



Mendip District Council Audit results report

Year ended 31 March 2023

January 2024



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Members of the Audit Committee

Somerset Council
County Hall
Taunton
TA1 4DY

10 January 2024

Dear Audit Committee Members

2022/23 Audit Results Report

We are pleased to attach our audit results report for Mendip District Council, summarising the status of our audit for the forthcoming meeting of the Audit Committee.

The audit is designed to express an opinion on the 2023 financial statements and address current statutory and regulatory requirements. This report contains our findings related to the areas of audit emphasis, our views on Mendip District Council's accounting policies and judgements and material internal control findings. Each year sees further enhancements to the level of audit challenge and the quality of evidence required to achieve the robust professional scepticism that society expects. We thank the management team for supporting this process.

This report is intended solely for the information and use of the Audit Committee, other members of the Council and senior management. It is not intended to be and should not be used by anyone other than these specified parties.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss the contents of this report with you at the Audit Committee meeting on 25 January 2024.

Yours faithfully

Kevin Suter

Partner

For and on behalf of Ernst & Young LLP

Encl

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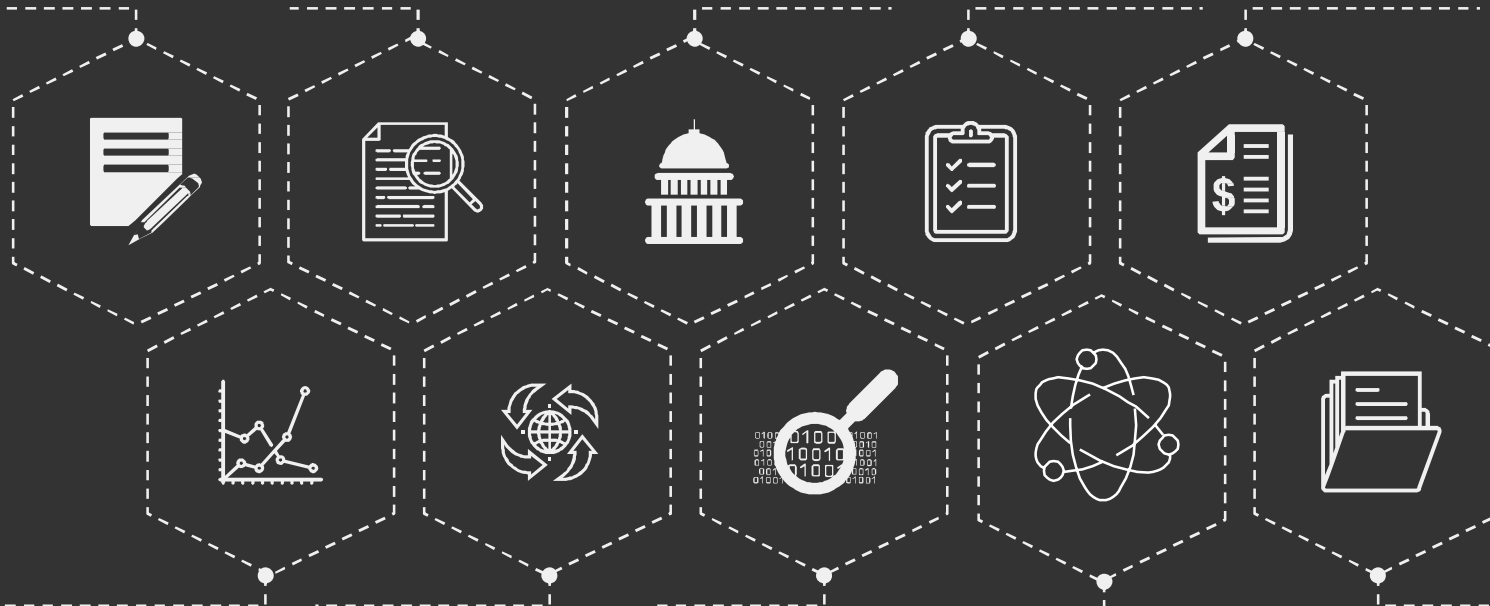
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Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) issued the "Statement of responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies". It is available from the PSAA website (<https://www.psa.co.uk/audit-quality/statement-of-responsibilities/>). The Statement of responsibilities serves as the formal terms of engagement between appointed auditors and audited bodies. It summarises where the different responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies begin and end, and what is to be expected of the audited body in certain areas.

The "Terms of Appointment and further guidance (updated July 2021)" issued by the PSAA (<https://www.psa.co.uk/managing-audit-quality/terms-of-appointment/terms-of-appointment-and-further-guidance-1-july-2021/>) sets out additional requirements that auditors must comply with, over and above those set out in the National Audit Office Code of Audit Practice (the Code) and in legislation, and covers matters of practice and procedure which are of a recurring nature.

This report is made solely to the Audit Committee members and management of Somerset Council in accordance with the statement of responsibilities. Our work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Audit Committee, and management of Somerset Council those matters we are required to state to them in this report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Audit Committee members and management of Somerset Council for this report or for the opinions we have formed. It should not be provided to any third-party without our prior written consent.



01 Executive Summary

Executive Summary

Scope update

In our audit planning report presented at the 28 September 2023 Mendip District Council Audit Committee meeting, we provided the Committee with an overview of our audit scope and approach for the audit of the financial statements. We carried out our audit in accordance with this plan, with no changes in scope.

Status of the audit

We have substantially completed our audit of Mendip District Council's financial statements for the year ended 31/3/2023 and have performed the procedures outlined in our Audit Planning Report. Subject to satisfactory completion of the following outstanding items we expect to issue an unqualified opinion on the Council's financial statements, in the form which appears at Section 3:

- Manager Review of creditors and debtors existence testing
- Completion of remaining journal entry testing
- Remaining Partner Review
- Consultation with our Professional Practice Directorate (PPD) on the Emphasis of Matter wording in our Audit Report in regards to the Going Concern note
- Receipt of the Management Letter of Representation (to be sent to management when the audit is completed)
- Receipt of the final, approved and signed, accounts and Annual Governance Statement, with subsequent audit review of these items
- Completion of audit procedures to assess potential events after the balance sheet date, up to the date of signing the audit report.
- Completion of procedures required by the National Audit Office (NAO) regarding the Whole of Government Accounts submission

We propose to include within our audit report an Emphasis of Matter, drawing the reader's attention to the disclosures concerning the local government reorganisation within Somerset, and that Mendip DC no longer exists as an entity. This is not a qualification of our opinion.

Executive Summary

Auditor responsibilities under the Code of Audit Practice 2020

Under the Code of Audit Practice 2020 we are required to consider whether the Council has put in place 'proper arrangements' to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness on its use of resources. The 2020 Code requires the auditor to design their work to provide them with sufficient assurance to enable them to report to the Council a commentary against specified reporting criteria (see below) on the arrangements the Council has in place to secure value for money through economic, efficient and effective use of its resources for the relevant period.

The specified 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 that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks; and
- 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.

Status of the audit – Value for Money

In the Audit Plan, we reported that we were yet to finalise our value for money (VFM) risk assessment. We have now completed this work and have not identified any risk of significant weakness against the three reporting criteria we are required to consider under the NAO's 2020 Code. As a result, we have completed our planned VFM procedures and have no matters to report by exception in the auditor's report (see Section 03).

We plan to issue the VFM commentary as part of issuing the Auditor's Annual Report.

Executive Summary

Audit differences

During the audit we have identified a few misstatements that have been discussed with management. Some of these have been adjusted for in the updated Statement of Accounts, but a number remain uncorrected based on grounds of materiality. We also note that there have been a number of suggested amends to disclosures.

Further details can be found in Section 4 Audit Differences.

Other reporting issues

We have reviewed the information presented in the Annual Governance Statement for consistency with our knowledge of the Council. We have no matters to report as a result of this work.

We are still to complete the procedures required by the National Audit Office (NAO) on the Whole of Government Accounts submission, this will be performed at the completion of the audit.

We have no other matters to report.

Executive Summary

Areas of audit focus

In our Audit Plan we identified a number of key areas of focus for our audit of the financial report of Mendip District Council. This report sets out our observations and status in relation to these areas, including our views on areas which might be conservative and areas where there is potential risk and exposure. Our consideration of these matters and others identified during the period is summarised within the "Areas of Audit Focus" section of this report.

Fraud Risk: Misstatements due to fraud or error

- Work in this area is complete, subject to manager and partner review – currently no matters to report.

Fraud Risk: Risk of fraud in revenue and expenditure recognition – inappropriate capitalisation of revenue expenditure

- Work in this area is complete – no matters to report.

Significant risk: Valuation of Investment Properties

- Work in this area is complete – one difference identified was valuation inconsistency in the independent valuer's report for one asset which was used to update the fixed asset register. A correction was made in the accounts for this.

Other Area of Audit Focus: Valuation of Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE)

- Work in this area is complete – several areas of difference were identified following review from EY Real Estates, relating to Council Offices and Car Parks. These differences were corrected in the financial statements. The required updated valuation assumptions for car parks were incorporated into those assets not revalued in 22/23, resulting in further adjustments being made for those assets. Corrections for these assets totalled:
 - Council offices – reduction in value of £841k
 - Car Parks – reduction in value of £2,131k

Other Area of Audit Focus: Pension Liability Valuation

- Work in this area is complete – one difference in assumptions identified relating to long term salary increases. The rate was not in line with the standard assumption of the actuary or within the range of our pensions specialist. Based on our findings, management agreed to request a re-running of the IAS19 report using the standard long term salary increase assumption and amended the accounts to reflect this updated report from the Actuary. The correction of the pension liability was as follows:
 - Defined Benefit Obligation – increase in liability of £1,412k

We request that you review these and other matters set out in this report to ensure:

- There are no residual further considerations or matters that could impact these issues
- You concur with the resolution of the issue
- There are no further significant issues you are aware of to be considered before the financial report is finalised

There are no matters, other than those reported by management or disclosed in this report, which we believe should be brought to the attention of the Council or Management.

Executive Summary

Control observations

We have adopted a fully substantive approach, so have not tested the operation of controls.

As part of our work, we obtained an understanding of internal control sufficient to plan our audit and determine the nature, timing and extent of testing performed. Although our audit was not designed to express an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control, we are required to communicate to you significant deficiencies in internal control identified during our audit.

We have not identified any significant deficiencies in the design or operation of an internal control that might result in a material misstatement in your financial statements of which you are not aware.

Based on our work performed to date we have made the following control observations.

- Related Party Transactions - In order to appropriately report related party transactions in the financial statements, we expect the Council to maintain an up to date register of interests. This is achieved through members and senior officers submitting their declaration of interests annually. During our testing we noted several instances of members not providing a submission in 2022/23, although it is noted the majority of members have made a timely submission. 16 out of 18 unreturned declarations relate to councillors that lost their seat due to the creation of Somerset Council. We have been able to obtain alternative evidence to satisfy ourselves the Related Parties Transactions note is accurate.

Independence

Please refer to Section 9 for our update on Independence.



02

Areas of Audit Focus



Areas of Audit Focus

Significant risk

Misstatements due to fraud or error

What is the risk?

The financial statements as a whole are not free of material misstatements whether caused by fraud or error.

As identified in ISA (UK) 240, management is in a unique position to perpetrate fraud because of its ability to manipulate accounting records directly or indirectly and prepare fraudulent financial statements by overriding controls that otherwise appear to be operating effectively.

We identify and respond to this fraud risk on every audit engagement.



What judgements are we focused on?

Our assessment of risk led us to create a series of criteria for the testing of journals, focusing specifically on areas that could be open to management manipulation. We have also focused specifically on capitalisation of assets as a potential area of manipulation, which is recorded as a separately identified Significant risk - Inappropriate capitalisation of revenue expenditure

What did we do?

We carried out the following procedures:

- Identified fraud risks during the planning stages.
- Inquired of management about risks of fraud and the controls put in place to address those risks
- Understood the oversight given by those charged with governance of management's processes over fraud.
- Considered the effectiveness of management's controls designed to address the risk of fraud.
- Tested the appropriateness of journal entries recorded in the general ledger and other adjustments made in the preparation of the financial statements
- Assessed accounting estimates for evidence of management bias, and
- Evaluated the business rationale for significant unusual transactions.

What are our conclusions?

This area is subject to final manager and partner review at the time of writing this report. However, our audit work to date has not identified any of the following:

- any material weaknesses in controls or evidence of material management override.
- any instances of inappropriate judgements being applied, or of any management bias.
- any transactions during our audit which appeared unusual or outside the Council's normal course of business.
- any inappropriate journal entries

Significant risk

Risk of fraud in revenue recognition - inappropriate capitalisation of revenue expenditure

What is the risk?

Under ISA 240 there is a presumed risk that revenue may be misstated due to improper revenue recognition. In the public sector, this requirement is modified by Practice Note 10 issued by the Financial Reporting Council, which states that auditors should also consider the risk that material misstatements may occur by the manipulation of expenditure recognition.

From our risk assessment, we have assessed that the risk manifests itself through the potential to inappropriately capitalise revenue expenditure to improve the financial position of the general fund.

Capitalised revenue expenditure can be funded through borrowing with only minimal MRP charges recorded in the general fund, deferring the expenditure for 30+ years when the borrowing is repaid. Alternately, other sources such as capital receipts or grants could be inappropriately used to finance the expenditure.

Inappropriate classification of revenue expenditure as REFCUS (revenue expenditure funded by capital under statute) could also have the same impact, incorrectly removing the spend from the general fund through applying statutory overrides.



What did we do?

Our approach focused on the following:

- We identified the full list of transactions being capitalised from the data in order to identify any postings which were outside the Council's normal capitalisation process.
- We selected a sample of PPE additions to test and confirm the item was appropriate to capitalise as per IAS 16 through agreement to evidence such as invoices and capital expenditure authorisations.
- We selected a sample of REFCUS items to test to confirm the appropriateness of the classification of these items

What are our conclusions?

Our work in this area is complete.

We have not identified any material weaknesses in controls or evidence of material management override.

We tested a sample of PPE additions and confirmed they met the capitalisation requirements under IAS16.

We tested a sample of REFCUS items and confirmed they were appropriately classified.

We have not identified any instances of inappropriate judgements being applied.



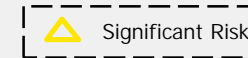
Areas of Audit Focus

Significant risk

Valuation of Investment Properties

What is the risk?

The fair value of Investment Property (IP) represents significant balances in the Council's accounts and are subject to valuation changes and impairment reviews. Management is required to make material judgemental inputs and apply estimation techniques to calculate the year-end balances recorded in the balance sheet which triggers the use of experts by management and EY likewise. Although the economic conditions may now be considered more stable, there are still uncertainties with regards to valuations impacting Investment Properties, which are held at Fair Value. Therefore, this remains as an area of significant risk for FY 2022/23.



What judgements did we focus on?

We focused on the following:

- The reasonableness of the underlying assumptions used by the Council's expert – Capita, including key assumptions of:
 - Yields
 - Future forecast income
 - Asset condition
- Ensuring the information supplied to the valuer in relation to Mendip District Council was complete and accurate
- Ensuring the accounting entries and disclosures made in the financial statements were consistent with the report from Capita.



Areas of Audit Focus

Significant risk

What did we do?

We have:

- Considered the work performed by the Council's valuer, this included a review of the adequacy of the scope of the work performed, their professional capabilities and the results of their work;
- Sample tested key asset information used by the valuer in performing their valuation (e.g. floor plans to support valuations based on price per square metre, or assessing comparative market information);
- Tested a sample of assets revalued in year to:
 - Challenge the assumptions used by the Council's valuers by reference to external evidence and our EY valuation specialists (where necessary);
 - Test journals for the valuation adjustments to confirm that they have been accurately processed in the financial statements;
- Instructed our own Property valuation team (EY Real Estates) to review a sample of FV valuations performed by the Council's Valuer;
- Confirmed that all Investment Property assets were revalued in year as per Code requirements; and
- Tested accounting entries have been correctly processed in the financial statements

What are our conclusions?

Our work in this area is complete.

We confirmed the scope of the work performed and professional capabilities of the valuer were reasonable and appropriate.

From our sample testing by both the local team and our EY Real Estates team, we did not identify any uncorrected differences or material corrected differences.

All Investment property assets were confirmed to be revalued in year. One factual error was identified due to valuation inconsistency in the independent valuer's report for one asset which was used to update the fixed asset register. A correction was made in the accounts for this. Following this correction we have confirmed that appropriate accounting entries and disclosures made in the financial statements.



Areas of Audit Focus

Other areas of audit focus

Valuation of Property Plant and Equipment

What is the risk?

The value of DRC and EUV assets represents a significant balance in the Council's accounts and it is subject to revaluation changes and impairment reviews.

Management is required to make material judgemental inputs and apply estimation techniques to calculate the year-end balances recorded in the balance sheet.

DRC and EUV assets are subject to regular review by the external valuers – Capita.

Valuation of these assets involves higher risk estimates due to the significant assumptions and judgments involved in their valuation, which triggers the use of experts by management and EY (where necessary). These estimates give scope for higher inherent risk in this area of accounts therefore we have identified PPE as an area of focus.

What judgements did we focus on?

We focused on the following:

- The reasonableness of the underlying assumptions used by the Council's expert – Capita, including key assumptions of:
 - Yields
 - Future forecast income
 - Building cost rates
 - Asset condition
- Ensuring the information supplied to the valuer in relation to Mendip District Council was complete and accurate
- Ensuring the accounting entries and disclosures made in the financial statements were consistent with the report from Capita.



Areas of Audit Focus

Other areas of audit focus

What did we do?

We have:

- Considered the work performed by the Council's valuers, including the adequacy of the scope of the work performed, their professional capabilities and the results of their work;
- Sample tested key asset information used by the valuers in performing their valuation (e.g. floor plans to support valuations based on price per square metre) and challenge the key assumptions used by the valuers;
- Considered the annual cycle of valuations to ensure that assets have been valued within a 5 year rolling programme as required by the Code for PPE. We will also consider if there are any specific changes to assets that have occurred and whether these have been communicated to the valuers;
- Reviewed PPE assets not subject to valuation in 2022/23 to confirm that the remaining asset base is not materially misstated;
- Considered the potential impact of current economic conditions on valuation uncertainties;
- Considered changes to useful economic lives as a result of the most recent valuation; and
- Tested to confirm that accounting entries have been correctly processed in the financial statements.

What are our conclusions?

Our work in this area is complete.

We confirmed the scope of the work performed and professional capabilities of the valuer were reasonable and appropriate.

From our sample testing by both the local team and our EY Real Estates team, we identified a number of differences in asset valuations, specifically for the asset types of Council Buildings and Car Parks. This difference was due to yields being applied by the valuer being outside of our reasonable range.

Following our findings and challenge of the figures, the valuer agreed to update their valuations for the affected assets, and management agreed to amend for the resulting valuation sheets. The updated valuations were confirmed to be within our valuation range. The updated valuation assumptions were then applied to assets not revalued in 22/23. This confirmed that some additional assets, particularly high value car parks not valued in the last 12 months required indexation using the updated assumptions to prevent becoming materially misstated.

Following the amendments above, the total changes made to assets were as follows:

- Council offices – reduction in value of £841k
- Car Parks – reduction in value of £2,131k

All assets were confirmed to be within the 5 year revaluation cycle.

No issues were identified with useful economic lives or any material valuation uncertainties.

Appropriate accounting entries and disclosures made in the financial statements, with only minor disclosure amendments requested.



Areas of Audit Focus

Other areas of audit focus

Pension Liability Valuation

What is the risk?

The Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting and IAS19 require the Authority to make extensive disclosures within its financial statements regarding the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) in which it is a scheduled body.

The Council's current pension fund deficit is a material and sensitive item and the Code requires that this liability be disclosed on the Council's balance sheet. The information disclosed is based on the IAS 19 report issued to the Council by the actuary to the administering body. Accounting for this scheme involves significant estimation and judgement. ISAs (UK and Ireland) 500 and 540 require us to undertake procedures on the use of management experts and the assumptions underlying fair value estimates.

What judgements are we focused on?

We focused on the following:

- The reasonableness of the underlying assumptions used by the Council's expert – Barnett Waddingham.
- Ensuring the information supplied to the actuary in relation to Mendip District Council was complete and accurate
- Ensuring the accounting entries and disclosures made in the financial statements were consistent with the report from Barnett Waddingham.

What did we do?

- Liaised with the auditors of Somerset Pension Fund, to obtain assurances over the information supplied to the actuary in relation to Mendip DC.
- Assessed the work of the Pension Fund actuary including the assumptions they have used by relying on the work of PWC - Consulting Actuaries commissioned by National Audit Office for all Local Government sector auditors, and considering any relevant reviews by the EY actuarial team.
- Reviewed and tested the accounting entries and disclosures made within the Council's financial statements in relation to IAS19.
- In accordance with the ISA540 (revised) standard, we tested the actuarial model to confirm it is appropriately designed, consistently applied and mathematically accurate. We involved our EY Pensions specialists to perform this work.

What are our conclusions?

Our work in this area is complete.

We have assessed the work of the Pension Fund Actuary, relying on the work of PWC and the EY Actuarial team which confirmed there was one findings in respect to the actuarial assumptions.

The "Long Term Salary" increase assumption applied by the actuary was different to their standard assumption, on the request of management. There was no evidence available to support using the non standard assumption. Therefore management agreed to request amendment for this assumption to be CPI+1% (3.95%) rather than the 1.75% which was being used to be included in an updated IAS19 report provided by the actuary. Management agreed to amend the Pensions liability figures to reflect the updated IAS19 report, resulting in an increase in Defined Benefit Obligation of £1,412k.

The results of the EY pensions specialist has confirmed the actuarial estimate to be accurate within a reasonable range.

We are satisfied the updated IAS 19 report has been correctly reflected in the Council's financial statements.



03 Audit Report



Audit Report

Draft audit report

Our opinion on the financial statements

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF MENDIP DISTRICT COUNCIL (DEMISED)

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Mendip District Council (the Council) for the year ended 31 March 2023 under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (as amended). The financial statements comprise the:

- Movement in Reserves Statement,
- Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement,
- Balance Sheet,
- Cash Flow Statement,
- the related notes 3.01 to 3.13, 4.01, 5.01 to 5.18, 6.01 to 6.04, 7.01 to 7.08, and 9,
- Collection Fund and the related notes 8.01 and 8.02

The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23 as amended by the Update to the Code and Specifications for Future Codes for Infrastructure Assets (November 2022).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial position of Mendip District Council as at 31 March 2023 and of its expenditure and income for the year then ended; and
- have been prepared properly in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23 as amended by the Update to the Code and Specifications for Future Codes for Infrastructure Assets (November 2022).

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those

standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report below. We are independent of the Council in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard and the Comptroller and Auditor General's (C&AG) AGN01, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Emphasis of matter – Merger of Somerset County Council and other local districts (including Mendip District Council) to form Somerset Council, 1 April 2023

We draw attention to Note 7.08 Going concern, which describes the formation of a single unitary authority for Somerset covering the area of the existing County Council and incorporating the four existing district councils, including Mendip on 1 April 2023 and the transfer of the Council's assets, liabilities and services to Somerset Council (the name of the newly formed Authority). Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Chief Finance Officer's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Council's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of 12 months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Chief Finance Officer with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report. However, because not all future events or conditions can be predicted, this statement is not a guarantee as to the Council's ability to continue as a going concern.



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Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the Statement of Accounts, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for the other information contained within the Statement of Accounts.

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in this report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

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

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which we report by exception

We report to you if:

- in our opinion the annual governance statement is misleading or inconsistent with other information forthcoming from the audit or our knowledge of the Council
- we issue a report in the public interest under section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (as amended)
- we make written recommendations to the audited body under Section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (as amended)
- we make an application to the court for a declaration that an item of account is contrary to law under Section 28 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (as amended)
- we issue an advisory notice under Section 29 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (as amended)

- we make an application for judicial review under Section 31 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (as amended)
- we are not satisfied that the Council has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2023.

We have nothing to report in these respects

Responsibility of the Chief Finance Officer

As explained more fully in the Statement of Responsibilities set out on pages 24 and 25, the Chief Finance Officer is responsible for the preparation of the Statement of Accounts, which includes the financial statements, in accordance with proper practices as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23 as amended by the Update to the Code and Specifications for Future Codes for Infrastructure Assets (November 2022), and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view and for such internal control as the Chief Finance Officer determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Chief Finance Officer is responsible for assessing the Council's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Council either intends to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

The authority is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources, to ensure proper stewardship and governance, and to review regularly the adequacy and effectiveness of these arrangements.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud



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

Explanation as to what extent the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect irregularities, including fraud. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error, as fraud may involve deliberate concealment by, for example, forgery or intentional misrepresentations, or through collusion. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below. However, the primary responsibility for the prevention and detection of fraud rests with both those charged with governance of the entity and management.

We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks that are applicable to the Council and determined that the most significant are:

- Local Government Act 1972,
- Local Government Finance Act 1988 (as amended by the Local Government Finance Act 1992),
- Local Government Act 2003,
- The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended in 2018, 2020, and 2022,
- The Local Government Finance Act 2012,
- The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (as amended), and
- The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

In addition, the Council has to comply with laws and regulations in the areas of anti-bribery and corruption, data protection, employment Legislation, tax Legislation, general power of competence, procurement and health & safety.

We understood how Mendip District Council is complying with those frameworks by understanding the incentive, opportunities and motives for non-compliance, including inquiring of management, head of internal audit, those charged with governance and the monitoring officer and obtaining and reading documentation relating to the procedures in place to identify, evaluate and comply with laws and regulations, and whether they are aware of instances of non-compliance. We corroborated this through our reading of the Council's committee minutes, through enquiry of employees to confirm Council policies, and through the inspection of employee handbooks and other information. Based on this understanding we designed our audit procedures to identify non-compliance with such laws and regulations. Our procedures had a focus on compliance with the accounting framework through obtaining sufficient audit evidence in line with the level of risk identified and with relevant legislation.

We assessed the susceptibility of the Council's financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur by understanding the potential incentives and pressures for management to manipulate the financial statements, and performed procedures to understand the areas in which this would most likely arise. Based on our risk assessment procedures, we identified inappropriate capitalisation of revenue expenditure and management override of controls to be our fraud risks.

To address our fraud risk of inappropriate capitalisation of revenue expenditure we tested the Council's capitalised expenditure to ensure the capitalisation criteria were properly met and the expenditure was genuine. We also tested a sample of REFCUS items to confirm they were appropriately classified.

To address our fraud risk of management override of controls, we tested the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments; assessed whether the judgements made in making accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluated the business rationale of any identified significant



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Our opinion on the financial statements

transactions that were unusual or outside the normal course of business. These procedures were designed to provide reasonable assurance that the financial statements were free from fraud or error.

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

Scope of the review of arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources

We have undertaken our review in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice 2020, having regard to the guidance on the specified reporting criteria issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General in December 2021, as to whether Mendip District Council had proper arrangements for financial sustainability, governance and improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The Comptroller and Auditor General determined these criteria as those necessary for us to consider under the Code of Audit Practice in satisfying ourselves whether Mendip District Council put in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2023.

We planned our work in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice. Based on our risk assessment, we undertook such work as we considered necessary to form a view on whether, in all significant respects, Mendip District Council had put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

We are required under Section 20(1)(c) of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (as amended) to satisfy ourselves that the Authority has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

We are not required to consider, nor have we considered, whether all aspects of the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources are operating effectively.

Delay in certification of completion of the audit

We cannot formally conclude the audit and issue an audit certificate until the NAO as group auditor has confirmed that no further assurances will be required from us as component auditors of Mendip District Council. We are satisfied that this work does not have a material effect on the financial statements or our work on value for money arrangements.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the members of Mendip District Council, as a body, in accordance with Part 5 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (as amended) and for no other purpose, as set out in paragraph 43 of the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies published by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Council and the Council's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



04 Audit Differences





Audit Differences

In the normal course of any audit, we identify misstatements between amounts we believe should be recorded in the financial statements and the disclosures and amounts actually recorded. These differences are classified as “known” or “judgemental”. Known differences represent items that can be accurately quantified and relate to a definite set of facts or circumstances. Judgemental differences generally involve estimation and relate to facts or circumstances that are uncertain or open to interpretation.

Summary of adjusted and unadjusted differences

We highlight the following misstatements greater than £0.858m which have been corrected by management that were identified during the course of our audit:

- Infrastructure Assets – Correction of a misclassification of £876k Multi User Paths as Other Land and Buildings rather than Infrastructure Asset.
- Capital Grants Receipts In Advance - Transfer of Glastonbury Town Deal to Capital Grants Unapplied Reserve as initial recognition conditions have been met to record as income in 22/23. Reduced Grants Receipts in Advance £5,336k, recognised as income and then transferred to Capital Grants Unapplied Reserve.
- Pensions Liability – Inappropriate salary increase % financial assumption applied to the IAS19 report. Management agreed to request an updated report which incorporated the standard actuarial assumption of CPI+1%. Management amended the accounts for the updated IAS19 report. Increase in the Defined Benefit Obligation of £1,412k
- PPE valuations – Inappropriate yields recorded for Council Offices and Car Parks. Valuer agreed to re-run valuations using updated yield rates and management agreed to amend the accounts for these updated valuations. High value Car Parks not previously valued in 22/23 were indexed using the updated assumptions to ensure they did not become materially misstated. Assets amended as follows:
 - Other Land and Buildings (Council offices) – reduction in value of £841k
 - Other Land and Buildings (Car Parks) – reduction in value of £2,131k

Management also agreed to make a small number of disclosure amendments as part of our wider review of the financial statements.

Audit Differences

Summary of adjusted and unadjusted differences (Continued)

We report to you any uncorrected misstatements greater than our nominal value of £57k, as recorded below:

Uncorrected misstatements 31 March 2023 (£'000)	Effect on the current period:		Net assets (Decrease)/Increase				Equity components Debit/(Credit)
	OCI Debit/(Credit)	Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement Debit/(Credit)	Assets current Debit/ (Credit)	Assets non current Debit/ (Credit)	Liabilities current Debit/ (Credit)	Liabilities non-current Debit/ (Credit)	
Known differences:							
• Bad Debt Provision – inclusion of Local Authority debt		(£64.5k)	£64.5k				
• CTAX Prepayment Debtors		(£112.6k)			£112.6k		
Judgemental difference:							
• NDR Appeals Provision – Estimation Difference		£148.5k			(£148.5k)		
Projected Difference:							
Net Cost of Services – Expenditure – Expenditure recorded in 22/23 which should have been recorded in earlier periods		(£125k)					£125k
Reclassification Difference:							
Adjustments between the accounting and funding basis: Capital Adjustment account figures from GF (General Fund)							£210k
Capital Adjustment account figures from GF (Capital adjustment account)							(£210k)
Totals		(£153.6k)	£64.5k		(£35.9k)		£125k

As we review the final version of financial statements, it is possible that further amendments may arise. We will provide an update at the Audit Committee meeting and a final position at the conclusion of the audit.



05

Value for Money



Value for money

The Council's responsibilities for value for money (VFM)

The Council is required to maintain an effective system of internal control that supports the achievement of its policies, aims and objectives while safeguarding and securing value for money from the public funds and other resources at its disposal.

As part of the material published with its financial statements, the Council is required to bring together commentary on its governance framework and how this has operated during the period in a governance statement. In preparing its governance statement, the Council tailors the content to reflect its own individual circumstances, consistent with the requirements set out in the Cipfa code of practice on local authority accounting. This includes a requirement to provide commentary on its arrangements for securing value for money from their use of resources.

Risk assessment

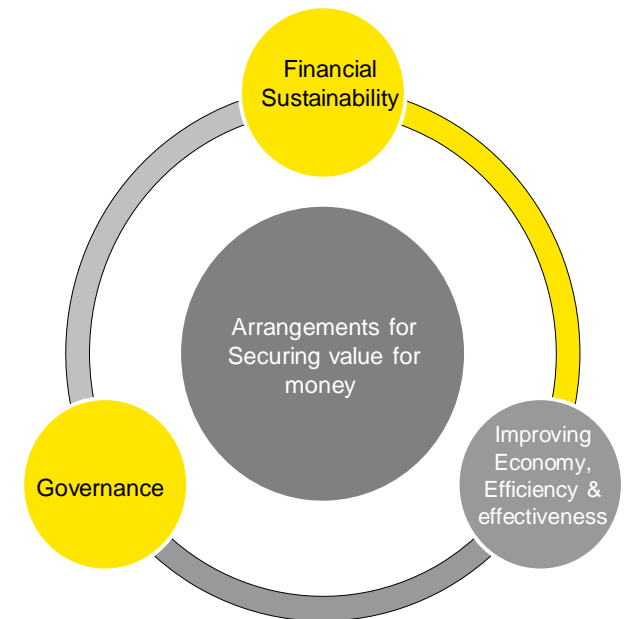
Throughout the audit we have performed a risk assessment in relation to the arrangements in place. This risk assessment looked at whether there was any risk of significant weaknesses in the VFM arrangements.

No significant risks were identified throughout the risk assessment stage.

Status of our VFM work

We have completed our planned VFM procedures and have no matters to report by exception in the auditor's report (see Section 03).

We plan to issue the VFM commentary, as part of issuing the Auditor's Annual Report.





06 Other reporting issues

Other reporting issues

Consistency of other information published with the financial statements, including the Annual Governance Statement

We must give an opinion on the consistency of the financial and non-financial information in the Financial Report 2022/23 with the audited financial statements

We must also review the Annual Governance Statement for completeness of disclosures, consistency with other information from our work, and whether it complies with relevant guidance.

Financial information in the Narrative Statement and published with the financial statements was consistent with the audited financial statements

We have reviewed the Annual Governance Statement and can confirm it is consistent with other information from our audit of the financial statements and we have no other matters to report.

Whole of Government Accounts

Alongside our work on the financial statements, we also review and report to the National Audit Office on your Whole of Government Accounts return. The extent of our review, and the nature of our report, is specified by the National Audit Office.

At the time of writing this report we have not yet been able to perform the procedures required by the National Audit Office (NAO) on the Whole of Government Accounts submission. This work will be performed on completion of the audit. We anticipate no matters to report, as the Council falls below the threshold for detailed audit procedures.

Other powers and duties

We have a duty under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 to consider whether to report on any matter that comes to our attention in the course of the audit, either for the Council to consider it or to bring it to the attention of the public (i.e. "a report in the public interest"). We did not identify any issues which required us to issue a report in the public interest.

We also have a duty to make written recommendations to the Council, copied to the Secretary of State, and take action in accordance with our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. We did not identify any issues.

Other matters

As required by ISA (UK&I) 260 and other ISAs specifying communication requirements, we must tell you significant findings from the audit and other matters if they are significant to your oversight of the Mendip District Council's financial reporting process. We have no other matters to report.

Other reporting issues

ISA (UK) 315 (Revised): Identifying and Addressing the Risks of Material Misstatement

ISA 315 is effective from FY 2022/23 onwards and is the critical standard which drives the auditor's approach to the following areas:

- Risk Assessment
- Understanding the entity's internal control
- Significant risk
- Approach to addressing significant risk (in combination with ISA 330)

The International Auditing & Assurance Standards Board (IAASB) concluded that whilst the existing version of the standard was fundamentally sound, feedback determined that it was not always clear, leading to a possibility that risk identification was not consistent. The aims of the revised standard is to:

- Drive consistent and effective identification and assessment of risks of material misstatement
- Improve the standard's applicability to entities across a wide spectrum of circumstances and complexities ('scalability')
- Modernise ISA 315 to meet evolving business needs, including:
 - how auditors use automated tools and techniques, including data analytics to perform risk assessment audit procedures; and
 - how auditors understand the entity's use of information technology relevant to financial reporting.
 - Focus auditors on exercising professional scepticism throughout the risk identification and assessment process.

We set out the findings and conclusions from our work to implement ISA 315 in the table below.

Audit Procedures

Audit findings and conclusions

We performed the following procedures:

We obtained an understanding of the IT processes related to the IT applications of the Fund. The Fund has two relevant IT applications for the purposes of ISA 315 risk assessment.

- We performed procedures to determine if there are typical controls missing or control deficiencies identified and evaluated the consequences for our audit strategy.
- When we have identified controls relevant to the audit that are application controls or IT-dependent manual controls where we do not gain assurance substantively, we performed additional procedures.
- We reviewed the following processes for all five relevant IT applications:
 - Manage vendor supplied changes
 - Manage security settings
 - Manage user access
 - Manage entity-programmed changes
 - Job scheduling and managing IT process

No significant issues were identified in our review of the various processes, including the design and implementation effectiveness of relevant controls around the financial statement close process.

We have not tested the operation of any controls through this review.



07

Assessment of Control Environment



Assessment of Control Environment

Financial controls

It is the responsibility of the Mendip District Council to develop and implement systems of internal financial control and to put in place proper arrangements to monitor their adequacy and effectiveness in practice. Our responsibility as your auditor is to consider whether the Mendip District Council has put adequate arrangements in place to satisfy itself that the systems of internal financial control are both adequate and effective in practice.

As part of our audit of the financial statements, we obtained an understanding of internal control sufficient to plan our audit and determine the nature, timing and extent of testing performed. As we have adopted a fully substantive approach, we have therefore not tested the operation of controls.

Although our audit was not designed to express an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control we are required to communicate to you significant deficiencies in internal control.

We have not identified any significant deficiencies in the design or operation of an internal control that might result in a material misstatement in your financial statements of which you are not aware.

Based on our work performed to date we have made the following control observations.

- Related Party Transactions – In order to appropriately report related party transactions in the financial statements, we expect the Council to maintain an up to date register of interests. This is achieved through members and senior officers submitting their declaration of interests annually. During our testing we noted several instances of members not providing a submission in 22/23, although it is noted the majority of members have made a timely submission. 16 out of 18 unreturned declarations relate to councillors that lost their seat due to the creation of Somerset Council. We have been able to obtain alternative evidence to satisfy ourselves the Related Parties Transactions note is accurate.



08 Data Analytics

Data analytics – Journal Entries

Analytics Driven Audit

Data Analytics

We used our data analysers to enable us to capture entire populations of your financial data. These analysers:

- Help identify specific exceptions and anomalies which can then be the focus of our substantive audit tests; and
- Give greater likelihood of identifying errors than traditional, random sampling techniques.

In 2022/23, our use of these analysers in the Council's audit included gaining a deeper understanding of the data sources which are used in each Significant Class of Transactions and therefore allowing us to tailor our testing accordingly dependant on the nature of the source entries. We tested specific journal entries which we deem to have the highest inherent risk to the audit, including unusual transactions not consistent with the rest of the population.

We capture the data through our formal data requests and the data transfer takes place on a secured EY website. These are in line with our EY data protection policies which are designed to protect the confidentiality, integrity and availability of business and personal information.

Journal Entry Analysis

We obtain downloads of all of the Council's financial ledger transactions posted in the year. We perform completeness analysis over the data, reconciling the sum of transactions to the movement in the trial balances and financial statements to ensure we have captured all data. Our analysers then review and sort transactions, allowing us to more effectively identify and test journals that we consider to be higher risk, as identified in our audit planning report.



09

Independence

The FRC Ethical Standard requires that we provide details of all relationships between Ernst & Young (EY) and the Council, and its members and senior management and its affiliates, including all services provided by us and our network to the Council, its members and senior management and its affiliates, and other services provided to other known connected parties that we consider may reasonably be thought to bear on the our integrity or objectivity, including those that could compromise independence and the related safeguards that are in place and why they address the threats.

There are no relationships from 1 April 2022 to the date of this report, which we consider may reasonably be thought to bear on our independence and objectivity.

Services provided by Ernst & Young

The next page includes a summary of the fees that you have paid to us in the year ended 31 March 2023 in line with the disclosures set out in FRC Ethical Standard and in statute. Full details of the services that we have provided are shown below.

We are continuing to provide non-audit services as reporting accountant for your Housing Benefit Assurance Process (HBAP) to the DWP which is a permitted service. We believe that it is appropriate for us to undertake this permitted non-audit services set out in Section 5.40 of the FRC Ethical Standard 2019 (FRC ES), and we will comply with the policies that you have approved.

Confirmation and analysis of Audit fees

We confirm there are no changes in our assessment of independence since our confirmation in our audit planning board report. We complied with the APB Ethical Standards. In our professional judgement the firm is independent and the objectivity of the audit engagement partner and audit staff has not been compromised within the meaning of regulatory and professional requirements.

We consider that our independence in this context is a matter that should be reviewed by both you and ourselves. It is therefore important that you and your Audit Committee consider the facts of which you are aware and come to a view. If you wish to discuss any matters concerning our independence, we will be pleased to do so at the forthcoming meeting of the Council.

Our fees continue to include the scale fee rebasing figure submitted in the prior year to properly account for the increased audit and quality requirements as well as increased regulatory challenge on the depth and quality of assurance provided by audit suppliers. This submission will be made to PSAA for their consideration.

As part of our reporting on our independence, we set out a summary of the fees for the year ended 31 March 2023.

Description	Final fee 2022/23	Planned Fee 2022/23	Final fee 2021/22
	£	£	£
Audit Scale Fee – Code work	47,287	47,287	38,287
Proposed scale fee rebasing (Note 1)	37,193		46,193
Scale fee variation – e.g. property valuation errors (Note 2)	TBC		TBC
Impact of the New Code of Audit Practice, and revised ISA540 (Note 3)	8,874	8,874	8,874
ISA 315 (Note 4)	7,342	TBC	n/a
Total Code audit fee	TBC	TBC	TBC
Non-audit services (Housing Benefits)	8,300	8,300	8,300
Total fees	TBC	TBC	TBC

All fees exclude VAT

Notes:

1. In our 2019/20 Annual Audit Letter we set out our rationale for a rebasing the audit fee to address changes in professional and regulatory requirements, and the associated impact on audit procedures. For the purposes of planning we have rolled the same calculated £46,193 forward from previous years. For 2022/23 the PSAA have updated the scale fee recorded above, reducing our request for the additional rebasing compared to the previous years,
2. We have not yet concluded our final procedures for 22/23 and therefore are not in a position to provide a final SFV. We will provide to management at the earliest opportunity following the completion of our procedures.
3. PSAA have written to all local authorities to indicate a range of fees for the impact of the 2020 Code of Audit Practice and new auditing standards on estimates. We calculated the impact for Mendip DC to be at the lower end of PSAA's ranges in 2020/21, which PSAA have approved. We have rolled this forward into the 2022/23 fee as the requirements are recurrent.
4. The revision to ISA 315 has had a significant impact on our scope and approach, requiring auditors to enhance the audit risk assessment process, better focus responses to identified risks and evaluate the impact of IT on key processes supporting the production of the financial statements.

All variations to the scale fee for both years are subject to determination by PSAA.

Other communications

EY Transparency Report 2023

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

Details of the key policies and processes in place within EY for maintaining objectivity and independence can be found in our annual Transparency Report which the firm is required to publish by law. The most recent version of this Report is for the year end 30 June 2023:

[EY UK Transparency Report | EY UK](#)







10 Appendices





Appendix A

Required communications with the Audit Committee

There are certain communications that we must provide to the those charged with governance of UK entities. We have detailed these here together with a reference of when and where they were covered:

		 Our Reporting to you
Required communications	 What is reported?	  When and where
Terms of engagement	Confirmation by the Audit Committee of acceptance of terms of engagement as written in the engagement letter signed by both parties.	The statement of responsibilities serves as the formal terms of engagement between the PSAA's appointed auditors and audited bodies
Our responsibilities	Reminder of our responsibilities as set out in the engagement letter.	Audit Planning Report – September 2023
Planning and audit approach	Communication of the planned scope and timing of the audit, any limitations and the significant risks identified. When communicating key audit matters this includes the most significant risks of material misstatement (whether or not due to fraud) including those that have the greatest effect on the overall audit strategy, the allocation of resources in the audit and directing the efforts of the engagement team.	Audit Planning Report – September 2023
Significant findings from the audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our view about the significant qualitative aspects of accounting practices including accounting policies, accounting estimates and financial statement disclosures • Significant difficulties, if any, encountered during the audit • Significant matters, if any, arising from the audit that were discussed with management • Written representations that we are seeking • Expected modifications to the audit report • Other matters if any, significant to the oversight of the financial reporting process 	Audit Results Report – January 2024




Appendix A

		 Our Reporting to you
 Required communications	 What is reported?	 When and where
Going concern	<p>Events or conditions identified that may cast significant doubt on the entity's ability to continue as a going concern, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether the events or conditions constitute a material uncertainty related to going concern • Whether the use of the going concern assumption is appropriate in the preparation and presentation of the financial statements • The appropriateness of related disclosures in the financial statements 	<p>No conditions or events were identified, either individually or together to raise any doubt about Mendip District Council's ability to continue for the 12 months from the date of our report.</p> <p>Mendip District Council's services were transferred to the newly formed Somerset Council on 1 April 2023, with Mendip DC then ceasing to exist. As there is a continuation of services the Going Concern assumption continues to be appropriate. This is appropriately recorded in the financial statements. We intend to report an emphasis of matter in our audit report to draw the users attention to this note in the accounts.</p>
Misstatements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncorrected misstatements and their effect on our audit opinion, unless prohibited by law or regulation • The effect of uncorrected misstatements related to prior periods • A request that any uncorrected misstatement be corrected • Material misstatements corrected by management 	Audit Results Report – January 2024
Subsequent events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enquiry of the Audit Committee where appropriate regarding whether any subsequent events have occurred that might affect the financial statements. 	Audit Results Report – January 2024
Fraud	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enquiries of the audit committee to determine whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud affecting the entity • Any fraud that we have identified or information we have obtained that indicates that a fraud may exist • Unless all of those charged with governance are involved in managing the entity, any identified or suspected fraud involving: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Management; b. Employees who have significant roles in internal control; or c. Others where the fraud results in a material misstatement in the financial statements. • The nature, timing and extent of audit procedures necessary to complete the audit when fraud involving management is suspected • Any other matters related to fraud, relevant to Audit Committee responsibility. 	Audit Results Report – January 2024

Appendix A

		Our Reporting to you
Required communications	What is reported?	When and where
Related parties	<p>Significant matters arising during the audit in connection with the entity's related parties including, when applicable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-disclosure by management • Inappropriate authorisation and approval of transactions • Disagreement over disclosures • Non-compliance with laws and regulations • Difficulty in identifying the party that ultimately controls the entity 	Audit Results Report – January 2024
Independence	<p>Communication of all significant facts and matters that bear on EY's, and all individuals involved in the audit, objectivity and independence.</p> <p>Communication of key elements of the audit engagement partner's consideration of independence and objectivity such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principal threats • Safeguards adopted and their effectiveness • An overall assessment of threats and safeguards • Information about the general policies and process within the firm to maintain objectivity and independence 	Audit Results Report – January 2024
External confirmations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management's refusal for us to request confirmations • Inability to obtain relevant and reliable audit evidence from other procedures. 	We have received all requested confirmations
Consideration of laws and regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject to compliance with applicable regulations, matters involving identified or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations, other than those which are clearly inconsequential and the implications thereof. Instances of suspected non-compliance may also include those that are brought to our attention that are expected to occur imminently or for which there is reason to believe that they may occur • Enquiry of the Audit Committee into possible instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations that may have a material effect on the financial statements and that the audit committee may be aware of 	We have asked management and those charged with governance. We have not identified any material instances or non-compliance with laws and regulations

Appendix A

		 Our Reporting to you
Required communications	 What is reported?	 When and where
Significant deficiencies in internal controls identified during the audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant deficiencies in internal controls identified during the audit. 	We have not identified any significant deficiencies in internal controls
Written representations we are requesting from management and/or those charged with governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written representations we are requesting from management and/or those charged with governance 	Audit Results Report – January 2024
Material inconsistencies or misstatements of fact identified in other information which management has refused to revise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Material inconsistencies or misstatements of fact identified in other information which management has refused to revise 	Audit Results Report – January 2024
Auditors report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key audit matters that we will include in our auditor’s report Any circumstances identified that affect the form and content of our auditor’s report 	Audit Results Report – January 2024 No such circumstances identified

Draft Management representation Letter

Management Rep Letter

[To be prepared on the entity's letterhead]

Kevin Suter
Ernst & Young LLP
Grosvenor House
Grosvenor Square
Southampton
Hampshire
SO15 2BE

This letter of representations is provided in connection with your audit of the financial statements of Mendip District Council ("the Council") for the year ended 31 March 2023. We recognise that obtaining representations from us concerning the information contained in this letter is a significant procedure in enabling you to form an opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of Mendip District Council as of 31 March 2023 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended in accordance with CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23.

We understand that the purpose of your audit of our financial statements is to express an opinion thereon and that your audit was conducted in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK), which involves an examination of the accounting system, internal control and related data to the extent you considered necessary in the circumstances, and is not designed to identify - nor necessarily be expected to disclose - all fraud, shortages, errors and other irregularities, should any exist.

Accordingly, we make the following representations, which are true to the best of our knowledge and belief, having made such inquiries as we considered necessary for the purpose of appropriately informing ourselves:

A. Financial Statements and Financial Records

1. We have fulfilled our responsibilities, under the relevant statutory authorities, for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and CIPFA LASAAC Code

- of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23.
2. We acknowledge, as members of management of the Council, our responsibility for the fair presentation of the financial statements. We believe the financial statements referred to above give a true and fair view of the financial position, financial performance (or results of operations) and cash flows of the Council in accordance with the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23. We have approved the financial statements.
3. The significant accounting policies adopted in the preparation of the financial statements are appropriately described in the financial statements.
4. As members of management of the Council, we believe that the Council has a system of internal controls adequate to enable the preparation of accurate financial statements in accordance with the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23, that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. We have disclosed to you any significant changes in our processes, controls, policies and procedures that we have made to address the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and of the conflict and related sanctions in Ukraine, Russia and/or Belarus on our system of internal controls.
5. We believe that the effects of any unadjusted audit differences, summarised in the accompanying schedule, accumulated by you during the current audit and pertaining to the latest period presented are immaterial, both individually and in the aggregate, to the financial statements taken as a whole. **We have not corrected these differences identified by and brought to the attention from the auditor because [specify reasons for not correcting misstatement]**

B. Non-compliance with law and regulations, including fraud

1. We acknowledge that we are responsible to determine that the Council's activities are conducted in accordance with laws and regulations and that we are responsible to identify and address any non-compliance with applicable laws and regulations, including fraud.
2. We acknowledge that we are responsible for the design, implementation and maintenance of internal controls to prevent and detect fraud.

Draft Management representation letter

Management Rep Letter

3. We have disclosed to you the results of our assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud.
 4. We have no knowledge of any identified or suspected non-compliance with laws or regulations, including fraud that may have affected the Council (regardless of the source or form and including, without limitation, allegations by “whistleblowers”) including non-compliance matters:
 - involving financial statements;
 - related to laws and regulations that have a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the Council’s financial statements;
 - related to laws and regulations that have an indirect effect on amounts and disclosures in the financial statements, but compliance with which may be fundamental to the operations of the Authority’s activities, its ability to continue to operate, or to avoid material penalties;
 - involving management, or employees who have significant roles in internal controls, or others; or
 - in relation to any allegations of fraud, suspected fraud or other non-compliance with laws and regulations communicated by employees, former employees, analysts, regulators or others.
- C. Information Provided and Completeness of Information and Transactions
1. We have provided you with:
 - Access to all information of which we are aware that is relevant to the preparation of the financial statements such as records, documentation and other matters;
 - Additional information that you have requested from us for the purpose of the audit; and
 - Unrestricted access to persons within the entity from whom you determined it necessary to obtain audit evidence.
 2. All material transactions have been recorded in the accounting records and all material transactions, events and conditions are reflected in the financial statements, including those related to the COVID-19 pandemic and including those related to the conflict and related sanctions in Ukraine, Russia and/or Belarus.
 3. We have made available to you all minutes of the meetings of the Full Council, Cabinet and Audit Committee (or summaries of actions of recent meetings for which minutes have not yet been prepared) held through the year to the most recent meeting on the following date: 8 March 2023.
 4. We confirm the completeness of information provided regarding the identification of related parties. We have disclosed to you the identity of the Council’s related parties and all related party relationships and transactions of which we are aware, including sales, purchases, loans, transfers of assets, liabilities and services, leasing arrangements, guarantees, non-monetary transactions and transactions for no consideration for the period ended, as well as related balances due to or from such parties at the year end. These transactions have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed in the financial statements.
 5. We believe that the methods, significant assumptions and the data we used in making accounting estimates and related disclosures are appropriate and consistently applied to achieve recognition, measurement and disclosure that is in accordance with the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23.
 6. We have disclosed to you, and the Council has complied with, all aspects of contractual agreements that could have a material effect on the financial statements in the event of non-compliance, including all covenants, conditions or other requirements of all outstanding debt.

Draft Management representation letter

Management Rep Letter

7. From the date of our last management representation letter (9 October 2023) through the date of this letter we have disclosed to you any unauthorised access to our information technology systems that either occurred or to the best of our knowledge is reasonably likely to have occurred based on our investigation, including of reports submitted to us by third parties (including regulatory agencies, law enforcement agencies and security consultants), to the extent that such unauthorised access to our information technology systems is reasonably likely to have a material impact to the financial statements, in each case or in the aggregate, and ransomware attacks when we paid or are contemplating paying a ransom, regardless of the amount.

D. Liabilities and Contingencies

1. All liabilities and contingencies, including those associated with guarantees, whether written or oral, have been disclosed to you and are appropriately reflected in the financial statements.
2. We have informed you of all outstanding and possible litigation and claims, whether or not they have been discussed with legal counsel.
3. We have recorded and/or disclosed, as appropriate, all liabilities related litigation and claims, both actual and contingent, and have disclosed in the financial statements all guarantees that we have given to third parties.

E. Going Concern

1. Note 7.08 to the financial statements discloses all the matters of which we are aware that are relevant to the Council's ability to continue as a going concern, including significant conditions and events, our plans for future action, and the feasibility of those plans.

F. Subsequent Events

1. Other than as described in the financial statements, there have been no events, including events related to the COVID-19 pandemic, and including events related to the conflict and related sanctions in Ukraine, Russia and/or Belarus, subsequent to period end which require adjustment of or disclosure in the financial statements or notes thereto.

G. Other information

1. We acknowledge our responsibility for the preparation of the other information. The other information comprises the Narrative Report and the Annual Governance Statement.
2. We confirm that the content contained within the other information is consistent with the financial statements.

H. Climate-related matters

1. We confirm that to the best of our knowledge all information that is relevant to the recognition, measurement, presentation and disclosure of climate-related matters has been considered and reflected in the financial statements.
2. The key assumptions used in preparing the financial statements are, to the extent allowable under the requirements of CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23, aligned with the statements we have made in the other information or other public communications made by us.

I. Reserves

1. We have properly recorded or disclosed in the financial statements the useable and unusable reserves.

Draft Management representation letter

Management Rep Letter

J. Use of the Work of a Specialist

1. We agree with the findings of the specialists that we engaged to evaluate the IAS19 pension liability and disclosure, property, plant and equipment valuations and investment property valuations, and have adequately considered the qualifications of the specialists in determining the amounts and disclosures included in the financial statements and the underlying accounting records. We did not give or cause any instructions to be given to the specialists with respect to the values or amounts derived in an attempt to bias their work, and we are not otherwise aware of any matters that have had an effect on the independence or objectivity of the specialists.

K. Estimates

1. We confirm that the significant judgments made in making the estimates for pension liabilities, the valuations of property, plant and equipment and investment properties, and the valuation of the NDR Appeals Provision have taken into account all relevant information of which we are aware.
2. We believe that the selection or application of the methods, assumptions and data used by us have been consistently and appropriately applied or used in making the estimates.
3. We confirm that the significant assumptions used in making the estimates appropriately reflect our intent and ability to carry out any relevant specific courses of action on behalf of the entity.

4. We confirm that the disclosures made in the financial statements with respect to the accounting estimates, including those describing estimation uncertainty and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, are complete and are reasonable in the context of the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23.
5. We confirm that appropriate specialised skills or expertise has been applied in making the estimates.
6. We confirm that no adjustments are required to the accounting estimates and disclosures in the financial statements, including due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

L. Retirement benefits

1. On the basis of the process established by us and having made appropriate enquiries, we are satisfied that the actuarial assumptions underlying the scheme liabilities are consistent with our knowledge of the business. All significant retirement benefits and all settlements and curtailments have been identified and properly accounted for.

Yours faithfully,

(s151 Officer)

(Chair of the Audit Committee)

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