

Audit Completion Report

North West Leicestershire District Council
- Year ended 31 March 2021

February 2023



Contents

- 01 Executive summary
- 02 Status of the audit
- 03 Audit approach
- 04 Significant findings
- 05 Internal control recommendations
- 06 Summary of misstatements
- 07ⁿ Value for Money

Appendix A: Draft management representation letter

Appendix B: Draft audit report

Appendix C: Independence

Appendix D: Other communications

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February 2023

Dear Committee Members

Audit Completion Report – Year ended 31 March 2021

We are pleased to present our Audit Completion Report for the year ended 31 March 2021. 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. 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 Mark.SurrIDGE@mazars.co.uk

Yours faithfully



Mark SurrIDGE, Director

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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 2020/21 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 land and buildings and investment properties.

Misstatements and internal control recommendations

Section 5 sets out internal control recommendations and section 6 sets out audit misstatements and unadjusted misstatements. 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 2021. At the time of preparing this report, significant matters remaining 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

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. This work is, however, incomplete. Further detail on our Value for Money work 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.

Executive summary

Status of audit

Audit approach

Significant findings

Internal control recommendations

Summary of misstatements

Value for Money

Appendices






02

Section 02: **Status of the audit**

9

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
PPE	 [Green]	Our work on PPE is substantially completed we just have procedures such as reconciling to the finalised set of accounts.
Net Pension Liability	 [Green]	Our work on pensions is substantially completed with an analytical review of the pensions figures remaining to be completed.
Whole of Government Accounts	 [Green]	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	 [Green]	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.
Value for Money	 [Green]	Our VFM work is substantially complete and we have not identified any significant weaknesses that require further work or reporting to members at this point. Our assessment remains open until we issue the Annual Auditor's Report.



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



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



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

Executive summary

Status of audit

Audit approach

Significant findings

Internal control
recommendations

Summary of
misstatements

Value for Money

Appendices

03

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. We have not made any changes to our audit approach since we presented our Audit Strategy Memorandum.

Reliance on internal audit

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

Materiality

Our provisional materiality at the planning stage of the audit was set at £1.819m using a benchmark of 2% of gross operating expenditure. Our final assessment of materiality, based on the final financial statements and qualitative factors, is £1.797m using the same benchmark.

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 the purposes of our audit.

Use of experts

Information below was disclosed within our Audit Strategy Memorandum. No changes to our audit approach have been identified.

Item of account	Management's expert	Our expert
Property Plant and Equipment & Investment Properties	Wilks, Head & Eve The Council's external valuer for Investment Properties, property, plant and equipment and council dwellings	None We have used third party evidence provided via the NAO to support our challenge of valuation assumptions.
Pensions	Hymans Robertson Actuary for Leicestershire Pension Fund (LGPS)	PWC (Consulting actuary appointed by the NAO).
Financial Instrument disclosures	Arlingclose Treasury management advisors	None.



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 15 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; and
- any significant difficulties we experienced during the audit.

Significant risks

Management override of controls	Description of the risk This is a mandatory significant risk on all audits due to the unpredictable way in which such override could occur. Management at various levels within an organisation are in a unique position to perpetrate fraud because of their ability to manipulate accounting records and prepare fraudulent financial statements by overriding controls that otherwise appear to be operating effectively. Due to the unpredictable way in which such override could occur there is a risk of material misstatement due to fraud on all audits.
11	How we addressed this risk We addressed this risk through performing audit work over: <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.
	Audit observations 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.
	Audit conclusion 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.



4. Significant findings

Defined benefit liability valuation

Description of the risk

The defined benefit liability relating to the Local Government pension scheme represents a significant balance on the Council’s balance sheet. The Council uses two actuaries 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.

Relevant Account Balances (taken from the 2020/21 draft financial statements): £65m – Note 33

How we addressed this risk

We addressed this risk by:

- critically assessing the competency, objectivity and independence of the Pension Funds’ Actuary;
- liaising with the auditors of the Leicestershire 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.

Audit Observations

The Council’s share of the LGPS pension fund net liability (being a deficit position) of £65m has increased from £44m in the prior year as shown in Note 33 of the financial statements. The main movements being an increase in the Present Value of Funded Liabilities from £130m to £174m; and an increase in the Fair Value of Employer Assets from £87m to £110m.

Audit conclusion

Our work is ongoing in this area.

12



4. Significant findings

Valuation of land & buildings and investment properties and council dwellings

Description of the risk

Land, Building and Investment Property assets are significant balances on the council's balance sheet. The valuation of these properties 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.

This risk covers (figures have been taken from the 2020/21 final financial statements):

- Council dwellings (£239m – Note 13)
- Other Land & Buildings (£137m - Note 13)
- Surplus Assets (£2.4m – Note 13)
- Investment Properties (£53m – Note 15)

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.

Audit observations

During our initial testing we observed that the Council's internal records (floor plans for assets) did not reconcile to the measurements used by the valuers, this had previously been raised with the Council as part of the prior years audit as an internal control issue. We confirmed with the Council that further evidence must be obtained to confirm the correct measurements of assets and revaluations undertaken if required. Once asset measurements were obtained it was recognised that the asset areas did vary to those used by the valuer and it would lead to a material difference. Updated revaluations were obtained and have been adjusted through the accounts.

We did also note that in several cases the updated measurements were not used which led to a minor variance, when this was extrapolated this has led to a variance of £65k the Council has decided not to adjust for this amount and it has been added to our unadjusted misstatements summary on page 21.

Audit conclusion

In line with section 2 of this report, some queries remain outstanding so we are yet to finalise and confirm our findings.

Executive summary

Status of audit

Audit approach

Significant findings

Internal control recommendations

Summary of misstatements

Value for Money

Appendices

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 2020/21 Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting, appropriately tailored to the Council's circumstances.

Draft financial statements were produced in July 2021. Our initial audit commenced in August 2021. However, due to a number of issues, as listed below, our work was delayed:

- Identification of errors and discrepancies in the Council's property records
- Competing priorities over the introduction of a new financial ledger system
- Changes in finance personnel, including the s151 level and the wider Finance Team

As a consequence of delays, we have needed to re-organise our own availability against a backdrop of multiple delayed audits across the sector within a constrained workforce, which is indicative of the challenging environment all parts of the sector are working in.

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 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.
- Discussions on accounting provisions, contingent liabilities and the capital programme.



4. Significant findings

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.

Delay in the audit certificate

The issue of the Audit Certificate confirms that we have discharged all of our audit responsibilities and that the audit is formally 'closed'. The Audit Certificate would normally be published in our Auditor's Report on the Statement of Accounts. We expect to issue the audit report but delay the issue of the Audit Certificate until the following procedures are complete:

- Value for Money – we expect, in line with NAO guidance, to issue our Annual Auditor's Report within three months of giving our audit opinion. This will include the findings from our work in respect of the Council's Value for Money arrangements for the year ended 31 March 2021. At the time of preparing this report, we have not identified any significant weaknesses in the Council's arrangements that requires us to make a recommendation.
- Whole of Government Accounts – The NAO has not yet issued its Group Instructions for local authority

audits.

We will update the Audit and Governance Committee when more information is known.



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 (2020/21), we have considered the internal control recommendations from the prior year. There was a total of 1 recommendations identified in 2019/20. These were reported within our Audit Completion Report.

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 we identified that the Council’s procedure is to only disclose related party transactions that are in excess of £60k. We identified three transactions that had not been disclosed in the accounts due to being under the £60k limit however this is not in line with the applicable standards. The standards stipulate that all related party transactions should be disclosed if the amount is material to either party.

We are satisfied that the three transactions in question would not have to have been disclosed based on this criteria but transactions may be missed if future years if the £60k limited is retained.

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 related party transactions are identified and then should determine which transactions are material and hence should be disclosed.

Management response

Matters arising

From our review of starters & leavers documentation it was noted that; 1) Some of the starters & leavers documentation were not signed by either employee or manager, 2) For two starters that no starter checklist had been completed due to these employees being processed at the start of the pandemic, 3) Due to the delay in completion of the leavers form, one employee was not marked as a leaver within iTrent until a year after officially leaving.

Potential effects

Individuals salary payments are incorrect and there may be GDPR breaches if individuals system access is not removed from the system in a timely manner.

Recommendation

All contractual documents and starter / leaver forms are signed by employees as required;

Starter checklists are completed and retained on file;

Leavers are removed from the system in a timely manner.

Management response



5. Internal control recommendations

Follow up on previous internal control points

Description of deficiency

In our testing of the underlying data used to calculate the value of assets, the Council were unable to immediately find data to validate the floor areas used to support the valuations, leading to the Council having to find alternative sources of evidence.

Potential effects

Incorrect valuation of assets in the financial statements.

Recommendation

The Council should perform a regular reconciliation between the underlying books and records of asset data, such as floor space and land areas, to confirm the accuracy of the information used as a basis of valuation by the external valuer.

Audit team update 2020/21

This has now been resolved with all assets being remeasured during the 2020/21 financial year - **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 £55k (Group) and £54k (Council). 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)
21	1	Dr: PPE		65	
		Cr: Revaluation Reserve			65
As part of our PPE revaluations testing we noted that Wilkes, Head and Eve LLP did not use the updated land measurements for several assets. The valuation was adjusted to calculate the difference in value this would make and this was then extrapolated over the whole PPE revaluation balance giving a £65k extrapolated error.					
Total unadjusted misstatements				65	65



6. Summary of misstatements

Adjusted misstatements

We noted one misstatements during our review of the accounts that have both been changed in the updated final version of the accounts.

The first point relates to PPE revaluations and the updated figures are due to remeasurement of assets being undertaken and differences in floor and land areas being identified. This led to the revaluation calculations being updated and the line in the accounts changed as below. Whilst not material sums, the adjustments have taken considerable time to resolve and have consequential impact across various other disclosure notes in the financial statements :

Line item per the accounts	Original version of the accounts £000	Updated version of the accounts £000	Change £000
Revaluation increases/(decreases) recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	15,617	15,342	(275)
Revaluation increases/(decreases) recognised in the Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services	789	591	(198)



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.

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.

Status of our work

We are yet to complete our work in respect of the Council's arrangements for the year ended 31 March 2021. One risk has been identified for further consideration as set out on the following page.

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.



Value for money

Identified risks of significant weaknesses in arrangements

The NAO’s guidance requires us to carry out work at the planning stage to understand the Council’s arrangements and to identify risks that significant weaknesses in arrangements may exist.

Although we have not fully completed our planning and risk assessment work, the table below outlines the risks of significant weaknesses in arrangements that we have identified to date, the outcome and any further identified risks to the Committee will be reported on completion of our work.

	Risk of significant weakness in arrangements	Financial sustainability	Governance	Improving the 3Es	Planned procedures
1 25	<p>Governance & decision making: financial reporting completion</p> <p>The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) put in place revised regulations effective from 31 March 2021. The Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2021 extend the statutory audit deadlines for 2020/21 for all local authorities from 31 July to 30 September 2021 for all local authority bodies.</p> <p>The current forecast for audited 2020/21 financial statements represents a delay of some 18 months. We believe this delay presents a risk of significant weakness in the Council’s arrangements for Governance (how the body ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks) including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how the body ensures effective processes and systems are in place to ensure budgetary control; to communicate relevant, accurate and timely management information (including non-financial information where appropriate); supports its statutory financial reporting requirements; and ensures corrective action is taken where needed.* <p><i>* Criteria as defined by Auditor Guidance Note 3 (AGN03), Auditors’ Work on Value for Money (VFM) Arrangements (December 2021)</i></p>	-	●	-	<p>Our work will include, but not be limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw from the outcome of the 2020/21 financial statement audit; • Meet with Officers • Review any applicable supporting committee reports.



Appendices

A: Draft management representation letter

B: Draft audit report

C: Independence

D: Other communications

Appendix A: Draft management representation letter

Mazars LLP

Dear Sirs

North West Leicestershire District Council – audit for year ended 31 March 2021

This representation letter is provided in connection with your audit of the financial statements of North West Leicestershire District Council (the Council) for the year ended 31 March 2021 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 2020/21 (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 Head of Finance that I have taken all the necessary steps to make me aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that you, as auditors, are aware of this information.

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

Accounting records

I confirm that all transactions that have a material effect on the financial statements have been recorded in the accounting records and are reflected in the financial statements. All other records and related information,

including minutes of all 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.

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).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 has 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.

Executive summary

Status of audit

Audit approach

Significant findings

Internal control
recommendations

Summary of
misstatements

Value for Money

Appendices

Appendix A: Draft management representation letter

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 Head of Finance for the design, implementation and maintenance of internal control to prevent and detect fraud and error.

I have disclosed to you:

- All the results of my assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud;
- All knowledge of fraud or suspected fraud affecting the 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.

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.



Appendix A: Draft management representation letter

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.

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

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

Yours faithfully

Head of Finance



Appendix B: Draft audit report

Independent auditor’s report to the members of North West Leicestershire District Council [SUBJECT TO FINALISATION]

Report on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion on the financial statements

We have audited the financial statements of North West Leicestershire District Council (‘the Council’) for the year ended 31 March 2021, which comprise the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, the Movement in Reserves Statement, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow 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 2020/21.

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Council as at 31st March 2021 and of the Council’s 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 2020/21.

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 Head of Finance’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 Head of Finance with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

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

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

We have nothing to report in this regard.



Appendix B: Draft audit report

Responsibilities of the Head of Finance for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Responsibilities, the Head of Finance 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 2020/21, and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view. The Head of Finance is also responsible for such internal control as the Head of Finance determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

The Head of Finance is required to comply with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21 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 Head of Finance 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, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, and we considered the extent to which non-compliance might have a material effect on the financial statements.

We evaluated the Head of Finance’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 and Governance 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 and Governance 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.



Appendix B: Draft audit report

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 and Governance 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 Head of Finance'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 April 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.

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 2021.

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 April 2021, we have not identified any significant weaknesses in arrangements for the year ended 31 March 2021.

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 April 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.

Executive summary

Status of audit

Audit approach

Significant findings

Internal control
recommendations

Summary of
misstatements

Value for Money

Appendices

Appendix B: Draft audit report

Use of the audit report

This report is made solely to the members of Charnwood Borough 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.

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Mark Surrige, Key Audit Partner

For and on behalf of Mazars LLP

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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.

Issue	Perceived threats	Safeguards
We have been separately engaged by the Council to carry out additional work Assurance services – Housing Benefits. Before agreeing to undertake any additional work, we consider whether there are any actual, potential or perceived threats to our independence.	Self-interest	The proposed fee for this work, £8,120, is significantly below the fee for the external audit.

Executive summary	Status of audit	Audit approach	Significant findings	Internal control recommendations	Summary of misstatements	Value for Money	Appendices
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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> <ol 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 Head of Finance that Mansfield 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> <p>We will obtain written representations from management, confirming that all relevant information covering a period of at least 12 months from the date of approval of the financial statements has been taken into account in assessing the appropriateness of the going concern basis of preparation of the financial statements.</p>
Subsequent events	<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>
Matters related to fraud	<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> <ol 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: <ol 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.



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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.