representations that have been sought		●
• Significant difficulties encountered during the audit		●
• Significant deficiencies in internal control identified during the audit		●
• Significant matters arising in connection with related parties		●

© 2026 Grant Thornton UK LLP. All rights reserved.

A. Communication of audit matters with those charged with governance

Our communication plan	Audit Plan	Audit Findings
Identification or suspicion of fraud involving management and/or which results in material misstatement of the financial statements		●
Non-compliance with laws and regulations		●
Unadjusted misstatements and material disclosure omissions		●
Expected modifications to the auditor's report, or emphasis of matter		●

ISA (UK) 260, as well as other ISAs (UK), prescribe matters which we are required to communicate with those charged with governance, and which we set out in the table here.

This document, the Audit Findings, outlines those key issues, findings and other matters arising from the audit, which we consider should be communicated in writing rather than orally, together with an explanation as to how these have been resolved.

Respective responsibilities

As auditor we are responsible for performing the audit in accordance with ISAs (UK), 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.

Distribution of this Audit Findings report

Whilst we seek to ensure our audit findings are distributed to those individuals charged with governance, as a minimum a requirement exists for our findings to be distributed to all the company directors and those members of senior management with significant operational and strategic responsibilities. We are grateful for your specific consideration and onward distribution of our report, to those charged with governance.

© 2026 Grant Thornton UK LLP. All rights reserved.



© 2026 Grant Thornton UK LLP. All rights reserved.

‘Grant Thornton’ refers to the brand under which the Grant Thornton member firms provide assurance, tax and advisory services to their clients and/or refers to one or more member firms, as the context requires. Grant Thornton UK LLP is a member firm of Grant Thornton International Ltd (GTIL). GTIL and the member firms are not a worldwide partnership. GTIL and each member firm is a separate legal entity. Services are delivered by the member firms. GTIL does not provide services to clients. GTIL and its member firms are not agents of, and do not obligate, one another and are not liable for one another’s acts or omissions.