

Audit of Accounts Report – The County Council of the City and County of Cardiff

Audit year: 2022-23

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We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh and English. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to delay. Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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We intend to issue an unqualified audit report on your Accounts. There are some issues to report to you prior to their approval.

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Audit of Accounts Report

Introduction

- 1 We summarise the main findings from our audit of your 2022-23 statement of accounts in this report.
- 2 We have already discussed these issues with the Corporate Director of Resources and Head of Finance.
- 3 Auditors can never give complete assurance that accounts are correctly stated. Instead, we work to a level of 'materiality'. This level of materiality is set to try to identify and correct misstatements that might otherwise cause a user of the accounts into being misled.
- 4 We set this level at £15.1million for this year's audit.
- 5 There are some areas of the accounts that may be of more importance to the reader and we have set a lower materiality level for these, as follows:
 - Senior officer remuneration £1,000
 - Senior officer exit packages (correct banding)
 - Number of senior officers earning over £60,000 (correct banding)
 - Related party transactions (non-corporate only) £10,000
- 6 We have now substantially completed this year's audit.
- 7 In our professional view, we have complied with the ethical standards that apply to our work; remain independent of yourselves; and our objectivity has not been compromised in any way. There are no relationships between ourselves and yourselves that we believe could undermine our objectivity and independence.

Status of the audit

- 8 We received the draft statement of accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023 on 16 June 2023 which was in advance of the agreed deadline of 31 July 2023 and the more challenging Society of Welsh Treasurers deadline of 30 June 2023.
- 9 At the date of this report, our audit of the financial statements is substantially complete, subject to completion of the following:
 - audit of the cash-flow statements and associated notes;
 - checking all audit amendments agreed have been correctly reflected in the final draft;
 - director and manager review of audit files and clearance of any review points;
 - completing final checks on the signed financial statements after the Council has approved them; and
 - a review of events after the reporting period up to signing date.
- 10 A verbal update on the progress made on these areas since this report was submitted for papers will be provided at the Committee meeting.

11 We are reporting to you the more significant issues arising from the audit, which we believe you must consider prior to approval of the financial statements.

Proposed audit opinion

- 12 We intend to issue an unqualified audit opinion on this year's accounts once you have provided us with a Letter of Representation based on that set out in **Appendix 1**.
- 13 We issue a 'qualified' audit opinion where we have material concerns about some aspects of your accounts; otherwise we issue an unqualified opinion.
- 14 The Letter of Representation contains certain confirmations we are required to obtain from you under auditing standards along with confirmation of other specific information you have provided to us during our audit.
- 15 Our proposed audit report is set out in **Appendix 2**.

Significant issues arising from the audit

Uncorrected misstatements

16 There are no misstatements identified in the accounts, which remain uncorrected.

Corrected misstatements

17 There were initially misstatements in the accounts, including material misstatements, that have now been corrected by management. However, we believe that these should be drawn to your attention and they are set out with explanations in **Appendix 3**.

Other significant issues arising from the audit

18 In the course of the audit, we consider a number of matters relating to the accounts and report any significant issues arising to you. There were some issues arising in these areas this year as shown in **Exhibit 2**

Exhibit 2 – significant issues arising from the audit

Property, Plant and Equipment – valuation of land, buildings & council dwellings	The Council's last valuation of its land, building and council dwelling was as at 1 April 2022. There was an audit risk raised in the Audit Plan that, due to inflationary	Recommendation: Management should ensure appropriate valuation work has been completed to provide sufficient assurance that the carrying value of
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	<p>pressures and changes in other market conditions, the carrying value of assets reflected in the accounts could be materially different to the current value of assets as at 31 March 2023.</p> <p>Subsequent to the submission of the draft accounts, Management commissioned its valuers to assess the current value of a representative sample of assets to determine if the carrying value as reported at 31 March 2023 was not materially different to the current value.</p> <p>This work concluded there were materially differences in the current value and carrying values of the depreciated replacement cost (DRC) assets and so amendments have been required.</p>	<p>assets as at year end is not materially different to the current value.</p> <p>Any valuation updates must be reasonable and in line with expectation and professional guidance.</p> <p>This work should be completed to inform the preparation of the draft annual statements and certified by the S151 officer, prior to submission for audit.</p>
<p>Property, Plant and Equipment – evidencing impairment and downward revaluations</p>	<p>It is the Council's accounting policy to annually assess assets for impairment and downward revaluation. Subsequent to the submission of the draft accounts and following audit enquiries, three key Council buildings were reviewed by valuers for impairment and downward revaluation. These buildings were St Davids Hall (RAAC), City Hall (works and closure), County Hall (Continued Under Occupancy). As a result, material amendments were required to the statements.</p>	<p>Recommendation: Asset impairment and downward revaluations reviews should be completed to inform the preparation of the draft annual statements and certified by the S151 officer, prior to submission for audit.</p>

Recommendations

- 19 The recommendations arising from our audit will be reported in an Addendum Report to be presented to the next Governance and Audit Committee.

Appendix 1

Final Letter of Representation

[Council's letterhead]

Auditor General for Wales
Wales Audit Office
1 Capital Quarter
Cardiff
CF10 4BZ

[Date]

Representations regarding the 2022-23 financial statements

This letter is provided in connection with your audit of the financial statements of the County Council of the City of Cardiff for the year ended 31 March 2023 for the purpose of expressing an opinion on their truth and fairness and their proper preparation.

We confirm that to the best of our knowledge and belief, having made enquiries as we consider sufficient, we can make the following representations to you.

Management representations

Responsibilities

We have fulfilled our responsibilities for:

- the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with legislative requirements and the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022-23; in particular the financial statements give a true and fair view in accordance therewith;
- the design, implementation, maintenance and review of internal control to prevent and detect fraud and error.

Information provided

We have provided you with:

- full access to:
 - all information of which we are aware that is relevant to the preparation of the financial statements such as books of account and supporting documentation, minutes of meetings and other matters;
 - additional information that you have requested from us for the purpose of the audit; and

- unrestricted access to staff from whom you determined it necessary to obtain audit evidence;
- the results of our assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud;
- our knowledge of fraud or suspected fraud that we are aware of and that affects the Council and involves:
 - management;
 - employees who have significant roles in internal control; or
 - others where the fraud could have a material effect on the financial statements;
- our knowledge of any allegations of fraud, or suspected fraud, affecting the financial statements communicated by employees, former employees, regulators or others;
- our knowledge of all known instances of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial statements;
- the identity of all related parties and all the related party relationships and transactions of which we are aware.

Financial statement representations

All transactions, assets and liabilities have been recorded in the accounting records and are reflected in the financial statements.

The methods, the data and the significant assumptions used in making accounting estimates, and their related disclosures are appropriate to achieve recognition, measurement or disclosure that is reasonable in the context of the applicable financial reporting framework.

Related party relationships and transactions have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed.

All events occurring subsequent to the reporting date which require adjustment or disclosure have been adjusted for or disclosed.

All known actual or possible litigation and claims whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial statements have been disclosed to the auditor and accounted for and disclosed in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework. All information available has been shared in respect to the purportedly under-declared landfill tax HMRC assessment received by the Council from 1 April 2015, for waste tipped at Lamby Way Landfill site.

The financial statements are free of material misstatements, including omissions. The effects of uncorrected misstatements identified during the audit are immaterial, both individually and in the aggregate, to the financial statements taken as a whole.

Representations by the County Council of the City and County of Cardiff

We acknowledge that the representations made by management, above, have been discussed with us.

We acknowledge our responsibility for ensuring that the company maintains adequate accounting records.

We acknowledge our responsibility for the preparation of true and fair financial statements in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework. The financial statements were approved by Members of the County Council of the City and County of Cardiff on 28 March 2024.

We confirm that we have taken all the steps that we ought to have taken in order to make ourselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that it has been communicated to you. We confirm that, as far as we are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which you are unaware.

Signed by:

Signed by:

Corporate Director Resources

Chair of the Council – signed on behalf
of those charged with governance

Date: 28 March 2024

Date: 28 March 2024

Appendix 2

Proposed Audit Report

The report of the Auditor General for Wales to the members of the County Council of the City and County of Cardiff

Opinion on financial statements

I have audited the financial statements of:

- the County Council of the City and County of Cardiff; and
- the County Council of the City and County of Cardiff Group

for the year ended 31 March 2023 under the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004.

The County Council of the City and County of Cardiff's financial statements comprise the Movement in Reserves Statement, the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement, the Movement on the Housing Revenue Account Statement, the Housing Revenue Account Income and Expenditure Statement and the related notes, including the significant accounting policies.

The County Council of the City and County of Cardiff's Group financial statements comprise the Group Movement in Reserves Statement, the Group Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, the Group Balance Sheet, the Group Cash Flow Statement and the related notes, including the significant accounting policies.

The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and UK adopted international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022-23.

In my opinion, in all material respects, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial position of the County Council of the City and County of Cardiff and the County Council of the City and County of Cardiff's Group as at 31 March 2023 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with legislative requirements and UK adopted international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022-23.

Basis of opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing in the UK (ISAs (UK)) and Practice Note 10 'Audit of Financial Statements of Public Sector Entities in the United Kingdom'. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of my report.

My staff and I are independent of the Council and the group in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in the UK including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and I have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that the use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work I have performed, I 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 to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

My responsibilities and the responsibilities of the responsible financial officer with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other Information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and my auditor's report thereon. The Responsible Financial Officer is responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in my report, I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

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

I have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters

In my opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of my audit:

- the information contained in the Narrative Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and is in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022-23;
- The information given in the Governance Statement for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and is in accordance with guidance.

Matters on which I report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the Council and the group and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified material misstatements in the Narrative Report or the Annual Governance Statement.

I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters, which I report to you, if, in my opinion:

- I have not received all the information and explanations I require for my audit;

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for my audit have not been received from branches not visited by my team; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns.

Responsibilities of the responsible financial officer for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts, the responsible financial officer is responsible for:

- the preparation of the statement of accounts, including the County Council of the City and County of Cardiff Group financial statements, which give a true and fair view and comply with proper practices;
- maintaining proper accounting records;
- internal controls as the responsible financial officer determines is necessary to enable the preparation of statements of accounts that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error;
- assessing the County Council of the City and County of Cardiff Group's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the responsible financial officer anticipates that the services provided by the County Council of the City and County of Cardiff Group will not continue to be provided in the future.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

My responsibility is to audit the financial statements in accordance with the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004.

My 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 my 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. I design procedures in line with my responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud.

My procedures included the following:

- enquiring of management, the County Council of the City and County of Cardiff 's head of internal audit and those charged with governance, including obtaining and reviewing supporting documentation relating to the County Council of the City and County of Cardiff's policies and procedures concerned with:
 - identifying, evaluating and complying with laws and regulations and whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance;

- detecting and responding to the risks of fraud and whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud; and
- the internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations.
- considering as an audit team how and where fraud might occur in the financial statements and any potential indicators of fraud. As part of this discussion, I identified potential for fraud in the following areas: revenue recognition, expenditure recognition, posting of unusual journals;
- obtaining an understanding of County Council of the City and County of Cardiff's framework of authority as well as other legal and regulatory frameworks that Cardiff Council operates in, focusing on those laws and regulations that had a direct effect on the financial statements or that had a fundamental effect on the operations of Cardiff Council; and
- obtaining an understanding of related party relationships.

In addition to the above, my procedures to respond to identified risks included the following:

- reviewing the financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with relevant laws and regulations discussed above;
- enquiring of management and the Governance and Audit Committee about actual and potential litigation and claims;
- reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance, the Cabinet and Council;
- in addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, testing the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments; assessing whether the judgements made in making accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluating the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business.

I also communicated relevant identified laws and regulations and potential fraud risks to all audit team members and remained alert to any indications of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations throughout the audit.

The extent to which my procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is affected by the inherent difficulty in detecting irregularities, the effectiveness of the County Council of the City and County of Cardiff's controls, and the nature, timing and extent of the audit procedures performed.

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

Other auditor's responsibilities

I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

Certificate of completion of audit

I certify that I have completed the audit of the accounts of the County Council of the City and County of Cardiff Group in accordance with the requirements of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 and the Auditor General for Wales' Code of Audit Practice.

Adrian Crompton
Auditor General for Wales
[Date]

1 Capital Quarter
Tyndall Street
Cardiff, CF10 4BZ

Appendix 3

Summary of Corrections Made

During our audit, we identified the following misstatements that have been corrected by management, but which we consider should be drawn to your attention due to their relevance to your responsibilities over the financial reporting process.

Exhibit 3: summary of corrections made

Value of correction	Nature of correction	Reason for correction
£29.51million £1.77million	Group Balance Sheet The 'Capital Grants Receipts in Advance' figure of £29.51million should be a negative figure. The 'Deferred Tax Liability' figure of £nil should be £1.77million.	To correct figures in the group Balance Sheet.
£32.15million	Note 13 Property, Plant & Equipment Three properties had not been assessed for impairment or downward revaluations during the year to reflect significant changes in use. These properties were St Davids Hall (RAAC), City Hall (works and closure), County Hall (Continued Under Occupancy). As a result, there was a decrease in gross cost of other land & buildings of £32.15m.	To correctly disclose impairments in line with the Code Guidance.
£28.73million	Note 13 Property, Plant & Equipment Assets valued on a depreciated replacement cost basis had not been revalued in the year to reflect significant changes since the last valuation.	To correctly disclose the value of depreciated replacement cost land and buildings in line with the Code requirements.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the gross cost of depreciated replacement cost land & buildings £10.45million; and • Decrease in the gross accumulated depreciation of depreciated replacement cost land & buildings £18.28million. 	
£13.18million	<p>Note 2.2 Expenditure & Income Analysed by Nature and Note 24 Grant Income</p> <p>Note 2.2 – Increase in ‘Grants and contributions’ of £13.18million and corresponding decrease in ‘Fees, charges & other service income’.</p> <p>Note 24 – increase in ‘Central Government Bodies’.</p>	This amendment corrects an error in the classification of grant income.
£6.97million	<p>Movement in Reserves Statement</p> <p>Increase of £6.97million in the ‘Increase/(Decrease) in 2021/22’ line for the ‘Total Usable Reserves’ column.</p> <p>Increase of £6.97million in the ‘Balance at 31 March 2022 carried forward’ line for the ‘Total Usable Reserves’ column.</p>	To correct the brought forward figures for Total Usable Reserves.
£2.00million	<p>Note 25.2 Earmarked Reserves</p> <p>Decrease of £2.00million in ‘Contributions From’ for the ‘Council Tax Reduction Scheme’ reserve line and corresponding increase in ‘Contributions From’ for the ‘Energy Market Volatility’ reserve line.</p>	This amendment corrects an error in the classification of contributions from reserves.

<p>£1.04million £0.58million</p>	<p>Note 14 Property, Plant & Equipment Decrease in depreciation of land & buildings of £1.04million and corresponding increase in depreciation of plant & equipment.</p> <p>Decrease in revaluations of land & buildings of £0.58million and a corresponding increase in revaluation of plant & equipment.</p>	<p>This amendment corrects an error in the classification of movements in property, plant & equipment.</p>
<p>£0.97million</p>	<p>Note 12 Leasing – Council as Lessor Increase in ‘Not later than one year’ of £0.01million, increase in ‘Later than one year and not later than five years’ of £0.03million and increase in ‘Later than five years’ of £0.93million.</p>	<p>To correct disclosure of minimum lease income.</p>
<p>£0.93million</p>	<p>Note 17 Short Term Debtors Decrease in ‘Central Government Bodies’ of £0.93million.</p>	<p>To correct the value of recoverable grant debtors.</p>
<p>Various</p>	<p>Note 10 Related Parties Various related party transactions and balances were omitted from the disclosure.</p>	<p>The amendments have been made to comply with the CIPFA Code and to provide clarification to the reader of the financial statements.</p>
<p>Various</p>	<p>Various Statements & Notes Various amendments have been made to reflect the Council’s share of the updated City Deal financial statements and the final audited Cardiff Bus financial statements.</p>	<p>The amendments have been made to update figures not previously available at the time of preparing the financial statements.</p>

Various	<p>Cashflow Statement Various entries in the statement were either misstated or misclassified.</p>	<p>The amendments have been made to correct classification issues and to comply with the CIPFA Code.</p>
Various	<p>Various Notes Various narrative and presentational amendments made.</p>	<p>To correct minor narrative and presentational errors and provide further clarity to the reader of the accounts.</p>



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We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh and English.
Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg.