



Audit Completion Report

Greater Manchester Pension Fund

Year ending 31 March 2020

CONTENTS

1. Executive summary
2. Significant findings
3. Internal control recommendations
4. Summary of misstatements

Appendix A – Draft management representation letter

Appendix B – Draft auditor's report

Appendix C – Independence

Our reports are prepared in the context of the 'Statement of responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies' and the 'Appointing Person Terms of Appointment' issued by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited.

Reports and letters prepared by appointed auditors and addressed to the Pension Fund are prepared for the sole use of the Pension Fund and we take no responsibility to any member or officer in their individual capacity or to any third party.

Mazars LLP is the UK firm of Mazars, an international advisory and accountancy group. Mazars LLP is registered by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales.

Audit Panel
Greater Manchester Pension Fund
c./o Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council
Tameside One
Market Place
Ashton Under Lyne
OL6 6BH

11 November 2020

Dear Members

Audit Completion Report – Year ended 31 March 2020

We are pleased to present our Audit Completion Report for the year ended 31 March 2020. The purpose of this document is to summarise our audit conclusions.

The scope of our work, including identified significant audit risks and other areas of management judgement, was outlined in our Audit Strategy Memorandum which we presented on 09 June 2020. Since then, the COVID-19 pandemic has had significant implications for the UK, including the Pension Fund sector. We have updated our planning work to understand the implications of COVID-19 on our audit and concluded that the original audit risks and other areas of management judgement in the Audit Strategy Memorandum remain appropriate:

- Management override of controls;
- Valuation of unquoted investments for which a market price is not readily available.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, MHGLC issued a revised reporting timetable for the Pension Fund to prepare its financial statements for inclusion in the Administering Authority Statement of Accounts and for the audit to be completed. We understand the difficult circumstances that the Pension Fund is facing in order to respond to the pandemic and would like to express our thanks for the assistance of your team during our audit.

If you would like to discuss any matters in more detail then please do not hesitate to contact me on 07721 234 043.

Yours faithfully

Karen Murray
Mazars LLP

Mazars LLP – One St. Peter's Square, Manchester, M2 3DE
Tel: 0161 238 9200 – www.mazars.co.uk

Mazars LLP is the UK firm of Mazars, an integrated international advisory and accountancy organisation. Mazars LLP is a limited liability partnership registered in England and Wales with registered number OC308299 and with its registered office at Tower Bridge House, St Katharine's Way, London E1W 1DD.

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 under reference number C001139861.
VAT number: 839 8356 73

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose of this report and principle conclusions

The Audit Completion Report sets out the findings from our audit of Greater Manchester Pension Fund ('the Pension Fund') for the year ended 31 March 2020, and forms the basis for discussion at the Audit Panel meeting on 24 November 2020.

The detailed scope of our work as your appointed auditor for 2019/20 is set out in the National Audit Office's (NAO) Code of Audit Practice. Our responsibilities and powers are derived from the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and, as outlined in our Audit Strategy Memorandum, our audit has been conducted in accordance with International Standards of Auditing (UK) and means we focus on audit risks that we have assessed as resulting in a higher risk of material misstatement.

Section 2 of this report outlines the detailed findings from our work on the financial statements. Section 2 also includes our conclusions on the audit risks and areas of management judgement in our Audit Strategy Memorandum, which include:

- management override of control; and
- valuation of level 3 unquoted investments for which a market price is not readily available.

Status of our work

As we outline on the following page, our work is substantially complete. Subject to the satisfactory completion of the outstanding work, at the time of issuing this report we have the following conclusions:

Opinion on the financial statements

We anticipate issuing an unqualified opinion, with an 'emphasis of matter' modification to the form of the auditor's report, on the financial statements. Our proposed audit opinion is included in the draft auditor's report in Appendix B.

Consistency report

We anticipate concluding that the Pension Fund financial statements within the Pension Fund's Annual Report are consistent with the Pension Fund financial statements within the Statement of Accounts of Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council. Our draft consistency report is provided in Appendix C.



Wider powers

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 Pension Fund and to consider any objection made to the accounts. Further details on the exercise of our wider powers are provided in section 2.




1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Status of our audit work

We have substantially completed our work on the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2020. At the time of preparing this report there are no significant matters outstanding however, the following administrative and audit matters remain outstanding:

Audit area	Status	Description of outstanding matters
Signed final statements and signed Management Representation Letter		We will complete our final review of the financial statements to confirm all expected changes have been made, upon receipt of the signed version of the accounts and letter of representation.
Review of draft Annual Report for consistency		We will complete our review of the Annual Report and review of consistency with the final statement of accounts upon receipt.

Status

-  Likely to result in material adjustment or significant change to disclosures within the financial statements
-  Potential to result in material adjustment or significant change to disclosures within the financial statements
-  Not considered likely to result in material adjustment or change to disclosures within the financial statements

We will provide the Audit Panel with an update in relation to these outstanding matters in a follow-up letter, prior to signing the auditor's report.

Our audit approach

We provided details of our intended audit approach in our Audit Strategy Memorandum in June 2020. We have not made any changes to our audit approach since we presented our Audit Strategy Memorandum.

Materiality

We set materiality at the planning stage of the audit at £238.4m using a benchmark of 1% of net assets available to pay benefits. We set a specific materiality for the fund account of £80.4m at the planning stage of the audit using a benchmark of 10% of benefits payable.

Our final assessment of materiality, based on the final financial statements and qualitative factors is £220.3m, and a fund account specific materiality of £86.0m, using the same benchmarks. We set our trivial threshold (the level under which individual errors are not communicated to the Audit Panel, at £6.6m based on 3% of overall materiality.

Misstatements and internal control recommendations

Section 3 sets out the internal control recommendations that we make, together with an update on any prior year recommendations.

Section 4 outlines the misstatements noted as part of our audit as at the time of issuing this report. If any additional misstatements are noted on completion of the outstanding work, these will be reported to the Audit Panel in a follow-up letter.

2. SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS

Set out below are the significant findings from our audit. These findings include:

- our audit conclusions regarding significant risks and key areas of management judgement outlined in the Audit Strategy Memorandum;
- our comments in respect of the accounting policies and disclosures that you have adopted in the financial statements. On page 7 we have concluded whether the financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the financial reporting framework and commented on any significant accounting policy changes that have been made during the year;
- any further significant matters discussed with management;
- any significant difficulties we experienced during the audit; and
- modifications required to our audit report.

Significant risks and key areas of management judgement

As part of our planning procedures we considered the risks of material misstatement in the Pension Fund's financial statements that required special audit consideration. Although we report identified significant risks at the planning stage of the audit in our Audit Strategy Memorandum, our risk assessment is a continuous process and we regularly consider whether new significant risks have arisen and how we intend to respond to these risks. No new risks have been identified since we issued our Audit Strategy Memorandum.

Significant risk

Management override of controls

Description of the risk

In all entities, 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, we consider there to be a risk of material misstatement due to fraud and thus a significant risk on all audits.

How we addressed this risk

We addressed this risk by performing audit work in the following areas:

- accounting estimates impacting on amounts included in the financial statements;
- consideration of identified significant transactions outside the normal course of business; and
- journals recorded in the general ledger and other adjustments made in preparation of the financial statements.

Audit conclusion

We have completed our planned procedures and there are no matters arising to bring to your attention.

2. SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS (CONTINUED)

Significant risk

Valuation of unquoted investments for which a market price is not readily available

Description of the risk

The fair value of investments which are not quoted on an active market is a significant and material item within the Net Assets Statement, and account for over 20 per cent of net investment assets. The values included in the accounts are based on externally generated professional valuations, Net Asset Values, or capital statements. This results in an increased risk of material misstatement.

How we addressed this risk

We addressed this risk by completing the following additional procedures:

- agreed the valuation to supporting documentation including investment manager valuation statements and cash flows for any adjustments made to the investment manager valuation;
- considered and agreed the assumptions used by independent property valuer were appropriate when determining the values which have subsequently been reflected in the Net Assets Statement;
- assessed the competence and experience of management's experts including the custodian;
- agreed the investment manager valuation to audited accounts or other independent supporting documentation, where available;
- where audited accounts are available, check that they are supported by a clear opinion; and
- where available, review independent control assurance reports to identify any exceptions that could present a risk of material misstatement in the Fund's financial statements.

Audit conclusion

We have completed our procedures in respect of this risk.

Whilst we are satisfied that the valuations included within the accounts are supported by the underlying evidence, we do wish to bring to your attention that the Fund, in Note 2 and the updated Note 2a, have disclosed a material valuation uncertainty in respect of the valuations of the property related investments within the Net Assets Statement.

As a result of the declaration by the World Health Organisation in March 2020 that the outbreak of Covid19 represented a 'global pandemic', and the subsequent UK lockdown that occurred, the valuer has included a caveat in relation to the weight that can be placed on the valuations as at the reporting date.

Following discussion, management have included appropriate additional disclosure within Note 2a (Major areas of estimation uncertainty) in respect of this issue.

2. SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS (CONTINUED)

Qualitative aspects of the entity's accounting practices

We have reviewed the Pension Fund's accounting policies and disclosures and concluded they comply with the requirements of the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting (the Code), appropriately tailored to the Pension Fund's circumstances.

Draft accounts were received from the Fund on 09 July 2020 and were of a good quality. Good quality supporting working papers have been made available in a timely manner and these have assisted our audit progress. Council finance officers have been very helpful in promptly answering our detailed audit queries.

Significant matters discussed with management

The significant matters we discussed with management through the audit included:

- The impact of COVID-19 on the Fund's financial statements, including potential impact on risks of material misstatement. We concluded that through our review of the valuations provided in respect of the property portfolio (direct) and the investments held indirectly in property related investments, there is a material valuation uncertainty in respect of these assets. The Fund's independent valuer, in line with their industry standards, highlighted that due to the pandemic there was a significant drop in the number of reference market transactions as at 31 March 2020, which although not specific to the Fund's assets, meant that less weight could be attached to the strength of the assumptions underpinning the valuation.
- Increased scrutiny both of your financial reporting, and the work of auditors (in particular by the Financial Reporting Council), required a more significant amount of work in relation to the valuation unquoted elements of the Fund's investment portfolio, which was also undertaken in the context of the emergence of the pandemic during Q1 2020 and the potential valuation impacts at 31 March 2020. This required not only significant additional effort by your own officers and ourselves, but also additional evidence and other information from relevant third parties such as the Fund's custodian and investment managers. In particular, where valuations had previously been based on December 2019 audited valuations, it was necessary to consider whether due consideration had been applied when deriving the March 2020 position.

The above noted material valuation uncertainty relating to the fund's property investment assets has been reflected in enhanced disclosure in the amended accounts presented to panel, and the material valuation uncertainty will be included as an 'emphasis of matter' in our auditor's report. This is outlined more fully on the following page.

Significant difficulties during the audit

During the course of the audit we did not encounter any significant difficulties and we have had the full co-operation of management and other officers.

2. SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS (CONTINUED)

Wider responsibilities

Our powers and responsibilities under the 2014 Act are broad and include the ability to:

- issue a report in the public interest;
- make statutory recommendations that must be considered and responded to publicly;
- apply to the court for a declaration that an item of account is contrary to law; and
- issue an advisory notice under schedule 8 of the 2014 Act.

We have not exercised any of these powers as part of our 2019/20 audit.

The 2014 Act also gives rights to local electors and other parties, such as the right to ask questions of the auditor and the right to make an objection to an item of account. No such objections have been raised in relation to the Pension Fund.

Modifications required to our audit report

We have identified the following issue which has resulted in us proposing to issue an unqualified audit opinion, but with a modified auditor's report. Our draft audit report, in full, is set out in Appendix B

Issue	Impact on our audit opinion
<p>Material Valuation Uncertainty (Property related investments)</p> <p>The Fund's independent valuer has highlighted a material valuation uncertainty in respect of the direct property related assets of the Fund as a result of the Covid19 pandemic. This is due to the reduction in the number of transactions in the market and the impact this has on relevant observable data upon which to base a valuation judgement.</p> <p>Our work and discussions with the Fund's management also highlighted there to be the corresponding risk in relation to the indirect property assets held by the Fund.</p> <p>Necessary disclosures have been included within the accounts following discussion with management, and we draw your attention to Notes 2 and 2a .</p>	<p>We propose issuing an unqualified audit opinion in respect of this matter, however, the Auditor's Report is modified.</p> <p>The modification to our audit report will be in the form of an 'Emphasis of Matter' and our proposed audit report is included at Appendix B.</p>

3. INTERNAL CONTROL RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of our audit is to express an opinion on the financial statements. As part of our audit we have considered the internal controls in place relevant to the preparation of the financial statements. We do this in order to design audit procedures to allow us to express an opinion on the financial statement and not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control, nor to identify any significant deficiencies in their design or operation.

The matters reported are limited to those deficiencies and other control recommendations that we have identified during our normal audit procedures and that we consider to be of sufficient importance to merit being reported. If we had performed more extensive procedures on internal control we might have identified more deficiencies to be reported or concluded that some of the reported deficiencies need not in fact have been reported. Our comments should not be regarded as a comprehensive record of all deficiencies that may exist or improvements that could be made.

Our findings and recommendations are set out below. We have assigned priority rankings to each of them to reflect the importance that we consider each poses to your organisation and, hence, our recommendation in terms of the urgency of required action. In summary, the matters arising fall into the following categories:

Priority ranking	Description	Number of issues
1 (high)	In our view, there is potential for financial loss, damage to reputation or loss of information. This may have implications for the achievement of business strategic objectives. The recommendation should be taken into consideration by management immediately.	0 (none)
2 (medium)	In our view, there is a need to strengthen internal control or enhance business efficiency. The recommendations should be actioned in the near future.	0 (none)
3 (low)	In our view, internal control should be strengthened in these additional areas when practicable.	0 (none)

3. INTERNAL CONTROL RECOMMENDATIONS (CONTINUED)

Follow up of previous internal control points

There are no issues to be followed up.



4. SUMMARY OF MISSTATEMENTS

Misstatements

We use this section to set out the misstatements identified for adjustment during the course of the audit, above the level of trivial threshold of £6.6m.

There are no misstatements that were identified during the course of our audit which management has assessed as not being material, either individually or in aggregate, to the financial statements and does not currently plan to adjust.

There are no misstatements that have been adjusted by management during the course of the audit which were considered to be material or above the trivial threshold. Some very minor adjustments have been made as a result of the audit but they do not reach the trivial threshold and we do not separately report them here.

Disclosure amendments

During our review of the financial statements and annual report we identified a number of presentational and non-material adjustments and amendments which the Fund has made. This includes a trivial value adjustment to the Fund Account to ensure that the reported Assets available at year end reconciles to the Net Assets Statement.

As highlighted earlier in this report, following discussions with management an additional disclosure was included in Note 2a in respect of the material valuation uncertainty relating to the Fund's property investment assets.

APPENDIX A

DRAFT MANAGEMENT REPRESENTATION LETTER

Greater Manchester Pension Fund
by Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council
Dukinfield Town Hall
King Street
Dukinfield
SK16 4LA

[Date]

Dear Karen

Greater Manchester Pension Fund - audit for year ended 31 March 2020

This representation letter is provided in connection with your audit of the financial statements of Greater Manchester Pension Fund, administered by Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council, for the year ended 31 March 2020 for the purpose of expressing an opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2018/19 (the Code) and applicable law.

I confirm that the following representations are made on the basis of enquiries of management and staff with relevant knowledge and experience (and, where appropriate, inspection of supporting documentation) sufficient to satisfy ourselves that I can properly make each of the following representations to you.

My responsibility for the financial statements and accounting information

I believe that I have fulfilled my responsibilities for the true and fair presentation and preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the Code and applicable law.

My responsibility to provide and disclose relevant information

I have provided you with:

- access to all information of which we are aware that is relevant to the preparation of the financial statements such as records, documentation and other material;
- additional information that you have requested from us for the purpose of the audit; and
- unrestricted access to individuals within the Pension Fund and Council you determined it was necessary to contact in order to obtain audit evidence.

I confirm as Director of Finance that I have taken all the necessary steps to make me aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that you, as auditors, are aware of this information.

As far as I am aware there is no relevant audit information of which you, as auditors, are unaware.

Accounting records

I confirm that all transactions that have a material effect on the financial statements have been recorded in the accounting records and are reflected in the financial statements. All other records and related information, including minutes of all relevant Pension Fund and Council Panel meetings and other committee meetings, have been made available to you.

Accounting policies

I confirm that I have reviewed the accounting policies applied during the year in accordance with Code and International Accounting Standard 8 and consider these policies to faithfully represent the effects of transactions, other events or conditions on the Pension Fund and Council's financial position, financial performance and cash flows.

Accounting estimates, including those measured at fair value

I confirm that any significant assumptions used by the Pension Fund and Council in making accounting estimates, including those measured at current or fair value, are reasonable.

Executive summary

Significant findings

Internal control
recommendations

Summary of misstatements

Appendices

APPENDIX A

DRAFT MANAGEMENT REPRESENTATION LETTER

Contingencies

There are no material contingent losses including pending or potential litigation that should be accrued where:

- information presently available indicates that it is probable that an asset has been impaired or a liability had been incurred at the balance sheet date; and
- the amount of the loss can be reasonably estimated.

There are no material contingent losses that should be disclosed where, although either or both the conditions specified above are not met, there is a reasonable possibility that a loss, or a loss greater than that accrued, may have been incurred at the balance sheet date.

There are no contingent gains which should be disclosed.

All material matters, including unasserted claims, that may result in litigation against the Pension Fund and Council have been brought to your attention. All known actual or possible litigation and claims whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial statements have been disclosed to you and accounted for and disclosed in accordance with the Code and applicable law.

Laws and regulations

I confirm that I have disclosed to you all those events of which I am aware which involve known or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations, together with the actual or contingent consequences which may arise therefrom.

The Pension Fund and Council have complied with all aspects of contractual agreements that would have a material effect on the accounts in the event of non-compliance.

Fraud and error

I acknowledge my responsibility as Director of Finance for the design, implementation and maintenance of internal control to prevent and detect fraud and error.

I have disclosed to you:

- all the results of my assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud;
- all knowledge of fraud or suspected fraud affecting the Pension Fund and Council involving:
 - management and those charged with governance;
 - employees who have significant roles in internal control; and
 - others where fraud could have a material effect on the financial statements.

I have disclosed to you all information in relation to any allegations of fraud, or suspected fraud, affecting the Pension Fund and Council's financial statements communicated by employees, former employees, analysts, regulators or others.

Related party transactions

I confirm that all related party relationships, transactions and balances, have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed in accordance with the requirements of the Code and applicable law.

I have disclosed to you the identity of the Pension Fund and Council's related parties and all related party relationships and transactions of which I am aware.

Future commitments

I am not aware of any plans, intentions or commitments that may materially affect the carrying value or classification of assets and liabilities or give rise to additional liabilities.

Subsequent events

I confirm all events subsequent to the date of the financial statements and for which the Code and applicable law, require adjustment or disclosure have been adjusted or disclosed.

APPENDIX A

DRAFT MANAGEMENT REPRESENTATION LETTER

Should further material events occur after the date of this letter which may necessitate revision of the figures included in the financial statements or inclusion of a note thereto, I will advise you accordingly.

Going concern

To the best of my knowledge there is nothing to indicate that the Pension Fund and Council will not continue as a going concern in the foreseeable future. The period to which I have paid particular attention in assessing the appropriateness of the going concern basis is not less than twelve months from the date of approval of the accounts.

Unadjusted misstatements

I confirm that the effects of the uncorrected misstatements are immaterial, both individually and in aggregate, to the financial statements as a whole.

Yours faithfully

Director of Finance

Chair of Audit Panel

Executive summary

Significant findings

Internal control
recommendations

Summary of misstatements

Appendices

APPENDIX B

DRAFT AUDITOR'S REPORT

Independent auditor's report to the members of Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council Report on the financial statements

Opinion on the financial statements of Greater Manchester Pension Fund

We have audited the financial statements of Greater Manchester Pension Fund ('the Pension Fund') for the year ended 31 March 2020, which comprise the Fund Account, the Net Assets Statement, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2019/20.

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial transactions of Greater Manchester Pension Fund during the year ended 31 March 2020, and the amount and disposition of the Pension Fund's assets and liabilities as at 31 March 2020; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2019/20.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities section of our report. We are independent of the Council, as administering authority for the Pension Fund, in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Emphasis of Matter – Effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on the valuation of property investment assets

We draw attention to notes 2 and 2a of the financial statements, which describes the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the valuation of the Fund's property investment assets. As disclosed in note 2 of the financial statements outlining the major areas of estimation uncertainty, the Pension Fund have disclosed their consideration of the impact of their independent property valuers inclusion of a 'material valuation uncertainty' declaration within their reports. This uncertainty arose as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic creating a shortage of relevant market evidence upon which to base their judgements. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

Conclusions relating to going concern

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the ISAs (UK) require us to report to you where: the Director of Finance's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is not appropriate; or the Director of Finance has not disclosed in the financial statements any identified material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about the Pension Fund's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Other information

The Director of Finance is responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Statement of Accounts, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

APPENDIX C

DRAFT CONSISTENCY REPORT

Responsibilities of the Director of Finance for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of the Director of Finance's Responsibilities, the Director of Finance is responsible for the preparation of the Statement of Accounts, which includes the Pension Fund's financial statements, in accordance with proper practices as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2019/20, and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view. The Director of Finance is also responsible for such internal control as the Director of Finance determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

The Director of Finance is required to comply with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2019/20 and prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis, unless the Council is informed of the intention for dissolution of the Pension Fund without transfer of services or function to another entity. The Director of Finance is responsible for assessing each year whether or not it is appropriate for the Pension Fund to prepare the accounts on the going concern basis and disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the Pension Fund's financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception under the Code of Audit Practice

We are required by the Code of Audit Practice to report to you if:

- we issue a report in the public interest under section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014;
- we make a recommendation under section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014; or
- we exercise any other special powers of the auditor under sections 28, 29 or 31 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

We have nothing to report in these respects.

Use of the audit report

This report is made solely to the members of Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council, as a body and as administering authority for the Greater Manchester Pension Fund, in accordance with part 5 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and as set out in paragraph 44 of the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies published by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the members of the Council those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's 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 members of the Council, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

[Signature]

[Name]

For and on behalf of Mazars LLP

Address

[Insert date]

APPENDIX D INDEPENDENCE

As part of our ongoing risk assessment we monitor our relationships with you to identify any new actual or perceived threats to our independence within the regulatory or professional requirements governing us as your auditors.

We can confirm that no new threats to independence have been identified since issuing the Audit Strategy Memorandum and therefore we remain independent.

CONTACT

Karen Murray

Partner

Mobile: 07721 234 043

Email: karen.murray@mazars.co.uk

Ian Pinches

Manager

Mobile: 07909 977 987

Email: ian.pinches@mazars.co.uk