

Audit Completion Report

Ashfield District Council – Year ended 31
March 2022

November 2022



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17 November 2022

Dear Committee Members

Audit Completion Report – Year ended 31 March 2022

We are pleased to present our Audit Completion Report for the year ended 31 March 2022. The purpose of this document is to summarise our audit conclusions.

The scope of our work, including identified significant audit risks and other areas of management judgement, was outlined in our Audit Strategy Memorandum dated 5 July 2022. We have reviewed our Audit Strategy Memorandum and concluded that the original significant audit risks and other areas of management judgement remain appropriate.

We would like to express our thanks for the assistance of your team during our audit.

If you would like to discuss any matters in more detail, then please do not hesitate to contact me on 0115 964 4744.

Yours faithfully



David Hoose, Key Audit Partner

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01

Section 01:

Executive summary

1. Executive summary

Principal conclusions and significant findings

The detailed scope of our work as your appointed auditor for 2021/22 is set out in the National Audit Office's (NAO) Code of Audit Practice. Our responsibilities and powers are derived from the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and as outlined in our Audit Strategy Memorandum, our audit has been conducted in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) and means we focus on audit risks that we have assessed as resulting in a higher risk of material misstatement.

In section 4 of this report, we have set out our conclusions and significant findings from our audit. This section includes our conclusions on the audit risks and areas of management judgement in our Audit Strategy Memorandum, which include:

- Management override of controls;
- Net defined benefit liability valuation; and
- Valuation of property, plant and equipment.

Misstatements and internal control recommendations

Section 5 sets out internal control recommendations and section 6 sets out audit misstatements; unadjusted misstatements total £1,060k. Section 7 outlines our work on the Council's arrangements to achieve economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

Status and audit opinion

We have substantially completed our audit in respect of the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2022. At the time of preparing this report, there are matters outstanding as outlined in section 2. We will provide an update to you in relation to the significant matters outstanding through issuance of a follow up letter.

Subject to the satisfactory conclusion of the remaining audit work, we have the following conclusions:



Audit opinion

We anticipate issuing an unqualified opinion, without modification, on the financial statements. Our proposed audit opinion is included in the draft auditor's report in Appendix B. This is subject to the work outstanding, identified in section 2 of this report.



Value for Money

To date, we anticipate having no significant weaknesses in arrangements to report in relation to the arrangements that the Council has in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. Further detail on our Value for Money work to date is provided in section 7 of this report.



Whole of Government Accounts (WGA)

We have not yet received group instructions from the National Audit Office in respect of our work on the Council's WGA submission. We are unable to commence our work in this area until such instructions have been received.



Wider powers

The 2014 Act requires us to give an elector, or any representative of the elector, the opportunity to question us about the accounting records of the Council and to consider any objection made to the accounts. No such correspondence from electors has been received.

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02

Section 02:

Status of the audit

2. Status of the audit

Our work is substantially complete and there are currently no matters of which we are aware that would require modification of our audit opinion, subject to the outstanding matters detailed below.

Audit area	Status	Description of the outstanding matters
S106 Capital Grants Unapplied		The Council have identified a material adjustment to the financial statements in respect of S106 Capital Grants Unapplied being incorrectly classified on the Balance Sheet. The Council have determined that these monies should be classified as Grants Received in Advance. Value is approximately £2m. As this transaction is material, it therefore, constitutes a prior period adjustment also for the 2020/21 balances. There is a net nil impact on the Council's balance sheet and reserves, and discussions are being held amongst the audit team and management to what needs to be included within the revised set of financial statements. This has been identified as 'Red' given the material sums attached to the amendment.
Investment Property and Property, Plant and Equipment Valuations		We are awaiting a response in respect of a few queries that were sent to the Council's valuer.
Loans and Borrowings		We are currently awaiting one external third party confirmation.
Related Parties		We are currently awaiting 1 updated interest form.
Information Technology General Control (ITGC) document		We are still awaiting a completed ITGC document from the Council.
IAS19 Defined benefit liability valuation		We received a formal response from the Nottinghamshire Pension Fund Auditors on 14 November 2022. We are currently processing the information supplied to establish the impact this may have on our financial audit. An unadjusted misstatement has been identified, refer to section 6 for additional information.
Whole of Government Accounts		We have not yet received group instructions from the National Audit Office in respect of our work on the Council's WGA submission. We are unable to commence our work in this area until such instructions have been received. This covers both 2020/21 and 2021/22.
Completion procedures		Procedures such as our quality control, review for post balance sheet events, and management representations are ongoing, and will remain as such, through to the date of issuing the auditor's report.



Likely to result in material adjustment or significant change to disclosures within the financial statements.



Potential to result in material adjustment or significant change to disclosures within the financial statements.



Not considered likely to result in material adjustment or change to disclosures within the financial statements.

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Section 03: **Audit approach**

3. Audit approach

Changes to our audit approach

We provided details of our intended audit approach in our Audit Strategy Memorandum in July 2022. We have not made any changes to our audit approach since we presented our Audit Strategy Memorandum.

Materiality

Our provisional materiality at the planning stage of the audit was set at £1,760k using a benchmark of 2% of gross operating expenditure. Our final assessment of materiality, based on the final financial statements and qualitative factors, is £1,546k using the same benchmark

Reliance on internal audit

No reliance has been placed on internal audit for the 2021/22 financial audit. Enquiries have been undertaken to aid our understanding of the overarching control environment at the Council.

Service organisations

International Auditing Standards (UK) (ISAs) define service organisations as third-party organisations that provide services to the Council that are part of its information systems relevant to financial reporting. We are required to obtain an understanding of the services provided by service organisations as well as evaluating the design and implementation of controls over those services.

We have not identified any service organisations for 2021/22.

Use of experts

Item of account	Management's expert	Our expert
Property, Plant and Equipment and Investment property	<u>Internal Valuer</u> Mr M Kirk – Estates Manager <u>External Valuer/s</u> Covers Other PPE and Investment Properties	None. We have used third party evidence provided via the NAO to support our challenge of valuation assumptions.
Pensions	Barnett Waddingham Actuary for Nottinghamshire Pension Fund	PWC (Consulting actuary appointed by the NAO)
Financial Instrument disclosures	Link Asset Management (LAM) Treasury management advisors	None. We have used information supplied by LAM to support our challenge and assumptions to management.



04

Section 04: **Significant findings**

4. Significant findings

In this section we outline the significant findings from our audit. These findings include:

- our audit conclusions regarding other significant risks and key areas of management judgement outlined in the Audit Strategy Memorandum;
- our comments in respect of the accounting policies and disclosures that you have adopted in the financial statements. On page 14 we have concluded whether the financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the financial reporting framework and commented on any significant accounting policy changes that have been made during the year;
- any further significant matters discussed with management;
- any significant difficulties we experienced during the audit; and

Significant risks

Management override of controls	<p>Description of the risk</p> <p>This is a mandatory significant risk on all audits due to the unpredictable way in which such override could occur.</p> <p>Management at various levels within an organisation are in a unique position to perpetrate fraud because of their ability to manipulate accounting records and prepare fraudulent financial statements by overriding controls that otherwise appear to be operating effectively. Due to the unpredictable way in which such override could occur there is a risk of material misstatement due to fraud on all audits.</p> <hr/> <p>How we addressed this risk</p> <p>We addressed this risk through performing audit work over:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accounting estimates impacting amounts included in the financial statements; • Consideration of identified significant transactions outside the normal course of business; and • Journals recorded in the general ledger and other adjustments made in preparation of the financial statements. <hr/> <p>Audit observations</p> <p>Our considerations of estimates is set out on page 16. We did not identify any significant transactions outside the normal course of business. We applied a combination of audit judgement and computer aided audit tools to analyse and perform tests over journal entries.</p> <hr/> <p>Audit conclusion</p> <p>No issues have been identified, subject to clearance of matters set out in section 2 of this report that need to be brought to the attention of members.</p>
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4. Significant findings

Defined benefit liability valuation	Description of the risk
(Local Government Pension Scheme)	<p>The defined benefit liability relating to the Local Government Pension Scheme represents significant balances on the Council's balance sheet. The Council uses an actuary to provide an annual valuation of these liabilities in line with the requirements of IAS 19 Employee Benefits. Due to the high degree of estimation uncertainty associated with this valuation, we have determined there is a significant risk of misstatement in this area.</p>
	<p>Relevant Account Balances (taken from the 2021/22 draft financial statements):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> £110,625k – Balance Sheet and Note 35b (Net pension liability)
	<p>How we addressed this risk</p>
	<p>We addressed this risk by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> critically assessing the competency, objectivity and independence of the Pension Funds' Actuary; liaising with the auditors of the Nottinghamshire Pension Fund to gain assurance that the controls in place at the Pension Fund are designed and implemented correctly. This included the processes and controls in place to ensure data provided to the Actuary by the Pension Fund for the purposes of the IAS 19 valuation is complete and accurate; reviewing the appropriateness of the Pension Asset and Liability valuation methodologies applied by the Pension Fund Actuary, and the key assumptions included within the valuations. This included comparing them to expected ranges, utilising information by the consulting actuary engaged by the National Audit Office; and agreeing the data in the IAS 19 valuation report provided by the Fund Actuary for accounting purposes to the pension accounting entries and disclosures in the Council's financial statements.
	<p>Audit Observations</p>
	<p>The Council's share of the LGPS pension fund net liability (being a deficit position) of £110,625k has decreased from £124,085k in the prior year as shown in Note 35b of the financial statements. The main movements being an increase in the value of pension assets from £125,618k to £135,013k; and a decrease in the value of pension liabilities from £245,564k to £241,751k.</p>
	<p>A non-material £540k misstatement has been identified in relation to the movement on Local Government Pension Fund assets. Further details are in part 6 of this report.</p>
	<p>Audit conclusion</p>
	<p>Aside from the unadjusted misstatement identified above and clearance of matters set out in section 2 of this report, there are no further issues noted from our testing that need to be brought to the attention of Members.</p>

4. Significant findings

Valuation of land & buildings and investment properties	Description of the risk <p>Land, Building and Investment Property assets are significant balances on the council's balance sheet. The valuation of these assets is complex and is subject to a number of management assumptions and judgements. Due to the high degree of estimation uncertainty associated, we have determined there is a significant risk in this area.</p> <p>At the planning stage of the audit, this risk covers (figures have been taken from the draft 2021/22 financial statements):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• HRA Council Dwellings (£247,181k – Note 11)• Land & Buildings (£58,279k - Note 11)• Investment Properties (£50,670k – Note 14)
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How we addressed this risk

We addressed this risk by:

- critically assessing the Council's valuers scope of work, qualifications, objectivity and independence to carry out the required programme of revaluations;
 - considering whether the overall revaluation methodologies used by the Council's valuers are in line with industry practice, the CIPFA Code of Practice and the Council's accounting policies;
 - assessing whether valuation movements are in line with market expectations by using third party information to provide information on regional valuation trends;
 - critically assessing the approach that the Council adopts to ensure assets that are not subject to revaluation in 2021/22 are materially correct, including considering the robustness of that approach in light of the valuation information reported by the Council's valuers; and
 - testing a sample of individual valuations, back to source records to ensure appropriateness and to gain assurance over whether the correct accounting treatment has been applied.
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Audit conclusion

In line with section 2 of this report, some queries remain outstanding so we are yet to finalise and confirm our findings, but no significant issues have been identified to date.

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4. Significant findings

Qualitative aspects of the Council's accounting practices

We have reviewed the Council's accounting policies and disclosures and concluded they comply with the 2021/22 Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting, appropriately tailored to the Council's circumstances.

Draft accounts were received from the Council on 29 July 2022 and were of a good quality.

Going Concern

The Council's financial statements are prepared on the assumptions that it is a going concern and will continue its operations for the foreseeable future. International Auditing Standard ISA (UK) 570, requires auditors to 'obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence about the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern assumption in the preparation and presentation of the financial statements and to conclude whether there is a material uncertainty about the entity's ability to continue as a going concern'.

Following the issue of Supplementary Guidance Note 1 (SGN1) by the National Audit Office, we have adopted a sector-specific approach to our work on going concern, which follows the principles of Practice Note 10 (PN10) and the guidance provided in SGN1. The SGN1 and PN10 make it clear that the auditor's focus for non-trading public sector bodies should be on the extent to which there are any indications that the services provided by an entity will cease or transfer outside of the public sector (termed the Continued Provision of Service approach ('CPoS')).

Significant difficulties during the audit

During the course of the audit, we did not encounter any significant difficulties from a Council perspective, and we have had the full co-operation of management.

One difficulty we did encounter throughout the audit, that was out of our control and the Council's was in respect of the formal response from the Pension Fund Auditors of Nottinghamshire Pension fund. Initial contact was made on 10 May 2022, with a supplementary letter dated 05 October 2022. The letter stipulated a 31st October deadline, to allow for our timely review of workings in line with reporting requirements.

Acknowledgement was made, however; formal response was not received until 14 November 2022. As detailed in section 2 of this report, we are now in the process of working through our work program for the financial audit in respect of the information received. An unadjusted misstatement has been identified which is detailed in section 6 of this report.

Significant matters discussed with management

Significant matters discussed with management during our audit, and which had implications for our audit testing and reporting included:

- The on-going impact of Covid-19 on the Council's business, including any potential impact on risks of material misstatement;
- How the current financial market, has impacted the Council's budget setting process, and assumptions made within the financial statements, alongside the impact of future funding.
- Earlier this year, the Government became aware of an issue relating to the reporting of infrastructure assets, which has led to delays in local authority audits. In response, CIPFA LASAAC Code Board agreed to try to assist in the resolution of the issue through changes to the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting (the Code). An accounting solution has not been found and a proposal has been made for an accounting statutory override under the Local Government Act 2003. Consultation via the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities website closes on 7 November 2022. Infrastructure assets as at 31 March 2022 for the Council was £56k, therefore, does not represent a material concern for the 2021/22 financial audit.

Audit fees

As set out in our Audit Strategy Memorandum, we identified the need for a variation to the published scale fee to take account of several matters. Our current estimate is set out below;

- Additional work in relation to responding to increased regulatory challenge in auditing the IAS19 pension figures contained within the financial statements; - **£3,200**
- Additional work in relation to responding to increased regulatory challenge in auditing the PPE figures contained within the financial statements; - **£5,000**
- ISA540 - additional work in relation to auditing accounting estimates and related disclosure; and - **£2,900**
- Work undertaken in relation to VFM commentary. - **£9,000**

We will agree the final fee, and any further variations, with management prior to reporting to Committee.

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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 2021/22 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.



4. Significant findings

Accounting estimates

We specifically considered the following areas of accounting estimates;

Estimate	HRA Council Dwellings	Land & Building Valuations	Investment Property Valuations	Net Pensions Liability	Depreciation	Accruals	Financial Instruments	Provisions
Note(s)	11	11	14	35b	11	22	17	23
Value in 2021/22	The net book value of HRA Council Dwellings at 31 March 2022 was £247,181k.	The net book value of land, buildings at 31 March 2022 was £58,279k.	The net book value of investment properties at 31 March 2022 was £50,670k.	Local Government Pension Scheme - £110,625k.	Depreciation provided in the year was £6,319k.	The carrying value of accruals (both short and long term), is approximately £5,668k at 31 st March 2022.	The Council have a number of long and short term assets and liabilities.	The carrying value of provisions is £3,295k.
Audit Risk	Significant	Significant	Significant	Significant	Standard	Standard	Standard	Standard
Comments	Property valuation estimates (covering HRA Council Dwellings, Land & Buildings and Investment Properties) are derived using the professional opinion of the Council's external valuer/s. We have not identified to date any issues that need reporting.			An unadjusted misstatement has been identified due to a change within the Local Government Pension Fund Assets included on the Council's balance sheet. Refer to section 6 of this report for additional information.	Depreciation is calculated using the straight-line method based on useful asset lives. The method used is appropriate and the accounting policy for depreciation (Note 17 of the Council's accounting policies) is in line with the financial reporting framework. We have no significant issues to report.	Our sample testing of accruals to date has not identified any significant issues to report.	Our review and agreement of the disclosures in the financial statements have not identified any issues in relation to the estimate.	We have not identified any issues to report in respect of the Council's provisions included on the balance sheet.



05

Section 05:

Internal control recommendations

5. Internal control recommendations

The purpose of our audit was to express an opinion on the financial statements. As part of our audit, we have considered the internal controls in place relevant to the preparation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures to allow us to express an opinion on the financial statements but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control or to identify any significant deficiencies in their design or operation.

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

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

In addition to the number of internal control recommendations identified in the current financial year (2021/22), we have considered the internal control recommendations from the prior year. There was a total of 3 recommendations identified in 2020/21. These were reported within our Audit Completion Report and Audit Follow Up letter.

Priority ranking	Description	Number of issues
1 (high)	In our view, there is potential for financial loss, damage to reputation or loss of information. This may have implications for the achievement of business strategic objectives. The recommendation should be taken into consideration by management immediately.	0
2 (medium)	In our view, there is a need to strengthen internal control or enhance business efficiency. The recommendations should be actioned in the near future.	2
3 (low)	In our view, internal control should be strengthened in these additional areas when practicable.	0



5. Internal control recommendations

Other deficiencies in internal control – Level 2

Matters arising

As part of our Related Parties testing and consistency check, we identified two instances where declarations made by Councillors were not consistent with the information held at Companies House.

Description of deficiency

Declaration forms are not being completed appropriately in line with the Council's processes.

Potential effects

Disclosures within the financial statements could be incomplete and not correctly reflect said interests because there is a risk that the Council are not aware of transactions between the two parties.

Recommendation

The Council need to ensure that all declarations are consistent and cross checked back to Companies House and where an undisclosed interest arises, the forms are updated alongside the financial statements.

Other deficiencies in internal control – Level 2

Matters arising

As part of our Capital Additions testing, we identified two assets that gave rise to a subsequent disposal and should have been accounted for as such. The assets in question, related to the Vehicle asset category included on the Council's balance sheet. No such adjustment was made to the Council's fixed asset register. No additional concerns were identified through our testing that would suggest the financial statements are materially misstated.

Description of deficiency

There is a risk that the Council are not undertaking timely monitoring of the fixed asset register.

Potential effects

The Council's fixed asset register is not being monitored and updated to accurately reflect disposals. There is a risk that Property, Plant and Equipment, in particular vehicle related assets is overstated in the financial statements as the Council no longer has legal ownership of the asset.

Recommendation

The Council need to ensure that their processes are reviewed and updated to ensure that such disposals are being identified and deleted from the fixed asset register.



5. Internal control recommendations

Follow up on previous internal control points

Description of deficiency

During our property, plant and equipment testing, we identified some land that the Council owns but that was not formally registered with the land registry.

Potential effects

The Council is open to disputes over unregistered land.

Recommendation

The Council is undertaking an exercise to register all its land with the land registry and should conclude this as soon as possible.

Management update 2021/22

Ashfield hold alternative evidence to support that the Council owns the asset in question.

There was a national project being pursued by the land registry to try and get all older land that is unregistered on their system which we were and are still participating with.

Audit team update 2021/22

No issues have been identified to date in respect of our substantive testing, and we are satisfied that adequate arrangements have been made by the Council to rectify the issue detailed above. This recommendation is therefore, **CLOSED**.

Description of deficiency

The Local Audit Team have identified a difference between the source records maintained by the Council and the Valuer relating to floor areas that has led to a misstatement (unadjusted) in the carrying value of land and buildings. Although the misstatement is below our trivial threshold, there were some large individual variances; representing both upward and downward movements.

Potential effects

Inaccurate property records being maintained.

Recommendation

The Council needs to ensure that accurate records are maintained for all assets and undertake an annual reconciliation between base data and information provided/ used by the valuer.

Management update 2021/22

In respect of the recommendation regarding accurate records being maintained for all assets.

It has been agreed that for each asset a floor area map will be maintained by the Valuer derived from the GIS system. It is to include the site area, the building area; the asset name, valuation method, the relevant measurement(s), and how this interlinks with the valuation report

This has been included in the instructions to the valuer for 21/22 and going forward where relevant, so for 21/22 this was for Surplus Assets and Non-Current Assets Held for Sale.

Audit team update 2021/22

No issues have been identified to date in respect of our substantive testing, and we are satisfied that adequate arrangements have been made by the Council to rectify the issue detailed above. This recommendation is therefore, **CLOSED**.

5. Internal control recommendations

Follow up on previous internal control points (continued)

Description of deficiency

The Local Audit Team have identified a few instances, where there was no clear audit trail in regard to the source evidence and calculations used within the Property Beacon valuation approach.

Potential effects

The Local Audit Team may be unable to substantiate source evidence for queries surrounding the valuation process.

Recommendation

The Council needs to ensure that working papers are kept up to date and that there is a clear audit trail that allows the Local Audit Team to efficiently re-perform.

Management update 2021/22

In respect of a clear audit trail to support the beacon property valuations a spreadsheet/log has been devised and is being used by the valuer. This includes a list of all the Beacon properties , 3 columns for up to 3 comparable to be given for each beacon (not all 3 columns will be used for each beacon), the comparable columns should detail the address and sales price and why the comparable has been used, plus a link/screen shot to Zoopla to show the evidence to support the sale price, there is also an adjustment column to detail what adjustments have been made to the sale prices of the comparable(s) and why.

The following has been added to the valuer instructions:

In support of the valuation please can you provide a spreadsheet listing the beacon and the comparable(s) used for each beacon and include a screenshot (e.g., from Zoopla), give details of why that property has been used as a comparable and an explanation for any difference between the value of the comparable property and the valuation.

The log has been used this year to support the beacon valuations.

Audit team update 2021/22

No issues have been identified to date in respect of our substantive testing, and we are satisfied that adequate arrangements have been made by the Council to rectify the issue detailed above. This recommendation is therefore, **CLOSED**.



06

Section 06:

Summary of misstatements

6. Summary of misstatements

This section outlines the misstatements identified during the course of the audit, above the trivial threshold for adjustment of £46k. The first table outlines the misstatements that were identified during the course of our audit which management has assessed as not being material either individually or in aggregate to the financial statements and does not currently plan to adjust.

The second table outlines the misstatements that have been adjusted by management during the course of the audit.

Unadjusted misstatements

		Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement		Balance Sheet	
		Dr (£'000)	Cr (£'000)	Dr (£'000)	Cr (£'000)
1	Dr: Prepayments			520	
	Cr: Cost of Services - Expenditure		520		
<p>As part of our Expenditure Cut off testing, we identified a total of 2 transactions (total factual error is £27k), that had been paid by the Council in the current financial year, however, the goods/ services related to the 2022/23 financial year. The Council had not treated these as a prepayment and therefore, this represents an error in the Council's accounts. This meant that expenditure for 2021/22 is overstated and Prepayments are understated. Because we apply a sampling methodology, where we cannot confirm the error is isolated we must extrapolate the impact of the error across the remainder of the population. This has led to an extrapolated error of £520k.</p>					
2	Dr: LGPS Net Defined Pension Liability			540	
	Cr: LGPS Pension Reserve				540
<p>Mazars advised management of a matter brought to their attention by the Nottinghamshire Pension Fund auditors. The Pension Fund auditors had identified a 0.40% difference (increase) between the estimated 2021/22 Fund investment asset value used by the Actuary to prepare the employers' IAS19 valuation reports and the 2021/22 Fund financial statements being audited.</p> <p>As disclosed in Note 35b to the Council's financial statements the value of the Council's share of the Fund's estimated pension scheme assets at 31/3/2022 was £135,013k. The extrapolated 0.40% difference is £540k.</p> <p>Management chose not, on the grounds of materiality, to obtain an updated IAS19 valuation report or amend the accounts for the specific extrapolated differences above, which represent a £540k increase in both Total Net Assets and Total Reserves.</p>					
Total unadjusted misstatements			520	1,060	540

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6. Summary of misstatements

Adjusted misstatements

No adjusted misstatements have been identified for the 2021/22 financial audit.

Disclosure amendments

One disclosure amendment have been made to the 20201/22 financial statements; this is;

- Lease disclosures have been updated to reflect the correct split between the minimum future lease payment required.



07

Section 07:

Value for Money

7. Value for Money

Approach to Value for Money

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

- **Financial sustainability** - How the Council plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services
- **Governance** - How the Council ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks
- **Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness** - How the Council uses information about its costs and performance to improve the way it manages and delivers its services

At the planning stage of the audit, we undertake work to understand the arrangements that the Council has in place under each of the reporting criteria and we identify risks of significant weaknesses in those arrangements. Although we describe this work as planning work, we keep our understanding of arrangements under review and update our risk assessment throughout the audit to reflect emerging issues that may suggest significant weaknesses in arrangements exist.

The table overleaf outlines the risks of significant weaknesses in arrangements that we have identified, the risk-based procedures we have undertaken, and the results of our work.

Where our risk-based procedures identify actual significant weaknesses in arrangements we are required to report these and make recommendations for improvement. Where such significant weaknesses are identified, we report these in the audit report.

The primary output of our work on the Council's arrangements is the commentary on those arrangements that forms part of the Auditor's Annual Report. We intend to issue the Auditor's Annual Report in [insert date].

Status of our work

We are yet to complete our work in respect of the Council's arrangements for the year ended 31 March 2022. At the time of preparing this report, we have not identified any significant weaknesses in arrangements that require us to make a recommendation, however we continue to undertake work on the Council's arrangements.

Our draft audit report at Appendix B outlines that we have not yet completed our work in relation to the Council's arrangements. As noted above, our commentary on the Council's arrangements will be provided in the Auditor's Annual Report.



Appendices

A: Draft management representation letter

B: Draft audit report

C: Independence

D: Other communications

Appendix A: Draft management representation letter

Mazars LLP
Park View House,
58 The Ropewalk,
Nottingham
NG1 5DW

Dear Sirs

Ashfield District Council - audit for year ended 31 March 2022

This representation letter is provided in connection with your audit of the financial statements of Ashfield District Council (the Council) for the year ended 31 March 2022 for the purpose of expressing an opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2021/22 (the Code) and applicable law.

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

My responsibility for the financial statements and accounting information

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

My responsibility to provide and disclose relevant information

I have provided you with:

- Access to all information of which we are aware that is relevant to the preparation of the financial statements such as records, documentation and other material;

- Additional information that you have requested from us for the purpose of the audit; and

Unrestricted access to individuals within the Council you determined it was necessary to contact in order to obtain audit evidence.

I confirm as Corporate Finance Manager (& Section 151 Officer) 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 Council and committee meetings, have been made available to you.

Accounting policies

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

Accounting estimates, including those measured at fair value

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

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Appendix A: Draft management representation letter

I confirm that I am satisfied that the actuarial assumptions underlying the valuation of pension scheme liabilities for IAS19 disclosures are consistent with my knowledge. I confirm that all settlements and curtailments have been identified and properly accounted for. I confirm that all significant retirement benefits have been identified and properly accounted for (including any arrangements that are statutory, contractual or implicit in the employer's actions, that arise in the UK or overseas, that are funded or unfunded).

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 Council have been brought to your attention. All known actual or possible litigation and claims whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial statements have been disclosed to you and accounted for and disclosed in accordance with the Code and applicable law.

Laws and regulations

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

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

Fraud and error

I acknowledge my responsibility as Corporate Finance Manager (& Section 151 Officer) for the design, implementation and maintenance of internal control to prevent and detect fraud and error.

I have disclosed to you:

- All the results of my assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud;
- All knowledge of fraud or suspected fraud affecting the Council involving:
 - management and those charged with governance;
 - employees who have significant roles in internal control; and

others where fraud could have a material effect on the financial statements.

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



Appendix A: Draft management representation letter

Related party transactions

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

I have disclosed the identity of the Council'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. I have considered the impact of Covid-19 on the Council's Investment Properties. An impairment review is therefore not considered necessary.

Charges on assets

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

Future commitments

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

Subsequent events

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

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.

Covid-19

We confirm that we have carried out an assessment of the on-going impact of the Covid-19 Virus pandemic on the Council, including the impact of mitigation measures and uncertainties, and that the disclosure in the Statement of Accounts fairly reflects that assessment.

Brexit

We confirm that we have carried out an assessment of the potential impact of the United Kingdom leaving the European Union, including the potential outcomes at the end of the Implementation Period, and that the disclosure in the Statement of Accounts fairly reflects that assessment.

Ukraine

We confirm that we have carried out an assessment of the potential impact of Russian Forces entering Ukraine on the business, including the impact of mitigation measures and uncertainties, and that the disclosure in the Narrative Report fairly reflects that assessment.

Going concern

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



Appendix A: Draft management representation letter

I have updated our going concern assessment in light of the on-going Covid-19 pandemic. I continue to believe that the Council's financial statements should be prepared on a going concern basis and have not identified any material uncertainties related to going concern on the grounds that current and future sources of funding or support will be more than adequate for the Council's needs. We believe that no further disclosures relating to the Council's ability to continue as a going concern need to be made in the financial statements.

Annual Governance Statement

I am satisfied that the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) fairly reflects the Council'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 Council's financial and operating performance over the period covered by the financial statements.

Unadjusted misstatements and internal control recommendations

I confirm that the effects of the uncorrected misstatements and internal control recommendations set out at Appendix A are immaterial, both individually and in aggregate, to the financial statements as a whole.

Yours faithfully

Corporate Finance Manager (& Section 151 Officer)



Appendix A: Draft management representation letter

Unadjusted misstatements

		Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement		Balance Sheet	
		Dr (£'000)	Cr (£'000)	Dr (£'000)	Cr (£'000)
1	Dr: Prepayments			520	
	Cr: Cost of Services - Expenditure		520		
<p>As part of our Expenditure Cut off testing, we identified a total of 2 transactions, that had been paid by the Council in the current financial year, however, the goods/ services related to the 2022/23 financial year. The Council had not accrued for these as a prepayment and therefore, this represents an error in the Council's accounts. This meant that expenditure for 2021/22 is overstated and Prepayments are understated. Because we apply a sampling methodology, where we cannot confirm the error is isolated we must extrapolate the impact of the error across the remainder of the population. This has led to an extrapolated error of £520k.</p>					
2	Dr: LGPS Net Defined Pension Liability			540	
	Cr: LGPS Pension Reserve				540
<p>Mazars advised management of a matter brought to their attention by the Nottinghamshire Pension Fund auditors. The Pension Fund auditors had identified a 0.40% difference (increase) between the estimated 2021/22 Fund investment asset value used by the Actuary to prepare the employers' IAS19 valuation reports and the 2021/22 Fund financial statements being audited.</p> <p>As disclosed in Note 35b to the Council's financial statements the value of the Council's share of the Fund's estimated pension scheme assets at 31/3/2022 was £135,013k. The extrapolated 0.40% difference is £540k.</p> <p>Management chose not, on the grounds of materiality, to obtain an updated IAS19 valuation report or amend the accounts for the specific extrapolated differences above, which represent a £540k increase in both Total Net Assets and Total Reserves.</p>					
Total unadjusted misstatements			520	1,060	540

Appendix A: Draft management representation letter

Other deficiencies in internal control – Level 2

Matters arising

As part of our Related Parties testing and consistency check, we identified two instances where declarations made by Councillors were not consistent with the information held at Companies House.

Description of deficiency

Declaration forms are not being completed appropriately in line with the Council's processes.

Potential effects

Disclosures within the financial statements could be incomplete and not correctly reflect said interests because there is a risk that the Council are not aware of transactions between the two parties.

Recommendation

The Council need to ensure that all declarations are consistent and cross checked back to Companies House and where an undisclosed interest arises, the forms are updated alongside the financial statements.

Other deficiencies in internal control – Level 2

Matters arising

As part of our Capital Additions testing, we identified two assets that gave rise to a subsequent disposal and should have been accounted for as such. The assets in question, related to the Vehicle asset category included on the Council's balance sheet. No such adjustment was made to the Council's fixed asset register. No additional concerns were identified through our testing that would suggest the financial statements are materially misstated.

Description of deficiency

There is a risk that the Council are not undertaking timely monitoring of the fixed asset register.

Potential effects

The Council's fixed asset register is not being monitored and updated to accurately reflect disposals. There is a risk that Property, Plant and Equipment, in particular vehicle related assets is overstated in the financial statements as the Council no longer has legal ownership of the asset.

Recommendation

The Council need to ensure that their processes are reviewed and updated to ensure that such disposals are being identified and deleted from the fixed asset register.



Appendix B: Draft audit report

Independent auditor's report to the members of Ashfield District Council

Report on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion on the financial statements

We have audited the financial statements of Ashfield District Council ("the Council") for the year ended 31 March 2022, which comprise the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, the Movement in Reserves Statement, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement, the Housing Revenue Account – Income and Expenditure Statement, the Collection Fund and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2021/22.

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Council as at 31st March 2022 and of its expenditure and income for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2021/22.

Basis for opinion

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

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Corporate Finance Manager (& Section 151 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 at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Corporate Finance Manager (& Section 151 Officer) with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The Corporate Finance Manager (& Section 151 Officer) is responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Statement of Accounts, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

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

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Responsibilities of the Corporate Finance Manager (& Section 151 Officer) for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of the Corporate Finance Manager (& Section 151 Officer)'s Responsibilities, the Corporate Finance Manager (& Section 151 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 2021/22, and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view. The Corporate Finance Manager (& Section 151 Officer) is also responsible for such internal control as the Corporate Finance Manager (& Section 151 Officer) determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

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The Corporate Finance Manager (& Section 151 Officer) is required to comply with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2021/22 and prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis on the assumption that the functions of the Council will continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. The Corporate Finance Manager (& Section 151 Officer) is responsible for assessing each year whether or not it is appropriate for the Council to prepare its accounts on the going concern basis and disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

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

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. Based on our understanding of the Council, we identified that the principal risks of non-compliance with laws and regulations related to the Local Government Act 2003 (and associated regulations made under section 21), the Local Government Finance Acts of 1988, 1992 and 2012, the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, and the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and we considered the extent to which non-compliance might have a material effect on the financial statements.

We evaluated the Corporate Finance Manager (& Section 151 Officer)'s incentives and opportunities for fraudulent manipulation of the financial statements (including the risk of override of controls) and determined that the principal risks were related to posting manual journal entries to manipulate financial performance, management bias through judgements and assumptions in significant accounting estimates and significant one-off or unusual transactions.

Our audit procedures were designed to respond to those identified risks, including non-compliance with laws and regulations (irregularities) and fraud that are material to the financial statements. Our audit procedures included but were not limited to:

- discussing with management and the Audit Committee the policies and procedures regarding compliance with laws and regulations;

communicating identified laws and regulations throughout our engagement team and remaining alert to any indications of non-compliance throughout our audit; and

considering the risk of acts by the Council which were contrary to applicable laws and regulations, including fraud.

Our audit procedures in relation to fraud included but were not limited to:

- making enquiries of management and the Audit Committee on whether they had knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud;
- gaining an understanding of the internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud;
- discussing amongst the engagement team the risks of fraud; and
- addressing the risks of fraud through management override of controls by performing journal entry testing.

There are inherent limitations in the audit procedures described above and the primary responsibility for the prevention and detection of irregularities including fraud rests with management and the Audit Committee. As with any audit, there remained a risk of non-detection of irregularities, as these may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations or the override of internal controls.

We are also required to conclude on whether the Corporate Finance Manager (& Section 151 Officer)'s use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate. We performed our work in accordance with Practice Note 10: Audit of financial statement and regularity of public sector bodies in the United Kingdom, and Supplementary Guidance Note 01, issued by the National Audit Office in September 2021.

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

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Report on the Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources

Matter on which we are required to report by exception

We are required to report to you if, in our opinion, 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 2022.

We have not completed our work on the Council's arrangements. On the basis of our work to date, having regard to the guidance issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General in December 2021, we have not identified any significant weaknesses in arrangements for the year ended 31 March 2022.

We will report the outcome of our work on the Council's arrangements in our commentary on those arrangements within the Auditor's Annual Report. Our audit completion certificate will set out any matters which we are required to report by exception.

Responsibilities of the Council

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

We are required under section 20(1)(c) of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 to satisfy ourselves that the Council 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 Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources are operating effectively.

We have undertaken our work in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice, having regard to the guidance issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General in December 2021.

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

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

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

We have nothing to report in these respects.

Use of the audit report

This report is made solely to the members of Ashfield District Council as a body, in accordance with part 5 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and as set out in paragraph 44 of the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies published by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the members of the Council those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the members of the Council, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Delay in certification of completion of the audit

We cannot formally conclude the audit and issue an audit certificate until we have completed:

- the work necessary to issue our assurance statement in respect of the Council's Whole of Government Accounts consolidation pack; and
- the work necessary to satisfy ourselves that the Council has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

David Hoose, Key Audit Partner
For and on behalf of Mazars LLP
Park View House,
58 The Ropewalk,
Nottingham,
NG1 5DW

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Appendix C: Independence

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

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

Fees for non-PSAA work

We have been separately engaged by the Council to carry out additional work as set out in the table below. Before agreeing to undertake any additional work, we consider whether there are any actual, potential or perceived threats to our independence. None have been identified.

Area of work	2021/22 Proposed Fee	2020/21 Actual Fee
Assurance services – Pooling of Housing Capital Receipts	£3,650	£3,350



Appendix D: Other communications

Other communication	Response
Compliance with Laws and Regulations	<p>We have not identified any significant matters involving actual or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations.</p> <p>We will obtain written representations from management that all known instances of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations whose effects should be considered when preparing financial statements have been disclosed.</p>
External confirmations	<p>We did not experience any issues with respect to obtaining external confirmations.</p>
Related parties	<p>We did not identify any significant matters relating to the audit of related parties.</p> <p>We will obtain written representations from management confirming that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. they have disclosed to us the identity of related parties and all the related party relationships and transactions of which they are aware; and b. they have appropriately accounted for and disclosed such relationships and transactions in accordance with the requirements of the applicable financial reporting framework.
Going Concern	<p>We have not identified any evidence to cause us to disagree with the Chief Financial Officer that Ashfield District Council will be a going concern, and therefore we consider that the use of the going concern assumption is appropriate in the preparation of the financial statements.</p>



Appendix D: Other communications

Other communication	Response
<p>Subsequent events</p>	<p>We are required to obtain evidence about whether events occurring between the date of the financial statements and the date of the auditor’s report that require adjustment of, or disclosure in, the financial statements are appropriately reflected in those financial statements in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework.</p> <p>We will obtain written representations from management that all events occurring subsequent to the date of the financial statements and for which the applicable financial reporting framework requires adjustment or disclosure have been adjusted or disclosed.</p>
<p>Matters related to fraud</p>	<p>We have designed our audit approach to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement due to fraud. In addition to the work performed by us, we will obtain written representations from management, and Audit Committee, confirming that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. they acknowledge their responsibility for the design, implementation and maintenance of internal control to prevent and detect fraud; b. they have disclosed to the auditor the results of management’s assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud; c. they have disclosed to the auditor their knowledge of fraud or suspected fraud affecting the entity involving: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Management; ii. Employees who have significant roles in internal control; or iii. Others where the fraud could have a material effect on the financial statements; and d. they have disclosed to the auditor their knowledge of any allegations of fraud, or suspected fraud, affecting the entity’s financial statements communicated by employees, former employees, analysts, regulators or others.



David Hoose, Key Audit Partner

Mazars

Park View House
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Mazars is an internationally integrated partnership, specialising in audit, accountancy, advisory, tax and legal services*. Operating in over 90 countries and territories around the world, we draw on the expertise of 40,400 professionals – 24,400 in Mazars' integrated partnership and 16,000 via the Mazars North America Alliance – to assist clients of all sizes at every stage in their development.

*where permitted under applicable country laws.