

# Audit Strategy Memorandum - Draft

Derbyshire County Council

Year ending 31 March 2022



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

21 February 2022

Dear Audit Committee Members

## Audit Strategy Memorandum – Year ending 31 March 2022

We are pleased to present our Audit Strategy Memorandum for Derbyshire County Council for the year ending 31 March 2022. The purpose of this document is to summarise our audit approach, highlight significant audit risks and areas of key judgements and provide you with the details of our audit team. As it is a fundamental requirement that an auditor is, and is seen to be, independent of its clients, section 7 of this document also summarises our considerations and conclusions on our independence as auditors. We consider two-way communication with you to be key to a successful audit and important in:

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

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

It is clear that the accounts preparation and audit will once again be significantly impacted by the COVID-19 working arrangements and it is important that we continue to keep in close contact with the finance team and are able to respond to emerging issues.

Client service is extremely important to us and we strive to provide technical excellence with the highest level of service quality, together with continuous improvement to exceed your expectations so, if you have any concerns or comments about this document or audit approach, please contact me on [mark.surridge@mazars.co.uk](mailto:mark.surridge@mazars.co.uk)



Mark Surridge

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We are registered to carry on audit work in the UK by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales. Details about our audit registration can be viewed at [www.auditregister.org.uk](http://www.auditregister.org.uk) under reference number C001139861. VAT number: 839 8356 73

# 01

Section 01:

**Engagement and  
responsibilities summary**

# 1. Engagement and responsibilities summary

## Overview of engagement

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

### Audit opinion

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

The section 151 officer is responsible for the assessment of whether it is appropriate for the Council to prepare its accounts on a going concern basis. As auditors, we are required to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding, and conclude on: a) whether a material uncertainty related to going concern exists; and b) consider the appropriateness of the section 151 officer's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements.

### Value for money

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



### Fraud

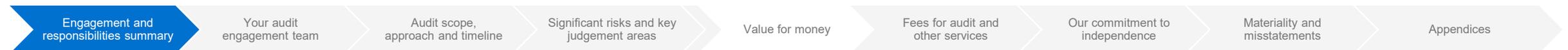
The responsibility for safeguarding assets and for the prevention and detection of fraud, error and non-compliance with law or regulations rests with both those charged with governance and management. This includes establishing and maintaining internal controls over reliability of financial reporting.

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

### Wider reporting and electors' rights

We report to the NAO on the consistency of the Council's financial statements with its Whole of Government Accounts (WGA) submission.

The 2014 Act requires us to give an elector, or any representative of the elector, the opportunity to question us about the accounting records of the Council and consider any objection made to the accounts. We also have a broad range of reporting responsibilities and powers that are unique to the audit of local authorities in the United Kingdom



# 02

Section 02:

**Your audit engagement team**

# 2. Your audit engagement team



**Mark Surridge**

**Engagement Lead**

Mark.Surridge@mazars.co.uk

07875 974 291



**Mike Norman**

**Engagement Senior Manager**

Michael.Norman@mazars.co.uk

07909 984 151



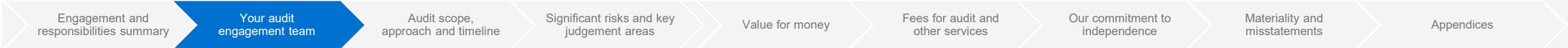
**Bethan Frudd**

**Engagement Assistant Manager**

Bethan.Frudd@mazars.co.uk

07581 020 016

In addition, an Engagement Quality Control Reviewer (EQCR) has been appointed for this engagement.



# 03

Section 03:

**Audit scope, approach and timeline**

# 3. Audit scope, approach and timeline

## Audit scope

Our audit is designed to comply with all professional requirements.

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

## Audit approach

Our risk based audit approach is driven by the risks we consider to result in a higher risk of material misstatement of the financial statements. Once we have completed our risk assessment, we develop our audit strategy and design audit procedures in response to this assessment.

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

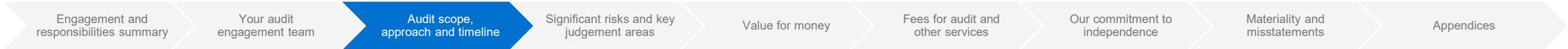
Our audit will be planned and performed so as to provide reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement and give a true and fair view. The concept of materiality and how we define a misstatement is explained in more detail in section 8.

The diagram on the next page outlines the procedures we perform at the different stages of the audit and the indicative timeline at this stage based on the current national timetable proposed by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). The specific dates are subject though as always to:

- the timely provision of information by third parties; and
- us being able to fully complete the audit procedures to the required quality standards.

## COVID-19 Working Arrangements and impact on our audit

The accounts preparation and audit will once again be significantly impacted by the COVID-19 remote working arrangements and it is important that we continue to keep in close contact with the finance team and are able to respond to emerging issues. The 2021/22 audit is again expected to be carried out largely remotely.



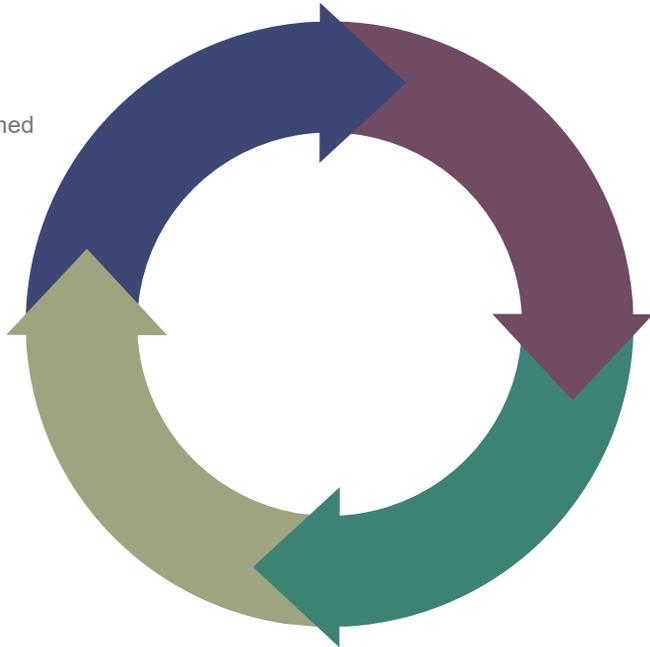
# 3. Audit scope, approach and timeline

## Planning January – February 2022

- Planning visit and developing our understanding of the Council
- Initial opinion and value for money risk assessments
- Considering proposed accounting treatments and accounting policies
- Developing the audit strategy and planning the audit work to be performed
- Agreeing timetable and deadlines
- Preliminary analytical review
- Liaison with the Derbyshire Pension Fund audit team

## Completion by 30<sup>th</sup> November 2022

- Final review and disclosure checklist of financial statements
- Final Engagement Lead and EQCR review
- Agreeing content of letter of representation
- Reporting to the Audit Committee.
- Reviewing subsequent events
- Updating our VFM risk assessment
- Signing the auditor’s report



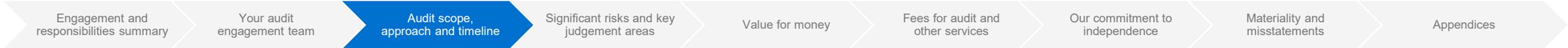
## Interim March 2022

- Documenting systems and controls
- Performing walkthroughs
- Interim controls testing including tests of IT general controls
- Early substantive testing of transactions
- Reassessment of audit plan and revision if necessary
- Completion of our VFM risk assessment

## Fieldwork June – August 2022

- Receiving and reviewing draft financial statements
- Reassessment of audit plan and revision if necessary
- Executing the strategy starting with significant risks and high risk areas
- Reviewing the assurances provided by the Derbyshire Pension Fund audit team
- Communicating progress and issues
- Clearance meeting
- Further work on any identified VFM risks

The timetable above is based on the dates set out in DLUHC’s December 2021 consultation for the 2021/22 accounts, which proposed draft accounts and audited accounts deadlines as 31<sup>st</sup> July 2022 and 30<sup>th</sup> November 2022 respectively.



# 3. Audit scope, approach and timeline

## Internal audit

We will continue to liaise with internal audit to inform our continual risk assessment.

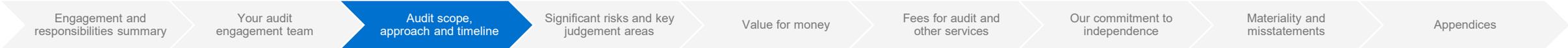
## Management’s and our experts

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

Item of account	Management’s expert	Our expert
Property Plant and Equipment - valuations	Internal Valuer	We will if necessary engage our internal valuation team to review Management’s expert’s valuation of specific assets
Net Pensions Pension Liability - valuations	Hymans Robertson	PWC (the consulting actuary appointed by the National Audit Office)
Financial instrument disclosures	Arlingclose Ltd	Not applicable

## Liaison with other auditors

We will again, under the existing protocol in place, liaise with the Mazars audit team carrying out the Derbyshire Pension Fund audit regarding the assurances we need in relation to the Council’s IAS19 valuation report. These assurances are required before we can complete the audit of the Council’s accounts and the audit opinions on the two sets of accounts are issued at the same time.



# 04

Section 04:

**Significant risks and other key  
judgement areas**

# 4. Significant risks and other key judgement areas

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

## Significant risk

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

## Enhanced risk

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

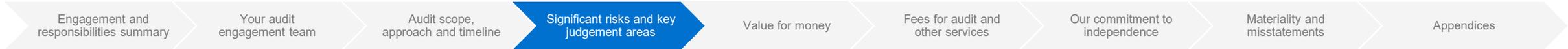
- key areas of management judgement, including accounting estimates which are material but are not considered to give rise to a significant risk of material misstatement; and
- other audit assertion risks arising from significant events or transactions that occurred during the period.

## Standard risk

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

## Area of Focus

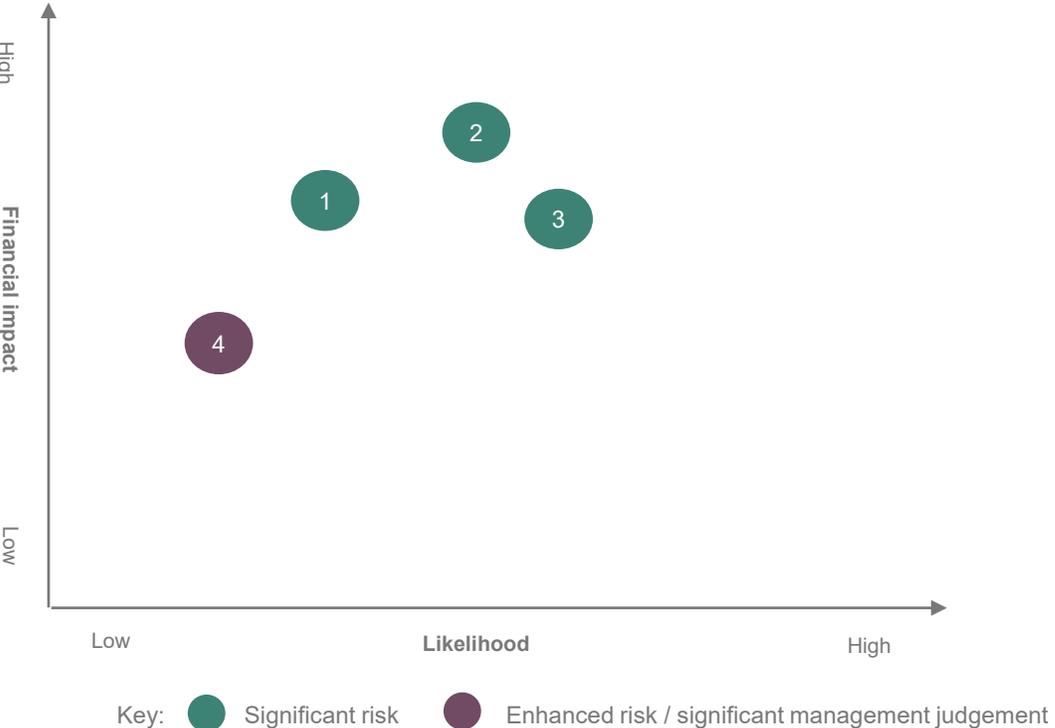
Where we identify a material item of account or aspect of financial reporting that represents a challenge to the Council, we will highlight to the Audit Committee as one where we will focus our audit attention.



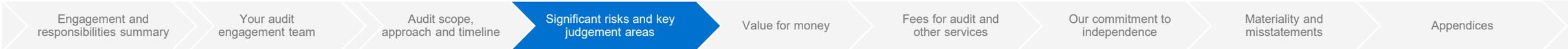
# 4. Significant risks and other key judgement areas

## Summary risk assessment

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



Risk	Risk rating 2020/21
1 Management override of controls	Significant risk (no change)
2 Net defined benefit liability valuation	Significant risk (no change)
3 Valuation of Land and Buildings	Significant risk (no change)
4 Accounting for the waste management treatment plant (SinFin)	Enhanced (no change)



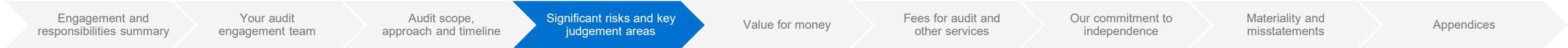
# 4. Significant risks and other key judgement areas

## Specific identified audit risks and planned testing strategy

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

## Significant risks

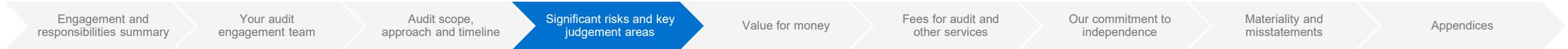
	Description	Fraud	Error	Judgement	Planned response
1	<p><b>Management override of controls</b></p> <p>This is a mandatory significant risk on all audits due to the unpredictable way in which such override could occur.</p> <p>Management at various levels within an organisation are in a unique position to perpetrate fraud because of their ability to manipulate accounting records and prepare fraudulent financial statements by overriding controls that otherwise appear to be operating effectively. Due to the unpredictable way in which such override could occur there is a risk of material misstatement due to fraud on all audits</p>	●	-	-	We plan to address the management override of controls risk through performing audit work over accounting estimates, journal entries and significant transactions outside the normal course of business or otherwise unusual.



# 4. Significant risks and other key judgement areas

## Significant risks

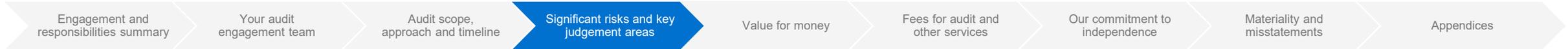
	Description	Fraud	Error	Judgement	Planned response
2	<p><b>Net defined benefit liability valuation</b></p> <p>The defined benefit liability relating to the Local Government pension scheme represents a significant balance on the Council's balance sheet.</p> <p>The Council uses an actuary to provide an annual valuation of these liabilities in line with the requirements of IAS 19 Employee Benefits.</p> <p>Due to the high degree of estimation uncertainty associated with this valuation, we have determined there is a significant risk in this area.</p> <p>Relevant Account Balances (taken from the 2020/21 financial statements):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pension Liability – LGPS: £1,027m</li> </ul>	-	●	●	<p>We plan to address the risk by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>critically assess the competency, objectivity and independence of the Pension Fund's Actuary;</li> <li>liaise with the auditors of the Derbyshire Pension Fund to gain assurance that the controls in place at the Pension Fund are operating effectively. This will included the processes and controls in place to ensure data provided to the Actuary by the Pension Fund for the purposes of the IAS 19 valuation is complete and accurate;</li> <li>review the appropriateness of the Pension Asset and Liability valuation methodologies applied by the Pension Fund Actuary, and the key assumptions included within the valuation. This will include comparing them to expected ranges, utilising information by the consulting actuary engaged by the National Audit Office; and</li> <li>agree the data in the IAS 19 valuation report provided by the Fund Actuary for accounting purposes to the pension accounting entries and disclosures in the Council's financial statements.</li> </ul>



# 4. Significant risks and other key judgement areas

## Significant risks

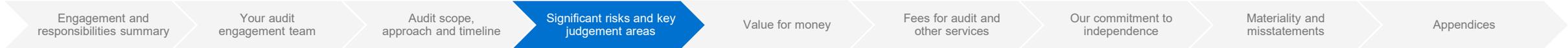
	Description	Fraud	Error	Judgement	Planned response
3	<p><b>Valuation of Land and Buildings</b></p> <p>Land and buildings assets are a significant balance on the council's balance sheet. The valuation of these properties is complex and is subject to a number of management assumptions and judgements. Due to the high degree of estimation uncertainty associated, we have determined there is a significant risk in this area.</p> <p>At the planning stage of the audit, this risk covers (figures have been taken from the 2020/21 financial statements):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Land &amp; Buildings (£1,198m - Note 14)</li> </ul>	-	●	●	<p>We plan to address this risk by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>critically assessing the scope of work, qualifications, objectivity and independence of the Council's valuer to carry out the required programme of revaluations;</li> <li>considering whether the overall revaluation methodologies used by the Council's valuers are in line with industry practice, the CIPFA code of practice and the Council's accounting policies;</li> <li>assessing whether valuation movements are in line with market expectations by considering valuation trends;</li> <li>critically assessing the approach that the Council adopts to ensure that assets that are not subject to revaluation in 2021/22 are materially correct, including considering the robustness of that approach in light of the valuation information reported by the Councils valuers.</li> </ul>



# 4. Significant risks and other key judgement areas

## Other key areas of management judgement and enhanced risks

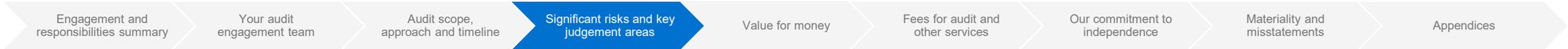
	Description	Fraud	Error	Judgement	Planned response
4	<p><b>SinFin Waste Recycling</b></p> <p>The long-term waste management contract between Derbyshire County Council, Derby City Council and Resource Recovery Solutions came to an end in 2019. Work is underway to determine the condition and capability of the currently non-operational treatment facility. The Council's management will need to make a judgement on how to account for the asset in 2021/22.</p>	-	-	●	We will evaluate the basis of the accounting judgement and the impact on the financial statements for 2021/22 including the adequacy of disclosures.



# 4. Significant risks and other key judgement areas

## Other areas of focus

	Description	Planned response
5	<p><b>IFRS 16 implementation</b></p> <p>IFRS 16 is applicable from 1 April 2022. The Council is required to make a disclosure in its 2021/22 accounts on the impact of IFRS 16 as an accounting standard 'not yet adopted'. We know from our engagement with the Council in 2020/21 that it has been undertaking preparation work. Given the importance of the adequate preparations for implementing IFRS 16 on 1 April 2022, we highlight this as an area of audit focus.</p>	<p>We will consider the Council's preparations for implementing IFRS 16As part of our interim audit, we will review the preparation work that the Council has carried out for the implementation of IFRS 16 on 1 April 2022 and discuss the disclosure planned for the 2021/22 accounts.</p>



# 05

Section 05:  
**Value for Money**

# 6. Value for Money

## The framework for Value for Money work

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

The new Code of Audit Practice (the Code) has changed the way in which we report our findings in relation to Value for Money (VFM) arrangements from 2020/21. We are still required to be satisfied that the Council has proper arrangements in place and to report in the auditor's report where we identify significant weaknesses in arrangements. However, the key output of our work on VFM arrangements will now be a commentary on the Council's arrangements which will form part of the Auditor's Annual Report.

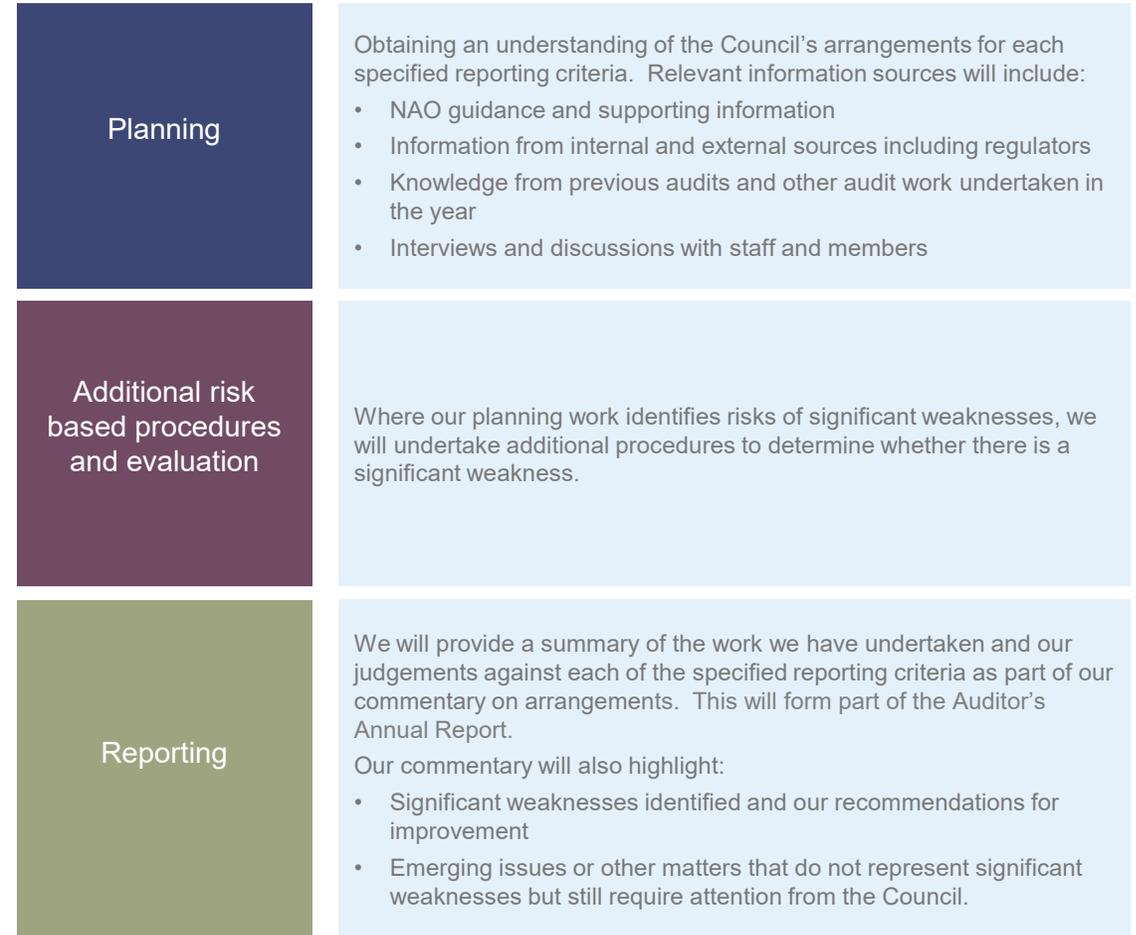
## Specified reporting criteria

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

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

## Our approach

Our work falls into three primary phases as outlined opposite. We need to gather sufficient evidence to support our commentary on the Council's arrangements and to identify and report on any significant weaknesses in arrangements. Where significant weaknesses are identified we are required to report these to the Council and make recommendations for improvement. Such recommendations can be made at any point during the audit cycle and we are not expected to wait until issuing our overall commentary to do so.



# 5. Value for Money

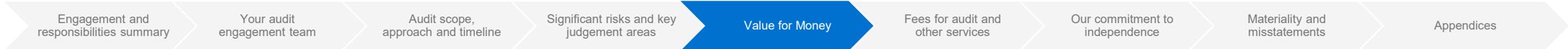
## Risks of significant weaknesses in arrangements

We reported our 2020/21 VFM commentary in the Annual Auditor’s Report issued to the Council in January 2022. We reported that we had not identified any risks of, or actual, significant weaknesses in the Council’s VFM arrangements and there were no recommendations arising from our work. We have not fully completed our 2021/22 planning and risk assessment work at this stage and have so far not identified any risks of, or actual, significant weaknesses.

We have, though, based on our brought forward understanding of the issues faced by the Council, some areas of focus for our continuing risk assessment:

- **Financial resilience:** In the Annual Auditors Report 2020/21, we drew attention to the Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy. Although the 2020/21 budget was balanced savings of £72m were required over the life of the 5 year Strategy with only £38m identified as planned or expected. This left £35m still to be found. The draft 2022/23 budget, presented to the Cabinet in February 2022, is again balanced but highlights that whilst the overall savings target to 2026/27 had fallen to £67m the level of savings still to be found had increased to £40m. Although this situation does not represent an immediate problem to the Council’s financial sustainability it does place pressure on reserve levels in future years. Careful monitoring of the situation, advance planning and responding quickly to any changes will be of particular importance moving forward.
- **Waste treatment plant (Sinfin):** SinFin Waste Recycling – The long-term waste management contract between Derbyshire County Council, Derby City Council and Resource Recovery Solutions came to an end in 2019. The facility was due to be operational in 2017, however this did not happen as intended. Following a sustained period of the Councils asking the funding banks to step-in and get the Waste Recycling facility fully operational, the banks issued a legal notice (called a “No Liquid Market” notice) that brought the contract to an end and the Councils did not dispute the notice. The Councils continue to explore future options for the site, including the negotiation of settlement with the funding banks.

We will, if necessary, report any identified risks or weaknesses to the Audit Committee on completion of our planning and risk identification and will report our final VFM commentary through the 2021/22 Annual Auditor’s Report.



# 06

Section 06:

**Fees for audit and other services**

## 6. Fees for audit and other services

### Fees for work as the Council's appointed auditor

Details of the 2020/21 actual and planned 2021/22 fees are set out below:

Area of work	2021/22 Fees	2020/21 Actual Fee
Scale audit fee	£96,524	£96,524
<i>Fee variations:</i>		
Additional testing on Property, Plant & Equipment and Defined Benefit Pensions Schemes and quality control procedures as a major local audit as a result of changes in regulatory expectations	£11,965 <sup>1</sup>	£11,965
Additional testing as a result of the implementation of new auditing standards: ISA 220 (Revised): Quality control of an audit of financial statements; ISA 540 (Revised): Auditing accounting estimates and related disclosures; ISA570 (Revised) Going Concern	£4,644 <sup>2</sup>	£4,644 <sup>2</sup>
Additional testing on new audit risks relating to the accounting for Covid-19 grants	-	£1,188
Other additional costs	TBC	-
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>£113,133</b>	<b>£114,321</b>
Additional work arising from the change in the Code of Audit Practice	Expected to be at least £10,000 <sup>3</sup>	£14,063
<b>Total</b>	<b>£123,133 <sup>4</sup></b>	<b>£128,384</b>

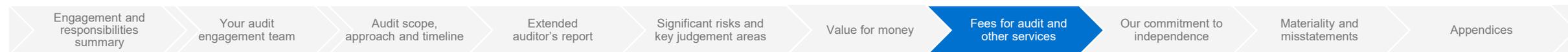
<sup>1</sup> As previously reported to you, the scale fee has been adjusted to take into account the additional work required as a result of increased regulatory expectations in these areas.

<sup>2</sup> For 2020/21, new auditing standards have been introduced which will lead to additional audit work not reflected in the scale fee.

<sup>3</sup> As explained in section 5, the revised Code of Audit Practice has led to a substantial amount of additional audit work to support the new value for money conclusion and the changes in reporting requirements. The final fee will take into account the extent and complexity of any significant weaknesses in arrangements we identify.

<sup>4</sup> This is a proposed fee for 2021/22 at the point of the issue of our ASM. This figure is subject to change and additional costs will be discussed with management.

We continue to liaise with PSAA regarding the 2020/21 and 2021/22 fee variations and sector-wide adjustments to the scale fee. We will also assess the impact of any additional work arising from the implementation of IFRS16 Leases.

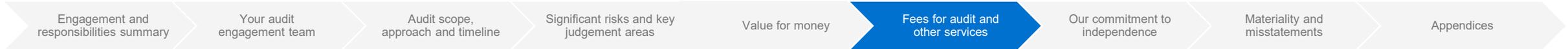


# 6. Fees for audit and other services

## Fees for non-PSAA work

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

Area of work	2021/22 Indicative Fee	2020/21 Actual Fee
Assurance services – Teachers’ Pensions Return	£4,000	£3,500
Local Transport Plan Grant Assurance	£5,500	£5,000



# 07

Section 07:

**Our commitment to independence**

# 7. Our commitment to independence

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

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

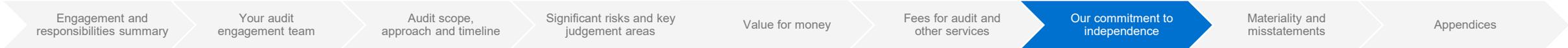
We have policies and procedures in place which are designed to ensure that we carry out our work with integrity, objectivity and independence. These policies include:

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

We confirm, as at the date of this document, that the engagement team and others in the firm as appropriate, Mazars LLP are independent and comply with relevant ethical requirements. However, if at any time you have concerns or questions about our integrity, objectivity or independence please discuss these with Mark SurrIDGE in the first instance.

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

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



# 08

Section 08:

**Materiality and other misstatements**

# 8. Materiality and misstatements

## Summary of initial materiality thresholds

Threshold	Initial threshold £'000s
Overall materiality	30,370
Performance materiality	22,770
Specific Materiality - Senior Officer remuneration disclosure	10
Trivial threshold for errors to be reported to the Audit Committee	910

## Materiality

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

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

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

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

- Have a reasonable knowledge of business, economic activities and accounts;
- Have a willingness to study the information in the financial statements with reasonable diligence;
- Understand that financial statements are prepared, presented and audited to levels of materiality;

- Recognize the uncertainties inherent in the measurement of amounts based on the use of estimates, judgement and the consideration of future events; and
- Will make reasonable economic decisions on the basis of the information in the financial statements.

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

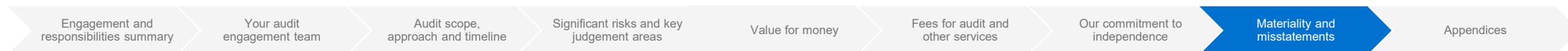
Whilst planning, we make judgements about the size of misstatements which we consider to be material and which provides a basis for determining the nature, timing and extent of risk assessment procedures, identifying and assessing the risk of material misstatement and determining the nature, timing and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

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

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

Our provisional materiality is set based on a benchmark of Gross Revenue Expenditure at Surplus/deficit on Provision of Services level. We will identify a figure for materiality but identify separate levels for procedures design to detect individual errors, and also a level above which all identified errors will be reported to the Audit Committee.

We consider that the Gross Revenue Expenditure at Surplus/deficit on Provision of Services level remains the key focus of users of the financial statements and, as such, we base our materiality levels around this benchmark.



# 8. Materiality and misstatements

## Materiality (continued)

We expect to set a materiality threshold at 2% of Gross Revenue Expenditure at Surplus/deficit on Provision of Services level. This is at the top of the accepted % range in our audit approach and reflects our professional judgement on the risk profile of the Council and its financing. Based on prior year financial statements we anticipate the overall materiality for the year ending 31 March 2022 to be in the region of £30m (£30m in the prior year).

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

## Performance Materiality

Performance materiality is the amount or amounts set by the auditor at less than materiality for the financial statements as a whole to reduce, to an appropriately low level, the probability that the aggregate of uncorrected and undetected misstatements exceeds materiality for the financial statements as a whole. Our initial assessment of performance materiality is based on low inherent risk, meaning that we have applied 75% of overall materiality as performance materiality. This is close to the top of the accepted % range in our audit approach (80%) and reflects our professional judgement on underlying complexity and volume of the Council's accounts.

## Misstatements

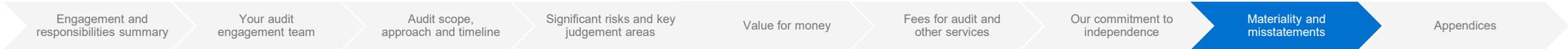
We accumulate misstatements identified during the audit that are other than clearly trivial. We set a level of triviality for individual errors identified (a reporting threshold) for reporting to the Audit Committee that is consistent with the level of triviality that we consider would not need to be accumulated because we expect that

the accumulation of such amounts would not have a material effect on the financial statements. Based on our preliminary assessment of overall materiality, our proposed triviality threshold is £910,000 based on 3% of overall materiality. If you have any queries about this please do not hesitate to raise these with Mark Surridge.

## Reporting to the Audit Committee.

The following three types of audit differences will be presented to the Audit Committee:

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





## Appendix: Key communication points

# Appendix: Key communication points

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

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

## Form, timing and content of our communications

We will present the following reports:

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

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

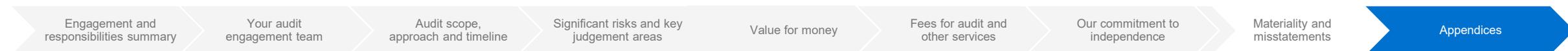
## Key communication points at the planning stage as included in this Audit Strategy Memorandum

- Our responsibilities in relation to the audit of the financial statements;
- The planned scope and timing of the audit;
- Significant audit risks and areas of management judgement;

- Our commitment to independence;
- Responsibilities for preventing and detecting errors;
- Materiality and misstatements; and
- Fees for audit and other services.

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

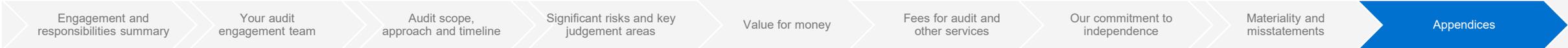
- Significant deficiencies in internal control;
- Significant findings from the audit;
- Significant matters discussed with management;
- Our conclusions on the significant audit risks and areas of management judgement;
- Summary of misstatements;
- Management representation letter;
- Our proposed draft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



# Appendix: Key communication points

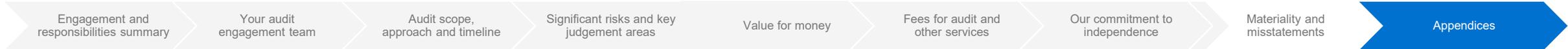
ISA (UK) 260 'Communication with Those Charged with Governance', ISA (UK) 265 'Communicating Deficiencies In Internal Control To Those Charged With Governance And Management' and other ISAs (UK) specifically require us to communicate the following:

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



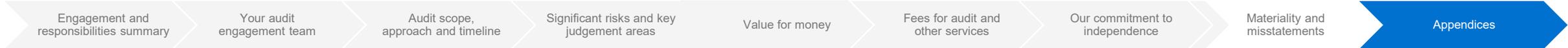
# Appendix: Key communication points

Required communication	Where addressed
Significant matters arising during the audit in connection with the entity's related parties including, when applicable: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-disclosure by management;</li> <li>• Inappropriate authorisation and approval of transactions;</li> <li>• Disagreement over disclosures;</li> <li>• Non-compliance with laws and regulations; and</li> <li>• Difficulty in identifying the party that ultimately controls the entity.</li> </ul>	Audit Completion Report
Significant findings from the audit including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our view about the significant qualitative aspects of accounting practices including accounting policies, accounting estimates and financial statement disclosures;</li> <li>• Significant difficulties, if any, encountered during the audit;</li> <li>• Significant matters, if any, arising from the audit that were discussed with management or were the subject of correspondence with management;</li> <li>• Written representations that we are seeking;</li> <li>• Expected modifications to the audit report; and</li> <li>• Other matters, if any, significant to the oversight of the financial reporting process or otherwise identified in the course of the audit that we believe will be relevant to Audit Committee in the context of fulfilling their responsibilities.</li> </ul>	Audit Completion Report
Significant deficiencies in internal controls identified during the audit.	Audit Completion Report
Where relevant, any issues identified with respect to authority to obtain external confirmations or inability to obtain relevant and reliable audit evidence from other procedures.	Audit Completion Report



# Appendix: Key communication points

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



# Mark Surridge

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

\*where permitted under applicable country laws.