

Governance, Audit, Risk Management and Standards Committee Supplemental Agenda

Date: Tuesday 2 August 2022

13. **External Audit Plans 2021-2022 (Information Report) (Pages 1 - 68)**

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**Report for: GOVERNANCE, AUDIT,
RISK MANAGEMENT
AND STANDARDS
COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting:	2 August 2022
Subject:	External Audit Plans (Audit Strategy Memoranda) 2021/22
Responsible Officer:	Dawn Calvert, Director of Finance and Assurance
Exempt:	No
Wards affected:	All
Enclosures:	External Audit Plans for the Council and the Pension Fund 2021/22

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report provides the Committee with an opportunity to consider the External Audit Plans 2021/22 from the Council's External Auditors.

Recommendations:

The Committee is requested to note the attached External Audit Plans (Audit Strategy Memoranda) for the Council and the Pension Fund.

Section 2 – Report

Background

External Audit Plans (Audit Strategy Memoranda) for 2021/22

1. The External Audit Plans (Audit Strategy Memoranda) provide the Council with clarity about how the external audit of the Council's accounts and Pension Fund accounts for 2021/22 will be conducted. The audit plan sets out the following:-

- a. Engagement and Responsibilities Summary;
- b. the Audit engagement team;
- c. Audit scope, approach and timeline – covers planning, interim work, main audit fieldwork and audit completion;
- d. Significant risks and judgement areas as summarised below:-
 - i. Management override of controls (applies to both Audit Plans) – would include testing of journals, significant accounting estimates and any unusual transactions;
 - ii. Revenue and expenditure recognition - Potential for fraudulent revenue recognition in specific areas – detailed testing of transactions will be undertaken as part of the audit;
 - iii. Property, plant and equipment valuations; including investment properties;
 - iv. Pension Fund defined benefit valuation (from the Authority's view);
 - v. Migration from SAP to D365 (applies to both plans) – LBH moved to a new financial information system during 2021/22
 - vi. Other key areas of management judgement and enhanced risks – the accounting for the Civic Centre falls as an enhanced risk;
 - vii. For the Pension Fund, valuation of investments within level 3 of the hierarchy (unquoted investments);
- e. Value for Money conclusion - this will be reviewed in conjunction with the delivery of the Medium Term Financial Strategy;
- f. Fees for audit and other services;
- g. Auditor's commitment to independence;
- h. Materiality and misstatements – a materiality threshold of around 1.7% of gross revenue expenditure for the Council's accounts and on a benchmark of net assets for the Pension Fund Accounts has been set for the 2021/22 audit (1.0% in 2020/21 for both the Council and Pension Fund). This gives an overall materiality level of £10.5m (£9.1m 2020/21) for the Council and £9.7m (£9.7m 2020/21) for the Pension Fund. The materiality levels for misstatements (the level of triviality) is set at £314k (£279k 2020/21) for the Council and £290k (£430k 2020/21) for the Pension Fund. In addition there are performance materiality levels for both LBH and the Pension Fund, and a specific materiality level for the Pension Fund account;

i. An appendix covering key communication points is included at the end of both audit plans.

2. The Committee is asked to consider the plans.

Legal Implications

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Risk Management Implications

Receipt of the audit plans is included within the closure of accounts timetable.

Risks included on corporate or directorate risk register? **No**

Separate risk register in place? **No**

The relevant risks contained in the register are attached/summarised below. **n/a**

Equalities implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

Considering the Council's Public Sector Equality Duties under the Equality Act 2010, s.149, is integral to the decision-making process.

Was an Equality Impact Assessment carried out? **No**

There are no direct equalities implications.

Council Priorities

The external audit provides assurance that the Council has managed its finances and delivered value for money in accordance with all the Council's priorities.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Statutory Officer:
Chief Financial Officer

Dawn Calvert

Date: 25th July 2022

Statutory Officer:
Signed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

Caroline Eccles

Date: 20th July 2022

Chief Officer:
Signed by the Corporate Director

Charlie Stewart

Date: 20th July 2022

Mandatory Checks

Ward Councillors notified: NO, as it impacts on all Wards

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Yinka Ehinfun (Chief Accountant)
Email: Yinka.ehinfun@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers:

None

If appropriate, does the report include the following considerations?

- | | |
|----------------|----|
| 1 Consultation | No |
| 2 Priorities | No |

Audit Strategy Memorandum

London Borough of Harrow Council

Year ending 31 March 2022



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Appendix – Key communication points

This document is to be regarded as confidential to London Borough of Harrow Council. It has been prepared for the sole use of Governance, Audit, Risk Management and Standards Committee as the appropriate sub-committee charged with governance. No responsibility is accepted to any other person in respect of the whole or part of its contents. Our written consent must first be obtained before this document, or any part of it, is disclosed to a third party.

Governance, Audit, Risk Management and Standards Committee
Harrow Council
Civic Centre
Station Road
Harrow
HA1 2XY

19 July 2022

30 Old Bailey
London
EC4M 7AU

Dear Members,

Audit Strategy Memorandum – Year ending 31 March 2022

We are pleased to present our Audit Strategy Memorandum for London Borough of Harrow Council for the year ending 31 March 2022. The purpose of this document is to summarise our audit approach, highlight significant audit risks and areas of key judgements and provide you with the details of our audit team. As it is a fundamental requirement that an auditor is, and is seen to be, independent of its clients, section 6 of this document also summarises our considerations and conclusions on our independence as auditors. We consider two-way communication with you to be key to a successful audit and important in:

- reaching a mutual understanding of the scope of the audit and the responsibilities of each of us;
- sharing information to assist each of us to fulfil our respective responsibilities;
- providing you with constructive observations arising from the audit process; and
- ensuring that we, as external auditors, gain an understanding of your attitude and views in respect of the internal and external operational, financial, compliance and other risks facing Harrow Council which may affect the audit, including the likelihood of those risks materialising and how they are monitored and managed.

With that in mind, we see this document, which has been prepared following our initial planning discussions with management, as being the basis for a discussion around our audit approach, any questions, concerns or input you may have on our approach or role as auditor. This document also contains an appendix that outlines our key communications with you during the course of the audit,

Client service is extremely important to us and we strive to provide technical excellence with the highest level of service quality, together with continuous improvement to exceed your expectations so, if you have any concerns or comments about this document or audit approach, please contact me on 07387 242052.

Yours faithfully

Lucy Nutley

Mazars LLP

Mazars LLP – 30, Old Bailey, London, EC4M 7AU

www.mazars.co.uk

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01

Section 01:

**Engagement and
responsibilities summary**

1. Engagement and responsibilities summary

Overview of engagement

We are appointed to perform the external audit of London Borough of Harrow Council (the Council) for the year to 31 March 2022. The scope of our engagement is set out in the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies, issued by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) available from the PSAA website: <https://www.psa.co.uk/managing-audit-quality/statement-of-responsibilities-of-auditors-and-audited-bodies/>. Our responsibilities are principally derived from the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (the 2014 Act) and the Code of Audit Practice issued by the National Audit Office (NAO), as outlined below.

Audit opinion

We are responsible for forming and expressing an opinion on the financial statements. Our audit does not relieve management or The Governance, Audit, Risk Management and Standards Committee, as those charged with governance, of their responsibilities.

The Director of Finance and Assurance is responsible for the assessment of whether it is appropriate for the Council to prepare its accounts on a going concern basis. As auditors, we are required to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding, and conclude on: a) whether a material uncertainty related to going concern exists; and b) consider the appropriateness of the Director of Finance and Assurance's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements.

Value for money

We are also responsible for forming a commentary on the arrangements that the Council has in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. We discuss our approach to Value for Money work further in section 5 of this report.



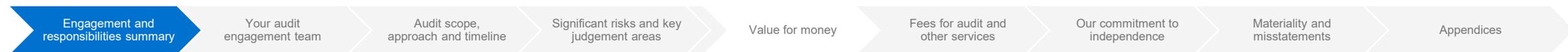
Fraud

The responsibility for safeguarding assets and for the prevention and detection of fraud, error and non-compliance with law or regulations rests with both those charged with governance and management. This includes establishing and maintaining internal controls over reliability of financial reporting.

As part of our audit procedures in relation to fraud we are required to enquire of those charged with governance, including key management and include internal audit as to their knowledge of instances of fraud, the risk of fraud and their views on internal controls that mitigate the fraud risks. In accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK), we plan and perform our audit so as to obtain reasonable assurance that the financial statements taken as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. However our audit should not be relied upon to identify all such misstatements.

Wider reporting and electors' rights

The 2014 Act requires us to give an elector, or any representative of the elector, the opportunity to question us about the accounting records of London Borough of Harrow and consider any objection made to the accounts. This would include an objection made to the accounts of the Council included in the administering authority's financial statements. We also have a broad range of reporting responsibilities and powers that are unique to the audit of local authorities in the United Kingdom



02

Section 02:

Your audit engagement team

2. Your audit engagement team



Lucy Nutley
Director and Engagement Lead
Email: Lucy.Nutley@mazars.co.uk
Telephone: 07387 242052

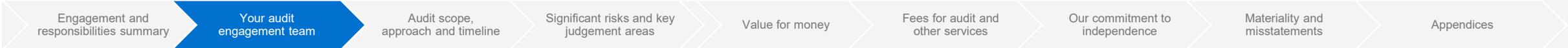


Stuart Frith
Engagement Senior Manager
Email: Stuart.Frith@mazars.co.uk
Telephone: 07909 982774



Paddy Sadd
Audit Manager
Email: Paddy.Sadd@mazars.co.uk
Telephone: 07581 008590

In addition, an engagement quality control reviewer has been appointed for this engagement.



03

Section 03:

Audit scope, approach and timeline

3. Audit scope, approach and timeline

Audit scope

Our audit of the financial statements will be conducted in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK), relevant ethical and professional standards, our own audit approach and in accordance with the terms of our engagement. Our work is focused on those aspects of your activities which we consider to have a higher risk of material misstatement, such as those impacted by management judgement and estimation, application of new accounting standards, changes of accounting policy, changes to operations or areas which have been found to contain material errors in the past.

Audit approach

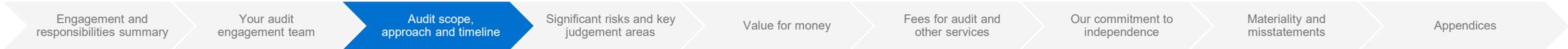
Our audit approach is designed to provide an audit that complies with all professional requirements.

Our audit approach is risk-based and primarily driven by the issues that we consider lead to a higher risk of material misstatement of the accounts. Once we have completed our risk assessment, we develop our audit strategy and design audit procedures in response to this assessment.

If we conclude that appropriately-designed controls are in place then we may plan to test and rely upon these controls. If we decide controls are not appropriately designed, or we decide it would be more efficient to do so, we may take a wholly substantive approach to our audit testing. Substantive procedures are audit procedures designed to detect material misstatements at the assertion level and comprise: tests of details (of classes of transactions, account balances, and disclosures); and substantive analytical procedures. Irrespective of the assessed risks of material misstatement, which take into account our evaluation of the operating effectiveness of controls, we are required to design and perform substantive procedures for each material class of transactions, account balance, and disclosure.

Our audit will be planned and performed so as to provide reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement and give a true and fair view. The concept of materiality and how we define a misstatement is explained in more detail in section 8.

The diagram on the next page outlines the procedures we perform at the different stages of the audit.



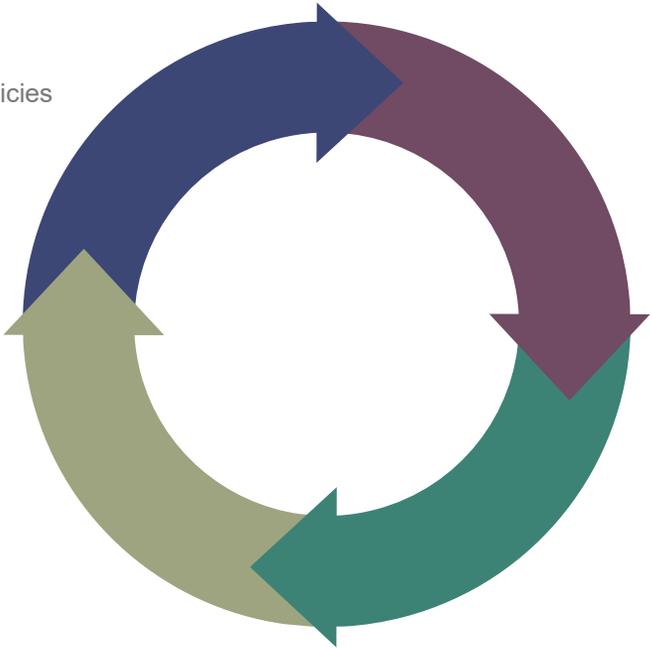
3. Audit scope, approach and timeline

Planning - March 2022

- Planning visit and developing our understanding of the Council
- Initial opinion assessment
- Considering proposed accounting treatments and accounting policies
- Developing the audit strategy and planning the audit work to be performed
- Agreeing timetable and deadlines
- Preliminary analytical review

Completion - October to November 2022

- Final review and disclosure checklist of financial statements
- Final partner and EQCR review
- Agreeing content of letter of representation
- Reporting to the Governance, Audit, Risk Management and Standards Committee
- Reviewing subsequent events
- Signing the auditor's reports

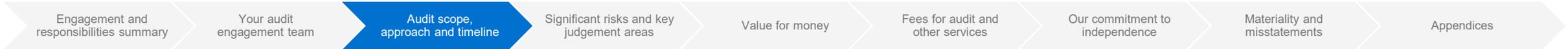


Interim - March to July 2022

- Documenting systems and controls
- Performing walkthroughs
- Interim controls testing including tests of IT general controls
- Additional IT audit work reviewing general ledger data migration and change management processes
- Reassessment of audit plan and revision if necessary

Fieldwork - July to October 2022

- Receiving and reviewing draft financial statements
- Reassessment of audit plan and revision if necessary
- Executing the strategy starting with significant risks and high risk areas
- Communicating progress and issues
- Clearance meeting



3. Audit scope, approach and timeline

Reliance on internal audit

Where possible we will seek to utilise the work performed by internal audit to modify the nature, extent and timing of our audit procedures. We will meet with internal audit to discuss the progress and findings of their work prior to the commencement of our controls evaluation procedures.

Where we intend to rely on the work on internal audit, we will evaluate the work performed by your internal audit team and perform our own audit procedures to determine its adequacy for our audit.

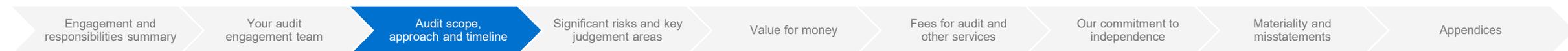
Service organisations

International Auditing Standards (UK) (ISAs) define service organisations as third party organisations that provide services to the Pension Fund that are part of its information systems relevant to financial reporting. We are required to obtain an understanding of the services provided by service organisations as well as evaluating the design and implementation of controls over those services. The table below summarises the service organisations used by the Pension Fund and our planned audit approach.

Management’s and our experts

Management makes use of experts in specific areas when preparing the Council’s financial statements. We also use experts to assist us to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence on specific items of account.

Items of account	Management’s expert	Our expert
Defined benefit pension liability	Hymans Robertson	We make use of PWC actuarial services who are commissioned by the NAO to review the national analysis of pension trends and assumptions of the various LGPS actuaries and consider the findings for potential impact on the values included within the financial statements.
Property, plant and equipment valuations	Internal valuers	For both sets of property valuations we will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> review the Gerald Eve analysis of property valuation movements provided centrally by PSAA and consider the outcome of the Council’s internal valuer’s valuations in comparison with these, challenging conclusions as appropriate; and where considered necessary, will complete further review and challenge using our own internal valuation expert.
Investment property valuations	External valuers	



04

Section 04:

**Significant risks and other key
judgement areas**

4. Significant risks and other key judgement areas

Following the risk assessment approach discussed in section 3 of this document, we have identified risks relevant to the audit of financial statements. The risks that we identify are categorised as significant, enhanced or standard. The definitions of the level of risk rating are given below:

Significant risk

A significant risk is an identified and assessed risk of material misstatement that, in the auditor’s judgment, requires special audit consideration. For any significant risk, the auditor shall obtain an understanding of the entity’s controls, including control activities relevant to that risk.

Enhanced risk

An enhanced risk is an area of higher assessed risk of material misstatement at audit assertion level other than a significant risk. Enhanced risks require additional consideration but does not rise to the level of a significant risk, these include but may not be limited to:

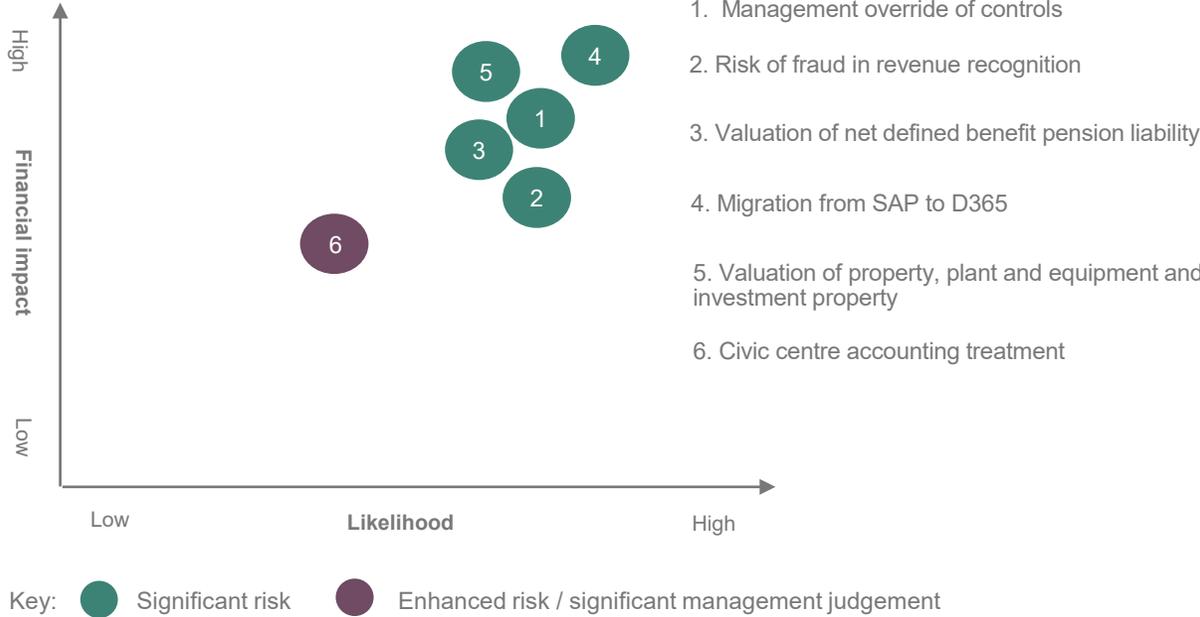
- key areas of management judgement, including accounting estimates which are material but are not considered to give rise to a significant risk of material misstatement; and
- other audit assertion risks arising from significant events or transactions that occurred during the period.

Standard risk

This is related to relatively routine, non-complex transactions that tend to be subject to systematic processing and require little management judgement. Although it is considered that there is a risk of material misstatement (RMM), there are no elevated or special factors related to the nature, the likely magnitude of the potential misstatements or the likelihood of the risk occurring.

Summary risk assessment

The summary risk assessment, illustrated in the table below, highlights those risks which we deem to be significant and other enhanced risks in respect of the Council. We have summarised our audit response to these risks on the next page.



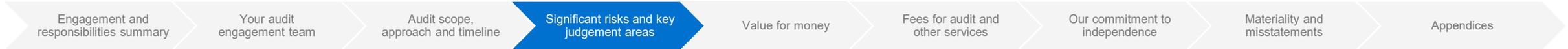
4. Significant risks and other key judgement areas

Specific identified audit risks and planned testing strategy

We have presented below in more detail the reasons for the risk assessment highlighted above, and also our testing approach with respect to significant risks. An audit is a dynamic process, should we change our view of risk or approach to address the identified risks during the course of our audit, we will report this to the Governance, Audit, Risk Management and Standards Committee.

Significant risks

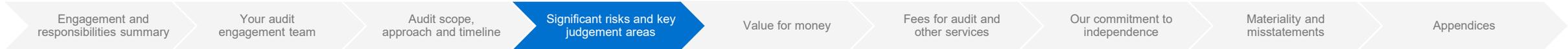
	Description	Fraud	Error	Judgement	Planned response
1	<p>Management override of controls</p> <p>This is a mandatory significant risk on all audits due to the unpredictable way in which such override could occur.</p> <p>Management at various levels within an organisation are in a unique position to perpetrate fraud because of their ability to manipulate accounting records and prepare fraudulent financial statements by overriding controls that otherwise appear to be operating effectively. Due to the unpredictable way in which such override could occur there is a risk of material misstatement due to fraud on all audits.</p>	●	○	○	<p>We plan to address the management override of controls risk through performing audit work over accounting estimates, journal entries and significant transactions outside the normal course of business or otherwise unusual.</p> <p>We will address the risk through performing audit procedures, covering a range of areas including (but not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accounting estimates included in the financial statements for evidence of management bias; • any significant transactions outside the normal course of business; and • journals and other adjustments recorded in the general ledger in preparing the financial statements.



4. Significant risks and other key judgement areas

Significant risks

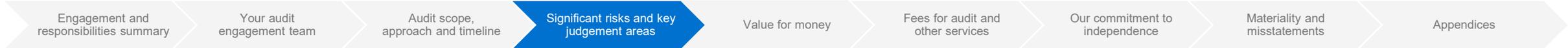
	Description	Fraud	Error	Judgement	Planned response
2	<p>Risk of fraud in revenue recognition</p> <p>The risk of fraud in revenue recognition is presumed to be a significant risk on all audits due to the potential to inappropriately shift the timing and basis of revenue recognition as well as the potential to record fictitious revenues or fail to record actual revenues.</p> <p>Based on our initial knowledge and planning discussions we have concluded that we can rebut the presumption of a revenue recognition risk for the majority of the Council's revenue income and expenditure. In particular we can rebut the revenue recognition risk for income derived from Council Tax, main revenue Grants and NNDR due to the low inherent risk associated with these amounts.</p> <p>For the Council we deem the risk to relate specifically to material income streams within the Council, being fees, charges and other service income, where the level of inherent risk is higher.</p>	●	○	○	<p>We plan to address this risk by obtaining a detailed understanding of the Council's processes by which it ensures that revenue is materially recognised in the correct accounting year.</p> <p>We will carry out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • detailed testing of transactions around both sides of the 2021/22 year end to confirm they are accounted for in the correct year; • testing from receipts around the year-end to provide assurance that there are no material unrecorded items of income / debtors in the 2021/22 accounts.



4. Significant risks and other key judgement areas

Significant risks

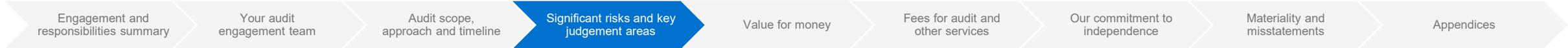
	Description	Fraud	Error	Judgement	Planned response
3	<p>Valuation of net defined benefit pension liability</p> <p>The last triennial valuation of the Harrow Pension Fund was completed as at 31 March 2019. As an admitted body within the Fund, the valuation provides the basis of the associated net pension liability for the Council as at 31 March 2022.</p> <p>The valuation of the Council's net liability includes use of discount rates, inflation rates, mortality rates etc., all of which should reflect the profile of the Council's employees and other appropriate data.</p> <p>Due to the high degree of estimation uncertainty associated with these valuations, we have determined there is a significant risk in this area.</p>	○	●	●	<p>We will address this risk by reviewing the controls that the Council has in place over the information sent to the Scheme Actuary, Hymans Robertson.</p> <p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assess the skill, competence and experience of the Fund's actuary; • challenge the reasonableness of the assumptions used by the actuary as part of the annual IAS 19 valuation;



4. Significant risks and other key judgement areas

Significant risks

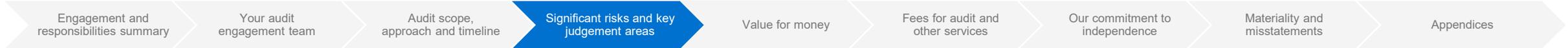
	Description	Fraud	Error	Judgement	Planned response
4	<p>Migration from SAP to D365</p> <p>During 2021/22, the Council has undertaken an accounting system migration from SAP to D365. In October 2021, the nominal ledger, accounts receivable and accounts payable functions were closed in SAP and became managed via Dynamics365 (D365). Payroll migrated in April 2022.</p> <p>There is a risk that the migration will not capture all data held in the prior system. The omission of such data could ultimately lead to material misstatement within the financial statements. The implementation of a new system also poses a significant risk to the integrity and validity of the Council’s financial reporting if change management processes are not robust and the new system is not correctly tested and implemented.</p> <p>There is a further risk the migration leads to a loss of data and accounting records during transfer. Such a loss of data may result in a risk that during the audit, we are unable to obtain sufficient and appropriate third part evidence to support transactions entered into by the Council.</p>	○	●	○	<p>We plan to address this risk by completing the following additional procedures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing the Council’s reconciliation of old system closing balances to the new system opening balances; • Engage internal IT specialists to perform tailored work around data migration process undertaken by the Council. • Engage internal IT specialists to perform design and implementation testing of controls within the new system.



4. Significant risks and other key judgement areas

Significant risks

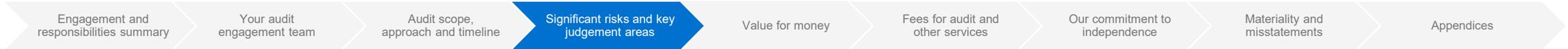
	Description	Fraud	Error	Judgement	Planned response
5	<p>Property, plant and equipment valuations (including investment property valuations)</p> <p>Where a Council's assets are subject to revaluation, the Code requires that the carrying value should reflect the appropriate fair value as at the year end. Estimation of fair values is subject to complex estimation. This creates a risk that the carrying value of those assets revalued in the year are materially mis-stated.</p> <p>In respect of Council Dwellings, these are reviewed using a beacon valuation methodology, which values Council stock by grouping assets into type and using a nominated beacon asset for each group. The assessed value is uplifted based on an open market assessment then amended for an adjustment factor provided by DHLUC.</p> <p>Due to the high degree of estimation uncertainty associated with valuations, we have determined there is a significant risk in this area.</p>	○	●	●	<p>We will assess the risk of valuations changing materially in year, considering the movement in market indices between valuation dates and the year end, in order to determine whether these indicate that fair values have moved materially.</p> <p>In addition, for those assets which have been revalued during the year we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assess the valuer's qualifications; • assess the valuer's objectivity and independence; • review the methodology used; • perform testing of the associated underlying data and assumptions; and • Ensure the accounting treatment of the valuation and associated movements is compliant with relevant accounting framework. <p>We will also follow up on recommendations made during the 2020/21 audit regarding PPE valuations. We will review the approach adopted by the Council to assess the risk that assets not subject to valuation at year end are not materially misstated, and consider the robustness of that approach.</p>



4. Significant risks and other key judgement areas

Enhanced risks

	Description	Fraud	Error	Judgement	Planned response
6	<p>Civic centre accounting treatment</p> <p>The Council are due to move the function of the Civic Centre to the Harrow Civic Hub. As part of this move, the existing Civic Centre will be decommissioned and the land redeveloped, through a joint venture. The accounting treatment of the property transactions are likely to be complex and will require considerable technical input in order to achieve an appropriate valuation of the land and buildings and to ensure all required disclosures are made in the financial statements.</p> <p>Given the level of complexity, there is a risk management fail to meet the disclosure requirements for such an asset.</p>	○	●	●	<p>We will discuss the valuation approach and accounting treatment with the council.</p> <p>Management have indicated they will prepare a working paper detailing the proposed treatment of the civic centre. This will be reviewed as part of our response.</p> <p>We will consider the valuation and basis of valuation applied to the Civic Centre as part of our valuation of property, plant and equipment work.</p>



05

Section 05:

Value for money

5. Value for money

The framework for Value for Money work

We are required to form a view as to whether the Council has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. The NAO issues guidance to auditors that underpins the work we are required to carry out in order to form our view, and sets out the overall criterion and sub-criteria that we are required to consider.

2021/22 will be the second audit year where we are undertaking our value for money (VFM) work under the 2020 Code of Audit Practice (the Code). Our responsibility remains to be satisfied that the Council has proper arrangements in place and to report in the audit report and/or the audit completion certificate where we identify significant weaknesses in arrangements. Separately we provide a commentary on the Council's arrangements in the Auditor's Annual Report.

Specified reporting criteria

The Code requires us to structure our commentary to report under three specified criteria:

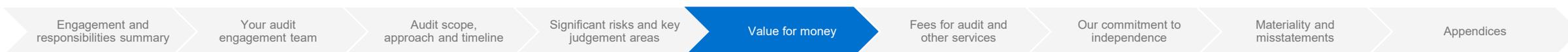
1. **Financial sustainability** – how the Council plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services
2. **Governance** – how the Council ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks
3. **Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness** – how the Council uses information about its costs and performance to improve the way it manages and delivers its services

Our approach

Our work falls into three primary phases as outlined opposite. We need to gather sufficient evidence to support our commentary on the Council's arrangements and to identify and report on any significant weaknesses in arrangements. Where significant weaknesses are identified we are required to report these to the Council and make recommendations for improvement.

Such recommendations can be made at any point during the audit cycle and we are not expected to wait until issuing our overall commentary to do so.

Planning and risk assessment	Obtaining an understanding of the Council's arrangements for each specified reporting criteria. Relevant information sources will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• NAO guidance and supporting information• Information from internal and external sources including regulators• Knowledge from previous audits and other audit work undertaken in the year• Interviews and discussions with staff and members
Additional risk based procedures and evaluation	Where our planning work identifies risks of significant weaknesses, we will undertake additional procedures to determine whether there is a significant weakness.
Reporting	We will provide a summary of the work we have undertaken and our judgements against each of the specified reporting criteria as part of our commentary on arrangements. This will form part of the Auditor's Annual Report. Our commentary will also highlight: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Significant weaknesses identified and our recommendations for improvement• Emerging issues or other matters that do not represent significant weaknesses but still require attention from the Council.



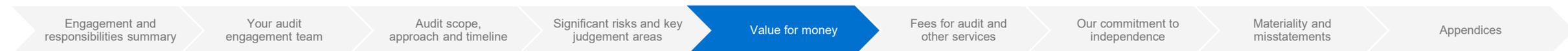
5. Value for money

Identified risks of significant weaknesses in arrangements

The NAO's guidance requires us to carry out work at the planning stage to understand the Council's arrangements and to identify risks that significant weaknesses in arrangements may exist.

Although we have not fully completed our planning and risk assessment work, the table below outlines the risks of significant weaknesses in arrangements that we have identified to date. We will report any further identified risks to the Governance, Audit, Risk Management and Standards Committee on completion of our planning and risk identification work.

	Risk of significant weakness in arrangements	Financial sustainability	Governance	Improving the 3Es	Planned procedures
1	<p>Financial Sustainability</p> <p>The Authority's Medium Term Financial Plan developed from the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) has identified the need to make significant savings of £3.4m in 2021/22.</p> <p>The Council has a strong track record of delivering savings (£99.4m since 2013/14). However, the 2020/21 MTFS acknowledged that due to these past savings, it is becoming increasingly difficult to deliver savings and achieve a balanced budget without impacting front line services.</p> <p>The Council initially planned that it would drawdown £3.8m from reserves in 2020-21, which is not a sustainable methodology for delivering balanced budgets. However, this was not required, and the Council outturn resulted in an addition to reserves of approximately £7m</p>	●	○	○	<p>Our work will include, but will not be limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the development and implementation of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), ensuring it has taken into account factors such as funding restrictions, demand pressures and savings requirements. Review of the controls in place to ensure the financial resilience of the Council <p>We will specifically review management actions and mitigations to deliver the budgeted position.</p>



06

Section 06:

Fees for audit and other services

6. Fees for audit and other services

Fees for work as the Council's appointed auditor

At this stage of the audit we are in the process of agreeing a divergence from the scale fees set by PSAA, as a result of changes in the scope of our work arising from a new NAO Code, revisions to auditing standards and increased regulatory requirements. We are also in the process of agreeing the impact of these with the Director of Finance & Assurance on the final fee for 2020/21. Please note that audit time responding to correspondence from the public will necessitate an additional audit fee.

Area of work	2021/22 Proposed Fee	2020/21 Actual Fee
Code Audit Work (Scale fee)	£116,057	£116,057
Additional fees:		
- Property, plant and equipment valuations (Note 1)	£5,000-12,000	£11,200
- Pension liability (Note 1)	£5,000-10,000	£4,853
- Code changes to value for money (Note 2)	£9,000-£30,000	£14,200
- Revised auditing standard on accounting estimates (Note 3)	TBC	£3,488
TOTAL	TBC	£152,624

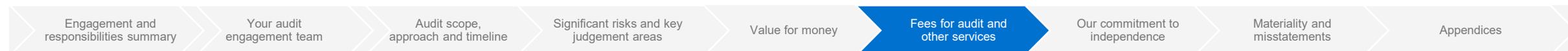
Notes:

1. Since the latest PSAA contract was awarded there have been significant changes to the requirements on auditors by regulators. This has resulted in additional procedures and additional internal review on the audit of PPE valuations and the pension liability.
2. The Code introduces new VFM requirements. We have used the PSAA range plus an estimate of work to address significant weaknesses in arrangements if identified by the risk assessment.
3. The auditing standard relating to accounting estimates changed for 2020/21 requiring additional work.

Fees for non-PSAA work

In addition to the fees outlined above in relation to our appointment by PSAA, we have been separately engaged by the Council to carry out additional work as set out in the table below. Before agreeing to undertake any additional work we consider whether there are any actual, potential or perceived threats to our independence. Further information about our responsibilities in relation to independence is provided in section 7.

Area of work	2021/22 Proposed Fee	2020/21 Actual Fee
Other services - Housing Benefits Subsidy Assurance	£18,300	£17,750
Other services - Teachers' Pensions	£3,700	£3,600
Other services - Pooled Housing Capital Receipts	£4,250	£4,100
Other services – Brent Transport Services Agreement	TBC	N/A



07

Section 07:

Our commitment to independence

7. Our commitment to independence

We are committed to independence and are required by the Financial Reporting Council to confirm to you at least annually in writing that we comply with the FRC's Ethical Standard. In addition, we communicate any matters or relationship which we believe may have a bearing on our independence or the objectivity of the audit team.

Based on the information provided by you and our own internal procedures to safeguard our independence as auditors, we confirm that in our professional judgement there are no relationships between us and any of our related or subsidiary entities, and you and your related entities creating any unacceptable threats to our independence within the regulatory or professional requirements governing us as your auditors.

We have policies and procedures in place which are designed to ensure that we carry out our work with integrity, objectivity and independence. These policies include:

- All partners and staff are required to complete an annual independence declaration;
- All new partners and staff are required to complete an independence confirmation and also complete computer based ethical training;
- Rotation policies covering audit engagement partners and other key members of the audit team; and
- Use by managers and partners of our client and engagement acceptance system which requires all non-audit services to be approved in advance by the audit engagement partner.

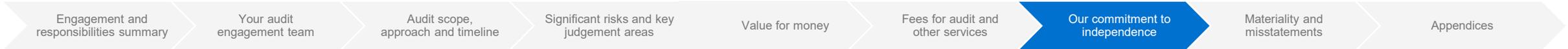
We confirm, as at the date of this document, that the engagement team and others in the firm as

appropriate, Mazars LLP are independent and comply with relevant ethical requirements. However, if at any time you have concerns or questions about our integrity, objectivity or independence please discuss these with Lucy Nutley in the first instance.

Prior to the provision of any non-audit services, Lucy Nutley will undertake appropriate procedures to consider and fully assess the impact that providing the service may have on our auditor independence.

No threats to our independence have been identified.

Any emerging independence threats and associated identified safeguards will be communicated in our Audit Completion Report.



08

Section 08:

Materiality and misstatements

8. Materiality and misstatements

Summary of initial materiality thresholds

Threshold	Initial threshold £'000s
Overall materiality	10,500
Performance materiality	6,300
Trivial threshold for errors to be reported to the Governance, Audit, Risk Management and Standards Committee	314

Materiality

Materiality is an expression of the relative significance or importance of a particular matter in the context of financial statements as a whole. Misstatements in financial statements are considered to be material if they, individually or in aggregate, could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial statements.

Judgements on materiality are made in light of surrounding circumstances and are affected by the size and nature of a misstatement, or a combination of both. Judgements about materiality are based on consideration of the common financial information needs of users as a group and not on specific individual users.

The assessment of what is material is a matter of professional judgement and is affected by our perception of the financial information needs of the users of the financial statements. In making our assessment we assume that users:

- have a reasonable knowledge of business, economic activities and accounts;

- have a willingness to study the information in the financial statements with reasonable diligence;
- understand that financial statements are prepared, presented and audited to levels of materiality;
- recognise the uncertainties inherent in the measurement of amounts based on the use of estimates, judgement and the consideration of future events; and
- will make reasonable economic decisions on the basis of the information in the financial statements.

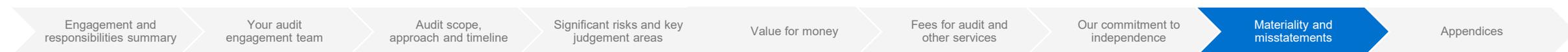
We consider materiality whilst planning and performing our audit based on quantitative and qualitative factors.

Whilst planning, we make judgements about the size of misstatements which we consider to be material and which provides a basis for determining the nature, timing and extent of risk assessment procedures, identifying and assessing the risk of material misstatement and determining the nature, timing and extent of further audit procedures.

The materiality determined at the planning stage does not necessarily establish an amount below which uncorrected misstatements, either individually or in aggregate, will be considered as immaterial.

We revise materiality for the financial statements as our audit progresses should we become aware of information that would have caused us to determine a different amount had we been aware of that information at the planning stage.

Our provisional materiality is set based on a benchmark of 1.7% of gross revenue expenditure at cost of services level. We will identify a figure for materiality but identify separate levels for procedures designed to detect individual errors, and also a level above which all identified errors will be reported to the Governance, Audit, Risk Management and Standards Committee.



8. Materiality and misstatements

Materiality (continued)

We consider that gross revenue expenditure at the cost of services level remains the key focus of users of the financial statements and, as such, we base our materiality levels around this benchmark.

We expect to set a materiality threshold at 1.7% of gross revenue expenditure at the cost of services level. Based on the prior year accounts, we anticipate the overall materiality for the year ending 31 March 2022 to be in the region of £10.5m.

After setting initial materiality, we continue to monitor materiality throughout the audit to ensure that it is set at an appropriate level.

Performance Materiality

Performance materiality is the amount or amounts set by the auditor 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.

Our initial assessment of performance materiality is based on low inherent risk, meaning that we have applied 60% of overall materiality as performance materiality.

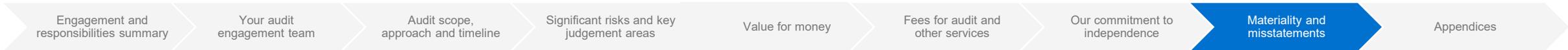
Misstatements

We accumulate misstatements identified during the audit that are other than clearly trivial. We set a level of triviality for individual errors identified (a reporting threshold) for reporting to the Governance, Audit, Risk Management and Standards Committee that is consistent with the level of triviality that we consider would not need to be accumulated because we expect that the accumulation of such amounts would not have a material effect on the financial statements. Based on our preliminary assessment of overall materiality, our proposed triviality threshold is £314k based on 3% of overall materiality. If you have any queries about this please do not hesitate to raise these with Lucy Nutley.

Reporting to the Governance, Audit, Risk Management and Standards Committee

The following three types of audit differences above the trivial threshold will be presented to the Governance, Audit, Risk Management and Standards Committee:

- summary of adjusted audit differences;
- summary of unadjusted audit differences; and
- summary of disclosure differences (adjusted and unadjusted).





Appendix: Key communication points

Appendix: Key communication points

We value communication with Those Charged With Governance as a two way feedback process at the heart of our client service commitment. ISA 260 (UK) 'Communication with Those Charged with Governance' and ISA 265 (UK) 'Communicating Deficiencies In Internal Control To Those Charged With Governance And Management' specifically require us to communicate a number of points with you.

Relevant points that need to be communicated with you at each stage of the audit are outlined below.

Form, timing and content of our communications

We will present the following reports:

- Audit Strategy Memorandum;
- Audit Completion Report; and
- Auditor's Annual Report

These documents will be discussed with management prior to being presented to yourselves and their comments will be incorporated as appropriate.

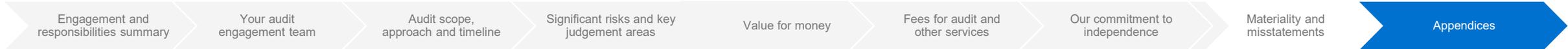
Key communication points at the planning stage as included in this Audit Strategy Memorandum

- Our responsibilities in relation to the audit of the financial statements;
- The planned scope and timing of the audit;

- Significant audit risks and areas of management judgement;
- Our commitment to independence;
- Responsibilities for preventing and detecting errors;
- Materiality and misstatements; and
- Fees for audit and other services.

Key communication points at the completion stage to be included in our Audit Completion Report

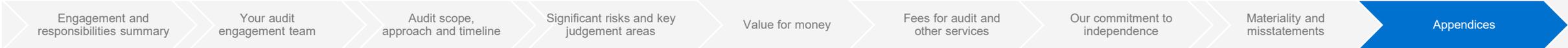
- Significant deficiencies in internal control;
- Significant findings from the audit;
- Significant matters discussed with management;
- Our conclusions on the significant audit risks and areas of management judgement;
- Summary of misstatements;
- Management representation letter;
- Our proposed draft audit report; and
- Independence.



Appendix: Key communication points

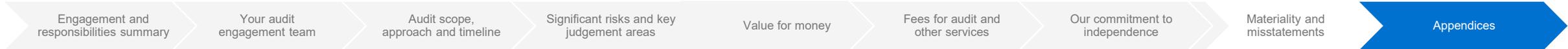
ISA (UK) 260 'Communication with Those Charged with Governance', ISA (UK) 265 'Communicating Deficiencies In Internal Control To Those Charged With Governance And Management' and other ISAs (UK) specifically require us to communicate the following:

Required communication	Where addressed
Our responsibilities in relation to the financial statement audit and those of management and those charged with governance.	Audit Strategy Memorandum
The planned scope and timing of the audit including any limitations, specifically including with respect to significant risks.	Audit Strategy Memorandum
With respect to misstatements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uncorrected misstatements and their effect on our audit opinion; • the effect of uncorrected misstatements related to prior periods; • a request that any uncorrected misstatement is corrected; and • in writing, corrected misstatements that are significant. 	Audit Completion Report
With respect to fraud communications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enquiries of the Governance, Audit, Risk Management and Standards Committee to determine whether they have a knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud affecting the entity; • any fraud that we have identified or information we have obtained that indicates that fraud may exist; and • a discussion of any other matters related to fraud. 	Audit Completion Report and discussion at Governance, Audit, Risk Management and Standards Committee Audit planning and clearance meetings



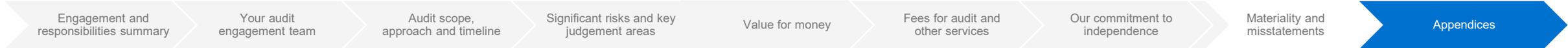
Appendix: Key communication points

Required communication	Where addressed
<p>Significant matters arising during the audit in connection with the entity’s related parties including, when applicable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • non-disclosure by management; • inappropriate authorisation and approval of transactions; • disagreement over disclosures; • non-compliance with laws and regulations; and • difficulty in identifying the party that ultimately controls the entity. 	<p>Audit Completion Report</p>
<p>Significant findings from the audit including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • our view about the significant qualitative aspects of accounting practices including accounting policies, accounting estimates and financial statement disclosures; • significant difficulties, if any, encountered during the audit; • significant matters, if any, arising from the audit that were discussed with management or were the subject of correspondence with management; • written representations that we are seeking; • expected modifications to the audit report; and • other matters, if any, significant to the oversight of the financial reporting process or otherwise identified in the course of the audit that we believe will be relevant to the Governance, Audit, Risk Management and Standards Committee in the context of fulfilling their responsibilities. 	<p>Audit Completion Report</p>
<p>Significant deficiencies in internal controls identified during the audit.</p>	<p>Audit Completion Report</p>



Appendix: Key communication points

Required communication	Where addressed
Where relevant, any issues identified with respect to authority to obtain external confirmations or inability to obtain relevant and reliable audit evidence from other procedures.	Audit Completion Report
Audit findings regarding non-compliance with laws and regulations where the non-compliance is material and believed to be intentional (subject to compliance with legislation on tipping off) and enquiry of the Governance, Audit, Risk Management and Standards Committee into possible instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations that may have a material effect on the financial statements and that the Governance, Audit, Risk Management and Standards Committee may be aware of.	Audit Completion Report and the Governance, Audit, Risk Management and Standards Committee meetings
<p>With respect to going concern, events or conditions identified that may cast significant doubt on the entity's ability to continue as a going concern, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whether the events or conditions constitute a material uncertainty; • whether the use of the going concern assumption is appropriate in the preparation and presentation of the financial statements; and • the adequacy of related disclosures in the financial statements. 	Audit Completion Report
Reporting on the valuation methods applied to the various items in the annual financial statements including any impact of changes of such methods	Audit Completion Report
Indication of whether all requested explanations and documents were provided by the entity	Audit Completion Report



Mazars

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Mazars is an internationally integrated partnership, specialising in audit, accountancy, advisory, tax and legal services*. Operating in over 90 countries and territories around the world, we draw on the expertise of 40,400 professionals – 24,400 in Mazars' integrated partnership and 16,000 via the Mazars North America Alliance – to assist clients of all sizes at every stage in their development.

*where permitted under applicable country laws.

Audit Strategy Memorandum

London Borough of Harrow Pension Fund

Year ending 31 March 2022



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- 01** Engagement and responsibilities summary
- 02** Your audit engagement team
- 03** Audit scope, approach and timeline
- 04** Significant risks and other key judgement areas
- 05** Fees for audit and other services
- 06** Our commitment to independence
- 07** Materiality and misstatements

Appendix – Key communication points

This document is to be regarded as confidential to London Borough of Harrow Pension Fund. It has been prepared for the sole use of the Governance, Audit, Risk Management and Standards committee as the appropriate sub-committee charged with governance. No responsibility is accepted to any other person in respect of the whole or part of its contents. Our written consent must first be obtained before this document, or any part of it, is disclosed to a third party.



Governance, Audit, Risk Management and Standards Committee
Harrow Council
Civic Centre
Station Road
Harrow
HA1 2XY

19 July 2022

Mazars LLP
30 Old Bailey
London,
EC4M 7AU

Dear Members

Audit Strategy Memorandum – Year ending 31 March 2022

We are pleased to present our Audit Strategy Memorandum for Harrow Council Pension Fund for the year ending 31 March 2022. The purpose of this document is to summarise our audit approach, highlight significant audit risks and areas of key judgements and provide you with the details of our audit team. As it is a fundamental requirement that an auditor is, and is seen to be, independent of its clients, section 6 of this document also summarises our considerations and conclusions on our independence as auditors. We consider two-way communication with you to be key to a successful audit and important in:

- reaching a mutual understanding of the scope of the audit and the responsibilities of each of us;
- sharing information to assist each of us to fulfil our respective responsibilities;
- providing you with constructive observations arising from the audit process; and
- ensuring that we, as external auditors, gain an understanding of your attitude and views in respect of the internal and external operational, financial, compliance and other risks facing Harrow Council Pension Fund which may affect the audit, including the likelihood of those risks materialising and how they are monitored and managed.

With that in mind, we see this document, which has been prepared following our initial planning discussions with management, as being the basis for a discussion around our audit approach, any questions, concerns or input you may have on our approach or role as auditor. This document also contains an appendix that outlines our key communications with you during the course of the audit,

Client service is extremely important to us and we strive to provide technical excellence with the highest level of service quality, together with continuous improvement to exceed your expectations so, if you have any concerns or comments about this document or audit approach, please contact me on 07387 242052.

Yours faithfully

Lucy Nutley

Mazars LLP

Mazars LLP – 30 Old Bailey, London, EC4M 7AU

www.mazars.co.uk

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01

Section 01:

**Engagement and
responsibilities summary**

1. Engagement and responsibilities summary

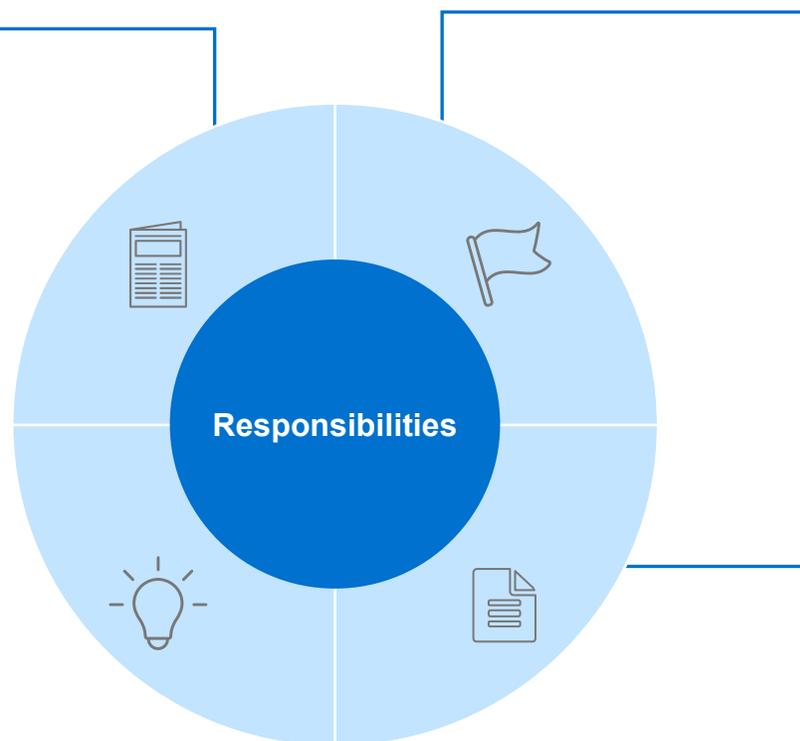
Overview of engagement

We are appointed to perform the external audit of London Borough of Harrow Pension Fund (the Pension Fund) for the year to 31 March 2022. The scope of our engagement is set out in the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies, issued by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) available from the PSAA website: <https://www.psa.co.uk/managing-audit-quality/statement-of-responsibilities-of-auditors-and-audited-bodies/>. Our responsibilities are principally derived from the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (the 2014 Act) and the Code of Audit Practice issued by the National Audit Office (NAO), as outlined below.

Audit opinion

We are responsible for forming and expressing an opinion on the financial statements. Our audit does not relieve management or The Governance, Audit, Risk Management and Standards Committee, as those charged with governance, of their responsibilities.

The Director of Finance and Assurance is responsible for the assessment of whether it is appropriate for the Pension Fund to prepare its accounts on a going concern basis. As auditors, we are required to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding, and conclude on: a) whether a material uncertainty related to going concern exists; and b) consider the appropriateness of the Director of Finance and Assurance's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements.



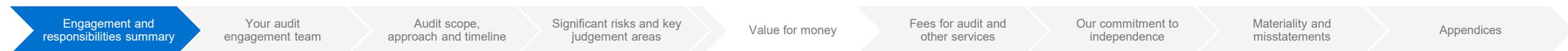
Fraud

The responsibility for safeguarding assets and for the prevention and detection of fraud, error and non-compliance with law or regulations rests with both those charged with governance and management. This includes establishing and maintaining internal controls over reliability of financial reporting.

As part of our audit procedures in relation to fraud we are required to enquire of those charged with governance, including key management and include internal audit as to their knowledge of instances of fraud, the risk of fraud and their views on internal controls that mitigate the fraud risks. In accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK), we plan and perform our audit so as to obtain reasonable assurance that the financial statements taken as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. However our audit should not be relied upon to identify all such misstatements.

Wider reporting and electors' rights

The 2014 Act requires us to give an elector, or any representative of the elector, the opportunity to question us about the accounting records of London Borough of Harrow and consider any objection made to the accounts. This would include an objection made to the accounts of the Pension Fund included in the administering authority's financial statements. We also have a broad range of reporting responsibilities and powers that are unique to the audit of local authorities in the United Kingdom



02

Section 02:

Your audit engagement team

2. Your audit engagement team



Lucy Nutley
Director and Engagement Lead
Email: Lucy.Nutley@mazars.co.uk
Telephone: 07387 242052



Stuart Frith
Engagement Senior Manager
Email: Stuart.Frith@mazars.co.uk
Telephone: 07909 982774



Paddy Sadd
Audit Manager
Email: Paddy.Sadd@mazars.co.uk
Telephone: 07581 008590

03

Section 03:

Audit scope, approach and timeline

3. Audit scope, approach and timeline

Audit scope

Our audit of the financial statements will be conducted in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK), relevant ethical and professional standards, our own audit approach and in accordance with the terms of our engagement. Our work is focused on those aspects of your activities which we consider to have a higher risk of material misstatement, such as those impacted by management judgement and estimation, application of new accounting standards, changes of accounting policy, changes to operations or areas which have been found to contain material errors in the past.

Audit approach

Our audit approach is designed to provide an audit that complies with all professional requirements

Our audit approach is risk-based and primarily driven by the issues that we consider lead to a higher risk of material misstatement of the accounts. Once we have completed our risk assessment, we develop our audit strategy and design audit procedures in response to this assessment.

If we conclude that appropriately designed controls are in place then we may plan to test and rely upon these controls. If we decide controls are not appropriately designed, or we decide it would be more efficient to do so, we may take a wholly substantive approach to our audit testing. Substantive procedures are audit procedures designed to detect material misstatements at the assertion level and comprise: tests of details (of classes of transactions, account balances, and disclosures); and substantive analytical procedures. Irrespective of the assessed risks of material misstatement, which take into account our evaluation of the operating effectiveness of controls, we are required to design and perform substantive procedures for each material class of transactions, account balance, and disclosure.

Our audit will be planned and performed so as to provide reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement and give a true and fair view. The concept of materiality and how we define a misstatement is explained in more detail in section 7.

The diagram on the next page outlines the procedures we perform at the different stages of the audit.



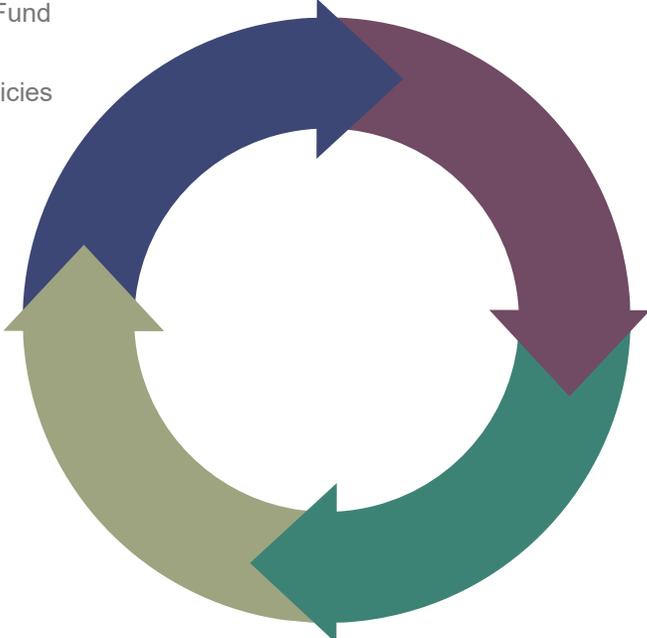
3. Audit scope, approach and timeline

Planning - March 2022

- Planning visit and developing our understanding of the Pension Fund
- Initial opinion assessment
- Considering proposed accounting treatments and accounting policies
- Developing the audit strategy and planning the audit work to be performed
- Agreeing timetable and deadlines
- Preliminary analytical review

Completion - September to November 2022

- Final review and disclosure checklist of financial statements
- Final file review
- Agreeing content of letter of representation
- Reporting to the Governance, Audit, Risk Management and Standards Committee
- Reviewing subsequent events
- Signing the auditor's reports



Interim - March to July 2022

- Documenting systems and controls
- Performing walkthroughs
- Interim controls testing including tests of IT general controls
- Reassessment of audit plan and revision if necessary

Fieldwork - July to September 2022

- Receiving and reviewing draft financial statements
- Reassessment of audit plan and revision if necessary
- Executing the strategy starting with significant risks and high risk areas
- Communicating progress and issues
- Clearance meeting

3. Audit scope, approach and timeline

Reliance on internal audit

Where possible we will seek to utilise the work performed by internal audit to modify the nature, extent and timing of our audit procedures. We will meet with internal audit to discuss the progress and findings of their work prior to the commencement of our controls evaluation procedures.

Where we intend to rely on the work on internal audit, we will evaluate the work performed by your internal audit team and perform our own audit procedures to determine its adequacy for our audit.

Management’s and our experts

Management makes use of experts in specific areas when preparing the Pension Fund’s financial statements. We also use experts to assist us to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence on specific items of account.

Item of account	Management’s expert	Our expert
Disclosure notes on funding arrangements and actuarial present value of promised retirement benefits	Hymans Robertson	NAO consulting actuary PwC
Valuation of investments within level 3 of the fair value hierarchy and related disclosures	Investment managers engaged by the fund that prepare valuations	At this stage we have not engaged our own expert for the valuation of level 3 investments. However, we may engage an expert if considered necessary to support the valuation of unusual or complex level 3 investments.

Service organisations

International Auditing Standards (UK) (ISAs) define service organisations as third party organisations that provide services to the Pension Fund that are part of its information systems relevant to financial reporting. We are required to obtain an understanding of the services provided by service organisations as well as evaluating the design and implementation of controls over those services. The table below summarises the service organisations used by the Pension Fund and our planned audit approach.

Items of account	Service organisation	Audit approach
The calculation and payment of pension benefits, assessment of funding levels based on existing pensioner data.	Harrow Council	We will seek appropriate confirmation that the Council’s controls and procedures have operated as designed throughout the year and that no weaknesses have been identified that would have a material impact on the information provided to the Pension Fund
Investment valuations and income and all related disclosures	Investment managers	Obtain direct confirmations from the fund managers and substantively test transactions occurring in the year and the valuations applied to investments at the year end.
Investment valuations and income and all related disclosures	Custodian	Obtain direct confirmations from the fund managers and substantively test transactions occurring in the year and the valuations applied to investments at the year end.



04

Section 04:

**Significant risks and other key
judgement areas**

4. Significant risks and other key judgement areas

Following the risk assessment approach discussed in section 3 of this document, we have identified risks relevant to the audit of financial statements. The risks that we identify are categorised as significant, enhanced or standard. The definitions of the level of risk rating are given below:

Significant risk

A significant risk is an identified and assessed risk of material misstatement that, in the auditor’s judgment, requires special audit consideration. For any significant risk, the auditor shall obtain an understanding of the entity’s controls, including control activities relevant to that risk.

Enhanced risk

An enhanced risk is an area of higher assessed risk of material misstatement at audit assertion level other than a significant risk. Enhanced risks require additional consideration but does not rise to the level of a significant risk, these include but may not be limited to:

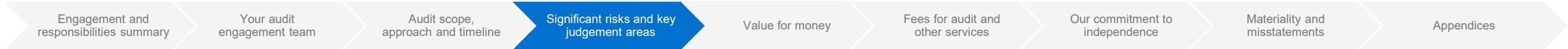
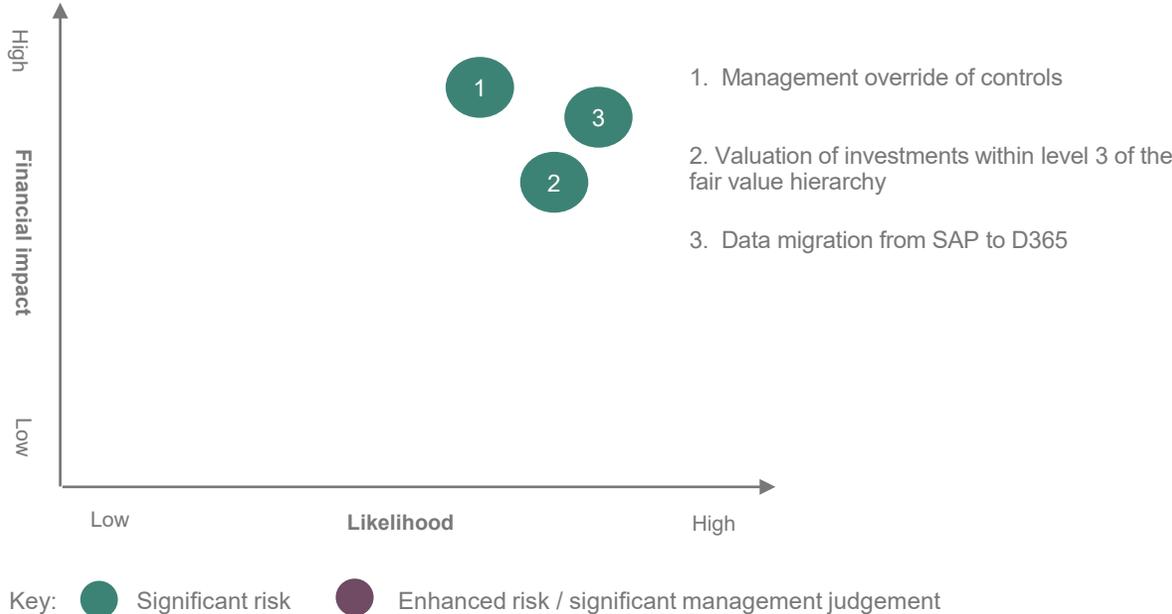
- key areas of management judgement, including accounting estimates which are material but are not considered to give rise to a significant risk of material misstatement; and
- other audit assertion risks arising from significant events or transactions that occurred during the period.

Standard risk

This is related to relatively routine, non-complex transactions that tend to be subject to systematic processing and require little management judgement. Although it is considered that there is a risk of material misstatement (RMM), there are no elevated or special factors related to the nature, the likely magnitude of the potential misstatements or the likelihood of the risk occurring.

Summary risk assessment

The summary risk assessment, illustrated in the table below, highlights those risks which we deem to be significant and other enhanced risks in respect of the London Borough of Harrow Pension Fund. We have summarised our audit response to these risks on the next page.



4. Significant risks and other key judgement areas

Specific identified audit risks and planned testing strategy

We have presented below in more detail the reasons for the risk assessment highlighted above, and also our testing approach with respect to significant risks. An audit is a dynamic process, should we change our view of risk or approach to address the identified risks during the course of our audit, we will report this to the Governance, Audit, Risk Management and Standards Committee.

Significant risks

	Description	Fraud	Error	Judgement	Planned response
1	<p>Management override of controls</p> <p>This is a mandatory significant risk on all audits due to the unpredictable way in which such override could occur.</p> <p>Management at various levels within an organisation are in a unique position to perpetrate fraud because of their ability to manipulate accounting records and prepare fraudulent financial statements by overriding controls that otherwise appear to be operating effectively. Due to the unpredictable way in which such override could occur there is a risk of material misstatement due to fraud on all audits.</p>	●	○	○	<p>We plan to address the management override of controls risk through performing audit work over accounting estimates, journal entries and significant transactions outside the normal course of business or otherwise unusual.</p> <p>We will address the risk through performing audit procedures, covering a range of areas including (but not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accounting estimates included in the financial statements for evidence of management bias; • any significant transactions outside the normal course of business; and • journals and other adjustments recorded in the general ledger in preparing the financial statements.



4. Significant risks and other key judgement areas

Significant risks

	Description	Fraud	Error	Judgement	Planned response
2	<p>Valuation of investments within level 3 of the fair value hierarchy</p> <p>As at 31 March 2021, the Pension Fund held investments which were not quoted on an active market with a fair value of £84.7 million, accounting for 8.8% of the Fund’s net investment assets.</p> <p>Inherently these assets are harder to value, as they do not have publicly available quoted prices from a traded market, and as such they require professional judgement or assumptions to be made when valuing them at year end.</p> <p>As the pricing of these investment assets is subject to judgements, they may be susceptible to pricing variances due to the assumptions underlying the valuation. We therefore consider that there is an increased risk of material misstatement.</p>	○	●	●	<p>We plan to address this risk by completing the following additional procedures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • agree holdings from fund manager reports to the custodian’s report; • agree the valuation to supporting documentation including investment manager valuation statements and cashflows for any adjustments made to the investment manager valuation; • agree the investment manager valuation to audited accounts or other independent supporting documentation, where available; and • where audited accounts are available, check that they are supported by a clear opinion.



4. Significant risks and other key judgement areas

Significant risks

	Description	Fraud	Error	Judgement	Planned response
3	<p>Data migration from SAP to D365</p> <p>During 2021/22, Harrow Council has undertaken an accounting system migration from SAP to D365. In October 2021, the nominal ledger, accounts receivable and accounts payable functions were closed in SAP and became managed via Dynamics365 (D365). Payroll migrated in April 2022.</p> <p>There is a risk that the migration will not capture all data held in the prior system. The omission of such data could ultimately lead to material misstatement within the financial statements. The implementation of a new system also poses a significant risk to the integrity and validity of the Pension Fund's financial reporting if change management processes are not robust and the new system is not correctly tested and implemented.</p> <p>There is a further risk the migration leads to a loss of data and accounting records during transfer. Such a loss of data may result in a risk that during the audit, we are unable to obtain sufficient and appropriate third party evidence to support transactions entered into by the Pension Fund.</p>	○	●	○	<p>We plan to address this risk by completing the following additional procedures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing the Council's reconciliation of old system closing balances to the new system opening balances; • Engage internal IT specialists to perform tailored work around data migration process undertaken by the Council.



05

Section 05:

Fees for audit and other services

5. Fees for audit and other services

Fees for work as the Pension Fund’s appointed auditor

At this stage of the audit we are not planning any divergence from the scale fees set by PSAA.

Area of work	2021/22 Proposed Fee	2020/21 Actual Fee
Code Audit Work	£16,170	£16,170



06

Section 06:

Our commitment to independence

6. Our commitment to independence

We are committed to independence and are required by the Financial Reporting Council to confirm to you at least annually in writing that we comply with the FRC’s Ethical Standard. In addition, we communicate any matters or relationship which we believe may have a bearing on our independence or the objectivity of the audit team.

Based on the information provided by you and our own internal procedures to safeguard our independence as auditors, we confirm that in our professional judgement there are no relationships between us and any of our related or subsidiary entities, and you and your related entities creating any unacceptable threats to our independence within the regulatory or professional requirements governing us as your auditors.

We have policies and procedures in place which are designed to ensure that we carry out our work with integrity, objectivity and independence. These policies include:

- all partners and staff are required to complete an annual independence declaration;
- all new partners and staff are required to complete an independence confirmation and also complete computer based ethical training;
- rotation policies covering audit engagement partners and other key members of the audit team; and
- use by managers and partners of our client and engagement acceptance system which requires all non-audit services to be approved in advance by the audit engagement partner.

We confirm, as at the date of this document, that the engagement team and others in the firm as

appropriate, Mazars LLP are independent and comply with relevant ethical requirements. However, if at any time you have concerns or questions about our integrity, objectivity or independence please discuss these with Lucy Nutley in the first instance.

Prior to the provision of any non-audit services Lucy Nutley will undertake appropriate procedures to consider and fully assess the impact that providing the service may have on our auditor independence.

No threats to our independence have been identified.

Any emerging independence threats and associated identified safeguards will be communicated in our Audit Completion Report.



07

Section 07:

Materiality and misstatements

7. Materiality and misstatements

Summary of initial materiality thresholds

Threshold	Initial threshold £'000s
Overall materiality	9,700
Performance materiality	6,800
Specific materiality:	
- Fund Account overall materiality	3,600
- Fund Account performance materiality	2,500
Trivial threshold for errors to be reported to the Governance, Audit, Risk Management and Standards Committee	290

Materiality

Materiality is an expression of the relative significance or importance of a particular matter in the context of financial statements as a whole.

Misstatements in financial statements are considered to be material if they, individually or in aggregate, could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial statements.

Judgements on materiality are made in light of surrounding circumstances and are affected by the size and nature of a misstatement, or a combination of both. Judgements about materiality are based on consideration of the common financial information needs of users as a group and not on specific individual users.

The assessment of what is material is a matter of professional judgement and is affected by our perception of the financial information needs of the users of the financial statements. In making our assessment we assume that users:

- have a reasonable knowledge of business, economic activities and accounts;
- have a willingness to study the information in the financial statements with reasonable diligence;
- understand that financial statements are prepared, presented and audited to levels of materiality;
- recognise the uncertainties inherent in the measurement of amounts based on the use of estimates, judgement and the consideration of future events; and
- will make reasonable economic decisions on the basis of the information in the financial statements.

We consider materiality whilst planning and performing our audit based on quantitative and qualitative factors.

Whilst planning, we make judgements about the size of misstatements which we consider to be material and which provides a basis for determining the nature, timing and extent of risk assessment procedures, identifying and assessing the risk of material misstatement and determining the nature, timing and extent of further audit procedures.

The materiality determined at the planning stage does not necessarily establish an amount below which uncorrected misstatements, either individually or in aggregate, will be considered as immaterial.

We revise materiality for the financial statements as our audit progresses should we become aware of information that would have caused us to determine a different amount had we been aware of that information at the planning stage.

Engagement and responsibilities summary

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Materiality and misstatements

Appendix

7. Materiality and misstatements

Materiality (continued)

Our provisional materiality is set based on a benchmark of net assets as at 3 March 2021. We will identify a figure for materiality but identify separate levels for procedures designed to detect individual errors, and also a level above which all identified errors will be reported to the Governance, Audit, Risk Management and Standards Committee.

We consider that net assets remains the key focus of users of the financial statements and, as such, we base our materiality levels around this benchmark.

We expect to set a materiality threshold at 1% of net assets. Based on the net fair value of investment assets we anticipate the overall materiality for the year ending 31 March 2022 to be in the region of £9.7m (£9.7m in the prior year).

After setting initial materiality, we continue to monitor materiality throughout the audit to ensure that it is set at an appropriate level.

Performance Materiality

Performance materiality is the amount or amounts set by the auditor 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. Our initial assessment of performance materiality is based on medium inherent risk, meaning that we have applied 70% of overall materiality as performance materiality.

Misstatements

We accumulate misstatements identified during the audit that are other than clearly trivial. We set a level of triviality for individual errors identified (a reporting threshold) for reporting to the Governance, Audit, Risk Management and Standards Committee that is consistent with the level of triviality that we consider would not need to be accumulated because we expect that the accumulation of such amounts would not have a material effect on the financial statements. Based on our preliminary assessment of overall materiality, our proposed triviality threshold is £290k based on 3% of overall materiality. If you have any queries about this please do not hesitate to raise these with Lucy Nutley

Reporting to the Governance, Audit, Risk Management and Standards Committee

The following three types of audit differences above the trivial threshold will be presented to the Governance, Audit, Risk Management and Standards Committee:

- summary of adjusted audit differences;
- summary of unadjusted audit differences; and
- summary of disclosure differences (adjusted and unadjusted).

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Appendix



Appendix: Key communication points

Appendix: Key communication points

We value communication with Those Charged With Governance as a two way feedback process at the heart of our client service commitment. ISA 260 (UK) 'Communication with Those Charged with Governance' and ISA 265 (UK) 'Communicating Deficiencies In Internal Control To Those Charged With Governance And Management' specifically require us to communicate a number of points with you.

Relevant points that need to be communicated with you at each stage of the audit are outlined below.

Form, timing and content of our communications

We will present the following reports:

- Audit Strategy Memorandum;
- Audit Completion Report; and
- Auditor's Annual Report

These documents will be discussed with management prior to being presented to yourselves and their comments will be incorporated as appropriate.

Key communication points at the planning stage as included in this Audit Strategy Memorandum

- Our responsibilities in relation to the audit of the financial statements;
- The planned scope and timing of the audit;

- Significant audit risks and areas of management judgement;
- Our commitment to independence;
- Responsibilities for preventing and detecting errors;
- Materiality and misstatements; and
- Fees for audit and other services.

Key communication points at the completion stage to be included in our Audit Completion Report

- Significant deficiencies in internal control;
- Significant findings from the audit;
- Significant matters discussed with management;
- Our conclusions on the significant audit risks and areas of management judgement;
- Summary of misstatements;
- Management representation letter;
- Our proposed draft audit report; and
- Independence.



Appendix: Key communication points

ISA (UK) 260 'Communication with Those Charged with Governance', ISA (UK) 265 'Communicating Deficiencies In Internal Control To Those Charged With Governance And Management' and other ISAs (UK) specifically require us to communicate the following:

Required communication	Where addressed
Our responsibilities in relation to the financial statement audit and those of management and those charged with governance.	Audit Strategy Memorandum
The planned scope and timing of the audit including any limitations, specifically including with respect to significant risks.	Audit Strategy Memorandum
With respect to misstatements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uncorrected misstatements and their effect on our audit opinion; • the effect of uncorrected misstatements related to prior periods; • a request that any uncorrected misstatement is corrected; and • in writing, corrected misstatements that are significant. 	Audit Completion Report
With respect to fraud communications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enquiries of the Governance, Audit, Risk Management and Standards Committee to determine whether they have a knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud affecting the entity; • any fraud that we have identified or information we have obtained that indicates that fraud may exist; and • a discussion of any other matters related to fraud. 	Audit Completion Report and discussion at the Governance, Audit, Risk Management and Standards Committee meetings



Appendix: Key communication points

Required communication	Where addressed
<p>Significant matters arising during the audit in connection with the entity’s related parties including, when applicable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • non-disclosure by management; • inappropriate authorisation and approval of transactions; • disagreement over disclosures; • non-compliance with laws and regulations; and • difficulty in identifying the party that ultimately controls the entity. 	<p>Audit Completion Report</p>
<p>Significant findings from the audit including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • our view about the significant qualitative aspects of accounting practices including accounting policies, accounting estimates and financial statement disclosures; • significant difficulties, if any, encountered during the audit; • significant matters, if any, arising from the audit that were discussed with management or were the subject of correspondence with management; • written representations that we are seeking; • expected modifications to the audit report; and • other matters, if any, significant to the oversight of the financial reporting process or otherwise identified in the course of the audit that we believe will be relevant to the Governance, Audit, Risk Management and Standards Committee in the context of fulfilling their responsibilities. 	<p>Audit Completion Report</p>
<p>Significant deficiencies in internal controls identified during the audit.</p>	<p>Audit Completion Report</p>



Appendix: Key communication points

Required communication	Where addressed
Where relevant, any issues identified with respect to authority to obtain external confirmations or inability to obtain relevant and reliable audit evidence from other procedures.	Audit Completion Report
Audit findings regarding non-compliance with laws and regulations where the non-compliance is material and believed to be intentional (subject to compliance with legislation on tipping off) and enquiry of the Governance, Audit, Risk Management and Standards Committee into possible instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations that may have a material effect on the financial statements and that the Governance, Audit, Risk Management and Standards Committee may be aware of.	Audit Completion Report and the Governance, Audit, Risk Management and Standards Committee meetings
<p>With respect to going concern, events or conditions identified that may cast significant doubt on the entity’s ability to continue as a going concern, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whether the events or conditions constitute a material uncertainty; • whether the use of the going concern assumption is appropriate in the preparation and presentation of the financial statements; and • the adequacy of related disclosures in the financial statements. 	Audit Completion Report
Reporting on the valuation methods applied to the various items in the annual financial statements including any impact of changes of such methods	Audit Completion Report
Indication of whether all requested explanations and documents were provided by the entity	Audit Completion Report



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Mazars is an internationally integrated partnership, specialising in audit, accountancy, advisory, tax and legal services*. Operating in over 90 countries and territories around the world, we draw on the expertise of 40,400 professionals – 24,400 in Mazars' integrated partnership and 16,000 via the Mazars North America Alliance – to assist clients of all sizes at every stage in their development.

*where permitted under applicable country laws.