



Audit Strategy and Completion Report

Greater Manchester Combined Authority– Year ended 31 March 2025

February 2026

Members of the Audit Committee
Greater Manchester Combined Authority
Churchgate House
56 Oxford Street
Manchester
M1 6EU

23 February 2026

Dear Audit Committee Members,

Audit Strategy and Completion Report – Year ended 31 March 2025

We are pleased to present our Audit Strategy and Completion Report for the Greater Manchester Combined Authority for the year ended 31 March 2025. The purpose of this document is to summarise our audit and to explain how the statutory backstop arrangements introduced by the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2024, have affected the completion of our work and the reporting consequences. We consider two-way communication with you to be key to a successful audit and particularly important in the context of the backstop arrangements as it facilitates:

- reaching a mutual understanding of the scope of the audit and the responsibilities of each of us;
- sharing information to assist each of us to fulfil our respective responsibilities; and
- providing you with constructive observations arising from the audit process even though this has been curtailed by the backstopped arrangements.

We would usually report the results of our planning work, including the significant risks identified and our planned procedures, in our Audit Strategy Memorandum. The results of our audit, including significant matters identified would usually be reported to you in our Audit Completion Report. As a result of the backstop arrangements, we have determined that the most appropriate way to communicate each of the matters required under auditing standards, in this single Audit Strategy and Completion Report.

As it is a fundamental requirement that an auditor is, and is seen to be, independent of audited bodies, section 8 of this document summarises our considerations and conclusions on our independence as auditors.

We will continue to work closely with you and management to take the necessary steps to rebuild assurance over future accounting periods. We will report further details to you on the rebuilding process in the coming months. In line with the guidance issued by the National Audit Office, as endorsed by the Financial Reporting Council, we hope to return to a standard audit cycle where we are able to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence in order to issue an unmodified audit opinion in as short a period as practicable.

Yours faithfully

Karen Murray

Forvis Mazars LLP

Contents

- 01** Our audit and the implications of the statutory backstop
- 02** Your audit team
- 03** Our audit approach
- 04** Materiality
- 05** Significant findings
- 06** Value for Money arrangements
- 07** Audit fees and other services
- 08** Confirmation of our independence

Appendices

- A** Draft management representation letter
- B** Key communication points

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 Authority are prepared for the sole use of the Authority and we take no responsibility to any member or officer in their individual capacity or to any third party.

01

Our audit and the implications of the statutory backstop

Our audit and the implications of the statutory backstop

We are appointed to perform the external audit of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority for the year to 31 March 2025. The scope of our engagement is set out in the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies, issued by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) available from the PSAA website: <https://www.psa.co.uk/managing-audit-quality/statement-of-responsibilities-of-auditors-and-audited-bodies/>.

Our audit of the financial statements

The detailed scope of our work as your appointed auditor for 2024/25 is set out in the National Audit Office's (NAO) Code of Audit Practice ('the Code'). Our responsibilities and powers are derived from the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 ("the 2014 Act").

We are appointed to audit the financial statements in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK). Under normal circumstances, our objectives would be to form and express an opinion on whether the financial statements present a true and fair view of the Authority's financial affairs for the year, and whether they have been prepared, in all material respects, in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting.

Government has recently introduced measures intended to resolve the local government financial reporting backlog. Amendments to the Accounts and Audit Regulations require the Authority to publish its audited 2024/25 financial statements and accompanying information on or before 28 February 2026. In accordance with the Code, we are required to provide our audit report on those financial statements in sufficient time to enable the Authority to meet these responsibilities, whether the audit is completed or not.

As a result of the backstop arrangements, we have determined there is insufficient time to complete our audit procedures so as to obtain sufficient appropriate evidence. In our view, the effect of the resulting lack of evidence is material and pervasive to the financial statements as a whole. As a result, we intend to issue a disclaimer of opinion on the Authority's financial statements. We have included our draft audit report in Appendix B. When an opinion is disclaimed the auditor does not express an opinion on the financial statements and, consequently, no assurance is provided on the financial statements. Members will note form and content of this report differs substantially from the report they will have seen in previous the years. We provide more details on this in section 5.

Further information on the procedures we have undertaken in order to issue a disclaimer of opinion in advance of the backstop date is provided in section 3.

Responsibilities in respect of fraud and internal control

The responsibility for safeguarding assets, and for the prevention and detection of fraud, error and non-compliance with law or regulations rests with both Those Charged With Governance and management. This includes establishing and maintaining internal controls over compliance with relevant laws and regulations, and the reliability of financial reporting. As part of our audit procedures in relation to fraud we are required to inquire of Those Charged with Governance and including key management include Internal audit, other key individuals where relevant as to their knowledge of instances of fraud, the risk of fraud and their views on internal controls that mitigate the fraud risks.

Management is also responsible for such internal control as it determines necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Despite our intention to issue a disclaimer of opinion, where matters come to our attention through the course of our audit, we may be required to report these to you. Section 5 sets out any internal control recommendations we have made and any misstatements identified in the draft financial statements and how these have been addressed by management.

Wider reporting and electors' rights

The 2014 Act requires us to give an elector, or any representative of the elector, the opportunity to question us about the accounts of the Authority and consider objections made to the accounts. We also have a broad range of reporting responsibilities and powers under the 2014 Act. No such correspondence from electors has been received.

Value for Money arrangements

The amendments to the Accounts and Audit Regulations do not affect our responsibilities in relation to the Authority's Value for Money arrangements. We are responsible for forming a view on the arrangements the Authority has in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. We discuss our approach to Value for Money work and our findings further in section 6 of this report.

Whole of Government Accounts

As a result of our intention to issue a disclaimer of opinion on the Authority's financial statements, we anticipate reporting to the NAO that we are unable to complete the mandatory audit procedures specified in their Group Audit Instructions. We are awaiting confirmation of when and how this should be reported to the NAO.

02

Your audit team

Your audit team



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03

Our audit approach

Our audit approach

Audit scope

Our audit is designed to comply with all professional requirements. Our audit of the financial statements has been conducted in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK), relevant ethical and professional standards, our own audit approach and in accordance with the terms of our engagement. We have also had regard to the Local Audit Reset and Recovery Implementation Guidance ('LARRIG') issued by the National Audit Office, and endorsed by the Financial Reporting Council, in delivering our audit in the context of the backstop arrangements introduced by the 2024 amendments to the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

Our approach to the audit of the financial statements

In the absence of the backstop arrangements, our audit would be risk-based, primarily driven by the issues that we consider lead to a higher risk of material misstatement of the accounts. After completing our detailed risk assessment work and developing our audit strategy, we would design and complete audit procedures in response to the risks identified.

The conditions created by the imposition of the backstop arrangements mean we have not carried out all of the work necessary to issue a detailed audit plan and to complete all the required audit procedures to provide an opinion on the financial statements. The approach we have taken to carrying out the Authority's audit has been designed so we can comply with International Standards on Auditing (UK) and issue our audit report to allow the Authority to meet the backstop date of 28 February 2026 for the publication of audited financial statements and other relevant information.

We summarise below, the work we have undertaken to inform our audit strategy and to determine it is necessary to issue a disclaimer of opinion on the Authority's financial statements. As we have not completed all our planning procedures, including all risk assessment work, we do not include a summary of significant and enhanced risks as part of this report.

| Area of the audit | Summary of our procedures |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Acceptance and continuance | We have carried out all acceptance and continuance procedures including consideration of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The financial reporting framework adopted by the Authority and the existence of any unusual or controversial accounting policies• The form, timing and expected content of our communication with Those Charged with Governance• Any actual or potential threats to our independence• The existence of any other factors that indicate we should not continue as the Authority's auditor |
| Understanding the entity | We have carried out audit procedures to understand and document our understanding of the Authority across a range of areas, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Authority's structure, including its wider group• Key accounting policies• Accounting estimates• The use of experts |
| Control environment assessment | We have documented our consideration of the Authority's control environment. We carry out this work to inform both our work on the financial statements and as an element of our Value for Money arrangements risk assessment work. |

Our audit approach

| Area of the audit | Summary of our procedures |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Fraud | We have carried out work on identifying potential fraud risks and made specific inquiries of management and Those Charged with Governance in respect of actual, potential or suspected fraud. We are awaiting final responses to our standard enquiries of management and those charged with governance. |
| Materiality | We have considered the application of materiality for the audit of the Authority's financial statements. Further details on the materiality thresholds determined, is included later in this section of our report. |
| Laws and regulations | We have obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory framework applicable to the Authority. We have made specific inquiries with management and Those Charged with Governance in respect of any instances of noncompliance with laws and regulations. |
| Written representations | We have requested certain written representations from management in accordance with ISA (UK) 580. The draft management letter of representation is provided in Appendix A. |
| Completion, review and reporting | <p>We have undertaken sufficient review procedures to ensure our audit complies with the requirements of ISA (UK) 230. This includes specific work to document our consideration of the implications of the backstop arrangements on our audit and the reporting implications.</p> <p>We have also considered whether any matters have come to our attention that we consider should be reported to Those Charged with Governance or that may be relevant to our auditor's report. Such matters may include misstatements identified in the draft financial statements or internal control recommendations.</p> <p>As we intend to issue a disclaimer of opinion, additional quality and risk management processes have also been followed.</p> |

Our audit approach

Group audit approach

- The Authority prepares Group accounts and consolidates the following bodies:
 - Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police (GMP) – under public sector accounting treatment consolidated into the GMCA Group
 - Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) – consolidated into the GMCA Group as the Authority’s executive body for delivery of transport services
 - NW Evergreen Holdings Limited Partnership (NWEH)
 - Greater Manchester Fund of Funds (FoF) Limited Partnership
 - Greater Manchester Evergreen 2 Limited Partnership (GME2LP)
- Forvis Mazars UK are the appointed auditor for the Chief Constable and Transport for Greater Manchester. As such we are the appointed auditor for 99% of the Group’s total expenditure.

| Entity | Classification | Auditor | Procedures undertaken |
|---|------------------|-------------------|--|
| Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police (GMP) | Significant | Forvis Mazars LLP | We have identified GMP as a significant component and calculated component materiality. |
| Transport for Greater Manchester (TFGM) | Significant | Forvis Mazars LLP | We have identified TFGM as a significant component and calculated component materiality. |
| NW Evergreen Holdings Limited Partnership (NWEH) | Non- significant | TC Group | We have identified NWEH as a non-significant component and calculated component materiality. |
| Greater Manchester Fund of Funds Limited partnership FoF) | Non- significant | TC Group | We have identified FoF as a non-significant component and calculated component materiality. |
| Greater Manchester Evergreen 2 Limited partnership (GME2LP) | Non- significant | TC Group | We have identified GME2LP as a non-significant component and calculated component materiality. |

04

Materiality

Materiality

Definitions

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

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

Our approach to determining materiality

Although we intend to issue a disclaimer of opinion on the financial statements, we are required to determine materiality and communicate this to the Audit Committee.

We determine materiality for the financial statements as a whole (overall materiality) using a benchmark that, in our professional judgement, is most appropriate to entity. We also determine an amount less than materiality (performance materiality), which is applied when we carry out our audit procedures and is designed to reduce to an appropriately low level the probability that the aggregate of uncorrected and undetected misstatements exceeds overall materiality. Further, we set a threshold above which all misstatements we identify during our audit (adjusted and unadjusted) will be reported to the Audit Committee.

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

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

- Have a reasonable knowledge of business, economic activities, and accounts;
- Have a willingness to study the information in the financial statements with reasonable diligence;
- Understand that financial statements are prepared, presented, and audited to levels of materiality;
- Recognise the uncertainties inherent in the measurement of amounts based on the use of estimates, judgement, and consideration of future events; and
- Will make reasonable economic decisions based on the information in the financial statements.

We consider overall materiality and performance materiality while planning and performing our audit based on quantitative and qualitative factors. When planning our audit, we make judgements about the size of misstatements we consider to be material.

The overall materiality and performance materiality we determine does not necessarily mean that uncorrected misstatements are below materiality, individually or in aggregate, will be considered immaterial.

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

Materiality

Our approach to determining materiality (continued)

For the group and single-entity financial statements, we consider that gross revenue expenditure at the surplus / deficit on the provision of services is the key focus of users of the financial statements. As such, we base our materiality levels around this benchmark.

We have set a materiality threshold of 1.8% of gross revenue expenditure for the group financial statements, and a materiality threshold of 1.8% of gross revenue expenditure for the Authority's single entity statements. Based on the 2024/25 draft financial statements, overall materiality for the year ended 31 March 2025 is as follows:

| Group financial statements | 2023/24 £'000s | 2024/25 £'000s |
|----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Overall materiality | £46,900 | £54,600 |
| Performance materiality | £25,800 | £30,000 |
| Clearly trivial | £1,400 | £1,600 |

| Single entity financial statements | 2023/24 £'000s | 2024/25 £'000s |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Overall materiality | £42,000 | £46,400 |
| Performance materiality | £23,100 | £25,500 |
| Clearly trivial | £1,260 | £1,400 |

05

Significant findings

Significant findings

Background and modification of the audit opinion

As a result of the backstop arrangements, we have not been able to complete sufficient audit procedures to enable us to provide an unmodified opinion on the Authority's financial statements. As we have determined the effects, or potential effects on the financial statements of the lack of sufficient appropriate evidence are material and pervasive, we will be issuing a disclaimer of opinion. This means we are expressing no opinion on the financial statements.

Our audit report explains the basis for our disclaimer of opinion being the introduction of the backstop arrangements which require the Authority to publish its audited 2024/25 financial statements by 28 February 2026.

Members will note the draft audit report does not report on other matters that would usually appear in an unmodified audit report. These include:

- the use of the going concern assumption in the preparation of the financial statements; and
- the consistency of the other information presented with the financial statements.

Although we are disclaiming our audit opinion, auditing standards require us to report matters to you that have come to our attention during the course of our audit, which we include in this section of this report.

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 2024/25 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.

Significant matters discussed with management

During our audit we communicated the following significant matters to management:

- Implications of the backstop arrangements

As part of our audit, we sought and obtained information from management in relation to actual or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations, and any actual or suspected fraud which could materially impact upon the financial statements.

We are awaiting final responses from management and those charged with governance but to date, have no matters to report in relation to fraud and the Authority's compliance with laws and regulations. We have not undertaken any further work in these areas and do not provide any assurance the financial statements are free from material error .

Significant difficulties during the audit

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

Our observations on internal control

As part of our planning procedures, we obtained an understanding of Authority's internal control environment and control activities relevant to the preparation of the financial statements, sufficient to inform our audit strategy. Although our audit was not designed to express an opinion on the effectiveness of Authority's internal controls, we are required to evaluate any deficiencies in internal control that come to our attention, even though we intend to issue a disclaimer of opinion.

A deficiency in internal control exists if:

- a control is designed, implemented, or operated in such a way that it is unable to prevent, detect, and/or correct potential misstatements in the financial statements; or
- a necessary control to prevent, detect, and/or correct misstatements in the financial statements on a timely basis is missing.

The matters reported in this section of our report are limited to those deficiencies and other control recommendations identified through the audit procedures we were able to complete. If we had performed more extensive procedures on internal control, we may have identified more matters to report. Our comments in this section should not be regarded as a comprehensive record of all deficiencies that may exist or improvements that could be made.

Significant deficiencies in internal control

A significant deficiency in internal control is one which, in our professional judgement, has the potential for financial loss, damage to reputation, or a loss of information which may have implications on the achievement of business strategic objectives. In our view, observations categorised as a significant deficiency are of sufficient importance to merit the attention of the Audit Committee.

We have not identified any significant deficiencies in the Authority's internal controls as at the date of this report.

Other observations on internal control

We also report to you, our observations on the Authority's internal controls where, in our professional judgement, there is a need to strengthen internal control or enhance business efficiency that do not constitute significant deficiencies in internal control but which we view as being important for consideration by management.

We do not have any other internal control observations to bring to your attention as at the date of this report.

Whether internal control observations merit attention by the Audit Committee and/or management is a matter of professional judgment, taking into account the risk of misstatement that may arise in the financial statements as a result of those observations.

Summary of amendments to the financial statements

The Authority's Treasurer authorised the Authority's draft financial statements for issue on 07/10/2025.

Although we intend to issue a disclaimer of opinion, we still report any amendments management have made to the draft financial statements, identified either through the audit procedures we have undertaken, or separately by management.

This information is provided to the audit committee for information and to support it to discharge its responsibilities. It is important to note that because we are issuing a disclaimer of opinion, we provide no assurance over the material accuracy of the amendments made to the draft financial statements.

We have not identified any changes to the financial statements above our reporting threshold.

Unadjusted misstatements

When we issue a disclaimer of opinion, auditing standards require us to consider whether we are aware of any matter otherwise requiring a modification to our opinion. Such matters may include, for example, material misstatements that have been identified but not been amended by management.

Our work in relation to GMCA's wholly owned subsidiary, Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM), is ongoing. Our audit responsibilities for GMCA extend to the group financial statements. TfGM is a significant component of the GMCA group. We are aware of significant matters in relation to the following areas of the TfGM financial statements preventing the conclusion of the component audit that are material to the GMCA group financial statements:

- **Right of use asset and property, plant and equipment valuations:** Some of TfGM's right of use assets and property, plant and equipment have not been valued on an appropriate basis, in line with code requirements. The balance of right of use assets and property, plant and equipment valued on an inappropriate basis may be material to both the TfGM and GMCA financial statements. If appropriate valuations cannot be obtained by the backstop deadline, the GMCA disclaimed opinion may require modification to outline this 'other matter' that may have a material impact on the group financial statements.
- **Assets under construction:** TfGM has recognised all fixed asset additions directly to assets under construction in 2023/24 and 2024/25. Where assets that were immediately operational they were reclassified from assets under construction to the appropriate operational asset categories. However, where assets are immediately operational, additions should be recognised directly to operational asset categories, and not as assets under construction. An adjustment was therefore required in the both the current (2024/25) and prior (2023/24) periods. These adjustments are material to the GMCA group and if not adjusted, may require modification to outline this 'other matter' that may have a material impact on the group financial statements.
- **Operating lease commitments:** As part of their IFRS16 transition, TfGM identified that prior period operating lease commitments has been misstated due to the failure to identify operating releases in relation to bus franchising arrangements. This prior period adjustment is material to the GMCA group and if not adjusted, may require modification to outline this 'other matter' that may have a material impact on the group financial statements.

We are also aware of the following ongoing matters in relation to the TfGM component audit, for which our audit procedures are ongoing. We are yet to quantify if the impact of the ongoing matter below is material to the GMCA group financial statements:

- **IFRS16 transition adjustments:** Our work has identified inaccuracies in the calculation of lease liabilities and in some instances, the exclusion of right of use assets and associated liabilities from the TfGM financial statements. These errors in TfGM's IFRS16 disclosures may be material to the GMCA group financial statements. If the errors are material to the group and are not adjusted, or if further work by TfGM does not bring the matter to a satisfactory conclusion, our audit report may require modification to outline this matter.

In each of the above instances, GMCA have been unable to make the required adjustments to their group financial statements at the date of drafting this report because TfGM have yet to complete the work necessary to finalise the adjustments. .

06

Value for Money arrangements

Value for money arrangements

The framework for Value for Money arrangements work

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

2024/25 is the fifth audit year where we are undertaking our value for money (VFM) work under the 2020 Code of Audit Practice (the Code). Our responsibility remains to be satisfied the Authority has proper arrangements in place and to report in the audit report and/or the audit completion certificate where we identify significant weaknesses in arrangements. Separately we provide a commentary on the Authority's arrangements in the Auditor's Annual Report. The introduction of the backstop arrangements does not alter our responsibilities in relation to Value for Money arrangements work.

Specified reporting criteria

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

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

Our approach

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

| | |
|---|---|
| Planning and risk assessment | Obtaining an understanding of the Authority's arrangements for each specified reporting criteria. Relevant information sources include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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; and• interviews and discussions with officers and Members. |
| Additional risk-based procedures and evaluation | Where our planning work identifies risks of significant weaknesses, we will undertake additional procedures to determine whether there is a significant weakness. |
| Reporting | We will provide a summary of the work we have undertaken and our judgements against each of the specified reporting criteria as part of our commentary on arrangements. This will form part of the Auditor's Annual Report. Our commentary will also highlight: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• significant weaknesses identified and our recommendations for improvement; and• emerging issues or other matters that do not represent significant weaknesses but still require attention from the Authority. |

Value for money arrangements

Identified significant weaknesses in arrangements and recommendations for improvement

As a result of our work we have identified significant weaknesses in the Authority's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. These identified weaknesses have been outlined in the table below.

| Identified significant weakness in arrangements | Financial sustainability | Governance | Improving the 3Es | Recommendation for improvement | Our views on the actions taken to date |
|---|--------------------------|------------|-------------------|--|---|
| <p>Governance – how Greater Manchester Combined Authority ensures effective processes and systems are in place to support statutory financial reporting requirements</p> <p>1 GMCA and the GMCA group was unable to publish its draft Statement of Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2025 by the statutory deadline of 30th June due to work in relation to the implementation of the accounting standard 'IFRS16 – leases' not being complete. The impact of the new standard on the figures recognised in the financial statements had previously been assessed as expected to be material based by management, with the implementation of the standard in the local government sector planned for several years. Despite this, an appropriate plan for identification of all leases affected by the new standard and subsequent calculation and review of appropriate accounting entries was not put in place.</p> <p>Management is responsible for ensuring appropriate systems and processes are in place to support timely and accurate statutory financial reporting. GMCA and the GMCA group was unable to prepare IFRS16 disclosures by the statutory deadline because the accounts preparation processes did not build in sufficient time to prepare for the transition to the new standard.</p> <p>We have concluded that this is evidence of a significant weakness in GMCA's arrangements for governance, specifically to ensure processes and systems support statutory financial reporting requirements within statutory deadlines.</p> | | ● | | <p>We recommend GMCA and the GMCA group reviews:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The capacity and capability of the finance team across the Group to ensure it can meet the statutory reporting timetable; and 2. the account closedown plan to ensure project milestones are identified to help meet the statutory deadline, including the provision of high quality supporting working papers to the draft financial statements. | <p>GMCA are undertaking a review of resourcing across the finance team to provide additional support to the Statement of Accounts preparation process in future years.</p> <p>A review of the accounts preparation process is taking place, with a view to identifying further efficiencies in the closedown process to support the timely preparation of the annual Statement of Accounts.</p> |

07

Audit fees and other services

Audit fees and other services

Fees for work as the Authority's appointed auditor

Our fees (exclusive of VAT and disbursements) as the Authority's appointed for the year ended 31 March 2025 are outlined below.

Our fees are designed to reflect the time, professional experience, and expertise required to perform our audit. The scale fee is set by PSAA each year, covering the work required as the Authority's appointed auditor under the NAO Code of Audit Practice. The scale fee for 2024/25 was set at £257,585 (£238,450 for 2023/24). As we have been unable to complete the required procedures to complete our audit before the backstop date, we have proposed a reduction in the scale fee in line with previous years.

Final fees are subject to review and approval by PSAA.

| | 2023//24 Fee £ | 2024/25 Fee (*) £ |
|--|-------------------|----------------------|
| Work to support the financial statements audit including time to plan the audit and issue the disclaimed opinion | 44,915 | 51,517 |
| Work to complete the core Value for Money work and to issue our commentary | 68,774 | 77,276 |
| Additional work on risks of significant weakness in respect of Value for Money | N/A | 12,000 |
| Total fee charged | 113,688 | 140,793 |
| PSAA Scale Fee for information | 238,450 | 257,585 |

(*) The fee for 2024/25 is subject to final confirmation from PSAA

Fees for other services

We have not provided any other services to the Authority.

08

Confirmation of our independence

Confirmation of our independence

We are committed to independence.

We confirm we comply with the FRC's Ethical Standard. In addition, we have set out in this section any matters or relationships we believe may have a bearing on our independence or the objectivity of our audit team.

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

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

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

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

We confirm, as at the date of this report, the engagement team and others in the firm as appropriate and, when applicable, Forvis Mazars' member firms, are independent and comply with relevant ethical requirements. However, if at any time you have concerns or questions about our integrity, objectivity or independence, please discuss these with Authority in the first instance.

Appendices

A: Draft management representation letter

B: Key Communication points

Appendix A: Draft management representation letter

Karen Murray
Partner

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Dear Karen,

Greater Manchester Combined Authority - Audit for Year Ended 31 March 2025

This representation letter is provided in connection with your audit of the financial statements of Greater Manchester Combined Authority the Authority and Group for the year ended 31 March 2025. I note that you intend to issue a disclaimer of opinion in respect of your audit. I understand I am still required to provide the representations set out in this letter so you can complete your audit in accordance with relevant auditing standards.

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, as amended by the Code Update and applicable law.

My responsibility to provide and disclose relevant information

I have provided you with:

- access to all information of which I am 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 Authority and Group you determined it was necessary to contact in order to obtain audit evidence.

I confirm as Treasurer 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 GMCA and committee meetings and committee meetings, have been made available to you.

Appendix A: Draft management representation letter

Accounting policies

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

Accounting estimates, including those measured at fair value

I confirm that the methods, significant assumptions and the data used by the Authority and Group in making the accounting estimates, including those measured at fair value, are appropriate to achieve recognition, measurement or disclosure that is in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework.

Consideration should be given to including representations about specific accounting estimates, including in relation to the methods, assumptions, or data used. Such representations about specific accounting estimates may include representations:

- *that the significant judgments made in making the accounting estimates have taken into account all relevant information of which management is aware;*
- *about the consistency and appropriateness in the selection or application of the methods, assumptions and data used by management in making the accounting estimates;*
- *that the assumptions appropriately reflect management's intent and ability to carry out specific courses of action on behalf of the entity, when relevant to the accounting estimates and disclosures;*
- *that disclosures related to accounting estimates, including disclosures describing estimation uncertainty, are complete and are reasonable in the context of the applicable financial reporting framework;*
- *that appropriate specialized skills or expertise has been applied in making the accounting estimates;*
- *that no subsequent event requires adjustment to the accounting estimates and related disclosures included in the financial statements; and/or*
- *when accounting estimates are not recognised or disclosed in the financial statements, about the appropriateness of management's decision that the recognition or disclosure criteria of the applicable financial reporting framework have not been met.*

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 Authority and Group 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, as amended by the Code Update 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 Authority and Group has complied with all aspects of contractual agreements that would have a material effect on the accounts in the event of non-compliance.

Appendix A: Draft management representation letter

Fraud and error

I acknowledge my responsibility as Treasurer for the design, implementation and maintenance of internal control to prevent and detect fraud and error and I believe I have appropriately fulfilled those responsibilities.

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 Authority and Group 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 Authority and Group'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, as amended by the Code Update and applicable law.

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

Impairment review

To the best of my knowledge, there is nothing to indicate that there is a permanent reduction in the recoverable amount of the property, plant and equipment and intangible assets below their carrying value at the balance sheet date. An impairment review is therefore not considered necessary.

Charges on assets

All the Authority and Group's assets are free from any charges exercisable by third parties except as disclosed within the financial statements.

Future commitments

The Authority and Group has no plans, intentions or commitments that may materially affect the carrying value or classification of assets and liabilities or give rise to additional liabilities.

Service Concession Arrangements

I am not aware of any material contract variations, payment deductions or additional service charges in 2024/25 in relation to the Authority and Group's service concession arrangements that you have not been made aware of.

Subsequent events

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

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.

Appendix A: Draft management representation letter

Going concern

To the best of my knowledge there is nothing to indicate that the Authority and the Group 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.

Annual Governance Statement

I am satisfied that the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) fairly reflects the Authority and Group's risk assurance and governance framework and I confirm that I am not aware of any significant risks that are not disclosed within the AGS.

Narrative Report

The disclosures within the Narrative Report fairly reflect my understanding of the Authority and Group's financial and operating performance over the period covered by the financial statements.

Prior period adjustment

A prior period adjustment was identified and impacted upon the figures in note '47 – Group Property, Plant and Equipment' and '46 – Group Capital and Lease Commitments'. As a result, the prior period figures have been restated. I confirm that I have disclosed to you all the relevant information to support the prior period adjustment and its disclosure notes within the financial statements and I deem the disclosure to be complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Arrangements to achieve economy, effectiveness and efficiency in Use of Resources (Value for Money arrangements)

I confirm that I have disclosed to you all findings and correspondence from regulators for previous and ongoing inspections of which I am aware. In addition, I have disclosed to you any other information that would be considered relevant to your work on value for money arrangements.

Yours faithfully,

[Signature]

Treasurer

Steve Wilson

Appendix B: Key communication points

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

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

Form, timing and content of our communications

We will present the following reports:

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

These documents will be discussed with management prior to being presented to yourselves and their comments will be incorporated as appropriate. We have taken the decision to report to you all of the matters which we would usually report in our Audit Strategy Memorandum and Audit Completion Report, within this single Audit Strategy and Completion Report given the nature of the backstop arrangements and the impact upon our audit.

Key communication points at the planning and completion stage of our audit communicated our Audit Strategy and Completion Report

- Our responsibilities in relation to the audit of the financial statements;
- The planned scope and timing of the audit and the effects of the backstop arrangements;
- Our commitment to independence;
- Responsibilities for preventing and detecting errors;
- Materiality and misstatements;
- Fees for audit and other services.
- Significant deficiencies in internal control;

- Significant findings from the audit including any significant matters discussed with management and significant difficulties, if any, encountered during the audit;
- Summary of misstatements and other corrections made to the draft financial statements;
- Management representation letter; and
- Our proposed draft audit report.

Contact

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