



**Audit & Governance Committee
Wednesday, 27 May 2020**

ADDENDA

7. External Auditors (Pages 1 - 26)

1.40 p.m.

Representatives from the external auditors Ernst & Young will attend to update the Committee.

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Oxfordshire Pension Fund Audit planning report

Year ended 31 March 2020

26 February 2020

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Oxfordshire Pension Fund
County Hall
New Road
Oxford
OX1 1ND

Dear Audit and Governance Committee Members

Audit planning report

We are pleased to attach our Audit Plan which sets out how we intend to carry out our responsibilities as auditor of Oxfordshire Pension Fund. Its purpose is to provide the Audit and Governance Committee with a basis to review our proposed audit approach and scope for the 2019/20 audit in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the National Audit Office's 2015 Code of Audit Practice, the Statement of Responsibilities issued by Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) Ltd, auditing standards and other professional requirements. It is also to ensure that our audit is aligned with the Committee's service expectations.

This plan summarises our initial assessment of the key risks driving the development of an effective audit for the Pension Fund, and outlines our planned audit strategy in response to those risks.

This report is intended solely for the information and use of the Audit and Governance Committee and management, and is not intended to be and should not be used by anyone other than these specified parties.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss this report with you on 18 March 2020 as well as understand whether there are other matters which you consider may influence our audit.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kevin Suter".

Kevin Suter

Associate Partner

For and on behalf of Ernst & Young LLP

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Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) issued the "Statement of responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies". It is available from the PSAA website (<https://www.psa.co.uk/audit-quality/statement-of-responsibilities/>). The Statement of responsibilities serves as the formal terms of engagement between appointed auditors and audited bodies. It summarises where the different responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies begin and end, and what is to be expected of the audited body in certain areas.

The "Terms of Appointment and further guidance (updated April 2018)" issued by the PSAA sets out additional requirements that auditors must comply with, over and above those set out in the National Audit Office Code of Audit Practice (the Code) and in legislation, and covers matters of practice and procedure which are of a recurring nature.

This report is made solely to the Audit and Governance Committee and management of Oxfordshire Pension Fund in accordance with the statement of responsibilities. Our work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Audit and Governance Committee, and management of Oxfordshire Pension Fund those matters we are required to state to them in this report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Audit and Governance Committee and management of Oxfordshire Pension Fund for this report or for the opinions we have formed. It should not be provided to any third-party without our prior written consent.

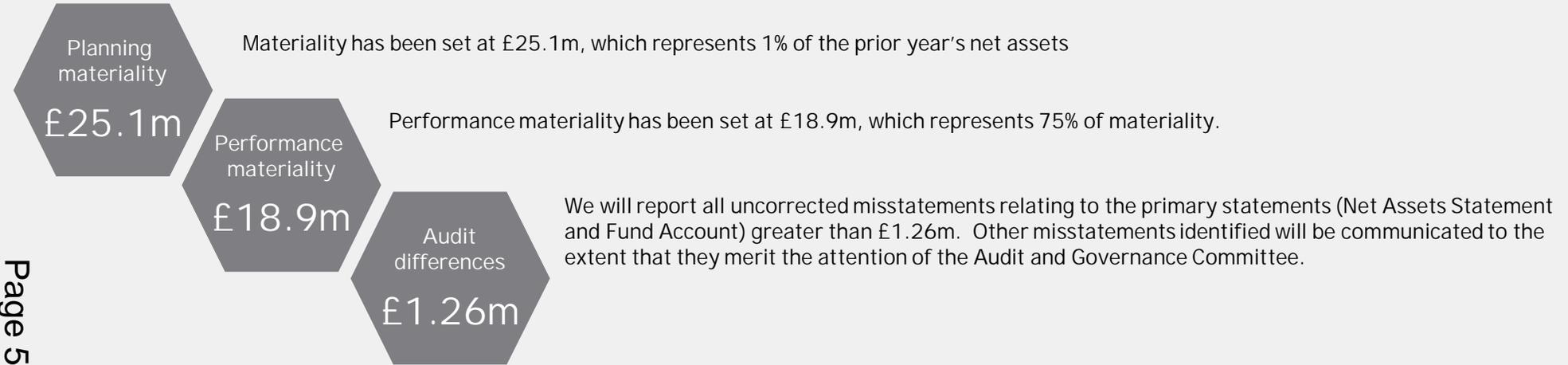
01 - Overview of our 2019/20 audit strategy

The following 'dashboard' summarises the significant accounting and auditing matters outlined in this report. It seeks to provide the Audit and Governance Committee with an overview of our initial risk identification for the upcoming audit and any changes in risks identified in the current year.

Risk / area of focus	Risk identified	Change from PY	Details
Misstatements due to fraud or error	Fraud risk	No change in risk or focus	As identified in ISA 240, management is in a unique position to perpetrate fraud because of its ability to manipulate accounting records directly or indirectly and prepare fraudulent financial statements by overriding controls that would otherwise appear to be operating effectively.
Risk of inappropriate posting of investment valuation and income	Fraud risk	More focused risk this year	Investment valuations and investment income are manually input on the GL. Our judgement is that the Fraud risk present at the Pension Fund relates to inappropriate journal posting of investments as reported by the custodian which will affect the long-term investment portfolio value and investment income.
Valuation of Complex Investments	Significant risk	No change in risk or focus	Investments at Level 3 are those where at least one input that could have a significant effect on the asset's valuation is not based on observable market data. Significant judgements are made by the Investment Managers or administrators to value these investments whose prices are not publicly available. The material nature of Investments means that any error in judgement could result in a material valuation error. Market volatility means such judgments can quickly become outdated, especially when there is a significant time period between the latest available audited information and the fund year end. Such variations could have a material impact on the financial statements.
Valuation of Investments under Level 2 Fair Value hierarchy	Inherent risk	No change in risk or focus	The valuation of investments under level 2 fair value hierarchy are based on observable inputs such as bid price in the market for similar instruments. There is a risk that the comparable inputs are not appropriate and valuation could be misstated.
Transfer of Assets to the Brunel Partnership	Inherent risk	More focused risk this year	Brunel Pension Partnership was set up by Oxfordshire Pension Fund with nine other pension funds to oversee investment of pension fund assets and achieve savings over the longer term. In 2019/20 £342m of funds were transferred. We looked at the Fund's processes in 2018/19 and raised no concerns. However there is a risk that the transfer of assets is not complete so we will focus on completeness.

01 - Overview of our 2019/20 audit strategy

Materiality



Audit team changes

Key changes to our team.



Kevin Suter, Associate Partner

- Kevin takes over from Paul King as the Engagement Lead.
- Kevin has significant public sector audit experience over 20 years, with a portfolio of Local Authorities, Police and Crime Commissioner & Constabularies, Local Government Pension Fund and National Park Authority audits.

Overview of our 2019/20 audit strategy

Audit scope

This Audit Plan covers the work that we plan to perform to provide you with:

- Our audit opinion on whether the financial statements of Oxfordshire Pension Fund give a true and fair view of the financial position as at 31 March 2020 and of the income and expenditure for the year then ended; and

Our audit will also include the mandatory procedures that we are required to perform in accordance with applicable laws and auditing standards.

When planning the audit we take into account several key inputs:

- Strategic, operational and financial risks relevant to the financial statements;
- Developments in financial reporting and auditing standards;
- The quality of systems and processes;
- Changes in the business and regulatory environment; and,
- Management's views on all of the above.

By considering these inputs, our audit is focused on the areas that matter and our feedback is more likely to be relevant to the Pension Fund. We will provide an update to the Audit Committee on the results of our work in these areas in our report to those charged with governance scheduled for delivery in July 2020.

In addition to the above we also perform procedures on behalf of the auditors of admitted bodies in relation to the IAS 19 reports. Our work specifically focuses on gaining assurance that the data submitted to the actuary agrees to the Pension Fund's systems. This tried and tested approach – we have been performing these procedures since 2012 – minimises disruption to the Pension Fund as only one set of auditors will perform procedures on the data. In 2019/20 we anticipate an increased request from auditors of the admitted bodies on the information provided to the actuary for the 2019 triennial valuation, particularly regarding the detailed membership information.

Taking the above into account, and as articulated in this audit plan, our professional responsibilities require us to independently assess the risks associated with providing an audit opinion and undertake appropriate procedures in response to that. Our Terms of Appointment with PSAA allow them to vary the fee dependent on “the auditors assessment of risk and the work needed to meet their professional responsibilities”. PSAA are aware that the setting of scale fees has not kept pace with the changing requirements of external audit with increased focus on, for example, the auditing of complex investment assets, the valuation of pension obligations, and the introduction of new accounting standards such as IFRS 9 in recent years. Therefore to the extent any of these are relevant in the context of Oxfordshire Pension Fund audit, we will discuss these with management as to the impact on the scale fee.



02 - Audit risks

Our response to significant risks

We have set out the significant risks identified for the current year audit along with the rationale and expected audit approach. The risks identified below may change to reflect any significant findings or subsequent issues we identify during the audit.

Misstatements due to fraud or error

What is the risk?

The financial statements as a whole are not free of material misstatements whether caused by fraud or error.

As identified in ISA (UK) 240, management is in a unique position to perpetrate fraud because of its ability to manipulate accounting records directly or indirectly and prepare fraudulent financial statements by overriding controls that otherwise appear to be operating effectively. We identify and respond to this fraud risk on every audit engagement.

What will we do?

We will undertake our standard procedures to address fraud risk, which include:

- asking management about risks of fraud and the controls to address those risks;
- understanding the oversight given by those charged with governance of management's processes over fraud; and
- considering the effectiveness of management's controls designed to address the risk of fraud.

Performing mandatory procedures regardless of specifically identified fraud risks, including:

- testing the appropriateness of journal entries recorded in the general ledger and other adjustments made in the preparation of the financial statements;
- assessing accounting estimates for evidence of management bias; and
- evaluating the business rationale for significant unusual transactions.

We will use our data analytics capabilities to assist with our work.



02 - Audit risks

Our response to significant risks (continued)

We have set out the significant risks identified for the current year audit along with the rationale and expected audit approach. The risks identified below may change to reflect any significant findings or subsequent issues we identify during the audit.

Risk of inappropriate posting of investment valuation

What is the risk?

Investment valuations are manually input on the GL, so there is opportunity to manipulate the valuation of investments and the resulting investment income.

What will we do?

Our approach will focus on:

- ▶ Reconciling the investment value to both the fund manager and custodian reports.
- ▶ Review the investment accounts in the general ledger and investigate any unusual items
- ▶ Journal testing - we will use our testing of journals to identify high risk transactions, such as items posted to investment or related accounts outside the normal process.

We will use our data analytics capabilities to assist with our work, including journal entry testing. We will assess journal entries for evidence of management bias and evaluate for business rationale.

Financial statement impact

Manipulation of investment would increase the net value of pension fund assets, and increase the investment returns recognised in year.

Total Investments for 2018/19: £2,423m.

Total investment income and change in market value of Fund assets in 2018/19 were £165m.

As our performance materiality is £18.9m, any manipulation over 0.8% and 11.5% would result in a material error to the value of investments.



02 - Audit risks

Our response to significant risks (continued)

Valuation of Complex Investments
(Level 3 Fair Value hierarchy)

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Financial statement impact

Misstatements that occur in relation to Complex Investments valued at level 3 fair value hierarchy such as Unquoted Equities and Direct property Investment could affect the valuation of the Net Assets Statement and investment income in the Fund Accounts.

These were £130m of level 3 investments in the 2018/19 financial statements. Sensitivity analysis ranged from +/- 3% to +/- 10%, a range of £19.8m.

What is the risk?

Investments at Level 3 are those where at least one input that could have a significant effect on the asset's valuation is not based on observable market data.

Significant judgements are made by the Investment managers or administrators to value these investments whose prices are not publicly available. The material nature of Investments means that any error in judgement could result in a material valuation error.

Market volatility means such judgments can quickly become outdated, especially when there is a significant time period between the latest available audited information and the fund year end. Such variations could have a material impact on the financial statements.

What will we do?

Our approach will focus on:

- reviewing the latest available audited accounts for the relevant funds and ensuring there are no matters arising that highlight weaknesses in the fund's valuation;
- where the latest audited accounts are not as at 31 March 2020, performing analytical procedures and checking the valuation output for reasonableness against our own expectations; and
- testing accounting entries have been correctly processed in the financial statements.

If necessary, our internal valuation specialists will support our work in this area.



02 - Audit risks

Other areas of audit focus

We have identified other areas of the audit, that have not been classified as significant risks, but are still important when considering the risks of material misstatement to the financial statements and disclosures and therefore may be key audit matters we will include in our audit report.

What is the risk/area of focus?

Transfer of Asset to the Brunel Partnership

Brunel Pension Partnership was set up by Oxfordshire Pension Fund and nine other pensions funds to oversee investment of pension fund assets and achieve savings over the longer term.

2018/19 was the first financial year where assets were transferred in exchange for units in the pooled fund. In 2019/20 a further £342m was transferred.

There is a risk that the transfer of assets is not complete.

Valuation of Investments under Level 2 Fair Value hierarchy

Level 2 includes pooled funds and private equity investments, where fair value is based on observable inputs such as bid price in the market for similar instruments.

There is a risk that the comparable inputs are not appropriate and valuation could be misstated.

What will we do?

Our approach will focus on:

- Reviewing reconciliations and post-transition reports from third parties to obtain assurance over the completeness of the transfer.

Our approach will focus on:

- Performing analytical procedures and checking the valuation input and output for reasonableness against our own expectations.
- Where necessary, our internal valuation specialists will support our work in this area.

Materiality

Materiality

For planning purposes, materiality for 2019/20 has been set at £25.1m. This represents 1% of the Pension Fund's prior year net assets. It will be reassessed throughout the audit process. We have provided supplemental information about audit materiality in Appendix C.

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We request that the Audit and Governance Committee confirm its understanding of, and agreement to, these materiality and reporting levels.

Key definitions

Planning materiality – the amount over which we anticipate misstatements would influence the economic decisions of a user of the financial statements.

Performance materiality – the amount we use to determine the extent of our audit procedures. We have set performance materiality at £18.9m, which represents 75% of planning materiality. 75% of Planning materiality was deemed appropriate as there were no corrected or uncorrected audit adjustments in the prior year, and was based on our cumulative audit knowledge and experience with the Pension Fund.

Audit difference threshold – we propose that misstatements identified below this threshold are deemed clearly trivial. We will report to you all uncorrected misstatements over this amount relating to Net Assets Statement and the Fund Account.

Other uncorrected misstatements, such as reclassifications and misstatements in statements or disclosures, and corrected misstatements will be communicated to the extent that they merit the attention of the Audit and Governance Committee, or are important from a qualitative perspective.



04 - Scope of our audit

Our Audit Process and Strategy

Objective and Scope of our Audit scoping

Under the Code of Audit Practice our principal objectives are to review and report on the Pension Fund's financial statements to the extent required by the relevant legislation and the requirements of the Code.

1. Financial statement audit

Our objectives are:

- To form an opinion on the financial statements under International Standards on Auditing (UK).
- To form an opinion on the consistency of the pension fund financial statements within the pension fund annual report with the published financial statements of Oxfordshire County Council.

We also perform other procedures as required by auditing, ethical and independence standards, the Code and other regulations. We outline below the procedures we will undertake during the course of our audit.

2. Procedures required by standards

- Addressing the risk of fraud and error;
- Significant disclosures included in the financial statements;
- Entity-wide controls;
- Reading other information contained in the financial statements and reporting whether it is inconsistent with our understanding and the financial statements; and
- Auditor independence.



04 - Scope of our audit

Our Audit Process and Strategy (continued)

Audit Process Overview

Our audit involves:

- Identifying and understanding the key processes and internal controls; and
- Substantive tests of detail of transactions and amounts.

For 2019/20 we plan to follow a substantive approach to the audit as we have concluded that this is the most efficient way to obtain the level of audit assurance required to conclude that the financial statements are not materially misstated.

Analytics:

We will use our computer-based analytics tools to enable us to capture whole populations of your financial data, in particular journal entries. These tools:

- Help identify specific exceptions and anomalies which can then be subject to more traditional substantive audit tests; and
- Give greater likelihood of identifying errors than random sampling techniques.

We will report the findings from our process and analytics work, including any significant weaknesses or inefficiencies identified and recommendations for improvement, to management and the Audit and Governance Committee.

Internal audit:

We will meet the Chief Internal Auditor regularly, and review internal audit plans and the results of their work. We will reflect the findings from these reports, together with reports from any other work completed in the year, in our detailed audit plan, where they raise issues that could have an impact on the financial statements.

IAS19 procedures:

In addition to the above we also perform procedures on behalf of the auditors of admitted bodies in relation to the IAS 19 reports. Our work specifically focuses on gaining assurance that the data submitted to the actuary agrees to the Pension Fund's systems. This tried and tested approach – we have been performing these procedures since 2012 – minimises disruption to the Pension Fund as only one set of auditors will perform procedures on the data. In 2019/20 we anticipate an increased request from auditors of the admitted bodies on the information provided to the actuary for the 2019 triennial valuation, particularly regarding the detailed membership information.

Audit team

Audit team structure:

Kevin Suter
Associate Partner

Susan Gill
Audit Manager

Anna Liao
Audit Senior

The engagement team is led by Kevin Suter, who has significant experience on Local Authorities and their audits. Kevin is supported by Susan Gill who is responsible for the day-to-day direction of audit work and is the key point of contact for the finance team.

Use of specialists

When auditing key judgements, we are often required to rely on the input and advice provided by specialists who have qualifications and expertise not possessed by the core audit team. The areas where either EY or third party specialists are planned to provide input for the current year audit are:

Area	Specialists
Actuarial present value of retirement benefits	EY Specialist - EY Actuaries PwC (Consulting Actuary to the PSAA)

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In accordance with Auditing Standards, we will evaluate each specialist's professional competence and objectivity, considering their qualifications, experience and available resources, together with the independence of the individuals performing the work.

We also consider the work performed by the specialist in light of our knowledge of the Pension Fund's business and processes and our assessment of audit risk in the particular area. For example, we would typically perform the following procedures:

- Analyse source data and make inquiries as to the procedures used by the specialist to establish whether the source data is relevant and reliable;
- Assess the reasonableness of the assumptions and methods used;
- Consider the appropriateness of the timing of when the specialist carried out the work; and
- Assess whether the substance of the specialist's findings are properly reflected in the financial statements.



Audit timeline

Timetable of communication and deliverables

Timeline

Below is a timetable showing the key stages of the audit and the deliverables we have agreed to provide to you through the audit cycle in 2019/20. The final timetable will depend on our ability to obtain sufficient, appropriate audit evidence to support our audit opinion.

From time to time matters may arise that require immediate communication with the Audit and Governance Committee and we will discuss them with the Committee Chair as appropriate. We will also provide updates on corporate governance and regulatory matters as necessary.

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Audit phase	Timetable	Audit committee timetable	Deliverables
Planning: Risk assessment and setting of scopes.	November - January		
Walkthrough of key systems and processes	November - January		
Interim substantive procedures	March-April	Audit and Governance Committee	Audit Planning Report
Year end audit Audit Completion procedures	May - July	Audit and Governance Committee	Audit Results Report Audit opinions and completion certificates
Year end audit Audit Completion procedures	September	Audit and Governance Committee	Annual Audit Letter (as part of Oxfordshire County Council AAL)

Introduction

The FRC Ethical Standard and ISA (UK) 260 “Communication of audit matters with those charged with governance”, requires us to communicate with you on a timely basis on all significant facts and matters that bear upon our integrity, objectivity and independence. The Ethical Standard, as revised in June 2016, requires that we communicate formally both at the planning stage and at the conclusion of the audit, as well as during the course of the audit if appropriate. The aim of these communications is to ensure full and fair disclosure by us to those charged with your governance on matters in which you have an interest.

Required communications

Planning stage	Final stage
<p>▶ The principal threats, if any, to objectivity and independence identified by Ernst & Young (EY) including consideration of all relationships between the you, your affiliates and directors and us;</p> <p>▶ The safeguards adopted and the reasons why they are considered to be effective, including any Engagement Quality review;</p> <p>The overall assessment of threats and safeguards;</p> <p>Information about the general policies and process within EY to maintain objectivity and independence.</p> <p>▶ Where EY has determined it is appropriate to apply more restrictive independence rules than permitted under the Ethical Standard [note: additional wording should be included in the communication reflecting the client specific situation]</p>	<p>▶ In order for you to assess the integrity, objectivity and independence of the firm and each covered person, we are required to provide a written disclosure of relationships (including the provision of non-audit services) that may bear on our integrity, objectivity and independence. This is required to have regard to relationships with the entity, its directors and senior management, its affiliates, and its connected parties and the threats to integrity or objectivity, including those that could compromise independence that these create. We are also required to disclose any safeguards that we have put in place and why they address such threats, together with any other information necessary to enable our objectivity and independence to be assessed;</p> <p>▶ Details of non-audit services provided and the fees charged in relation thereto;</p> <p>▶ Written confirmation that the firm and each covered person is independent and, if applicable, that any non-EY firms used in the group audit or external experts used have confirmed their independence to us;</p> <p>▶ Written confirmation that all covered persons are independent;</p> <p>▶ Details of any inconsistencies between FRC Ethical Standard and your policy for the supply of non-audit services by EY and any apparent breach of that policy;</p> <p>▶ Details of any contingent fee arrangements for non-audit services provided by us or our network firms; and</p> <p>▶ An opportunity to discuss auditor independence issues.</p>

In addition, during the course of the audit, we are required to communicate with you whenever any significant judgements are made about threats to objectivity and independence and the appropriateness of safeguards put in place, for example, when accepting an engagement to provide non-audit services.

We also provide information on any contingent fee arrangements, the amounts of any future services that have been contracted, and details of any written proposal to provide non-audit services that has been submitted;

We ensure that the total amount of fees that EY and our network firms have charged to you and your affiliates for the provision of services during the reporting period, analysed in appropriate categories, are disclosed.

07 - Independence

Relationships, services and related threats and safeguards

We highlight the following significant facts and matters that may be reasonably considered to bear upon our objectivity and independence, including the principal threats, if any. We have adopted the safeguards noted below to mitigate these threats along with the reasons why they are considered to be effective. However we will only perform non-audit services if the service has been pre-approved in accordance with your policy.

Overall Assessment

Overall, we consider that the safeguards that have been adopted appropriately mitigate the principal threats identified and we therefore confirm that EY is independent and the objectivity and independence of Kevin Suter, your audit engagement partner, and the audit engagement team have not been compromised.

Self-interest threats

A self-interest threat arises when EY has financial or other interests in the Pension Fund. Examples include where we receive significant fees in respect of non-audit services; where we need to recover long outstanding fees; or where we enter into a business relationship with you. At the time of writing, there are no long outstanding fees.

We believe that it is appropriate for us to undertake permissible non-audit services and we will comply with the policies that you have approved.

None of the services are prohibited under the FRC's ES or the National Audit Office's Auditor Guidance Note 01 and the services have been approved in accordance with your policy on pre-approval. The ratio of non-audit fees to audit fees is not permitted to exceed 70%.

At the time of writing, the current ratio of non-audit fees to audit fees is approximately nil. No additional safeguards are required.

A self-interest threat may also arise if members of our audit engagement team have objectives or are rewarded in relation to sales of non-audit services to you. We confirm that no member of our audit engagement team, including those from other service lines, has objectives or is rewarded in relation to sales to you, in compliance with Ethical Standard part 4.

There are no other self-interest threats at the date of this report.

Self-review threats

Self-review threats arise when the results of a non-audit service performed by EY or others within the EY network are reflected in the amounts included or disclosed in the financial statements.

There are no self-review threats at the date of this report.

Relationships, services and related threats and safeguards

Management threats

Partners and employees of EY are prohibited from taking decisions on behalf of management of the Pension Fund. Management threats may also arise during the provision of a non-audit service in relation to which management is required to make judgements or decision based on that work.

There are no management threats at the date of this report.

Other threats

Other threats, such as advocacy, familiarity or intimidation, may arise.

There are no other threats at the date of this report.

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Other communications

EY Transparency Report 2019

Ernst & Young (EY) has policies and procedures that instil professional values as part of firm culture and ensure that the highest standards of objectivity, independence and integrity are maintained.

Details of the key policies and processes in place within EY for maintaining objectivity and independence can be found in our annual Transparency Report which the firm is required to publish by law. The most recent version of this Report is for the year ended 1 July 2019 and can be found here:

https://www.ey.com/en_uk/who-we-are/transparency-report-2019

Fees

Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) has published the fee scale for the audit of the 2019/20 accounts of opted-in principal local government and police bodies. This is defined as the fee required by auditors to meet statutory responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Audit Practice and supporting guidance published by the National Audit Office, the financial reporting requirements set out in the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting published by CIPFA/LASAAC, and the professional standards applicable to auditors' work.

	Planned fee 2019/20	Scale fee 2019/20	Final Fee 2018/19
	£	£	£
Total Fee - Code work	18,563	18,563	18,563
Fee for IAS 19 work*	7,000	N/A	5,500
Total audit	25,563	18,563	24,063

All fees exclude VAT

Notes

For 19/20 the scale fee may be affected by a range of factors (see page 7). We will update the committee on these as the audit progresses.

*The Authority has agreed the IAS19 fee for 2018/19 (which is where information is provided to the auditors of admitted bodies who request it as part of the process for their audit). This amount is not included in the scale fee set by PSAA as it is not part of Code work for the audit of the Pension Fund.

The core of work required will be the same in 2019/20, but additional input is likely to be requested to assess the quality of information provided to the actuary in their triennial valuation, particularly the detailed membership information. We have made an assessment of the likely additional costs, which will depend on the requests received.

The agreed fee presented is based on the following assumptions:

- ▶ officers meet the agreed timetable of deliverables;
- ▶ the production of materially accurate draft accounts;
- ▶ our accounts opinion is unqualified;
- ▶ appropriate quality of documentation is provided by the Pension Fund; and
- ▶ the Pension Fund has an effective control environment.

If any of the above assumptions prove to be unfounded, we will seek a variation to the agreed fee. This will be discussed with the Pension Fund in advance.

Fees for the auditor's consideration of correspondence from the public and formal objections will be charged in addition to the scale fee.

Required communications with the Audit and Governance Committee

We have detailed the communications that we must provide to the Audit and Governance Committee.

 Our Reporting to you

Required communications	 What is reported?	  When and where
Terms of engagement	Confirmation by the Audit and Governance Committee of acceptance of terms of engagement as written in the engagement letter signed by both parties.	The statement of responsibilities serves as the formal terms of engagement between the PSAA's appointed auditors and audited bodies.
Our responsibilities	Reminder of our responsibilities as set out in the engagement letter	The statement of responsibilities serves as the formal terms of engagement between the PSAA's appointed auditors and audited bodies.
Planning and audit approach	Communication of the planned scope and timing of the audit, any limitations and the significant risks identified.	Audit planning report
Significant findings from the audit	<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 • Written representations that we are seeking • Expected modifications to the audit report • Other matters if any, significant to the oversight of the financial reporting process 	Audit results report

Required communications with the Audit and Governance Committee (continued)

Required communications	 What is reported?	 When and where
Going concern	<p>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 • The adequacy of related disclosures in the financial statements 	Audit results report
Misstatements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncorrected misstatements and their effect on our audit opinion, unless prohibited by law or regulation • The effect of uncorrected misstatements related to prior periods • A request that any uncorrected misstatement be corrected • Corrected misstatements that are significant • Material misstatements corrected by management 	Audit results report
Fraud	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking the Audit and Governance Committee to determine whether they have 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 a fraud may exist • A discussion of any other matters related to fraud 	Audit results report
Related parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant matters arising during the audit in connection with the entity's related parties including, when applicable: • Non-disclosure by management • Inappropriate authorisation and approval of transactions • Disagreement over disclosures • Non-compliance with laws and regulations • Difficulty in identifying the party that ultimately controls the entity 	Audit results report

Required communications with the Audit and Governance Committee (continued)

Required communications	 What is reported?	  When and where
Independence	Communication of all significant facts and matters that bear on EY's, and all individuals involved in the audit, objectivity and independence Communication of key elements of the audit engagement partner's consideration of independence and objectivity such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principal threats • Safeguards adopted and their effectiveness • An overall assessment of threats and safeguards • Information about the general policies and process within the firm to maintain objectivity and independence 	Audit Planning Report and Audit Results Report
External confirmations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management's refusal for us to request confirmations • Inability to obtain relevant and reliable audit evidence from other procedures 	Audit results report
Consideration of laws and regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit findings regarding non-compliance where the non-compliance is material and believed to be intentional. This communication is subject to compliance with legislation on tipping off • Enquiry of the Audit and Governance Committee into possible instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations that may have a material effect on the financial statements and that the Audit and Governance Committee may be aware of 	Audit results report
Internal controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant deficiencies in internal controls identified during the audit 	Management letter/Audit results report
Representations	Written representations we are requesting from management and/or those charged with governance	Audit results report
Material inconsistencies and misstatements	Material inconsistencies or misstatements of fact identified in other information which management has refused to revise	Audit results report
Auditors report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any circumstances identified that affect the form and content of our auditor's report 	Audit results report
Fee Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakdown of fee information when the audit plan is agreed • Breakdown of fee information at the completion of the audit • Any non-audit work 	Audit Planning Report and Audit Results Report



Additional audit information

Other required procedures during the course of the audit

In addition to the key areas of audit focus outlined in section 2, we have to perform other procedures as required by auditing, ethical and independence standards and other regulations. We outline the procedures below that we will undertake during the course of our audit.

Our responsibilities required by auditing standards

- Identifying and assessing the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.
- Obtaining an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Pension Fund's internal control.
- Evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Concluding on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting.
- Evaluating the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.
- Obtaining sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding the financial information of the entities or business activities within the Pension Fund to express an opinion on the consolidated financial statements. Reading other information contained in the financial statements, the Audit and Governance Committee reporting appropriately addresses matters communicated by us to the Audit and Governance Committee and reporting whether it is materially inconsistent with our understanding and the financial statements; and
- Maintaining auditor independence.

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Purpose and evaluation of materiality

For the purposes of determining whether the accounts are free from material error, we define materiality as the magnitude of an omission or misstatement that, individually or in the aggregate, in light of the surrounding circumstances, could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of the users of the financial statements. Our evaluation of it requires professional judgement and necessarily takes into account qualitative as well as quantitative considerations implicit in the definition. We would be happy to discuss with you your expectations regarding our detection of misstatements in the financial statements.

Materiality determines:

- The locations at which we conduct audit procedures to support the opinion given on the financial statements; and
- The level of work performed on individual account balances and financial statement disclosures.

The amount we consider material at the end of the audit may differ from our initial determination. At this stage, however, it is not feasible to anticipate all of the circumstances that may ultimately influence our judgement about materiality. At the end of the audit we will form our final opinion by reference to all matters that could be significant to users of the accounts, including the total effect of the audit misstatements we identify, and our evaluation of materiality at that date.

Oxfordshire County Council

Audit Plan Addendum - Covid 19

Year ended 31 March 2020

May 2020

Other areas of audit focus

Impact of Covid-19

The ongoing disruption to daily life and the economy as a result of the Covid-19 virus will have a pervasive impact upon the financial statements. Understandably, the priority for the Council to date has been to ensure the safety of staff and the delivery of business critical activities. However, the financial statements will need to reflect the impact of Covid-19 on the Council's financial position and performance. Due to the significant uncertainty about the duration and extent of disruption, at this stage we have not identified specific risks related to Covid-19, but wish to highlight the wide range of ways in which it could impact the financial statements. These may include, but not be limited to:

- ▶ **Going concern** - management's assessment of whether the Council is a going concern will need to consider the impact of the current conditions on the Council's future performance. Additional narrative disclosure will be required, including on the future principal risks and uncertainties, including the impact on operations for 2020/21 and beyond.
- ▶ **Revenue recognition** - there may be an impact on income collection (Council and Business rates) if businesses and residents are unable to work and earn income due to the lockdown and restriction of movement due to COVID-19.
- ▶ **Tangible assets** - there may be impairment of tangible assets if future service potential is reduced by the economic impact of the virus. The Council may also have already incurred capital costs on projects where the economic case has fundamentally changed.
- ▶ **Pensions** - volatility in the financial markets is likely to have a significant impact on pension assets, and therefore net liabilities.
- ▶ **Receivables** - there may be an increase in amounts written off as irrecoverable and impairment of year-end balances due to the increased number of businesses and residents unable to meet their financial obligations.
- ▶ **Holiday and sickness pay** - the change in working patterns may result in year-end staff pay accruals which are noticeably different to prior years.
- ▶ **Government support** - any Covid-19 specific government support is likely to be a new transaction stream and may require development of new accounting policies and treatments.
- ▶ **Annual Governance Statement** - the widespread use of home working is likely to change the way internal controls operate. The Annual Governance Statement will need to capture how the control environment has changed during the period and what steps were taken to maintain a robust control environment during the disruption. This will also need to be considered in the context of internal audit's ability to issue their Head of Internal Audit opinion for the year, depending on the ability to complete the remainder of the internal audit programme.

We will provide an update on the impact of Covid-19 on the Council's financial statements, and how we have responded to the additional risks of misstatement, later in our audit.

In addition to the impact on the financial statements themselves, the disruption caused by Covid-19 may impact on management's ability to produce the financial statements and our ability to complete the audit to the planned timetable. For example, it may be more difficult than usual to access the supporting documentation necessary to support our audit procedures. There will be additional audit procedures we have to perform to respond to the additional risks caused by the factors noted above.