







Merton Pension Fund. Civic Centre. London Road, Morden, SM4 5DQ

Dear Committee Members

Audit planning report

We are pleased to attach our audit planning report for the forthcoming meeting of the Standards and General Purposes Committee. The purpose of this report is provide the Committee with a basis to review our proposed audit approach and scope for the 2017-18 audit, in accordance with the requirements of the auditing standards and other professional requirements, but also to ensure that our audit is aligned with the Committee's service expectations.

This report summarises our assessment of the key issues which drive the development of an effective audit for Merton Pension Fund. We have aligned our audit approach and scope with these.

This report is intended solely for the information and use of the Standards and General Purposes 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 15 March 2018 as well as understand whether there are other matters which you consider may influence our audit.

Yours faithfully

Suresh Patel

Associate Partner

For and on behalf of Ernst & Young

Contents



In April 2015 Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) issued "Statement of responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies". It is available from the via the PSAA website (www.PSAA.co.uk). 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 (updated February 2017)" 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 Standards and General Purposes Committee and management of Merton Pension Fund in accordance with the statement of responsibilities. Our work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Standards and General Purposes Committee, and management of Merton Pension Fund those matters we are required to state to them in this report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Committee and management of Merton Pension Fund for this report or for the opinions we have formed. It should not be provided to any third-party without our prior written consent.





Overview of our 2017-18 audit strategy

The following 'dashboard' summarises the significant accounting and auditing matters outlined in this report. It seeks to provide the Standards and General Purposes 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
Risk of management override	Fraud risk	No change	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.

Page Planning materiality £13.0mn

We have set materiality at £13mn, which represents 2% of 2016-17 net assets. This is consistent with the basis we used to determine materiality in the prior year.

Performance materiality

We have set performance materiality at £9,75mn, which represents 75% of materiality.

£9.75mn

Audit differences £0.65mn We will report all uncorrected misstatements relating to the Net Assets Statement and Pension Fund Account over £0.65mn. We will communicate other misstatements identified to the extent that they merit the attention of the Standards and General Purposes Committee.



Audit risks

Our response to significant risks

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

Management Override

Financial statement impact

We have assessed that the risk of management override is most likely to affect investment income and assets in the year, specifically through journal postings.

What is the risk?

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.

What will we do?

We will:

- ► Test journals at year-end to ensure there are no unexpected or unusual postings;
- ► Test the existence and valuation of investments provided in fund manager reports to the custodian reports and independent bid prices; and
- ► Test the occurrence and measurement of investment income notified in fund manager reports to confirmations from custodians.



Materiality

Materiality

For planning purposes, materiality for 2017-18 has been set at £13mn. This represents 2% of the net assets for 2016-17. This is consistent with the basis we used to determine materiality in the prior year. We will reassess it throughout the audit process. For Merton Pension Fund, the Net Asset Statement, which discloses the value of the investments held by the scheme, is the most appropriate measure rather than the Fund Account. Assets are key, as they cover the liabilities of the fund and generate significant income. Use of net assets as the measure of materiality is EY standard practice for pension funds.



We request that the Standards and General Purposes 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 £9.75mn which represents 75% of planning materiality. We apply 75% when it is not an initial audit and we have a sound understanding of the entity and past experience with the engagement indicates that a higher risk of misstatement is unlikely.

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 fund account and the net assets statement that have an effect on returns or that relate to expenditure.

We will communicate other uncorrected misstatements, such as reclassifications and misstatements in the statements or disclosures and corrected misstatements to the extent that they merit the attention of the Standards and General Purposes Committee, or are important from a qualitative perspective.



Objective and Scope of our Audit scoping

Under the Code of Audit Practice our principal objectives are to review and report on the Pension Fund financial statements.

Financial statement audit

Our objective is:

- To form an opinion on the financial statements under International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland); and
- To form an opinion on the consistency of the pension fund financial statements within the pension fund annual report with the published financial statements of the London Borough of Merton.

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

T 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.

Audit Process Overview

Our audit involves:

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• Identifying and understanding the key processes and internal controls; and substantive tests of detail of transactions and amounts.

For 2017-18 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.

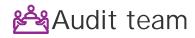
Analytics - We will use our computer-based analytics tools to enable us to capture whole populations of your financial data, in particular journal entries. These tools:

- 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.

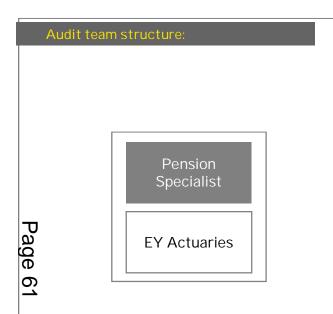
We will report the findings from our process and analytics work, including any significant weaknesses or inefficiencies identified and recommendations for improvement, to management and the Standards and General Purposes Committee.

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.





Audit team





Working together with the Pension Fund

We are working together with officers to identify continuing improvements in communication and processes for the 2017-18 audit.

We will continue to keep our audit approach under review to streamline it where possible.

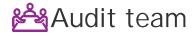
Audit team changes

Key changes to our team.



Suresh Patel, Associate Partner

- Ø Suresh takes over from Melissa Hargreaves as the Engagement Lead.
- Ø Suresh has significant public sector audit experience, with a portfolio of Local Authorities and Local Government Pension Funds
- Ø He is a member of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA).



Use of specialists

When auditing key judgements, we are often required to use the input and advice provided by specialists who have qualifications and expertise not possessed by the core audit team. The areas where specialists are expected to provide input for the current year audit are:

Area	Specialists
Pension Valuation	Management Specialist - Barnett Waddingham EY Specialist - EY actuaries

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

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

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





Audit timeline

Timetable of communication and deliverables

Timeline

Below is a timetable showing the key stages of the audit and the deliverables we have agreed to provide to you through the audit cycle in 2017-18. From time to time matters may arise that require immediate communication with the Standards and General Purposes Committee and we will discuss them with the Committee Chair as appropriate. We will also provide updates on corporate governance and regulatory matters as necessary.

Audit phase		Timetable	Standards and General Purposes Committee Meeting timetable	Deliverables
Planning: Risk assessment and sett scopes Walkthrough of key syste processes		December		
Risk assessment and sett scopes	ing of	January		
Interim audit testing		February		
Interim audit testing		March	Standards and General Purposes Meeting	Audit Planning Report Interim audit update
		April		
		May		
Year end audit Audit Completion proced	ures	June		
		July	Standards and General Purposes Committee Meeting	Audit Results Report Audit opinions and completion certificates



Audit timeline

Faster Close – Key Messages

What is the issue

Earlier accounts deadline

For 2017/18 the Council needs to prepare PF draft accounts by 31 May and the publish audited accounts by 31 July a challenge and risk for both preparers and auditors.

There are risks to the Council including the late preparation of working papers and the impact of staffing changes.

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 the same compressed timetable. Slippage at one client could put delivery of others at risk.

mitigate this risk we will require:

good quality draft accounts 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 the Council is unable to meet key dates within our agreed timetable, we will notify the Director of Corporate Services of the impact on the timing of your audit, which may be that we postpone the audit until later in the summer and redeploy the team to other work to meet deadlines elsewhere.

Where we require additional work to complete your audit, due to new risks, scope changes, or poor audit evidence, we will notify the Director of Corporate Services of the impact on the timing of the audit and fees. Such circumstances may result in a delay to your audit while we complete other work elsewhere.

What will we do?

To support the Pension Fund we will:

- Work with the Pension Fund to engage early to facilitate early substantive testing where appropriate, specially our IAS19 protocol testing needed to support the audit of Merton Council.
- Provide an early review on the Pension Fund's streamlining of the Statement of Accounts where nonmaterial 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 2017/18 financial year.
- Work with the Pension Fund to implement 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.



Independence

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

► 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

Final stage

- 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 is independent;
- ▶ 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 Suresh Patel, 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 Fund. Examples include where we receive significant fees in respect of non-addit 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 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.

me 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, there are no non-audit fees associated with Merton Pension Fund. No additional safeguards are required.

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

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

Self review threats

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

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

Management threats

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

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



Relationships, services and related threats and safeguards

Other threats

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

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

Other communications

EY Transparency Report 2017

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

tetails of the key policies and processes in place within EY for maintaining objectivity and independence can be found in our annual Transparency Report is the firm is required to publish by law. The most recent version of this Report is for the year ended 1 July 2017 and can be found here:

http://www.ey.com/uk/en/about-us/ey-uk-transparency-report-2017





Appendix A

Fees

The duty to prescribe fees is a statutory function delegated to Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

PSAA has published a scale fee for all relevant 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 NAO Code.

	Planned fee 2017-18	Final Fee 2016-17
	£	£
Total Fee	21,000	21,000
Tajal audit	21,000	21,000

(A) All fees exclude VAT The agreed fee presented is based on the following assumptions:

- ▶ Officers meeting the agreed timetable of deliverables;
- ► Our accounts opinion being unqualified;
- ► Appropriate quality of documentation is provided by the Pension Fund: and
- ▶ The Pension Fund has an effective control environment.

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

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



Required communications with the Standards and General Purposes Committee

We include the communi	Our Reporting to you	
Required communications	What is reported?	When and where
Terms of engagement	Confirmation by the Standards and General Purposes 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 D a G o	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.
Ranning and audit approach	Communication of the planned scope and timing of the audit, any limitations and the significant risks identified. When communicating key audit matters this includes the most significant risks of material misstatement (whether or not due to fraud) including those that have the greatest effect on the overall audit strategy, the allocation of resources in the audit and directing the efforts of the engagement team	Audit Planning Report
Significant findings from the audit	 Our view about the significant qualitative aspects of accounting practices including accounting policies, accounting estimates and financial statement disclosures Significant difficulties, if any, encountered during the audit Significant matters, if any, arising from the audit that were discussed with management Written representations that we are seeking Expected modifications to the audit report Other matters if any, significant to the oversight of the financial reporting process 	Audit Results Report



Required communications with the Standards and General Purposes Committee (continued)

		- Sur Hoper III.g 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: 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
Masstatements Ge 73	 Uncorrected misstatements and their effect on our audit opinion, unless prohibited by law or regulation The effect of uncorrected misstatements related to prior periods A request that any uncorrected misstatement be corrected Corrected misstatements that are significant Material misstatements corrected by management 	Audit Results Report
Fraud	 Enquiries of the Standards and General Purposes Committee to determine whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud affecting the entity Any fraud that we have identified or information we have obtained that indicates that a fraud may exist A discussion of any other matters related to fraud 	Audit Results Report
Related parties	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

Our Reporting to you



Required communications with the Standards and General Purposes Committee (continued)

		Our Reporting to you
Required communications	What is reported?	When and where
Independence	 Communication of all significant facts and matters that bear on EY's, and all individuals involved in the audit, objectivity and independence Communication of key elements of the audit engagement partner's consideration of independence and objectivity such as: The principal threats 	Audit planning report Audit Results Report
Page 7	 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 	
Z External confirmations	 Management's refusal for us to request confirmations Inability to obtain relevant and reliable audit evidence from other procedures 	Audit Results Report
Consideration of laws and regulations	 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 Standards and General Purposes Committee into possible instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations that may have a material effect on the financial statements and that the Committee may be aware of 	Audit Results Report
Internal controls	Significant deficiencies in internal controls identified during the audit	Audit Results Report
Representations	Written representations we are requesting from management and/or those charged with governance	Assurance Letter
Material inconsistencies and misstatements	 Material inconsistencies or misstatements of fact identified in other information which management has refused to revise 	Audit Results Report
Auditors report	 Key audit matters that we will include in our auditor's report Any circumstances identified that affect the form and content of our auditor's report 	Audit Results Report

Our Reporting to you

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 Fund's internal control.
- Evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Concluding on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting.
- Evaluating the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.
- Obtaining sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding the financial information of the entities or business activities
 within the Fund to express an opinion on the consolidated financial statements. Reading other information contained in
 the financial statements, including the board's statement that the annual report is fair, balanced and understandable,
 the Standards and General Purposes Committee reporting appropriately addresses matters communicated by us to the
 Committee and reporting whether it is materially inconsistent with our understanding and the financial statements; and
- Maintaining auditor independence.

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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 financial statements; and
- The level of work performed on individual account balances and financial statement disclosures.

me 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 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 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.

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