Auditor's Annual Report

Manchester City Council – year ended 31 March 2021

August 2023

mazars

Contents

01

Section 01:

Introduction

1. Introduction

Purpose of the Auditor's Annual Report

Our Auditor's Annual Report (AAR) summarises the work we have undertaken as the auditor for Manchester City Council ('the Council') for the year ended 31 March 2021. Although this report is addressed to the Council, it is designed to be read by a wider audience including members of the public and other external stakeholders.

Our responsibilities are defined by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Code of Audit Practice ('the Code') issued by the National Audit Office ('the NAO'). The remaining sections of the AAR outline how we have discharged these responsibilities and the findings from our work. These are summarised below.

Opinion on the financial statements
We issued our audit report on 7 August 2023. Our opinion on the financial statements was unqualified.

Wider reporting responsibilities
In line with group audit instructions issued by the NAO we were not required to carry out work on the Council's Whole of Government Accounts return. We did not exercise any of our other reporting responsibilities.

Value for Money arrangements
In our audit report issued we reported we had completed our work on the Council's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources and had not issued recommendations in relation to identified significant weaknesses in those arrangements. Section 3 provides our commentary on the Council's arrangements.

02

Section 02:

Audit of the financial statements

2. Audit of the financial statements

The scope of our audit and the results of our opinion

Our audit was conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Code, and International Standards on Auditing (ISAs). The purpose of our audit is to provide reasonable assurance to users that the financial statements are free from material error. We do this by expressing an opinion on whether the statements are prepared, in all material respects, in line with the financial reporting framework applicable to the Council and whether they give a true and fair view of the Council's financial position as at 31 March 2023 and of its financial performance for the year then ended. Our audit report, issued on 7 August 2023 gave an unqualified opinion on the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023.

A summary of the significant risks we identified when undertaking our audit of the financial statements and the conclusions we reached on each of these is outlined in Appendix A. In this appendix we also outline the uncorrected misstatements we identified and any internal control recommendations we made.

Reporting responsibility	Outcome
Annual Report	We did not identify significant inconsistencies between the content of the annual report and our knowledge of the Council.
Annual Governance Statement	We did not identify any matters where, in our opinion, the governance statement did not comply with the guidance issued by CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting.

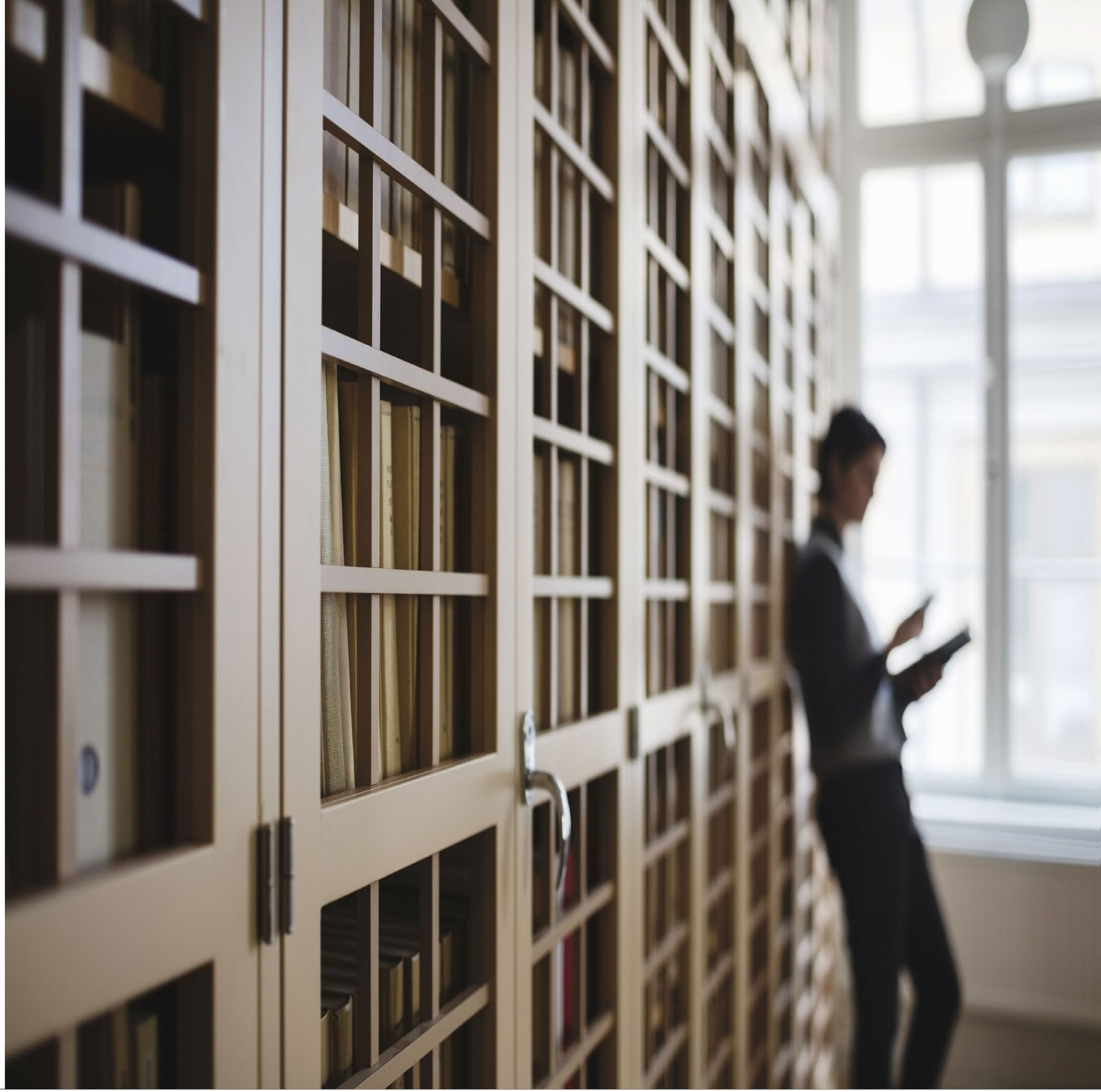
03

Section 03:

Commentary on VFM arrangements

3. Commentary on VFM arrangements

Overall summary



3. VFM arrangements – Overall summary

Approach to Value for Money arrangements work

We are required to consider whether the Council has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. The NAO issues guidance to auditors to underpin the work we are required to carry out and sets out the reporting criteria we are required to consider. The reporting criteria are:

Financial sustainability - How the Council plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services

Governance - How the Council ensures it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks

Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness - How the Council uses information about its costs and performance to improve the way it manages and delivers its services

Our work is carried out in three main phases.

Phase 1 - Planning and risk assessment
At the planning stage of the audit, we undertake work so we can understand the arrangements the Council has in place under each of the reporting criteria; as part of this work we may identify risks of significant weaknesses in those arrangements.

We obtain our understanding of arrangements for each of the specified reporting criteria using a variety of information sources which may include:

- NAO guidance and supporting information
- Information from internal and external sources including regulators
- Knowledge from previous audits and other audit work undertaken in the year
- Interviews and discussions with staff and directors

Although we describe this work as planning work, we keep our understanding of arrangements under review and update our risk assessment throughout the audit to reflect emerging issues that may suggest there are further risks of significant weaknesses.

Phase 2 - Additional risk-based procedures and evaluation
Where we identify risks of significant weaknesses in arrangements, we design a programme of work to enable us to decide whether there are actual significant weaknesses in arrangements. We use our professional judgement and have regard to guidance issued by the NAO in determining the extent to which an identified weakness is significant.

Phase 3 - Reporting the outcomes of our work and our recommendations
We are required to provide a summary of the work we have undertaken and the judgments we have reached against each of the specified reporting criteria in this Auditor's Annual Report. We do this as part of our Commentary on VFM arrangements which we set out for each criteria later in this section.

We also make recommendations where we identify weaknesses in arrangements or other matters that require attention from the Council. We refer to two distinct types of recommendation through the remainder of this report:

- **Recommendations arising from significant weaknesses in arrangements**
  We make these recommendations for improvement where we have identified a significant weakness in the Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. Where such significant weaknesses in arrangements are identified, we report these (and our associated recommendations) at any point during the course of the audit.

- **Other recommendations**
  We make other recommendations when we identify areas for potential improvement or weaknesses in arrangements which we do not consider to be significant but which still require action to be taken

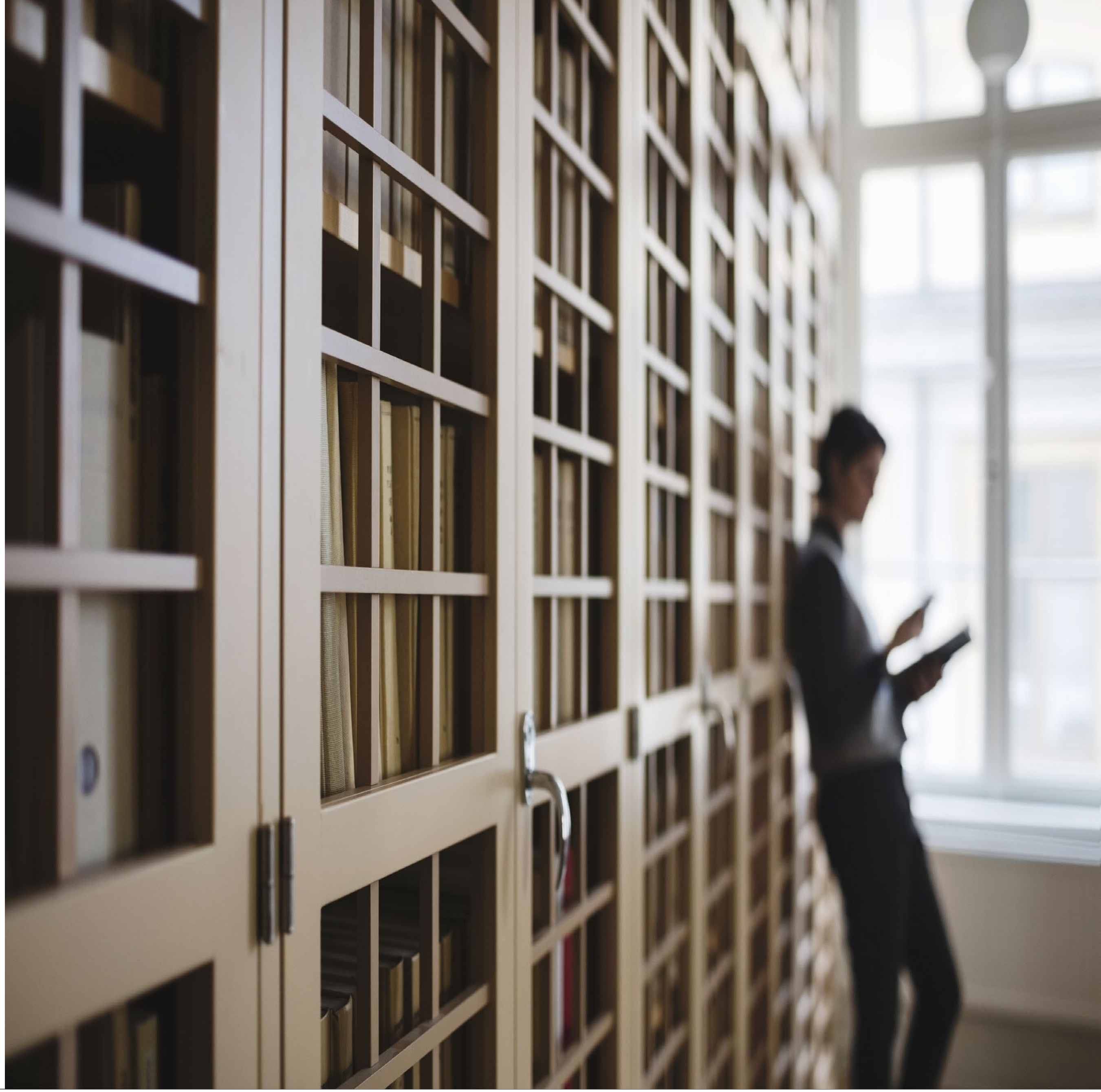
The table on the following page summarises the outcomes of our work against each reporting criteria, including whether we have identified any significant weaknesses in arrangements or made other recommendations.

3. VFM arrangements – Overall summary

Overall summary by reporting criteria

Reporting criteria	Commentary page reference	Identified risks of significant weakness?	Actual significant weaknesses identified?	Other recommendations made?
Financial sustainability	12	No	No	No
Governance	15	No	No	No
Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness	18	No	No	No

3. Commentary on VFM arrangements



Financial Sustainability

How the body plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services

3. VFM arrangements – Financial Sustainability

Overall commentary on the Financial Sustainability reporting criteria

Background to financial sustainability in 2020/21

The Council entered the 2020/21 financial year as the first national lockdown began and immediately faced a significant operational impact to respond to the range of challenges presented by the pandemic. As part of the national response to Covid-19, central government made a series of policy announcements which impacted on the Council. Consequently the Council was at the forefront of efforts to protect local residents, including the most vulnerable, and to support local businesses.

Some of the Government's initiatives to respond to the covid-19 pandemic were supported by additional funding, and so the Council received significant additional funding in 2020/21. This included general grants to support its Covid-19 response of £78.6m, and specific grants of £402.5m of which the Council had discretion over the use of £209.2m. Within the specific grants was the significant funding provided to support local business in line with the government's national initiatives. Taken together, this funding helped the Council to support residents and businesses through the year, and provided immediate funding to help mitigate some of the financial pressures caused by the pandemic. The Council's financial sustainability challenges from the Covid-19 pandemic will continue through the medium term and this places considerable pressure on the Council to maintain effective financial sustainability arrangements.

The Council's financial planning and monitoring arrangements

In March 2020, the Council set a balanced budget for the 2020/21 financial year with a total net budget for Council services of £665m. This required an increase in Council Tax of 3.99% (including 2% Adult Care precept). Throughout the year the Council regularly updated its budget forecast, enabling budgets to remain up-to-date in the fast-changing and uncertain operating environment of the pandemic. The final net budget reported for the year was £871m reflecting the significant Covid-19 funding received through the year. Within the original budget approved in March 2020, the Council had identified a savings requirement of £7.5m alongside a range of initiatives and measures to deliver these reductions.

The Council's financial planning and budgeting arrangements are well established and include a wide range of activities and consultations. The budget setting process includes engagement with senior Council officers and incorporates discussion about the delivery of statutory services/priorities, the Council's Corporate Plan, and the impact on resources of emerging challenges and risks. Where additional resources are required these are scrutinised and challenged before they are included in the budget estimates. Engagement with directorates and members are key parts of the budgeting arrangements, and from our review of the output and discussions with officers, these are detailed and extensive.

The Council reported its revenue outturn position for 2020/21 as an overall underspend of £3.9m. This continues the Council's strong track record of managing its budget through the year, and mitigating the risks and pressures emerging through the year. The Council provided regular reports of its financial position to Executive through the year. We have reviewed a sample of the reports presented for 2020/21. These reports were detailed and comprehensive and incorporate monitoring of the revenue budget, the capital programme and a wide range of other financial measures. The Council follows an established timetable for reporting to Executive which includes reporting to directorate management teams and the strategic management team.

The Council's financial management arrangements were significantly impacted in 2020/21 by the impact of Covid-19. The Council reported the direct pressures on services and income was over £55m, and the mitigating actions it put in place through the year included delivering additional savings of £17.8m, alongside a return of some GMCA reserves. The Council is keenly aware of the continued impact of Covid-19 on its financial position, and this will require the Council to continue its strong financial management arrangements through the next few years.

The Council has a very significant capital programme, and continues to play a lead role in developing the city. In 2020/21 the final capital budget was £373m. Actual spending against the budget was £335m, reflecting that, although significant progress was made against the various projects, Covid-19 impacted on the delivery of some projects. In 2020/21, the Council as a shareholder in Manchester Airport, along with the other Greater Manchester councils provided capital support to the airport. As well as the routine capital projects the Council undertakes, there a number of large, strategically important projects underway or planned in the near future. The most significant of these are the renovation of the Town Hall (total capital budget of £305m), the Factory project, (total capital budget of £190m), and the Victoria North project (total capital budget of £75m). The size and complexity of the capital programme requires a robust and effective monitoring process to enable the financial impact of the projects to be evaluated and reported promptly to enable timely effective decision making. The capital budget monitoring and reporting mirrors the revenue budget monitoring. We reviewed a sample of these reports and this confirmed they provide timely detailed monitoring reports to key decision makers in the governance structure.

3. VFM arrangements – Financial Sustainability

Overall commentary on the Financial Sustainability reporting criteria - continued

The Council's arrangements for identifying, managing and monitoring funding gaps and savings

As part of its budget setting arrangements for 2020/21 the Council commenced its planning for its updated three year financial plan. The planning for 2020/21 recognised the importance of setting a balanced one year budget alongside demonstrating the long term financial resilience of the Council. The approach for 2020/21 reflected the one year settlement announced by the government, and recognised the uncertainty in the medium term funding. A key element of the budget setting process is identifying savings and funding gaps. The budget reporting to Executive and Council provides significant detail on the savings plans, in-year monitoring and outturn delivery at the year end. The budget report to Council in March 2020 set out the detailed savings plans and proposals for each directorate, along with the proposed impact on the Council's reserves until 2023/24.

The Council's budget setting process, which begins in the summer, is a detailed and comprehensive process. There is detailed consultation and discussion with officers and members on the assumptions and principles on which the budget is to be based. As part of the budget setting process, the Council explicitly identifies its savings requirements for the following years through detailed consideration of the budgetary pressures, funding estimates, and impact of national and local initiatives and policies. We reviewed a range of the budget preparation documents and meetings held as part of the budget setting process. Our review confirmed the documents were comprehensive and detailed and the discussions were timely and delivered the intended outcomes to assist with the budget preparation.

Council's arrangements and approach to 2021/22 financial planning

The Council's arrangements for the 2021/22 budget setting process largely followed the arrangements in place for 2020/21.

The budget for 2021/22 was approved at the March 2021 Council meeting. The Council set a balanced budget with a total net budget for Council services of £637m with an increase in Council Tax of 4.99% (including 3% Adult Care precept). The budget planning for 2021/22 recognised the very significant impact on the Council's finances of Covid-19, identifying the financial impact on the Council for 2021/22 at £144m. The budget for 2021/22 included £41m of savings proposals and £185m use of reserves. The high use of reserves in 2021/22 reflects the use of Covid-19 funding received in 2020/21 but which was unspent and added to reserves at the end of 2020/21, to be spent during 2021/22.

We have reviewed the supporting evidence relating to the preparation of the 2021/22 budget and these demonstrate the arrangements are consistent with the previous year, were detailed and robust, and were properly applied.

Financial accounting and reporting

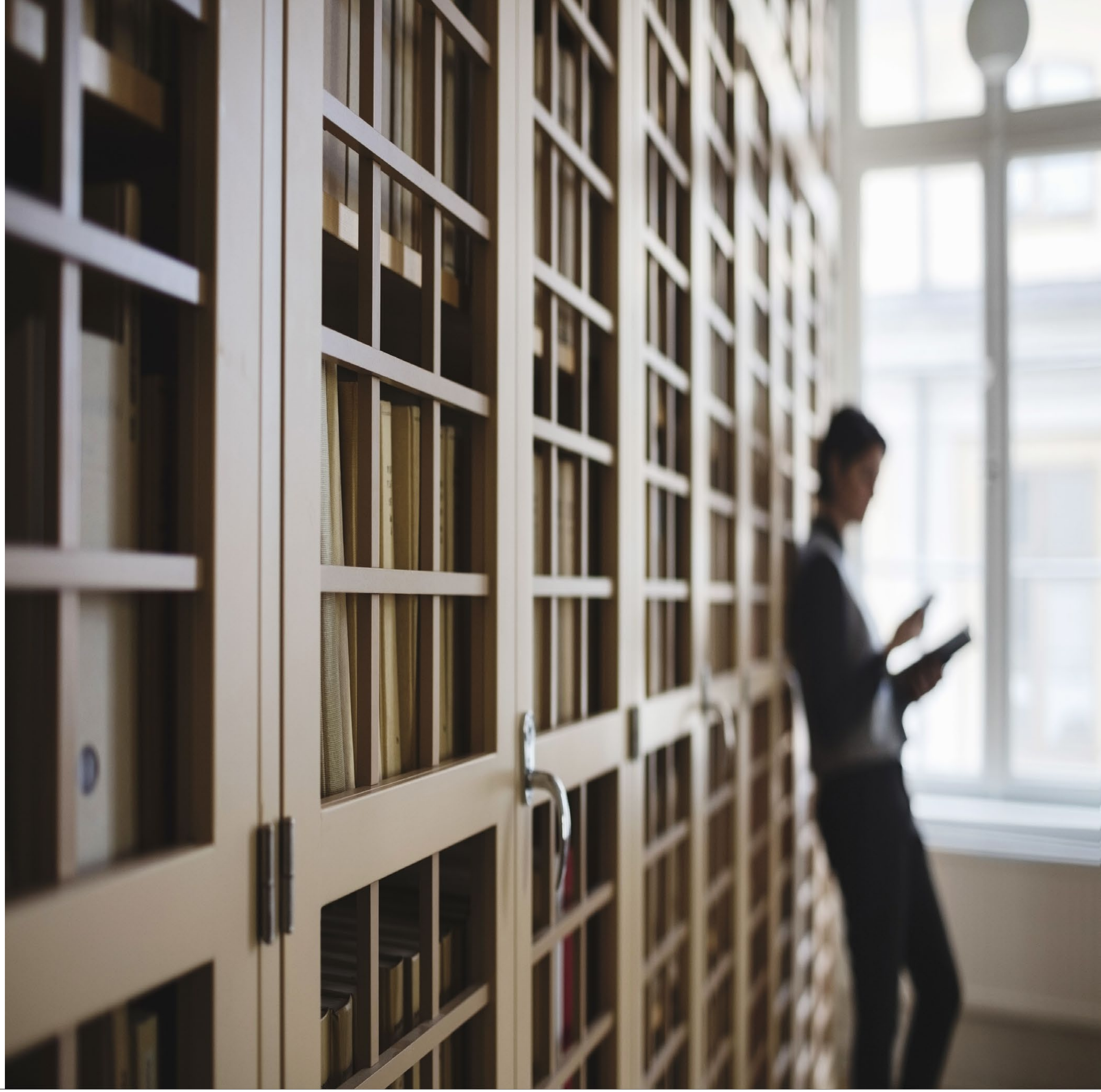
Our 2020/21 audit highlighted a number of accounting and reporting issues with the draft 2020/21 Statement of Accounts submitted for audit. The audit process identified some significant adjustments to the draft accounts and the Council corrected the majority of those adjustments. Particular challenges were encountered with the valuation of the Council's Property Plant and Equipment and Investment Properties. This was because of issues arising from information provided by the Council to the valuer and the approach adopted by one of the Council's external valuers. The Council has strengthened its arrangements following the 2020/21 audit including providing additional resource for the accounts closedown processes, and ensuring the finance team take a more prominent role in liaising with the Council external valuers. These improvements should be evident in the 2021/22 and subsequent audits.

Based on the above considerations we are satisfied there is not a significant weakness in the Council's arrangements in relation to financial sustainability.

3. Commentary on VFM arrangements

Governance

How the body ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks



3. VFM arrangements – Governance

Overall commentary on the Governance reporting criteria

The Council's risk management and monitoring arrangements

The Council has a well established risk management system in place and embedded in the governance structure of the organisation. The Council has a risk management strategy 2020-2023 which sets out the Council's risk appetite and context to its risk management. The risk management arrangements incorporate service and directorate risk registers informed by detailed assessments of the key risks impacting on each area. These registers inform the Council's corporate risk register which sets out the key strategic and corporate risks. The risk registers apply a risk score alongside the Council's target score for each risk. The register includes the controls in place to mitigate the risks along with other sources of assurance, and enables the Council to manage the risks actively and take action where necessary. We have reviewed the risk management strategy along with examples of risk registers. Our review confirms the strategy is clear, and the registers appear comprehensive, containing sufficient and appropriate detail for Council officers and members to discharge their responsibilities.

The Council reports its risk registers through its governance framework, culminating in reports to the Audit Committee. Our attendance at the Audit Committee meetings has confirmed the Committee understands its role in the risk management framework. It provides challenge to management on the risk register's and corresponding risks and mitigating actions.

The Council has a team of internal auditors, led by the Head of Audit & Risk Management, who provide assurance over the effective operation of internal controls, including arrangements to prevent and detect fraud. The annual Internal Audit plan is ordinarily agreed with management at the start of the financial year and is reviewed by the Audit Committee prior to final approval. In 2020/21, the Covid-19 pandemic impacted significantly on Internal Audit's plans, and as a result of cancelled meetings at the start of the pandemic, the Audit Plan was presented to the Committee in July 2020. The audit plan is based on an assessment of risks the Council faces, and is planned to ensure there is assurance on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and control. The planned work is supplemented by ad hoc reviews in respect of suspected irregularities and other work to respond to emerging risks and issues. We have reviewed the Internal Audit plans for 2020/21 and 2021/22 and confirmed they are consistent with the risk based approach. The Council has comprehensive anti-fraud and corruption policies which are updated as required. In 2020/21 a significant focus of the Council's anti-fraud work was in implementing processes to minimise any loss on business grants by putting in place checks to minimise fraud/ loss before payments were made to businesses.

Internal Audit progress reports are presented to each Audit Committee meeting, including follow up reporting on recommendations from previous Internal Audit reports. From our attendance at meetings, we are satisfied this allows the Committee to effectively hold management to account. At the end of each financial year the Head of Audit & Risk Management provides an opinion based on the work completed during the year. For 2020/21 the Head of Audit & Risk Management concluded a reasonable level of assurance could be given that the Council's overall framework of governance, risk management and control remains appropriate and had been complied with. Whilst this reflected the significant impact of the pandemic, the annual report highlighted the strength of the core governance, risk and control systems.

Throughout the year we have attended all Audit Committee meetings. These meetings have received regular updates on both internal audit progress and risk management. Audit Committee members engage with the reports and challenge the papers and reports which they receive from management, internal audit and external audit.

Council arrangements for budget monitoring and budgetary control

The Council has well established budget monitoring arrangements in place. The Finance service is configured to align to the Council's management portfolio structure. Members of the Finance Team are assigned to specific service areas and work closely with cost centre managers to review, discuss and agree the financial pressures/ issues impacting on specific service areas. At the end of each month, a Portfolio dashboard is prepared which contains all relevant financial information. Forecasts are produced for cost centres, service areas and the whole Portfolio. These are discussed and agreed with relevant Directors and managers.

There is a detailed budget monitoring timetable to which the Finance service works to ensure reports are timely. Overall financial monitoring reports are prepared encompassing the whole Council position for both Capital and Revenue. The format of the reports ensures relevant information is available, and in 2020/21, the reports were adapted to report on the impact of COVID including information on the impact on service costs and income shortfalls, specific grants received including business grants and other grants where the Council acted as an agent. We have reviewed a range of the reports and conclude they are appropriately detailed and comprehensive to provide members with the current financial position and the future challenges and risks ahead.

3. VFM arrangements – Governance

Overall commentary on the Governance reporting criteria - continued

Council decision making arrangements and control framework

The Council's decision making arrangements are established in the Council Constitution. Decisions are either made by members (Council, Executive, or other decision making committees) or delegated to Executive portfolio leads, or officers. The Constitution sets out clearly the approach to decision making. The Council also has a range of overview and scrutiny committees and sub-groups that challenge and scrutinise Council decisions.

Reports provided to support decision making include an assessment of the revenue and capital financial impacts and other key impact areas such as risk management, legality and equal opportunities.

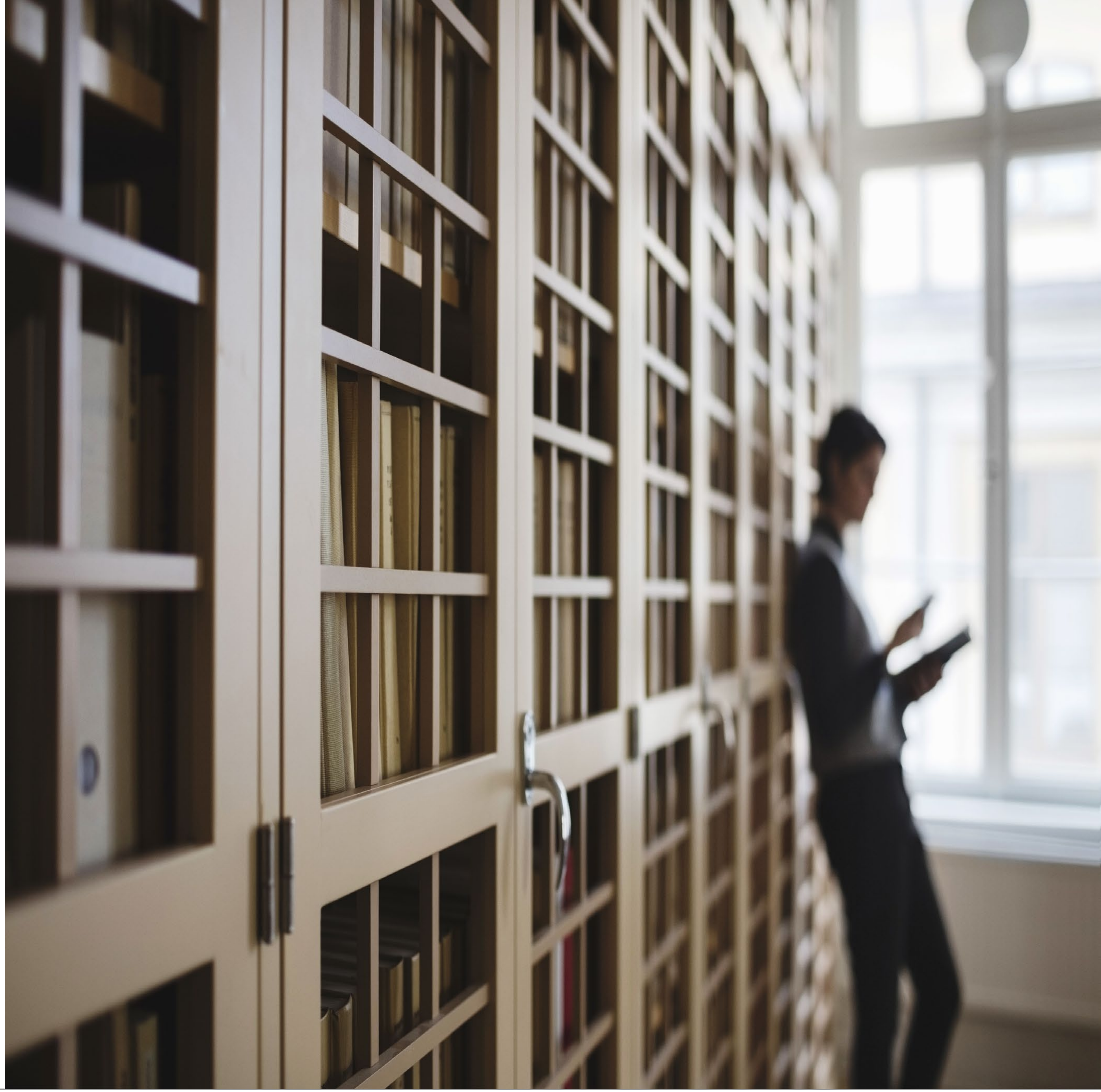
The Council operates an Audit Committee which has the appropriate status in the organisation to challenge management and obtain assurance on the operation of the internal control framework. The Committee has an agreed workplan and, where necessary, asks management to report on specific internal control issues. This includes asking management to attend meetings to answer questions. The Audit Committee met regularly throughout the year and routinely considered key reports on internal controls.

Based on the above considerations we are satisfied there is not a significant weakness in the Council's arrangements in relation to governance.

3. Commentary on VFM arrangements

Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness

How the body uses information about its costs and performance to improve the way it manages and delivers its services



3. VFM arrangements – Improving Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness

Overall commentary on the Improving Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness reporting criteria

The Council's arrangements for assessing performance and evaluating service delivery

The Council prepares performance monitoring and financial monitoring reports which are regularly reported through the year. The monitoring of the achievement of the Corporate Plan priorities is supported by accessible detailed dashboards. These are presented alongside narrative reporting of the actual performance, progress to achieving targets, current and known future challenges and an assessment of how the Council is doing. During 2020/21 this incorporated an explicit reference to how Covid-19 would affect delivery of priorities. The financial monitoring position is reported separately to performance monitoring but both provide a detailed and insightful summary of the Council performance and provide up to date evidence to inform decision making. The monitoring is also used to identify service delivery challenges, for example where increased costs are incurred to address service backlogs or underlying underperformance. Where such issues are highlighted through financial monitoring, the resources required as an investment to address this are identified.

The Council produces a range of value for money analysis, including annual benchmarking of outcomes and unit costs against similar Councils. During 2020/21 the Council commissioned an external financial benchmarking review. The analysis highlighted the Council's areas of strength along with areas where other similar Councils achieve better outcomes with a lower spend. The Council used the output to both inform the budget planning process, and also to undertake detailed work with directorates to identify and deliver improvements in the delivery of value for money. The Council uses benchmarking tools to inform its understanding of its performance. As well as using some off the shelf benchmarking tools, the Council also has a corporate Performance, Research & Intelligence service. This service provides a valuable source of advice on performance monitoring methodologies for projects and directorates, as well as interpreting data and performance monitoring information.

The Council's arrangements for effective partnership working

The Council's key partnerships include a wide range of organisations as is expected for a very large and complex Council. These include service delivery partnerships, statutory partnerships, and commercial partnerships.

The Council monitors its delivery through key partnerships including an ongoing assessment of risk as set out in its Register of Significant Partnerships which is reported to the Audit Committee annually. This summarises the significant partnerships the Council has alongside a rating of assurance the Council considers the partnership arrangements provide. This is informed by discussions and assessments involving the partnership link officer, moderated by Council officers from a range of service areas. As at 31 March 2021 the register included 49 significant partnerships, only one of which was reported as having limited assurance of controls over the partnership, and 36 were rated as having the highest level of assurance.

During 2020/21 the impact of Covid-19 has placed a greater focus on the operation of a number of strategic partnerships, particularly those related to delivery of health and social care responsibilities, and those supporting vulnerable residents.

The Council's arrangements for procurement and commissioning services

The Council's Constitution contains a chapter on the Contract Procurement Rules. This sets out the detailed process the Council must follow when procuring goods or services. We have reviewed the procedure rules and this confirms they are comprehensive and cover the procedures, the quotation and tender process, using frameworks, post tender evaluation and contract monitoring procedures.

To support procurement, the Council has centralised procurement team. This team provides a key source of procurement expertise. The team are required to be involved in procurement contracts above £30,000 and lead the procurement process in many cases. The Council controls in place to manage procurement effectively include completion of a pre-tender form to evidence the approval for the procurement and that financial and legal requirements have been followed. The support provided by the procurement team includes training to officers involved in the procurement process, enabling a clear common understanding of the approach and compliance requirements. The Council appoints contract managers who have responsibility for managing the contract. Directorates record their contracts in registers to track all the contracts within their portfolio.

Based on the above considerations we are satisfied there is not a significant weakness in the Council's arrangements in relation to improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

04

Section 04:

Other reporting responsibilities and our fees

4. Other reporting responsibilities and our fees

Matters we report by exception

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 provides auditors with specific powers where matters come to our attention that, in their judgement, require specific reporting action to be taken. Auditors have the power 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 the law; and
- issue an advisory notice.

We have not exercised any of these statutory reporting powers.

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. We did not receive any such objections or questions.

Reporting to the NAO in respect of Whole of Government Accounts consolidation data

The NAO, as group auditor, issues Group Audit Instructions to us in respect of its consolidation data. We submitted the required information to the NAO for 2020/21 and the NAO confirmed no work was required for the Council's WGA consolidation data.

4. Other reporting responsibilities and our fees

Fees for work as the Council's auditor

We reported our proposed fees for the delivery of our work under the Code of Audit Practice in our Audit Strategy Memorandum presented to the Audit Committee in June 2021. Having completed our work for the 2020/21 financial year, we can confirm our fees are as below. We confirm we have not undertaken any non-audit services for the Council or its Group entities relating to 2020/21.

Area of work	2019/20 fees	2020/21 fees
Planned fee in respect of our work under the Code of Audit Practice	£159,519	£159,519
Additional fees in respect of recurrent scope changes: Additional testing on Property, Plant & Equipment and Defined Benefit Pensions Schemes as a result of changes in regulatory expectations	£39,750	£43,750
Additional fees in respect of in-year scope changes: Additional testing as a result of the implementation of new auditing standards: ISA 220 (Revised): Quality control of an audit of financial statements; ISA 540 (Revised): Auditing accounting estimates and related disclosures; ISA570 (Revised) Going Concern; and ISA 600 (Revised): Specific considerations – audit of group financial statements	£5,500	£2,500
Additional fees in respect of additional audit requirements for Manchester CC: Enhanced Audit Reporting	£4,500	£5,625
Additional fees in respect of value for money work arising from the change in the Code of Audit Practice	-	£12,500
Additional fees in respect of auditing infrastructure assets	-	£15,000
Additional fees in respect of specific accounting and quality issues in 2020/21: Group consolidation, Valuation of Property, Plant & Equipment/Investment Property, cash and bank balances, journals and Cash Flow statement	-	£62,000
Total fees	**£209,269**	**£300,894**

A

Appendix

A. Further information on our audit of the financial statements

Significant risks and audit findings

As part of our audit, we identified significant risks to our audit opinion during our risk assessment. The table below summarises these risks, how we responded and our findings.

Risk	Our audit response and findings
Valuation of Council Property, Plant & Equipment The CIPFA Code requires that where assets are subject to revaluation, their year-end carrying value should reflect the current value at that date. The Council has adopted a rolling revaluation model which sees all such property, plant & equipment revalued in a five-year cycle. The valuation of property, plant & equipment involves the use of a management expert (the valuer) and incorporates assumptions and estimates which impact materially on the reported value. There are risks relating to the valuation process. The Council employs a valuation expert to provide valuations, however there remains a high degree of estimation uncertainty associated with the valuations of property, plant and equipment due to the significant judgements and number of variables involved. As a result of the rolling programme of revaluations, there is a risk that individual assets which have not been revalued for up to four years are not valued at the current value at the balance sheet date. In addition, as the valuations are undertaken through the year there is a risk that the current value of the assets could be materially different at the year end. Council Dwelling valuations are based on Existing Use Value, discounted by a factor to reflect that the assets are used for Social Housing (EUV-SH). The Social Housing adjustment factor is prescribed in MHCLG guidance, but this guidance indicates that where a valuer has evidence that this factor is different in the Council's area they can use their more accurate local factor. There is a risk that the Council's application of the valuer's assumptions is not in line with the statutory requirements and that the valuation is not supported by detailed evidence.	Our audit procedures included: • Obtaining an understanding of the skills, experience and qualifications of the Council's valuers, and considering the appropriateness of the Council's instructions to the valuers. • Obtaining an understanding of the basis of valuation applied by the valuers in the year. • Obtaining an understanding of the Council's approach to ensuring assets not subject to revaluation in 2020/21 are materially fairly stated. • Obtaining an understanding of the Council's approach to ensuring assets revalued through 2020/21 are materially fairly stated at the year end. • For a sample of the valuations, comparing the valuation to our valuation expert's estimate of the valuation. • Sample testing the completeness and accuracy of underlying data provided by the Council and used by the valuers as part of their valuations. • Using relevant market and cost data to assess the reasonableness of the valuation as at 31 March 2021. • Testing the accuracy of how valuation movements were presented and disclosed in the financial statements. The work carried out identified material and non-material adjustments were required to the financial statements for some of the asset valuations we tested. In addition we identified the Council's approach to valuing its assets not formally valued in 2020/21 led to a material understatement of the asset values. The Council obtained updated valuation reports, carried out additional work where required, and made adjustments to the values of the assets.
Valuation of investment properties The CIPFA Code requires that where Investment Property assets are subject to revaluation, their year-end carrying value should reflect the fair value at that date. The valuation of Investment Property involves the use of a management expert (the valuer) and incorporates assumptions and estimates which impact materially on the reported value. There are risks relating to the valuation process. The Council employs valuation experts to provide valuations, however there remains a high degree of estimation uncertainty associated with the valuations of property, plant and equipment due to the significant judgements and number of variables involved.	Our audit procedures included: • Obtaining an understanding of the skills, experience and qualifications of the valuers, and considering the appropriateness of the Council's instructions to the valuers. • Obtaining an understanding of the basis of valuation applied by the valuers in the year. • Obtaining assurance on the appropriateness of the methodology and assumptions adopted by the Council's valuers. • For a sample of the valuations, comparing the valuation to our valuation expert's estimate of the valuation. • Sample testing the completeness and accuracy of underlying data provided by the Council and used by the valuer as part of their valuations. The work carried out identified material and non-material adjustments were required to the financial statements for some of the investment property valuations we tested. The Council obtained updated valuation reports, carried out additional work where required, and made adjustments to the values of the assets.

A. Further information on our audit of the financial statements

Significant risks and audit findings (continued)

Risk	Our audit response and findings
Valuation of the Council's and the Group's defined benefit pension liability The net pension liability represents a material element of the Council and the Group balance sheet. The Council and its consolidated subsidiaries are admitted bodies of Greater Manchester Pension Fund, which had its last triennial valuation completed as at 31 March 2019. The valuation of the Local Government Pension Scheme relies on a number of assumptions, most notably around the actuarial assumptions, and actuarial methodology which results in the Council's and the subsidiaries' overall valuations. There are financial assumptions and demographic assumptions used in the calculation of the valuation, such as the discount rate, inflation rates and mortality rates. The assumptions should also reflect the profile of the Council's and the subsidiaries' employees, and should be based on appropriate data. The basis of the assumptions is derived on a consistent basis year to year, or updated to reflect any changes. There is a risk that the assumptions and methodology used in valuing the pension obligations are not reasonable or appropriate to the Council's or the subsidiaries' circumstances. This could have a material impact to the Council and Group net pension liability in 2020/21.	Our audit procedures included: • Obtaining an understanding of the skills, experience and qualifications of the actuary, and considering the appropriateness of the instructions to the actuary from the Council and the Group components. • Obtaining confirmation from the auditor of the Greater Manchester Pension Fund that the controls in place at the Pension Fund are free from material deficiencies. • Reviewing a summary of the work performed by the Pension Fund auditor on the Pension Fund investment assets, and evaluating whether the outcome of their work would affect our consideration of the Council's and the Group's share of Pension Fund assets. • Reviewing the actuarial allocation of Pension Fund assets to the Council and the Group by the actuary, including comparing the Council's and the Group's share of the assets to other corroborative information. • Reviewing the appropriateness of the Pension Asset and Liability valuation methodology applied by the Pension Fund Actuary, and the key assumptions included within the valuation. This includes comparing them to expected ranges, utilising information provided by PwC, consulting actuary engaged by the National Audit Office. • Agreeing the data in the actuarial valuation reports provided by the Pension Fund Actuary for accounting purposes to the pension accounting entries and disclosures in the Council's and the Group's financial statements. The work carried out identified the Council's pension asset was materially understated as a result of the actuary estimating the pension asset returns for the final quarter of the year. The Council obtained an updated actuarial report and amended the accounts accordingly.
Management override of controls This is a mandatory significant risk on all audits due to the unpredictable way in which such override could occur. 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.	We addressed this risk through performing audit work over: • Accounting estimates impacting 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. Our work did not identify any matters to report.

A. Further information on our audit of the financial statements

Summary of uncorrected misstatements

		Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement		Balance Sheet	
		Dr (£'000)	Cr (£'000)	Dr (£'000)	Cr (£'000)
1	Dr: Short-term debtors			10,252	
	Cr: Short-term creditors				10,252
	An error of £1.5m was identified in in our sample testing, in line with our approach, we extrapolated the known error of £1.5m over the remaining untested grant income. The Council has amended the actual error, but the extrapolated impact of £10.2m has not been amended as it relates to an audit extrapolation.				
2	Dr: Unusable Reserves			7,014	
	Cr: Investment Properties				7,014
	The valuation of three assets are above the upper-end our expected valuation range.				
3	Dr: Group LT Investment in Joint Venture			568	
	Cr: Group I&E Reserve				568
	Net impact of two misstatements: the impact of IFRS16 in the Group entity accounts (£1.9m) and an understatement of lease income in the Group entity accounts (£1.4m).				

A. Further information on our audit of the financial statements

Summary of uncorrected misstatements (continued)

		Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement		Balance Sheet	
		Dr (£'000)	Cr (£'000)	Dr (£'000)	Cr (£'000)
4	Dr: Unusable Reserves			2,396	
	Cr: Infrastructure Assets				2,396
	Impact of the change in accounting policy for infrastructure assets.				
5	Dr: Assets Held for Sale			4,050	
	Cr: Property, Plant & Equipment				4,050
	An asset included in the operational land & buildings balance was marketed for sale at the year end and was not an operational asset.				
6	Dr: Group LT Investment in Joint Venture			835	
	Cr: Share of Operating Results of Joint Venture	9,950			
	Dr: Other Comprehensive Income of Joint Venture		9,115		
	Additional depreciation not applied to some Group entity assets.				
	Total unadjusted misstatements	**9,950**	**9,115**	**25,115**	**24,280**

A. Further information on our audit of the financial statements

Internal control observations

We raised seven internal control recommendations from our audit. These covered the Council’s closedown arrangements, its arrangements to obtain land and building valuations, and its general control arrangements.

The Council has agreed with all recommendations and has subsequently implemented the agreed actions.

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