

A photograph of a meeting table with several papers and hands pointing at documents. The background is a bright, clean white table. In the foreground, a person's hand is pointing at a document. Another person's hand is also visible, pointing at a different document. A smartphone is lying on the table. The overall scene suggests a collaborative work environment.

Brentwood Borough
Council
Audit planning report
Year ended 31 March 2019

30 January 2019



Private and Confidential
Brentwood Borough Council
Town Hall, Ingrave Road,
Brentwood, Essex
CM15 8AY

30 January 2019

Dear Audit and Scrutiny 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. Its purpose is to provide the Audit and Scrutiny Committee with a basis to review our proposed audit approach and scope for the 2018/19 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 Council, 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 Scrutiny 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 30 January 2019 as well as understand whether there are other matters which you consider may influence our audit.

Yours faithfully

Neil Harris

For and on behalf of Ernst & Young LLP

Contents



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 Scrutiny Committee and management of Brentwood Borough Council in accordance with the statement of responsibilities. Our work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee, and management of Brentwood Borough Council 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 Committee and management of Brentwood Borough Council 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 2018/19 audit strategy



Overview of our 2018/19 audit strategy

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

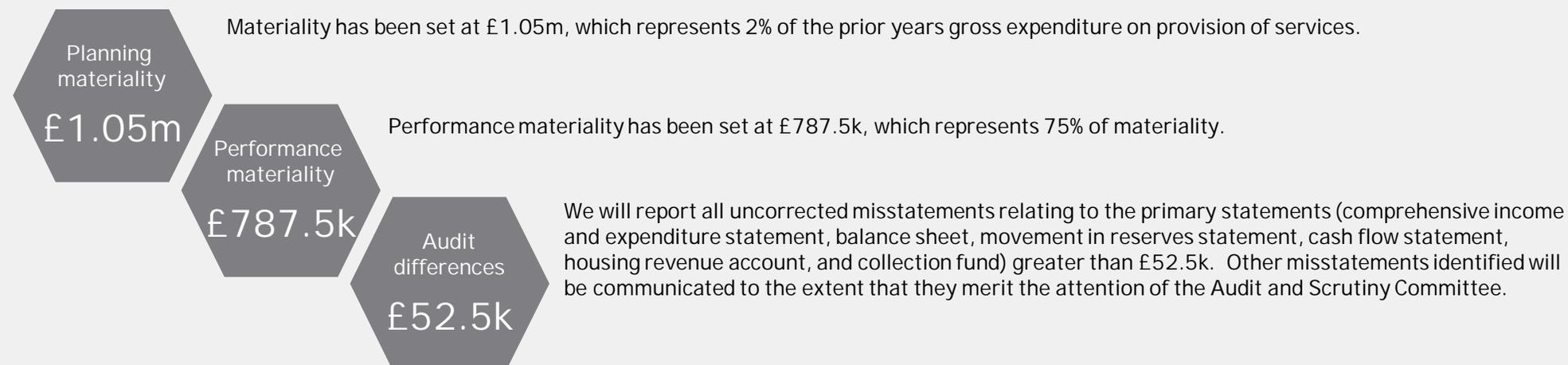
Audit risks and areas of focus

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.
Incorrect Capitalisation of Revenue Expenditure	Fraud Risk	Previously covered under 'Misstatements due to fraud or error' No change in focus	Practice note 10 issued by the Financial Reporting Council, states that auditors should also consider the risk that material misstatements may occur by the manipulation of expenditure recognition. The potential for the incorrect classification of revenue spend as capital is a particular area where there is a risk of management override at Brentwood Borough Council.
Property, plant and equipment valuations	Higher inherent risk	No change in risk or focus	Property, plant and equipment (PPE) represents a significant balance in the Council's accounts and is subject to valuation changes, impairment reviews and depreciation charges. Material judgemental inputs and estimation techniques are required to calculate the year-end PPE balances held in the balance sheet. As the Council's asset base is significant, and the outputs from the valuer are subject to estimation, there is a higher inherent risk PPE may be under/overstated or the associated accounting entries incorrectly posted. ISAs (UK and Ireland) 500 and 540 require us to undertake procedures on the use of experts and assumptions underlying fair value estimates.
Pension valuation and disclosures	Higher inherent risk	No change in risk or focus	The Local Authority Accounting Code of Practice and IAS19 require the Council to make extensive disclosures within its financial statements regarding the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) in which it is an admitted body. The Council's current pension fund deficit is a material and sensitive item and the Code requires that this liability be disclosed on the Council's balance sheet. The information disclosed is based on the IAS 19 report issued to the Council by the Actuary. Accounting for this scheme involves significant estimation and judgement and due to the nature, volume and size of the transactions we consider this to be a higher inherent risk.

Overview of our 2018/19 audit strategy

Risk / area of focus	Risk identified	Change from PY	Details
Group Accounting	Higher inherent risk	New risk	The creation of Seven Arches Investment Limited (SAIL), wholly owned investment company, means the council will be required to produce group accounts to consolidate the transactions of SAIL with the councils accounts. Group accounting is a complex accounting process and therefore can lead to material error, therefore we consider this to be a higher inherent risk in the first year of consolidation

Materiality



Overview of our 2018/19 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 Brentwood Borough Council give a true and fair view of the financial position as at 31 March 2019 and of the income and expenditure for the year then ended; and
- § Our conclusion on the Council's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

We will also review and report to the National Audit Office (NAO), to the extent and in the form required by them, on the Council's Whole of Government Accounts return.

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 Council.

The 2018/19 audit will include additional audit deliverables due to the first year of group accounting, and the Value For Money aspect of the audit will require additional work around the increase in commercialisation activities by the council in 2018/19

Audit team changes

Key changes to our team.



Neil Harris
Associate Partner
Neil has 20+ years local government audit experience
Neil is the engagement lead and is responsible for providing the audit opinion



Dean Bardrick
Manager
Dean has 10 years of LG audit experience
Dean is responsible for the day to day running of the audit



02

Audit risks



Our response to significant risks

We have set out the significant risks (including fraud risks denoted by*) 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.

<p>Misstatements due to fraud or error *</p>	<p>What is the risk?</p> <p>The financial statements as a whole are not free of material misstatements whether caused by fraud or error.</p> <p>As identified in ISA (UK and Ireland) 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.</p>	<p>What will we do?</p> <p>We will undertake our standard procedures to address fraud risk, which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ø Identifying fraud risks during the planning stages. Ø Inquiry of management about risks of fraud and the controls put in place to address those risks. Ø Understanding the oversight given by those charged with governance of management's processes over fraud. Ø Considering the effectiveness of management's controls designed to address the risk of fraud. Ø Determining an appropriate strategy to address those identified risks of fraud. <p>Performing mandatory procedures regardless of specifically identified fraud risks, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ø Testing the appropriateness of journal entries recorded in the general ledger and other adjustments made in the preparation of the financial statements Ø Assessing accounting estimates, such as bad debt and business rate appeals provision, for evidence of management bias, and Ø Evaluating the business rationale for significant unusual transactions. <p>In addition to our overall response, we consider where these risk may manifest themselves and identify separate fraud risks below.</p>
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Our response to significant risks

We have set out the significant risks (including fraud risks denoted by*) 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.

	What is the risk?	What will we do?
<p>Incorrect capitalisation of revenue expenditure *</p>	<p>As identified in ISA (UK and Ireland) 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.</p> <p>We have assessed the following as the area most open to manipulation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ø capitalisation of revenue expenditure on Property, Plant and Equipment given the extent of the Council's capital programme. 	<p>We will undertake additional procedures to address the specific risk we have identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ø Performing sample testing on additions to PPE to a more granular level to ensure that they have been correctly classified as capital, and included at the correct value, to identify any revenue items that have been inappropriately capitalised. Ø Identification of the controls the Council has in place to prevent incorrect capitalisation of revenue expenditure. Ø Consideration of the effectiveness of management's controls designed to address the risk. Ø Test year end journals which move expenditure from revenue to capital

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?

Valuation of Land and Buildings

The fair value of Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE) and Investment Properties (IP) represent significant balances in the Council's accounts and are subject to valuation changes, impairment reviews and depreciation charges. Management is required to make material judgemental inputs and apply estimation techniques to calculate the year-end balances recorded in the balance sheet.

Pension Liability Valuation

The Local Authority Accounting Code of Practice and IAS19 require the Council to make extensive disclosures within its financial statements regarding its membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme administered by Essex County Council. The Council's pension fund deficit is a material estimated balance and the Code requires that this liability be disclosed on the Council's balance sheet. At 31 March 2018 this totalled £46.4 million. The information disclosed is based on the IAS 19 report issued to the Council by the actuary to the County Council. Accounting for this scheme involves significant estimation and judgement and therefore management engages an actuary to undertake the calculations on their behalf. ISAs (UK) 500 and 540 require us to undertake procedures on the use of management experts and the assumptions underlying fair value estimates.

What will we do?

We will:

- Consider the work performed by the Council's valuers, including the adequacy of the scope of the work performed, their professional capabilities and the results of their work;
- Sample testing key asset information used by the valuers in performing their valuation (e.g. floor plans to support valuations based on price per square metre);
- Consider the annual cycle of valuations to ensure that assets have been valued within a 5 year rolling programme as required by the Code for PPE and annually for IP. We have also considered if there are any specific changes to assets that have occurred and that these have been communicated to the valuer;
- Review assets not subject to valuation in 2018/19 to confirm that the remaining asset base is not materially misstated;
- Consider changes to useful economic lives as a result of the most recent valuation; and
- Test accounting entries have been correctly processed in the financial statements,

We will:

- Liaise with the auditors of Essex Pension Fund, to obtain assurances over the information supplied to the actuary in relation to Brentwood Borough Council;
- Assess the work of the Pension Fund actuary (Barnett Waddingham) including the assumptions they have used by relying on the work of PWC - Consulting Actuaries commissioned by the National Audit Office for all Local Government sector auditors, and considering any relevant reviews by the EY actuarial team; and
- Review and test the accounting entries and disclosures made within the Council's financial statements in relation to IAS19.

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?	What will we do?
<p>Group Accounting</p> <p>2018/19 will be the first year the council will consolidate the accounts of the wholly owned subsidiary Seven Arches Investment Limited (SAIL) with the Council's accounts.</p> <p>Group accounting is a complex accounting method and therefore there is an increased risk of material misstatement due to error</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Test the accounting entries to ensure they have been correctly processed in the financial statements• Sample test the transactions completed by SAIL• Liaise with the auditors of SAIL, to obtain assurances over the accounting judgements, governance and transactions completed SAIL

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?

What will we do?

IFRS 9 financial instruments

This new accounting standard is applicable for local authority accounts from the 2018/19 financial year and will change:

- How financial assets are classified and measured;
- How the impairment of financial assets are calculated; and
- The disclosure requirements for financial assets.

There are transitional arrangements within the standard; and the 2018/19 Cipfa Code of practice on local authority accounting provides guidance on the application of IFRS 9. However, until the Guidance Notes are issued and any statutory overrides are confirmed there remains some uncertainty on the accounting treatment.

IFRS 15 Revenue from contracts with customers

This new accounting standard is applicable for local authority accounts from the 2018/19 financial year.

The key requirements of the standard cover the identification of performance obligations under customer contracts and the linking of income to the meeting of those performance obligations.

The 2018/19 Cipfa Code of practice on local authority accounting provides guidance on the application of IFRS 15 and includes a useful flow diagram and commentary on the main sources of LG revenue and how they should be recognised.

The impact on local authority accounting is likely to be limited as large revenue streams like council tax, non domestic rates and government grants will be outside the scope of IFRS 15. However where that standard is relevant, the recognition of revenue will change and new disclosure requirements introduced.

We will:

- Assess the authority's implementation arrangements that should include an impact assessment paper setting out the application of the new standard, transitional adjustments and planned accounting for 2018/19;
- Consider the classification and valuation of financial instrument assets;
- Review new expected credit loss model impairment calculations for assets; and
- Check additional disclosure requirements.

We will:

- Assess the authority's implementation arrangements that should include an impact assessment paper setting out the application of the new standard, transitional adjustments and planned accounting for 2018/19. This will include Local Authority Trading Companies consolidated into the Authority's Group Accounts;
- Consider application to the authority's revenue streams, and where the standard is relevant test to ensure revenue is recognised when (or as) it satisfies a performance obligation; and
- Check additional disclosure requirements.



03

Value for Money Risks





Background

We are required to consider whether Brentwood Borough Council has put in place 'proper arrangements' to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness on its use of resources. This is known as our value for money conclusion.

For 2018/19 this is based on the overall evaluation criterion:

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

Proper arrangements are defined by statutory guidance issued by the National Audit Office. They comprise your arrangements to:

- § Take informed decisions;
- § Deploy resources in a sustainable manner; and
- § Work with partners and other third parties.

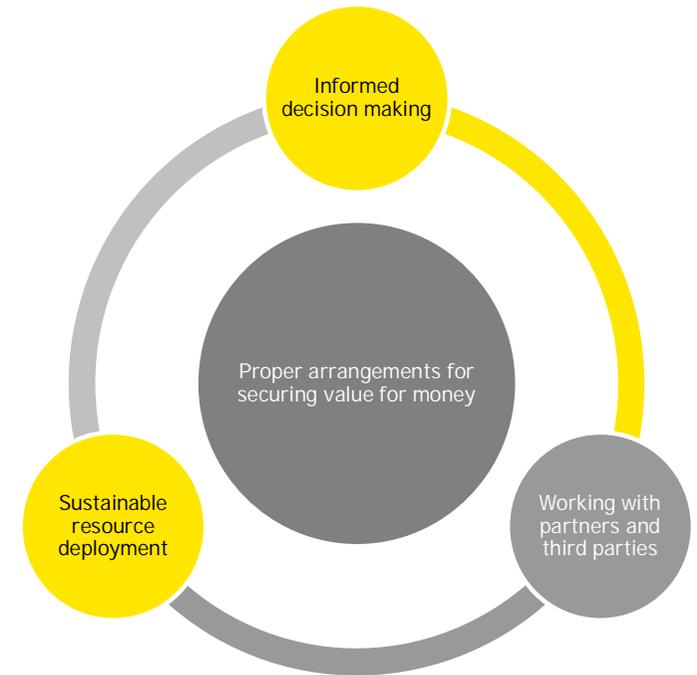
In considering your proper arrangements, we will draw on the requirements of the CIPFA/SOLACE framework for local government to ensure that our assessment is made against a framework that you are already required to have in place and to report on through documents such as your annual governance statement.

We are only required to determine whether there are any risks that we consider significant, which the Code of Audit Practice defines as:

"A matter is significant if, in the auditor's professional view, it is reasonable to conclude that the matter would be of interest to the audited body or the wider public"

Our risk assessment supports the planning of sufficient work to enable us to deliver a safe conclusion on arrangements to secure value for money and enables us to determine the nature and extent of further work that may be required. If we do not identify any significant risks there is no requirement to carry out further work. We consider business and operational risks insofar as they relate to proper arrangements at both sector and organisation-specific level. In 2018/19 this has included consideration of the steps taken by [the Authority to consider the impact of Brexit on its future service provision, medium-term financing and investment values. Although the precise impact cannot yet be modelled, we anticipate that Authorities will be carrying out scenario planning and that Brexit and its impact will feature on operational risk registers.

Our risk assessment has therefore considered both the potential financial impact of the issues we have identified, and also the likelihood that the issue will be of interest to local taxpayers, the Government and other stakeholders. This has resulted in the identification of the significant risks noted on the following page which we view as relevant to our value for money conclusion.





Value for Money Risks

What is the significant value for money risk?

Governance arrangements for Joint Venture decision making.

The council has recently received bids from external organisations to become partners in a Joint Venture with the aim of building new homes in the borough.

This Joint Venture has a significant impact on the council's future, as this is a key part of the council delivering balanced budgets going forward

Therefore the governance around the Joint Venture process and decision making is considered to be a significant risk to the council delivering value for money

What arrangements does the risk affect?

- Take informed decisions
- Deploy resources in a sustainable manner
- Work with partners and other third parties

What will we do?

Our approach will focus on:

- The quality of the information provided to Members and Officers when taking decisions in relation to the Joint Venture.
- The nature and consideration of advice taken by the Council, including legal and financial advice.
- The extent to which the Council has identified, considered, and mitigated the risks around the Joint Venture.
- The extent to which the financial implications of the Joint Venture are reflected within the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.
- The adequacy of the processes established by the Council to review and monitor delivery of the agreed outputs.

We anticipate that our work in this area will involve additional audit work that is not contained with the assumptions used by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited (PSAA Ltd) in setting the Council's 2018/19 audit fee. We are not able to estimate the likely additional fee in relation to this risk at this stage of our planning but will discuss this with officers once the work is complete. Any variation to our fee needs to be approved by PSAA Ltd.



Value for Money Risks

What is the significant value for money risk?	What arrangements does the risk affect?	What will we do?
<p>Due diligence process for consideration of out of borough commercial investments.</p> <p>The creation of Seven Arches Investment Limited (SAIL), as a wholly owned subsidiary, by the council has now led to one completed out of borough investment and another which is expected to be completed prior to year end. Out of borough investments are subject to greater public scrutiny,</p> <p>The due diligence process must be thorough and demonstrate value for money for the borough. The Council should also ensure that it meets the prudential framework guidelines.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take informed decisions • Deploy resources in a sustainable manner 	<p>Our approach will focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of the information provided to Members and Officers when taking decisions in relation to the projects. • The nature consideration of advice taken by the Council, including legal and financial advice. • How the Council has addressed the CIPFA Prudential Code For Capital Financing in LA's 2018 guidelines and requirements in its decision making. • The extent to which the Council has identified, considered, and mitigated the risks around the project. • The extent to which the financial implications of the project are reflected within the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan. • The extent to which the Council has considered alternative funding options. • The adequacy of the processes established by the Council to review and monitor delivery of the agreed outputs. <p>We anticipate that our work in this area will involve additional audit work that is not contained with the assumptions used by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited (PSAA Ltd) in setting the Council's 2018/19 audit fee. We are not able to estimate the likely additional fee in relation to this risk at this stage of our planning but will discuss this with officers once the work is complete. Any variation to our fee needs to be approved by PSAA Ltd.</p>



04

Audit materiality



Materiality

Materiality

For planning purposes, materiality for 2018/19 has been set at £1.05m. This represents 2% of the Council's prior year gross expenditure on provision of services. It will be reassessed throughout the audit process. We have provided supplemental information about audit materiality in Appendix D.



We request that the Audit and Scrutiny 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 £787.5k which represents 75% of planning materiality.

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 the comprehensive income and expenditure statement, balance sheet, housing revenue account, and collection fund that have an effect on income or that relate to other comprehensive income.

Other uncorrected misstatements, such as reclassifications and misstatements in the cashflow statement and movement in reserves statement or disclosures, and corrected misstatements will be communicated to the extent that they merit the attention of the audit committee, or are important from a qualitative perspective.

Specific materiality – We have set a materiality of £5,000 for the following: Remuneration disclosures (including severance payments, exit packages and termination benefits), related party transactions, and members' allowances. This reflects our understanding that an amount less than our materiality would influence the economic decisions of users of the financial statements in relation to this.



05

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 Council's financial statements and arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources to the extent required by the relevant legislation and the requirements of the Code.

We issue an audit report that covers:

1. Financial statement audit

Our objective is to form an opinion on the financial statements under International Standards on Auditing (UK).

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.

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.

Procedures required by the Code

- Reviewing, and reporting on as appropriate, other information published with the financial statements, including the Annual Governance Statement; and
- Reviewing and reporting on the Whole of Government Accounts return, in line with the instructions issued by the NAO [delete if not applicable]

2. Arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness (value for money)

We are required to consider whether the Council has put in place 'proper arrangements' to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness on its use of resources.

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 2018/19 we plan to follow a substantive approach to the audit as we have concluded 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 Committee.

Internal audit:

We will regularly meet with the Head of Internal Audit, 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.

Our Audit Process and Strategy (continued)

Earlier deadline for production of the financial statements

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 introduced a significant change in statutory deadlines from the 2017/18 financial year. From that year the timetable for the preparation and approval of accounts has been brought forward with draft accounts needing to be prepared by 31 May 2019 and the publication of the accounts by 31 July 2019.

These changes provide risks for both the preparers and the auditors of the financial statements:

- The Council now has less time to prepare the financial statements and supporting working papers. Risks to the Council include slippage in delivering data for analytics work in format and to time required, late working papers, internal quality assurance arrangements, changes to finance team
- As your auditor, we have a more significant peak in our audit work and a shorter period to complete the audit. Risks for auditors relate to delivery of all audits within same compressed timetable. Slippage at one client could potentially put delivery of others at risk.

To mitigate this risk we will require:

- good quality draft financial statements and supporting working papers by the agreed deadline;
- appropriate Council staff to be available throughout the agreed audit period; and
- complete and prompt responses to audit questions.

If you are unable to meet key dates within our agreed timetable, we will notify you of the impact on the timing of your audit, which may be that we postpone your audit until later in the summer and redeploy the team to other work to meet deadlines elsewhere.

Where additional work is required to complete your audit, due to additional risks being identified, additional work being required as a result of scope changes, or poor audit evidence, we will notify you of the impact on the fee and the timing of the audit. Such circumstances may result in a delay to your audit while we complete other work elsewhere.

To support the Council we will:

- Work with the Council to engage early to facilitate early substantive testing where appropriate.
- Provide an early review on the Council's streamlining of the Statement of Accounts where non-material disclosure notes are removed.
- Facilitate faster close workshops to provide an interactive forum for Local Authority accountants and auditors to share good practice and ideas to enable us all to achieve a successful faster closure of accounts for the 2018/19 financial year.
- Work with the Council to implement/ embed/ improve the use of EY Client Portal, this will:
 - Streamline our audit requests through a reduction of emails and improved means of communication;
 - Provide on -demand visibility into the status of audit requests and the overall audit status;
 - Reduce risk of duplicate requests; and
 - Provide better security of sensitive data.
- Agree the team and timing of each element of our work with you.
- Agree the supporting working papers that we require to complete our audit.

Scoping the group audit

Group scoping

Our audit strategy for performing an audit of an entity with multiple locations is risk based. We identify components as:

1. Significant components: A component is significant when it is likely to include risks of material misstatement of the group financial statements, either because of its relative financial size to the group (quantitative criteria), or because of its specific nature or circumstances (qualitative criteria). We generally assign significant components a full or specific scope given their importance to the financial statements.
2. Not significant components: The number of additional components and extent of procedures performed depended primarily on: evidence from significant components, the effectiveness of group wide controls and the results of analytical procedures.

For all other components we perform other procedures to confirm that there is no risk of material misstatement within those locations. These procedures are detailed below.

Scoping by Entity

Our preliminary audit scopes by number of locations we have adopted are set out below, when considering SAIL. We provide scope details for each component within Appendix D.

0	A	Full scope audits
1	B	Specific scope audits
0	C	Review scope audits
0	D	Specified procedures
0	E	Other procedures

Scope definitions

Full scope: locations where a full audit is performed to the materiality levels assigned by the Group audit team for purposes of the consolidated audit. Procedures performed at full scope locations support an interoffice conclusion on the reporting package. These may not be sufficient to issue a stand-alone audit opinion on the local statutory financial statements because of the materiality used and any additional procedures required to comply with local laws and regulations.

Specific scope: locations where the audit is limited to specific accounts or disclosures identified by the Group audit team based on the size and/or risk profile of those accounts.

Review scope: locations where procedures primarily consist of analytical procedures and inquiries of management. On-site or desk top reviews may be performed, according to our assessment of risk and the availability of information centrally.

Specified Procedures: locations where the component team performs procedures specified by the Group audit team in order to respond to a risk identified.

Other procedures: For those locations that we do not consider material to the Group financial statements in terms of size relative to the Group and risk, we perform other procedures to confirm that there is no risk of material misstatement within those locations.



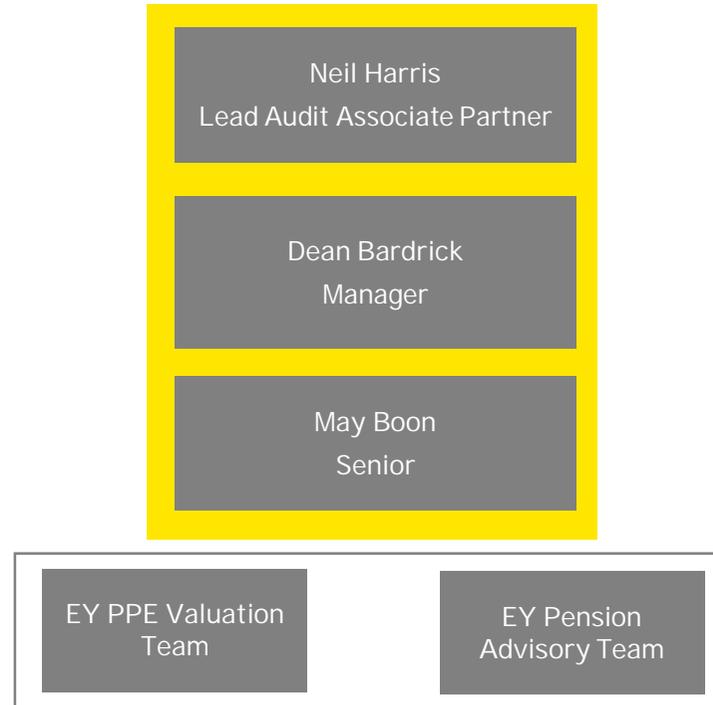
06

Audit team



Audit team

Audit team structure:



Audit team changes

Key changes to our team.

Neil Harris, Associate Partner and Dean Bardrick, Audit Manager

- Ø Neil takes over from Debbie Hanson as the Engagement Lead.
- Ø Dean take over from Pamela Hillie as Audit Manager
- Ø Both Neil and Dean have significant public sector audit experience, with a portfolio of Local Authorities and Local Government clients
- Ø Both Neil and Dean are members of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA).

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 provide input for the current year audit are:

Area	Specialists
Valuation of Land and Buildings	EY PPE Valuations Team - We will consider any valuation aspects that may require EY valuation specialists to review any material specialist assets and the underlying assumptions used.
Pensions disclosure	EY Actuaries

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 Council'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.



07

Audit timeline





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 2018/19.

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

Audit phase	Timetable	Audit committee timetable	Deliverables
Planning: Risk assessment and setting of scopes.	November		
Walkthrough of key systems and processes	December		
	January	Audit and Scrutiny Committee 30/01/2019	Audit Planning Report
Interim audit testing	March		
Year end audit	June		
Year end audit	July	Audit and Scrutiny Committee	Audit Results Report
Audit Completion procedures			Audit opinions and completion certificates
Conclusion of Reporting	August - October	Audit and Scrutiny Committee	Annual Audit Letter



08

Independence



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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 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; ▶ The safeguards adopted and the reasons why they are considered to be effective, including any Engagement Quality review; ▶ The overall assessment of threats and safeguards; ▶ Information about the general policies and process within EY to maintain objectivity and independence. ▶ 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] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 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; ▶ Details of non-audit services provided and the fees charged in relation thereto; ▶ 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; ▶ Written confirmation that all covered persons are independent; ▶ 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; ▶ Details of any contingent fee arrangements for non-audit services provided by us or our network firms; and ▶ An opportunity to discuss auditor independence issues.

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.

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 Neil Harris, 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 Council. 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 audits fees is not permitted to exceed 70%.

At the time of writing, the current ratio of non-audit fees to audit fees is 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.

EY Transparency Report 2018

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 2018 and can be found here:

<https://www.ey.com/uk/en/about-us/ey-uk-transparency-report-2018>



09

Appendices



Appendix A

Fees

Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) has published the fee scale for the audit of the 2018/19 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, and the professional standards applicable to auditors' work.

	Planned fee 2018/19	Scale fee 2018/19	Total Planned fee 2018/19	Final Fee 2017/18
	£	£	£	£
Total Fee - Code work	52,365		52,365	70,876*
Group Consolidation		**2,500	2,500	
VFM Significant Risks		**10,000	10,000	
Total audit	52,365	**12,500	64,865	70,876
Certification of Claims and Returns (Housing Benefits)	-			33,606
Total fees	52,365	12,500	64,865	104,482

All fees exclude VAT

- * The 2017/18 final audit fee included a scale fee variation increase of £2,870 due to additional work performed on the Value For Money audit as a result of significant risk linked to the commercialisation projects the council initiated
- ** The 2018/19 final fee will include a scale fee variation to reflect the additional work performed for the group accounts consolidation, and Value For Money significant risks linked to the commercialisation projects the council has begun to invest in. This represents a change in the scope of the audit and will trigger a scale fee variation. Any fee will be agreed with management and subject to approval by PSAA. This fee has not yet been agreed, the fees reflected in the table above are estimated

The agreed fee presented is based on the following assumptions:

- ▶ Officers meeting the agreed timetable of deliverables;
- ▶ Our accounts opinion and value for money conclusion being unqualified;
- ▶ Appropriate quality of documentation is provided by the Council; and
- ▶ The Council 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 Council 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.

Appendix B

Required communications with the Audit and Scrutiny Committee

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



Our Reporting to you

Required communications	 What is reported?	 When and where
Terms of engagement	Confirmation by the Audit and Scrutiny 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 – January 2019
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 – July 2019

Required communications with the Audit Committee (continued)

 Our Reporting to you		
Required communications	 What is reported?	  When and where
Going concern	Events or conditions identified that may cast significant doubt on the entity's ability to continue as a going concern, including: <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 – July 2019
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 – July 2019
Fraud	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enquiries of the Audit and Scrutiny 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 – July 2019
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 – July 2019

Appendix B

Required communications with the Audit Committee (continued)

			 Our Reporting to you
Required communications	 What is reported?	  When and where	
Independence	<p>Communication of all significant facts and matters that bear on EY's, and all individuals involved in the audit, objectivity and independence</p> <p>Communication of key elements of the audit engagement partner's consideration of independence and objectivity such as:</p> <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 	<p>Audit Planning Report – January 2019</p> <p>Audit Results Report - July 2019</p>	
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 	<p>Audit Results Report - July 2019</p>	
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 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 Committee may be aware of 	<p>Audit Results Report - July 2019</p>	
Internal controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant deficiencies in internal controls identified during the audit 	<p>Management letter/audit results report – July 2019</p>	

Appendix B

Required communications with the Audit Committee (continued)

			 Our Reporting to you
Required communications	 What is reported?	 When and where	
Group audits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An overview of the type of work to be performed on the financial information of the components • An overview of the nature of the group audit team's planned involvement in the work to be performed by the component auditors on the financial information of significant components • Instances where the group audit team's evaluation of the work of a component auditor gave rise to a concern about the quality of that auditor's work • Any limitations on the group audit, for example, where the group engagement team's access to information may have been restricted • Fraud or suspected fraud involving group management, component management, employees who have significant roles in group-wide controls or others where the fraud resulted in a material misstatement of the group financial statements 	Audit Planning Report – January 2019 Audit Results Report - July 2019	
Representations	Written representations we are requesting from management and/or those charged with governance	Audit Results Report - July 2019	
Material inconsistencies and misstatements	Material inconsistencies or misstatements of fact identified in other information which management has refused to revise	Audit Results Report - July 2019	
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 - July 2019	
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 – January 2019 Audit Results Report - July 2019	
Certification work	Summary of certification work undertaken	Certification 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 Council'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 Council to express an opinion on the consolidated financial statements. Reading other information contained in the financial statements, the Audit and Scrutiny Committee reporting appropriately addresses matters communicated by us to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee and reporting whether it is materially inconsistent with our understanding and the financial statements; and
- Maintaining auditor independence.

Additional audit information (continued)

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 Group 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.

Appendix D

Scoping the group audit

The below table sets out the scoping details of all locations. We set audit scopes for each reporting unit which, when taken together, enable us to form an opinion on the group accounts. We take into account the size, risk profile, changes in the business environment, and other factors when assessing the level of work to be performed at each reporting unit.

Detailed scoping				
In scope locations	Scope	Statutory audit performed by EY	Current year rationale for scoping	
			Size	Risk
Seven Arches Investment Limited (SAIL)	Specific	r	Yes	Yes
TOTAL FULL & SPECIFIC SCOPE				

Through discussions with management and initial review of the working papers the significant transactions related to Seven Arches Investment Limited (SAIL) are the initial loan from the council to SAIL; the related interest payments from SAIL to the council, the acquisition of investment property by SAIL and recharges for council employees working on SAIL.

Based on this knowledge, we plan to perform specific audit procedures to gain assurance over these transactions and the consolidation process. We will revisit this approach throughout the audit to ensure that our understanding of SAIL as a component remains consistent with our knowledge, and adapt our approach as necessary if anything changes.