

MEDWAY COUNCIL

AUDIT PLAN TO THE AUDIT COMMITTEE
Audit for the year ending 31 March 2017

Date of issue: 9 March 2017

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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE AND USE OF OUR REPORT

The purpose of this report is to highlight and explain the key issues which we believe to be relevant to the audit of the financial statements and use of resources of Medway Council for the year ending 31 March 2017. It forms a key part of our communication strategy with you, a strategy which is designed to promote effective two-way communication throughout the audit process. Planning is an iterative process and our plans, reflected in this report, will be reviewed and updated as our audit progresses.

This report has been prepared solely for the use of the Audit Committee.

In preparing this report, we do not accept or assume responsibility for any other purpose. If others choose to rely on the contents of this report, they do so entirely at their own risk.

YOUR BDO TEAM



Name	Contact details	Key responsibilities
David Eagles Engagement Lead	Tel: 01473 320728 Mob: 07967 203431 david.eagles@bdo.co.uk	Oversee the audit and sign the audit report
Alison Langridge Project Manager	Tel: 01473 320752 Mob: 07595 244858 alison.langridge@bdo.co.uk	Management of the audit
Nuwan Indika Senior	Tel: 01473 320807 Mob: 07966 243886 nuwan.indika@bdo.co.uk	Day to day supervision of the audit team

David Eagles is the engagement lead and has the primary responsibility to ensure that the appropriate audit opinion is given on the financial statements.

In meeting this responsibility, he will ensure that the audit has resulted in obtaining sufficient and appropriate evidence to provide reasonable, but not absolute, assurance that:

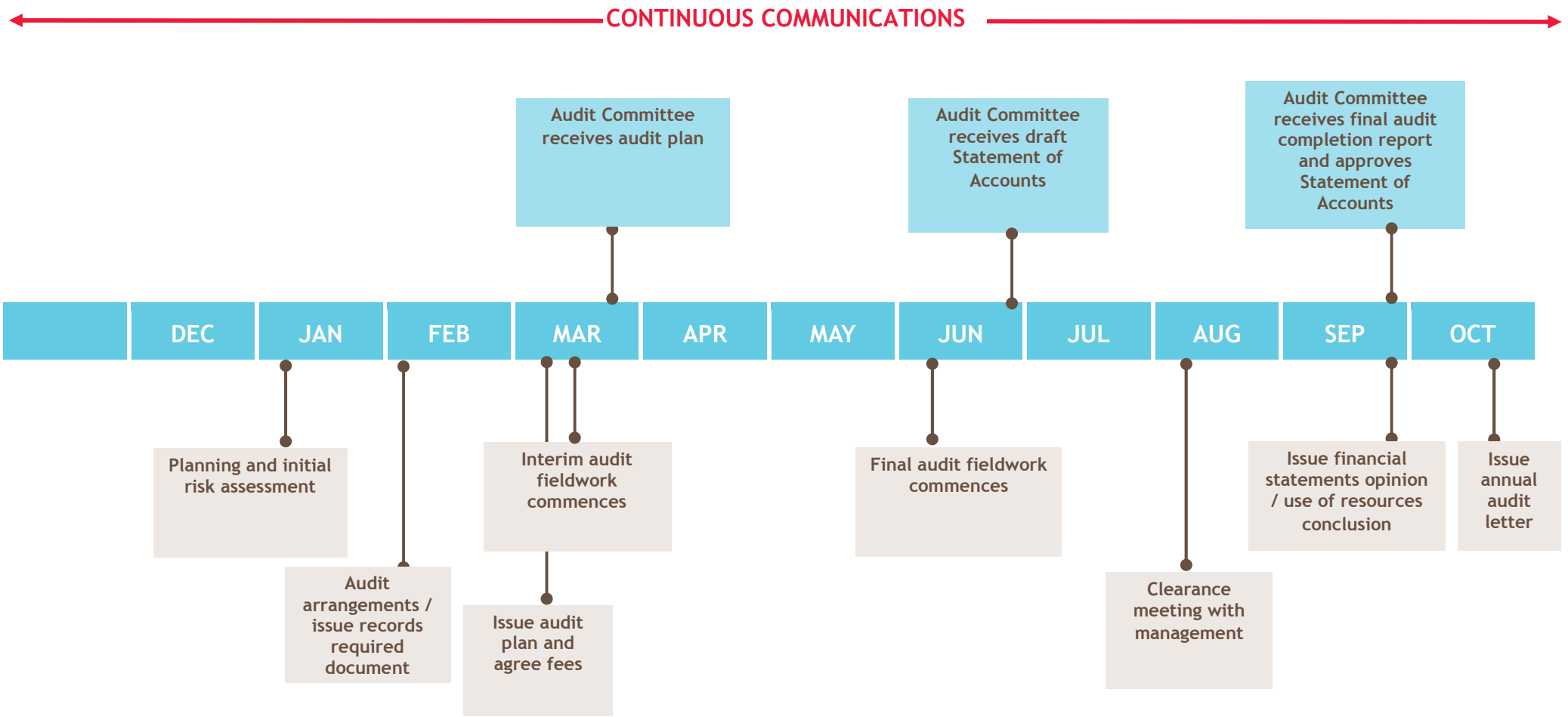
- the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error
- the authority has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

He is responsible for the overall quality of the engagement.

ENGAGEMENT TIMETABLE

TIMETABLE

The timeline below identifies the key dates and anticipated meetings for the production and approval of the audited financial statements and completion of the use of resources audit.



AUDIT SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

Our audit scope covers the audit in accordance with the National Audit Office (NAO) Code of Audit Practice, International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) and other guidance issued by the NAO.

Our objective is to form an opinion on whether:

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS		OTHER INFORMATION	WGA CONSOLIDATION	USE OF RESOURCES
<p>1 The financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of the authority and its expenditure and income for the period in question.</p>	<p>2 The financial statements have been prepared properly in accordance with the relevant accounting and reporting framework as set out in legislation, applicable accounting standards or other direction.</p>	<p>3 Other information published together with the audited financial statements is consistent with the financial statements (including the governance statement).</p>	<p>4 The return required to facilitate the preparation of the Whole of Government Accounts (WGA) consolidated accounts is consistent with the audited financial statements.</p>	<p>5 The authority has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.</p>

ADDITIONAL POWERS AND DUTIES

<p>6 Where necessary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the issue of a report in the public interest Make a written recommendation to the authority Allow electors to raise questions about the accounts and consider objections 	<p>7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply to the court for a declaration that an item of account is contrary to law Consider whether to issue an advisory notice or to make an application for judicial review.
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MATERIALITY

AUTHORITY MATERIALITY

	MATERIALITY	CLEARLY TRIVIAL THRESHOLD
Medway Council	£11,700,000	£350,000

Please see Appendix I for detailed definitions of materiality and triviality.

Planning materiality for the Council has been based on 2% of average gross expenditure for the current and two preceding years. At this stage, the current year figure is based on the prior year financial statements. This will be revisited when the draft financial statements are received for audit.

The clearly trivial amount is based on 3% of the materiality level.

OVERALL AUDIT STRATEGY

We will perform a risk based audit on the authority's financial statements and use of resources

This enables us to focus our work on key audit areas.

Our starting point is to document our understanding of the Council's business and the specific risks it faces. We discussed the changes to the business and management's own view of potential audit risk to gain an understanding of the authority's activities and to determine which risks impact on our audit. We will continue to update this assessment throughout the audit.

For the financial statements audit, we also confirm our understanding of the accounting systems in order to ensure their adequacy as a basis for the preparation of the financial statements and that proper accounting records have been maintained.

For the use of resources audit, we consider the significance of business and operational risks insofar as they relate to 'proper arrangements', including risks at both sector and authority-specific level, and draw on relevant cost and performance information as appropriate.

The new, single criterion set by the NAO that underpins our work is:

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.

We then carry out our audit procedures in responses to audit risks.

Audit risks and planned audit responses

For the financial statements audit, under International Standard on Auditing (ISA) 315 "Identifying and assessing the risks of material misstatement through understanding the entity and its environment", we are required to consider significant risks that require special audit attention.

In assessing a risk as significant, we exclude the effects of identified controls related to the risk. The ISA requires us at least to consider:

- Whether the risk is a risk of fraud
- Whether the risk is related to recent significant economic, accounting or other developments and, therefore, requires specific attention

- The complexity of transactions
- Whether the risk involves significant transactions with related parties
- The degree of subjectivity in the measurement of financial information related to the risk, especially those measurements involving a wide range of measurement uncertainty
- Whether the risk involves significant transactions that are outside the normal course of business for the entity, or that otherwise appear to be unusual.

For the use of resources audit, the NAO has provided information on potential significant risks such as:

- Organisational change and transformation
- Significant funding gaps in financial planning
- Legislative or policy changes
- Repeated financial difficulties or persistently poor performance
- Information from other inspectorates and review agencies suggesting governance issues or poor service performance.

We consider the relevance of these risks to the authority in forming our risk assessment and audit strategy.

Internal Audit

We will ensure that we maximise the benefit of the overall audit effort carried out by Internal Audit and ourselves, whilst retaining the necessary independence of view.

We understand that internal audit reviews have been undertaken across a range of accounting systems and governance subjects. We will review relevant reports as part of our audit planning and consider whether to place any reliance on Internal Audit work as evidence of the soundness of the control environment.

Fraud risk assessment

We have discussed with management its assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated due to fraud and the processes for identifying and responding to the risks of fraud.

Management believe that the risk of material misstatement due to fraud in the authority's financial statements is low and that controls in operation would prevent or detect material fraud. We are informed by management that there have not been any cases of significant or material fraud to their knowledge.

We are required to discuss with those charged with governance their oversight of management's processes for identifying and responding to risks of all fraud.

We expect Audit Committee Members, as those charged with governance, to let us know if there are any actual, suspected or alleged instances of fraud of which they are aware.

KEY AUDIT RISKS AND OTHER MATTERS

Key: ■ Significant risk ■ Normal risk

AUDIT RISK AREAS - FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

RISK	DESCRIPTION	PLANNED AUDIT RESPONSE	EXTERNAL DATA TO BE USED TO CORROBORATE AUDIT EVIDENCE
Management override	<p>The primary responsibility for the detection of fraud rests with management. Their role in the detection of fraud is an extension of their role in preventing fraudulent activity. They are responsible for establishing a sound system of internal control designed to support the achievement of departmental policies, aims and objectives and to manage the risks facing the organisation; this includes the risk of fraud.</p> <p>Under International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) 240, there is a presumed significant risk of management override of the system of internal controls.</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test the appropriateness of a sample of journal entries recorded in the general ledger and other adjustments made in the preparation of the financial statements. We will select those journal entries and other adjustments that are considered to be of high risk based on our knowledge of the Council. • Review accounting estimates for biases and evaluate whether the circumstances producing the bias, if any, represent a risk of material misstatement due to fraud. • Obtain an understanding of the business rationale for significant transactions that are outside the normal course of business for the entity or that otherwise appear to be unusual. 	Not applicable
Revenue recognition - Fees and charges	<p>Under auditing Standards there is a presumption that income recognition presents a fraud risk. For local authorities, the risks can be identified as affecting the accuracy and existence of income.</p> <p>We consider there to be a significant risk of material misstatement in relation to the existence (recognition) and accuracy of fees and charges.</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test a sample of fees and charges income streams to ensure income has been recorded in the correct period and that all income has been accurately recorded. 	Not applicable

KEY AUDIT RISKS AND OTHER MATTERS

Continued

AUDIT RISK AREAS - FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

RISK	DESCRIPTION	PLANNED AUDIT RESPONSE	EXTERNAL DATA TO BE USED TO CORROBORATE AUDIT EVIDENCE
<p>Changes in presentation of the financial statements</p>	<p>The Code requires a change to the presentation of some areas of the financial statements. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change to the format of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES) • Change to the format of the Movement in Reserves Statement (MIRS) • New Expenditure and Funding Analysis (EFA) note • Change to the Segmental Reporting note • New Expenditure and Income analysis note. <p>These changes will require a restatement to the 2015/16 CIES. There is a risk that these presentational changes are not correctly applied in the financial statements.</p>	<p>We will review the draft financial statements and check these against the CIPFA Disclosure Checklist to ensure that all of the required presentational changes have been correctly reflected within the financial statements.</p>	<p>Not applicable.</p>
<p>Pension liability assumptions</p>	<p>The net pension liability comprises the Authority's share of the market value of assets held in the Kent County Council pension scheme and the estimated future liability to pay pensions.</p> <p>An actuarial estimate of the pension fund liability is calculated by an independent firm of actuaries with specialist knowledge and experience. The estimate is based on the most up to date membership data held by the pension fund and has regard to local factors such as mortality rates and expected pay rises along with other assumptions around inflation when calculating the liability.</p> <p>A full actuarial valuation is carried out in every three years with the latest being at 31 March 2016, results of which will be reported in 2016/17.</p> <p>There is a risk the valuation is not based on accurate membership data or uses inappropriate assumptions to value the liability.</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree the disclosures to the information provided by the pension fund actuary • Contact the administering authority and request confirmation of the controls in place for providing accurate membership data to the actuary • Review the reasonableness of the assumptions used in the calculation against other local government actuaries and other observable data. 	<p>We will agree the disclosures to the report received from the actuary.</p> <p>We will use the PwC consulting actuary report for the review of the methodology of the actuary and reasonableness of the assumptions.</p>

KEY AUDIT RISKS AND OTHER MATTERS

Continued

AUDIT RISK AREAS - FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

RISK	DESCRIPTION	PLANNED AUDIT RESPONSE	EXTERNAL DATA TO BE USED TO CORROBORATE AUDIT EVIDENCE
Valuation of property, plant & equipment (PPE)	<p>Local authorities are required to ensure that the carrying value of property, plant and equipment (PPE) is not materially different to the fair value at the balance sheet date.</p> <p>The Council carries out a rolling programme under which relevant items of PPE are revalued at least every five years. The assets that are not revalued in year are assessed to ensure that the carrying value is still materially accurate.</p> <p>There is a risk over the valuation of land and buildings where valuations are based on assumptions or where updated valuations have not been provided for a class of assets at year-end.</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the instructions provided to the valuer and review the valuer's skills and expertise in order to determine if we can rely on the management expert Confirm that the basis of valuation for assets valued in year is appropriate based on their usage. Confirm that an instant build modern equivalent asset basis has been used for assets valued at DRC Review valuation movements against indices of price movements for similar classes of assets and follow up valuation movements that appear unusual against indices. Review reasonableness of the carrying value of assets that are not revalued during the year. 	<p>We will review independent data that shows indices and price movements for classes of assets against the percentage movement applied by the Council.</p>
Consideration of related party transactions	<p>We need to consider if the disclosures in the financial statements concerning related party transactions are complete and adequate and in line with the requirements of the accounting standards.</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document the related party transactions identification procedures in place and review relevant information concerning any such identified transactions Discuss with management and review councillors and Senior Management declarations to ensure there are no potential related party transactions which have not been disclosed. This is something we will require you to include in your management representation letter to us. 	<p>Companies House searches for undisclosed interests.</p>

KEY AUDIT RISKS AND OTHER MATTERS

Continued

AUDIT RISK AREAS - FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

RISK	DESCRIPTION	PLANNED AUDIT RESPONSE	EXTERNAL DATA TO BE USED TO CORROBORATE AUDIT EVIDENCE
<p>Non-domestic rates appeals provision</p>	<p>Billing authorities are required to estimate the value of potential refund of business rates arising from rate appeals, including backdated appeals. The Valuation Office Agency (VOA) provides information regarding the appeals currently being assessed and settled. Management use this information to calculate a success rate for specific business types for settled appeals, and applies an appropriate rate to each type of business appeal still outstanding at year end.</p> <p>We consider there to be a risk in relation to the estimation of the provision due to potential incomplete data and assumptions used in calculating the likely success rate of appeals.</p> <p>We are aware that some NHS organisations are also appealing their business rate charge and are seeking to obtain charitable status to claim mandatory rate relief.</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the accuracy of the appeals data to confirm that it is complete based on the VAO list, and that settled appeals are removed. Review the assumptions used in the preparation of the estimate including the historic success rates to confirm if the rates applied are appropriate. Monitor progress with the potential rate relief claims from NHS organisations and the potential impact on the collection fund account. 	<p>We will compare the listing of current appeals to listings from the VOA.</p>

KEY AUDIT RISKS AND OTHER MATTERS

Continued

AUDIT RISK AREAS - USE OF RESOURCES

RISK	DESCRIPTION	PLANNED AUDIT RESPONSE	EXTERNAL DATA TO BE USED TO CORROBORATE AUDIT EVIDENCE
Sustainable finances	Government continues to reduce funding for local government, and combined with additional pressures arising from demographic and other changes, will have a significant impact on the financial resilience of the Council in the medium term.	We will review the Council's MTFS to assess the reasonableness of assumptions and how the Council is addressing financial pressures.	Not applicable.

INDEPENDENCE

INDEPENDENCE

Under Auditing and Ethical Standards, we are required as auditors to confirm our independence to ‘those charged with governance’. In our opinion, and as confirmed by you, we consider that for these purposes it is appropriate to designate the Audit Committee as those charged with governance.

Our internal procedures are designed to ensure that all partners and professional staff are aware of relationships that may be considered to have a bearing on our objectivity and independence as auditors. The principal statements of policies are set out in our firm-wide guidance. In addition, we have embedded the requirements of the Standards in our methodologies, tools and internal training programmes. The procedures require that engagement leads are made aware of any matters which may reasonably be thought to bear on the firm’s independence and the objectivity of the engagement lead and the audit staff. This document considers such matters in the context of our audit for the period ended 31 March 2017.

We confirm that the firm complies with the Financial Reporting Council’s Ethical Standards for Auditors and, in our professional judgement, is independent and objective within the meaning of those Standards.

In our professional judgement the policies and safeguards in place ensure that we are independent within the meaning of all regulatory and professional requirements and that the objectivity of the audit engagement lead and audit staff is not impaired. These policies include engagement lead and manager rotation, for which rotation is required after 5 years and 10 years respectively.

INDEPENDENCE - ENGAGEMENT TEAM ROTATION

SENIOR TEAM MEMBERS

NUMBER OF YEARS INVOLVED

DAVID EAGLES - Engagement lead

3

ALISON LANGRIDGE - Project manager

2

Should you have any comments or queries regarding this confirmation we would welcome their discussion in more detail.

FEES

FEES SUMMARY

Our proposed fees, excluding VAT, for the year ending 31 March 2017 are:

	2016/17 Proposed fee £	2015/16 Actual fee £
Code audit fee	142,451	142,451
Certification fee (Housing benefits subsidy)	9,188	9,856
Total code audit and certification fees:	151,639	152,307
Fees for non audit services - audit related (see below)	7,400	7,400
Fees for non audit services - other (see below)	-	-
TOTAL FEES	159,039	159,707

NON AUDIT SERVICES FEES ANALYSIS

£

Audit related services:

Teachers Pensions certification fee	4,200
Pooled capital receipts certification fee	3,200
Total	7,400

The above fees do not differ from those included in the fee letter that we issued 28 April 2016.

Billing arrangements

We will raise invoices for the Code audit fee on a quarterly basis, at £35,612.75 per quarter, from June 2016. Following our firm's standard terms of business, full payment will be due within 14 days of receipt of invoice. Fee invoices for other services, including the certification of the housing benefits subsidy claim, will be raised as the work is completed.

Amendments to the proposed fees

If we need to propose any amendments to the fees during the course of the audit, where our assessment of risk and complexity are significantly different from those reflected in the proposed fee or where we are required to carry out work in exercising our additional powers and duties, we will first discuss this with the Chief Finance Officer. Where this requires a variation to the scale fee we will seek approval from PSAA. If necessary, we will also prepare a report outlining the reasons why the fee needs to change for discussion with the Audit Committee. At this stage, nothing has come to our attention that would require us to seek approval to amend the scale fee.

Our fee is based on the following assumptions

The complete draft financial statements and supporting work papers will be prepared to a standard suitable for audit. All balances will be reconciled to underlying accounting records.

Key dates will be met, including receipt of draft accounts and working papers prior to commencement of the final audit fieldwork.

We will receive only one draft of the Statement of Accounts prior to receiving the final versions for signing.

Within reason, personnel we require to hold discussions with will be available during the period of our on-site work (we will set up meetings with key staff in advance).

APPENDIX I: MATERIALITY

CONCEPT AND DEFINITION

- The concept of materiality is fundamental to the preparation of the financial statements and the audit process and applies not only to monetary misstatements but also to disclosure requirements and adherence to appropriate accounting principles and statutory requirements.
- We apply the concept of materiality both in planning and performing our audit, and in evaluating the effect of misstatements. For planning, we consider materiality to be the magnitude by which misstatements, including omissions, could influence the economic decisions of reasonable users that are taken on the basis of the financial statements. In order to reduce to an appropriately low level the probability that any misstatements exceed materiality, we use a lower materiality level, performance materiality, to determine the extent of testing needed. Importantly, misstatements below these levels will not necessarily be evaluated as immaterial as we also take account of the nature of identified misstatements, and the particular circumstances of their occurrence, when evaluating their effect on the financial statements as a whole.
- Materiality therefore has qualitative as well as quantitative aspects and an item may be considered material, irrespective of its size, if it has an impact on (for example):
 - Narrative disclosure e.g. accounting policies, going concern
 - Instances when greater precision is required (e.g. senior management remuneration disclosures).
- International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) also allow the auditor to set a lower level of materiality for particular classes of transaction, account balances or disclosures for which misstatements of lesser amounts than materiality for the financial statements as a whole could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial statements.

CALCULATION AND DETERMINATION

- We have determined materiality based on professional judgement in the context of our knowledge of the authority, including consideration of factors such as sector developments, financial stability and reporting requirements for the financial statements.
- We determine materiality in order to:
 - Assist in establishing the scope of our audit engagement and audit tests
 - Calculate sample sizes
 - Assist in evaluating the effect of known and likely misstatements on the financial statements.

APPENDIX I: MATERIALITY


Continued

REASSESSMENT OF MATERIALITY

- We will reconsider materiality if, during the course of our audit engagement, we become aware of facts and circumstances that would have caused us to make a different determination of planning materiality if we had been aware.
- Further, when we have performed all our tests and are ready to evaluate the results of those tests (including any misstatements we detected) we will reconsider whether materiality combined with the nature, timing and extent of our auditing procedures, provided a sufficient audit scope. If we conclude that our audit scope was sufficient, we will use materiality to evaluate whether uncorrected misstatements (individually or in aggregate) are material.
- You should be aware that any misstatements that we identify during our audit, both corrected and uncorrected errors, might result in additional audit procedures being necessary.

UNADJUSTED ERRORS

- In accordance with auditing standards, we will communicate to the Audit Committee all uncorrected misstatements identified during our audit, other than those which we believe are 'clearly trivial'.
 - Clearly trivial is defined as matters which will be of a wholly different (smaller) order of magnitude than the materiality thresholds used in the audit, and will be matters that are clearly inconsequential, whether taken individually or in aggregate.
 - We will obtain written representations from the Audit Committee confirming that in their opinion these uncorrected misstatements are immaterial, both individually and in aggregate and that, in the context of the financial statements taken as a whole, no adjustments are required.
 - There are a number of areas where we would strongly recommend/request any misstatements identified during the audit process being adjusted. These include:
 - Clear cut errors whose correction would cause non-compliance with statutory requirements, management remuneration, other contractual obligations or governmental regulations that we consider are significant.
 - Other misstatements that we believe are material or clearly wrong.
-



The matters raised in our report prepared in connection with the audit are those we believe should be brought to your attention. They do not purport to be a complete record of all matters arising. This report is prepared solely for the use of the organisation and may not be quoted nor copied without our prior written consent. No responsibility to any third party is accepted.

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