

URGENT BUSINESS AND SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee

31 July 2019

Agenda Item Number	Page	Title	Officer Responsible	Reason Not Included with Original Agenda
8.	(Pages 1 - 48)	External Audit – Annual Audit Opinion 2018-19 Appendix 1	Assistant Director: Finance (Interim)	Appendix being reviewed and finalised at time of agenda publication

If you need any further information about the meeting please contact Aaron Hetherington, Democratic and Elections aaron.hetherington@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk, 01295 227956

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Cherwell District
Council
Audit results report
Year ended 31 March 2019

31 July 2019

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EY

Building a better
working world

Agenda Item 8



Private and Confidential

31 July 2019

Dear Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee Members

We are pleased to attach our audit results report for the forthcoming meeting of the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee. This report summarises our preliminary audit conclusion in relation to the audit of Cherwell District Council for 2018/19.

We have substantially completed our audit of Cherwell District Council for the year ended 31 March 2019. At the time of writing, we have yet to conclude our audit procedures on the group accounts, because of delays in receiving the final audited information and group audit deliverables from the subsidiary auditors, which have not arrived at the date of this report. We have also experienced resource constraints because of over-running Major Local Audits that have had an impact on the scheduling of the District Council audit. We have been working with the Council to complete outstanding audit work up to 31 July but to safeguard audit quality and professional standards, at the date of issuing this report there is a risk the remainder of the audit will not be concluded at 31 July.

I have discussed the status of our audit with the Executive Director of Finance (Interim) up to the date of issuing this report. The Executive Director of Finance (Interim) shared by email on 26th July 2019 to the Council's Leader, Portfolio Holder for Resources, Chair of the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee and Chief Executive the status of the audit and a proposed narrative the Council could include on its website to enable it to meet its accounts publication deadline of 31st July 2019. This narrative explains why our audit is not concluded and the steps required thereafter to issue the audited accounts. I am happy to discuss this narrative and next steps with the members at the Committee meeting.

Subject to concluding the outstanding matters listed in our report, we confirm that we expect to issue an unqualified audit opinion on the financial statements in the form at section 3. We also have no matters to report to date on your arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in your use of resources and we will finalise our conclusion once we have completed all our outstanding work.

This report is intended solely for the use of the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee, other members of the Authority, and senior management. It should not be used for any other purpose or given to any other party without obtaining our written consent.

We would like to thank your staff for their help during the engagement. We welcome the opportunity to discuss the contents of this report with you at the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee meeting on 31 July 2019.

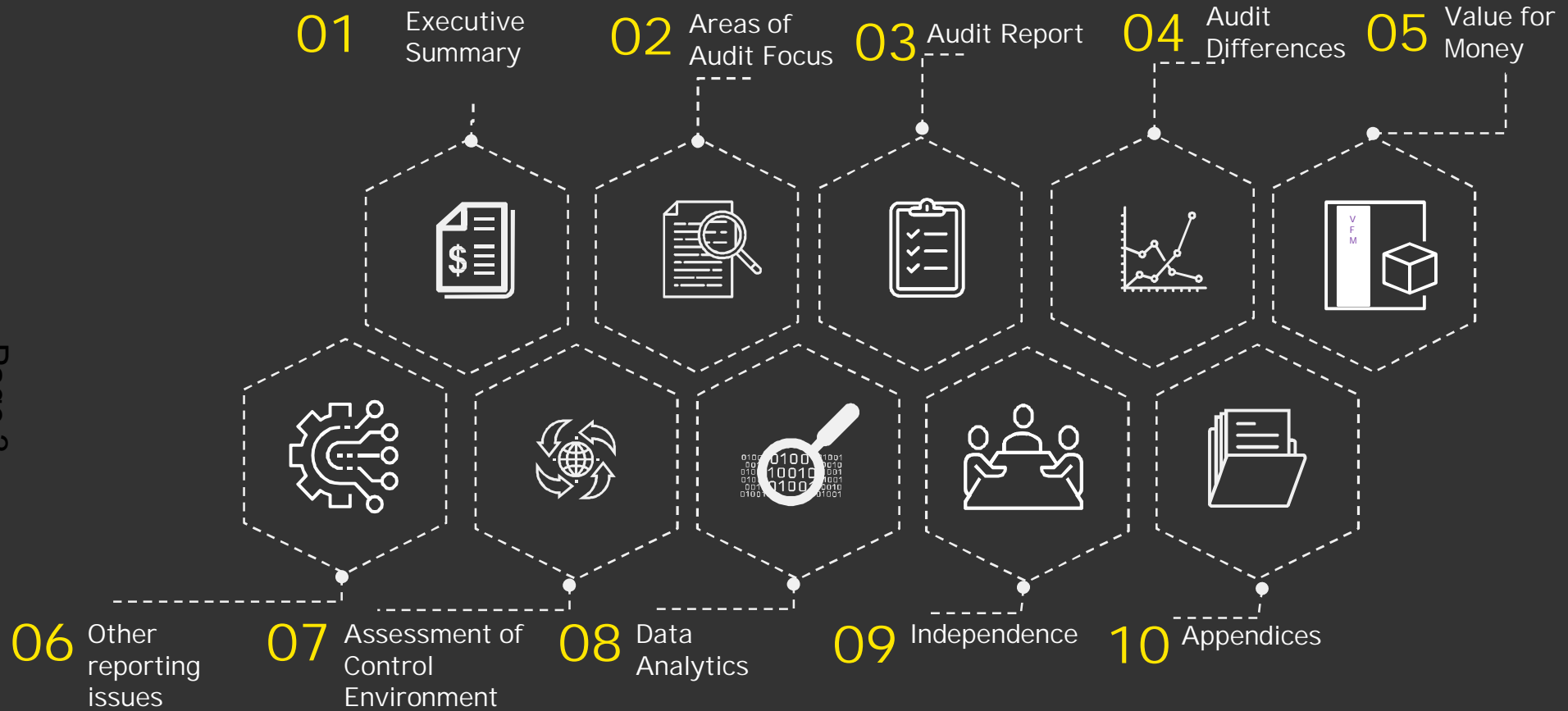
Yours faithfully

Neil Harris

Associate Partner For and on behalf of Ernst & Young LLP
Encl

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Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) have issued a 'Statement of responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies'. It is available from the Chief Executive of each audited body and via the PSAA website (www.psa.co.uk). This Statement of responsibilities serves as the formal terms of engagement between appointed auditors and audited bodies. It summarises where the different responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies begin and end, and what is to be expected of the audited body in certain areas.

The 'Terms of Appointment (updated April 2018)' issued by PSAA sets out additional requirements that auditors must comply with, over and above those set out in the National Audit Office Code of Audit Practice (the Code) and statute, and covers matters of practice and procedure which are of a recurring nature.

This Annual Audit Letter is prepared in the context of the Statement of responsibilities. It is addressed to the Members of the audited body, and is prepared for their sole use. We, as appointed auditor, take no responsibility to any third party.

Our Complaints Procedure – If at any time you would like to discuss with us how our service to you could be improved, or if you are dissatisfied with the service you are receiving, you may take the issue up with your usual partner or director contact. If you prefer an alternative route, please contact Steve Varley, our Managing Partner, 1 More London Place, London SE1 2AF. We undertake to look into any complaint carefully and promptly and to do all we can to explain the position to you. Should you remain dissatisfied with any aspect of our service, you may of course take matters up with our professional institute. We can provide further information on how you may contact our professional institute.



01

Executive Summary



Executive Summary

Scope update

In our audit planning report tabled at the 23 January 2019 Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee meeting, we provided you with an overview of our audit scope and approach for the audit of the financial statements. We carried out our audit in accordance with this plan, with the following exception:

- Changes in materiality. We updated our planning materiality assessment using the draft financial statements and have also reconsidered our risk assessment. Based on our materiality measure of gross expenditure on provision of services, we have updated our overall materiality assessment to £2.409 million (Audit Planning Report – £1.869 million). This results in updated performance materiality, at 75% of overall materiality, of £1.8m, and an updated threshold for reporting misstatements of £120,000.
- The basis of our assessment has remained consistent with prior years at 2% of gross expenditure on provision of services.

A summary of our approach to the audit of the balance sheet including any changes from the prior year audit is included in Appendix A.



Executive Summary

Status of the audit

We have substantially completed our audit of Cherwell District Council's financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2019 and have performed the procedures outlined in our audit planning report. Please refer to our covering letter at page 2 on the status of the audit. At the time of writing, we have yet to conclude our audit procedures on the group accounts, because of delays in receiving the final audited information from the subsidiary auditors and concluding on whether there are any remaining material technical issues that need to be resolved for the group financial statements.

We have set out in Appendix C the remaining areas of audit to be completed at the time of writing this report. Subject to satisfactory completion of those matters, we expect to issue an unqualified opinion on the Authority's financial statements in the form which appears at Section 4. However until work is complete, further amendments may arise.

We expect to issue the audit certificate at the same time as the audit opinion.

Audit differences

At the time of writing, we have not yet identified any unadjusted audit differences in the draft financial statements which management has chosen not to adjust.

If we identify any, we will ask for them to be corrected or a rationale given as to why they are not corrected, which is approved by the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee and included in the Letter of Representation. We will set out the aggregated impact of unadjusted audit differences and whether we agree with management's assessment that the impact is not material.

To date there is the following adjusted misstatement in the draft statements.

1. An amendment as a result of judgement being made on the McCloud case, brought to address the impact of historical age discrimination in the treatment of pensioners. This decision came through in late June, i.e. after the statements were originally drafted. The effect is to increase expenditure by £0.855 million. NB this is a national issue affecting many public sector bodies. This has no impact on the Council's general fund balance.

We also note that the audit team found an error of £403K to the cash flow statement. The Council has agreed to amend this, but we have not yet seen the adjusted statement.

There were also some minor disclosures which have been adjusted by management. Details can be found in Section 4 Audit Differences.



Executive Summary

Areas of audit focus

Our Audit Planning Report identified key areas of focus for our audit of Cherwell District Council's financial statements. This report sets out our observations and conclusions, including our views on areas which might be conservative, and where there is potential risk and exposure. We summarise our consideration of these matters, and any others identified, in the "Key Audit Issues" section of this report.

We ask you to review these and any other matters in this report to ensure:

- There are no other considerations or matters that could have an impact on these issues
- You agree with the resolution of the issue
- There are no other significant issues to be considered.

There are no matters, apart from those reported by management or disclosed in this report, which we believe should be brought to the attention of the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee.

Control observations

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

Value for money

We have considered your arrangements to take informed decisions; deploy resources in a sustainable manner; and work with partners and other third parties. In our Audit Planning Report we identified no significant risks.

We have identified no concerns to date but will revisit once we have received the outcomes from the group component auditors and reviewed the work of our Real Estates specialist team on the valuation of Castle Quay.



Executive Summary

Other reporting issues

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

We have performed the procedures required by the National Audit Office (NAO) on the Whole of Government Accounts submission. As the authority is below the NAO thresholds, this consists simply of a return to the NAO.

We have no other matters to report.

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Independence

Please refer to Section 9 for our update on Independence.



02 Areas of Audit Focus



Areas of Audit Focus

Significant risk

Misstatements due to fraud or error

What is the risk?

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

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

We have not identified a heightened risk of management override overall, but we have identified a specific area where management override might occur: incorrect capitalisation of revenue spending. Our specific response to this risk is set out in the next slide.

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What judgements are we focused on?

We have considered the risk of management override and the areas of the financial statements that may be most susceptible to this risk. For the Council, we have identified the potential for the incorrect classification of revenue spend as capital and the allocation of shared costs between South Northamptonshire Council and Cherwell District Council as particular areas where there is a risk of fraud or error.

What did we do?

- Identified fraud risks during the planning stages.
- Asked management about risks of fraud and the controls put in place to address those risks.
- Understood the oversight given by those charged with governance of management's processes over fraud.
- Considered the effectiveness of management's controls designed to address the risk of fraud.
- Determined an appropriate strategy to address those identified risks of fraud.
- Performed mandatory procedures regardless of specifically identified fraud risks, including testing of journal entries and other adjustments in the preparation of the financial statements
- Specific testing where amounts have been allocated between Cherwell District Council and South Northamptonshire Council.

What are our conclusions?

We have not identified any material weaknesses in controls or evidence of material management override. We have not identified any instances of inappropriate judgements being applied.

We did not identify any other transactions during our audit which appeared unusual or outside the Authority's normal course of business.





Areas of Audit Focus

Significant risk

Incorrect capitalisation of revenue expenditure

What is the risk?

Linking to our risk of misstatements due to fraud and error above, we have considered the capitalisation of revenue expenditure on property, plant and equipment as a specific area of risk given the extent of the Council's capital programme and the complexity surrounding Phase 2 of the Castle Quay project (this is covered in more detail on the following slide).

For our audit of Cherwell District Council, we consider that this risk is limited to the cost of sales charged to the profit and loss account by the Council's wholly owned subsidiary company, Graven Hill Village Development Company Limited. The costs comprise a combination of direct costs, and costs estimated on the basis of individual dwelling plots. These costs came to £23.8 million as at 31 March 2019 (£3.5 million in 2017/18).

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What judgements are we focused on?

How management decides on appropriate capitalisation of revenue expenditure
How the capital programme complies with the strategy principles listed above

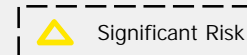
What did we do?

- Sample testing additions to property, plant and equipment to ensure that they have been correctly classified as capital and included at the correct value in order to identify any revenue items that have been inappropriately capitalised.
- Include the risk of fraud in revenue expenditure recognition as a significant risk in our instructions to the auditors to Graven Hill Village Development Company Limited. We reviewed the work they did in relation to this risk.

What are our conclusions?

We have not identified any material weaknesses in controls or evidence of material management override.
We have not identified any instances of inappropriate judgements being applied.

We did not identify any other transactions during our audit which appeared unusual or outside the Council's normal course of business





Areas of Audit Focus

Significant risk

Valuation and classification of Castle Quay

What is the risk?

The fair value of the Castle Quay development will represent a significant balance in the Council's group Statement of Accounts.

The asset is subject to an annual revaluation, and management is required to make material judgemental inputs and apply estimation techniques to calculate the year-end value recorded in the balance sheet.

2018/19 sees the Castle Quay project entering its second phase.

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What judgements are we focused on?

- Management judgements of ownership arrangements and how they are disclosed
- Correctness of reporting and disclosure of group elements in the consolidated financial statements
- Correctness of consolidating adjustments
- Completeness of related party disclosures

What did we do?

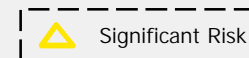
- Considered the work performed by the Council's valuer, including the adequacy of the scope of the work performed, their professional capabilities and the results of their work. We used specialist support from our Real Estate team to support our testing of the valuation;
- Tested and challenged the information and assumptions used by the valuers in performing their valuation;
- Engage support from our Real Estate team to support our work reviewing the assumptions used in the valuation. This was the focus of professional scepticism in view of recent reports on the fragility of the retail sector e.g. increases in discount rates ("yield") having a negative impact on carrying value
- Tested that the asset was correctly classified on the balance sheet, and that the accounting entries for the valuation were correctly reflected in the Statement of Accounts.

What are our conclusions?

We have been liaising with our specialist Real Estate team on their review of the valuation of Castle Quay.

We have received the report from our specialists, who have concluded that the valuation in the financial statement falls within an acceptable range. They have however identified areas for improvement in the valuation methodology in future.

We will update the committee on the report in more detail at the meeting.



Other areas of audit focus

In our audit planning report we identified other areas of the audit, not classified as significant risks, but still important when considering the risks of material misstatement to the financial statements and disclosures.

What is the risk/area of focus?

Valuation of Land and Buildings

The fair value of Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE) and Investment Properties (IP) represent significant balances in the Council's accounts and are subject to valuation changes, impairment reviews and depreciation charges. Management is required to make material judgemental inputs and apply estimation techniques to calculate the year-end balances recorded in the balance sheet.

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Pension Liability Valuation

The Local Authority Accounting Code of Practice and IAS19 require the Council to make extensive disclosures within its financial statements regarding its membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme administered by Cherwell District Council.

The Council's pension fund deficit is a material estimated balance and the Code requires that this liability be disclosed on the Council's balance sheet. At 31 March 2019 this came to £207 million.

The information disclosed is based on the IAS19 report issued to the Council by the actuary to the County Council.

Accounting for this scheme involves significant estimation and judgement and therefore management engages an actuary to undertake the calculations on their behalf. ISAs (UK) 500 and 540 require us to undertake procedures on the use of management experts and the assumptions underlying fair value estimates.

The Council re-ran the actuary's report to take account of the McCloud case.

What did we do?

We:

- considered the work performed by the Council's valuers, including the adequacy of the scope of the work performed, their professional capabilities and the results of their work;
- sample tested key asset information used by the valuers in performing their valuation (e.g. floor plans to support valuations based on price per square metre);
- considered the annual cycle of valuations to ensure that assets have been valued within a 5 year rolling programme as required by the Code for PPE and annually for IP. We also considered if there are any specific changes to assets that have occurred and that these have been communicated to the valuer;
- reviewed assets not subject to valuation in 2018/19 to confirm that the remaining asset base is not materially misstated;
- considered changes to useful economic lives as a result of the most recent valuation; and
- tested that accounting entries have been correctly processed in the financial statements,

We:

- liaised with the auditors of Oxfordshire Pension Fund to obtain assurances over the information supplied to the actuary in relation to Oxfordshire County Council;
- assessed the work of the Pension Fund actuary (Hyman Robertson) including the assumptions they have used by relying on the work of PWC - Consulting Actuaries commissioned by the National Audit Office for all Local Government sector auditors, and considering any relevant reviews by the EY actuarial team; and
- reviewed and tested the accounting entries and disclosures made within the Council's financial statements in relation to IAS19.
- The Council has amended its financial statements to take account of the implications of the McCloud case, brought to address the impact of historical age discrimination in the treatment of pensioners. This decision came through in late June, after the statements were originally drafted. The effect is to increase expenditure by £0.855m, This is a national issue affecting many public sector bodies. The Council's actuary have advised that the impact of GMP is not material. We have corroborated the actuary's view that there is no material impact.

Other areas of audit focus

We have identified other areas of the audit, that have not been classified as significant risks, but are still important when considering the risks of material misstatement to the financial statements and disclosures.

What is the risk/area of focus?	What did we do?
<p>IFRS 9 financial instruments</p> <p>This new accounting standard is applicable for local authority accounts from the 2018/19 financial year and will change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How financial assets are classified and measured; • How the impairment of financial assets are calculated; and • The disclosure requirements for financial assets. <p>Page 14 here are transitional arrangements within the standard; and the 2018/19 Cipfa Code of practice on local authority accounting provides guidance on the application of IFRS 9. We are currently in discussion with officers on the appropriate accounting treatment for some equities.</p>	<p>We:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assessed the Council's implementation arrangements that should include an impact assessment paper setting out the application of the new standard, transitional adjustments and planned accounting for 2018/19; • considered the classification and valuation of financial instrument assets; • reviewed new expected credit loss model impairment calculations for assets; and • checked additional disclosure requirements. <p>There were no issues arising that we wished to bring to your attention.</p>
<p>IFRS 15 Revenue from contracts with customers</p> <p>This new accounting standard is applicable for local authority accounts from the 2018/19 financial year.</p> <p>The key requirements of the standard cover the identification of performance obligations under customer contracts and the linking of income to the meeting of those performance obligations.</p> <p>The 2018/19 Cipfa Code of practice on local authority accounting provides guidance on the application of IFRS 15 and includes a useful flow diagram and commentary on the main sources of LG revenue and how they should be recognised.</p> <p>The impact on local authority accounting is likely to be limited as large revenue streams like council tax, non domestic rates and government grants will be outside the scope of IFRS 15. However where that standard is relevant, the recognition of revenue will change and new disclosure requirements introduced.</p>	<p>We:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assessed the authority's implementation arrangements that should include an impact assessment paper setting out the application of the new standard, transitional adjustments and planned accounting for 2018/19. This includes Local Authority Trading Companies consolidated into the Authority's Group Accounts; • considered application to the authority's revenue streams, and where the standard is relevant test to ensure revenue is recognised when (or as) it satisfies a performance obligation; and • checked additional disclosure requirements. <p>There were no issues arising that we wished to bring to your attention.</p>

Other areas of audit focus

We have identified other areas of the audit, that have not been classified as significant risks, but are still important when considering the risks of material misstatement to the financial statements and disclosures and therefore may be key audit matters we will include in our audit report.

What did we do?

Group Boundary Assessment

The Council now has 3 wholly owned subsidiary companies and also holds an interest in a joint company with South Northamptonshire Council to process housing benefit claims across both Councils from June 2018.

As in previous years, our work in this area is not contained with the assumptions used by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited (PSAA Ltd) in setting the Council's 2017/18 audit fee. We have included an estimate of the likely additional fee in relation to this matter; this is reflected in Appendix A of this report.

In 2017/18, Clark Howes provided accounting and external auditing services to the Graven Hill companies. In 2018/19 the work was undertaken by Critchleys.

We:

- Reviewed the Council's assessment of its group boundary
- Tested the consolidation of entries relating to these subsidiary entities into the Council's Group Statement of Accounts
- Issued instructions to the auditors of the three component entities as appropriate. The detail will depend on the outcome of the current tendering process for the audit of components.

Re-organisation of local government in Northamptonshire: impact on Cherwell DC

The re-organisation of local government in Northamptonshire may have an impact on the Council's capacity to identify and implement the efficiency savings necessary to close the forecast budget gap in future years, as it separates itself from its close working with South Northamptonshire Council (which will cease to exist from 1 April 2020). The proposal for an interim governance structure is taking up considerable Chief Officer time and expenditure is being set aside to cover the costs of reorganisation. There may also be an impact on staff morale and retention, and on the Council's capacity to handle its day-to-day operations efficiently.

We:

- Maintained a watching brief over developments in relation to the reorganisation and any impact on officers' capacity; and
- Checked additional disclosure requirements relating to the reorganisation.



03 Audit Report



Audit Report

Draft audit report

Our opinion on the financial statements

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF CHERWELL DISTRICT COUNCIL

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Cherwell District Council for the year ended 31 March 2019 under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. The financial statements comprise the:

Authority and Group Movement in Reserves Statement,
Authority and Group Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement,
Authority and Group Balance Sheet,
Authority and Group Cash Flow Statement,
Collection Fund, and
The related notes 1 to 39 of the authority Financial Statements, notes 1 to 4 of the Collection Fund, and notes 1 to 3 of the group Financial Statements.

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 2018/19.

In our opinion the financial statements:
give a true and fair view of the financial position of Cherwell District Council and Group as at 31 March 2019 and of its expenditure and income for the year then ended; and
have been prepared properly in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2018/19.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report below. We are independent of Cherwell District Council and Group in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard and the Comptroller and Auditor General's (C&AG) AGN01, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

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

Conclusions relating to going concern

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the ISAs (UK) require us to report to you where:
the Executive Director of Finance (interim)' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is not appropriate; or
the Executive Director of Finance (interim) has not disclosed in the financial statements any identified material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about the Authority's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the statement of accounts, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Executive Director of Finance (interim) is responsible for the other information.

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



Audit Report

Our opinion on the financial statements

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 the other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters prescribed by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014

Arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit, having regard to the guidance issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) in November 2017, we are satisfied that, in all significant respects, Cherwell District Council put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2019.

Matters on which we report by exception

We report to you if:

- in our opinion the annual governance statement is misleading or inconsistent with other information forthcoming from the audit or our knowledge of the Council;
- we issue a report in the public interest under section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014;
- we make written recommendations to the audited body under Section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014;

we make an application to the court for a declaration that an item of account is contrary to law under Section 28 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014;

we issue an advisory notice under Section 29 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014; or

we make an application for judicial review under Section 31 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

We have nothing to report in these respects

Responsibility of the Executive Director of Finance (interim)

As explained more fully in the Statement of Responsibilities set out on page x, the Executive Director of Finance (interim) 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 2018/19, and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view.

In preparing the financial statements, the Executive Director of Finance (interim) is responsible for assessing the Authority'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 Authority either intends to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

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

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion.



Audit Report

Our opinion on the financial statements

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.

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

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

We have undertaken our review in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice, having regard to the guidance on the specified criterion issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) in November 2017, as to whether Cherwell District Council had proper arrangements to ensure it took properly informed decisions and deployed resources to achieve planned and sustainable outcomes for taxpayers and local people. The Comptroller and Auditor General determined this criterion as that necessary for us to consider under the Code of Audit Practice in satisfying ourselves whether Cherwell District Council put in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2019.

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

We are required under Section 20(1)(c) of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 to satisfy ourselves that the Authority has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. The Code of Audit Practice issued by the National Audit Office (NAO) requires us to report to you our conclusion relating to proper arrangements.

We report if significant matters have come to our attention which prevent us from concluding that the Authority has put in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. We are not required to consider, nor have we considered, whether all aspects of the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources are operating effectively.

Certificate

We certify that we have completed the audit of the accounts of Cherwell District Council in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Code of Audit Practice issued by the National Audit Office.

Use of our report

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

Neil Harris (Key Audit Partner)
Ernst & Young LLP (Local Auditor)
Luton
Xxxx 2019

The maintenance and integrity of the Cherwell District Council web site is the responsibility of the directors; the work carried out by the auditors does not involve consideration of these matters and, accordingly, the auditors accept no responsibility for any changes that may have occurred to the financial statements since they were initially presented on the web site. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.



04 Audit Differences





Audit Differences

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

Summary of adjusted differences

To date there is the following adjusted misstatements in the draft statements.

1. An amendment as a result of judgement being made on the McCloud case, brought to address the impact of historical age discrimination in the treatment of pensioners. This decision came through in late June, i.e. after the statements were originally drafted. The effect is to increase expenditure by £0.855 million. NB this is a national issue affecting many public sector bodies.

We also note that the audit team found an error of £403K to the cash flow statement. The Council has agreed to amend this but we have not yet received the updated statement.

There were also some minor disclosures which have been adjusted by management.

There are to date no uncorrected misstatements.



05

Value for Money Risks



Background

We are required to consider whether the Council has put in place 'proper arrangements' to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness on its use of resources. This is known as our value for money conclusion.

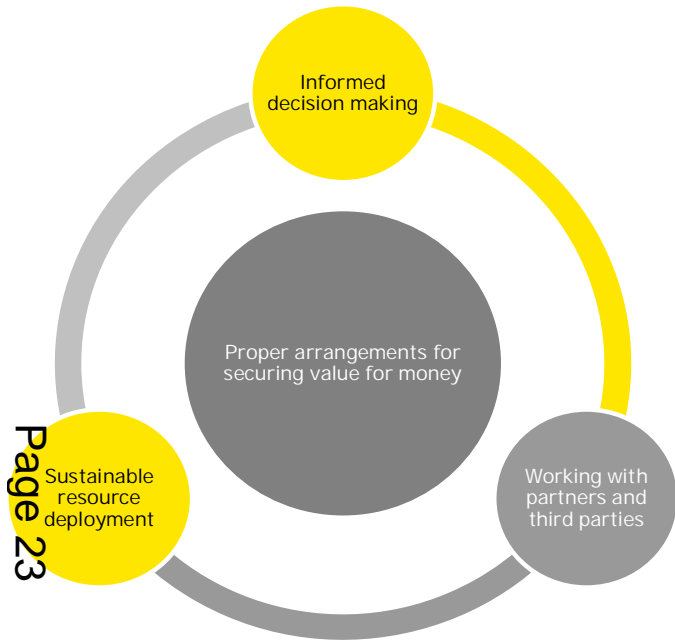
For 2018/19 this is based on the overall evaluation criterion:

"In all significant respects, the audited body had proper arrangements to ensure it took properly informed decisions and deployed resources to achieve planned and sustainable outcomes for taxpayers and local people"

Proper arrangements are defined by statutory guidance issued by the National Audit Office. They comprise your arrangements to:

- Take informed decisions;
- Deploy resources in a sustainable manner; and
- Work with partners and other third parties.

In considering your proper arrangements, we will draw on the requirements of the CIPFA/SOLACE framework for local government to ensure that our assessment is made against a framework that you are already required to have in place and to report on through documents such as your annual governance statement.



Overall conclusion

We did not identify any significant risks around these criteria at the planning stage. However we reviewed the Council's financial resilience by completing a quantitative and qualitative assessment of the Council's budget, medium term financial strategy and capital, treasury management strategies produced in the period to 31 March 2019.

We also reviewed how the Council has responded to the weaknesses in arrangements that led to a qualification of our Value for Money Conclusion in the 2017/18 financial year. This considered the arrangements the Council now has to support its decision-making on any future investment and commercial decisions.

We have identified no concerns to date but will revisit once we have received the outcomes from the group component auditors and reviewed the work of our Real Estates specialist team on the valuation of Castle Quay, which suggests improvements to the methodology.



06 Other reporting issues

Other reporting issues

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

We must give an opinion on the consistency of the financial and non-financial information in the Statement of Accounts 2018/19 with the audited financial statements

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

Financial information in the Statement of Accounts 2018/19 and published with the financial statements was consistent with the audited financial statements.

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

Whole of Government Accounts

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

We have completed the return for the NAO. As the Council falls below the threshold for audit, no further work is required in this area.

Notice of audit

For 2018/19 the period of notice should include 3 - 14 June. The Council's notice allowed for the required 30 days but did not include 3 June (it was for 4 - 15 June).

Other reporting issues

Other powers and duties

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

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

Other matters

As required by ISA (UK&I) 260 and other ISAs specifying communication requirements, we must tell you significant findings from the audit and other matters if they are significant to your oversight of the Authority’s financial reporting process. They include the following:

- Significant qualitative aspects of accounting practices including accounting policies, accounting estimates and financial statement disclosures;
- Any significant difficulties encountered during the audit;
- Any significant matters arising from the audit that were discussed with management;
- Written representations we have requested;
- Expected modifications to the audit report;
- Any other matters significant to overseeing the financial reporting process;
- Findings and issues around the opening balance on initial audits (if applicable);
- Related parties;
- External confirmations;
- Going concern;
- Consideration of laws and regulations; and
- Group audits

We have nothing to report in these matters.



07

Assessment of Control Environment



Assessment of Control Environment

Reliance on internal audit

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

As part of our audit of the financial statements, we obtained an understanding of internal control sufficient to plan our audit and determine the nature, timing and extent of testing performed.

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

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



08 Data Analytics



Use of Data Analytics in the Audit

▶ Data analytics

Analytics Driven Audit

Data analytics

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

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

In 2018/19, our use of these analysers in the authority's audit included testing journal entries, to identify and focus our testing on those entries we deem to have the highest inherent risk to the audit.

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

Journal Entry Analysis

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

Payroll Analysis

We also use our analysers in our payroll testing. We obtain all payroll transactions posted in the year from the payroll system and perform completeness analysis over the data, including reconciling the total amount to the General Ledger trial balance. We then analyse the data against a number of specifically designed procedures. These include analysis of payroll costs by month to identify any variances from established expectations, as well as more detailed transactional interrogation.

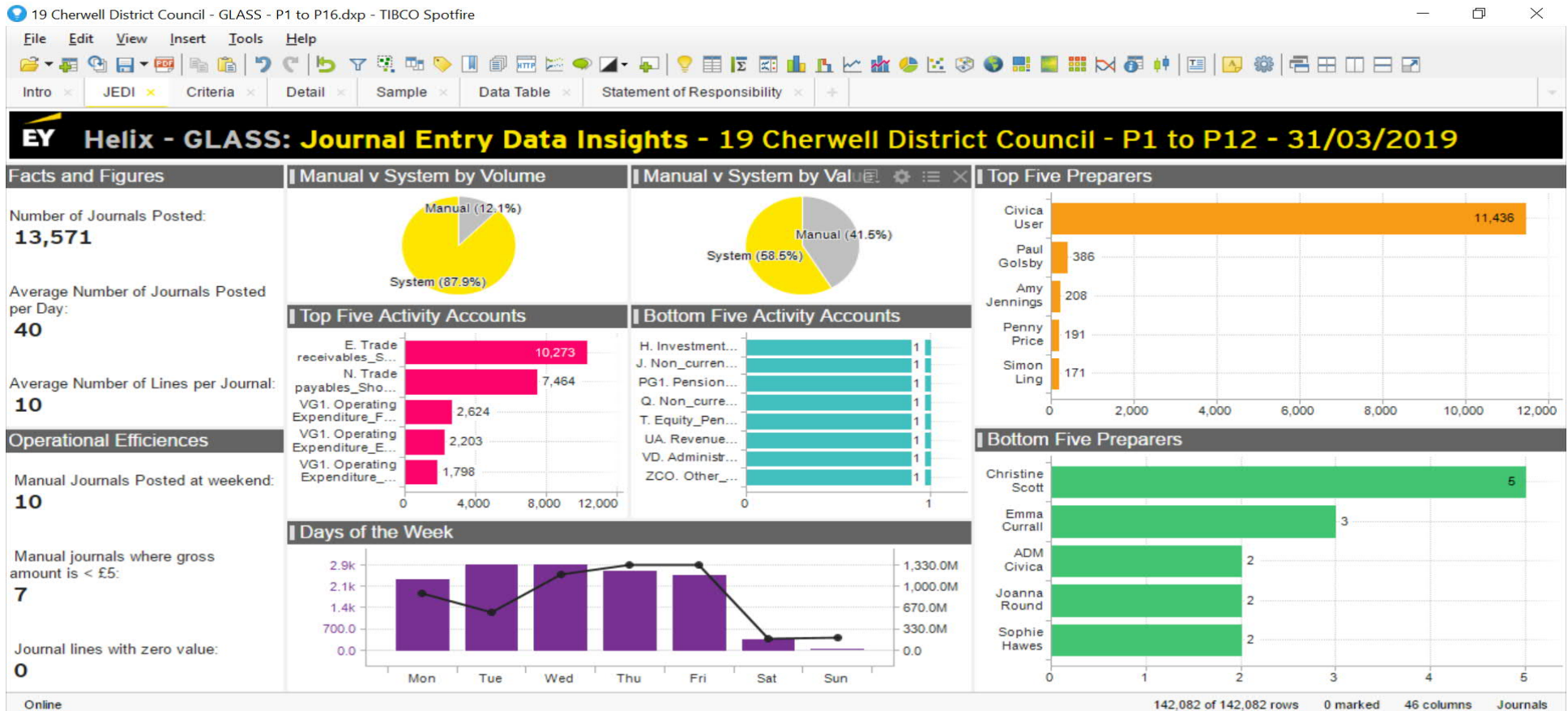


Data Analytics

Journal Entry Data Insights

The graphic outlined below summarises the journal population for 2018/19. We review journals by certain risk based criteria to focus on higher risk transactions, such as journals posted manually by management, those posted around the year-end, those with unusual debit and credit relationships, and those posted by individuals we would not expect to be entering transactions.

The purpose of this approach is to provide a more effective, risk focused approach to auditing journal entries, minimising the burden of compliance on management by minimising randomly selected samples.





Journal Entry Testing

What is the risk?

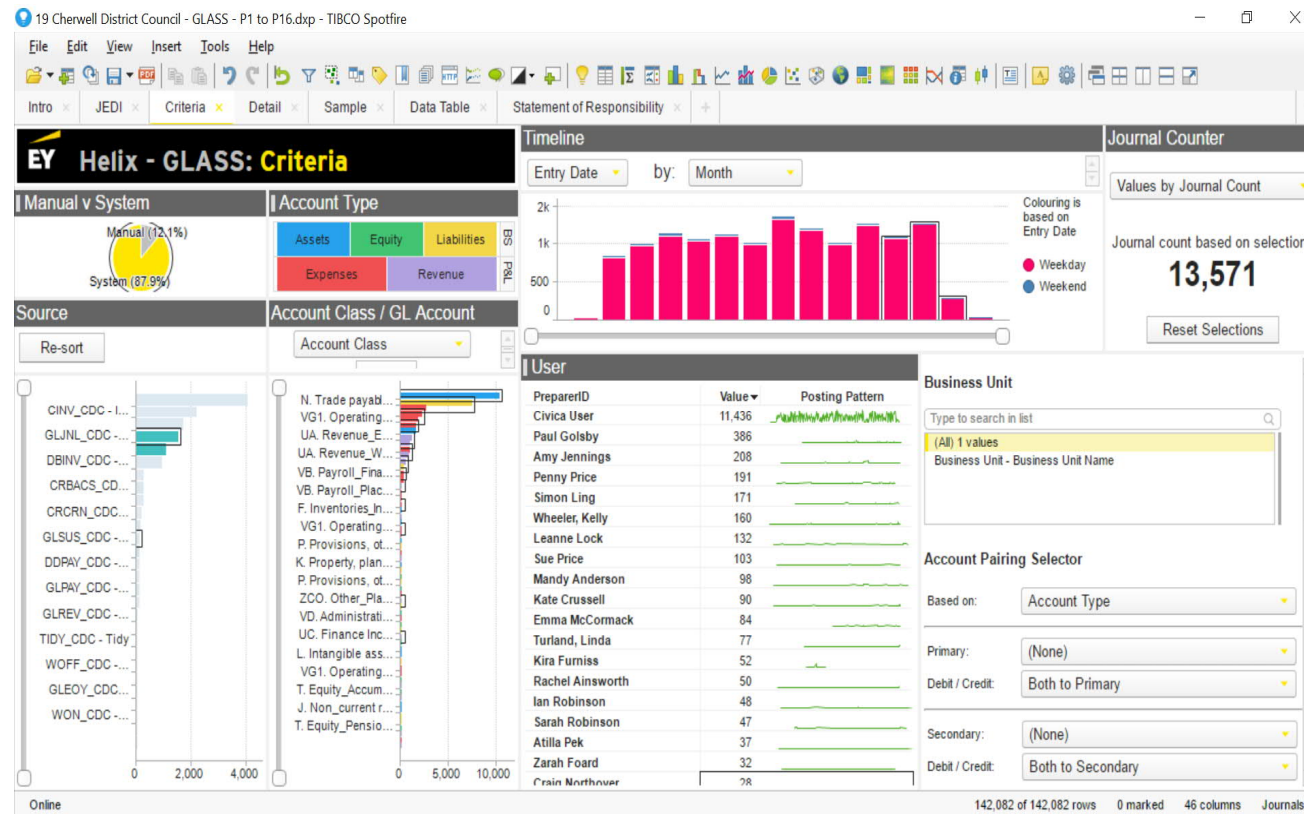
In line with ISA 240 we are required to test the appropriateness of journal entries recorded in the general ledger and other adjustments made in the preparation of the financial statements.

Journal entry data criteria – 31 March 20XX

What judgements are we focused on?

Using our analysers we are able to take a risk based approach to identify journals with a higher risk of management override, as outlined in our audit planning report.

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What did we do?

We obtained general ledger journal data for the period and have used our analysers to identify characteristics typically associated with inappropriate journal entries or adjustments, and journals entries that are subject to a higher risk of management override.

We then performed tests on the journals identified to determine if they were appropriate and reasonable.

What are our conclusions?

We isolated a sub-set of journals for further investigation and obtained supporting evidence to verify the posting of these transactions and concluded that they were appropriately stated.



09 Independence

Confirmation

We confirm that there are no changes in our assessment of independence since our confirmation in our audit planning report dated January 2019.

We complied with the FRC Ethical Standards and the requirements of the PSAA's Terms of Appointment. In our professional judgement the firm is independent and the objectivity of the audit engagement partner and audit staff has not been compromised within the meaning of regulatory and professional requirements.

We consider that our independence in this context is a matter which you should review, as well as us. It is important that you and your Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee consider the facts known to you and come to a view. If you would like to discuss any matters concerning our independence, we will be pleased to do this at the meeting of the Committee on 31 July 2019.

Independence

Fee analysis

As part of our reporting on our independence, we set out below a summary of the fees paid for the year ended 31 March 2019.

We confirm that we have not undertaken non-audit work outside the NAO Code requirements.

	Final Fee 2018/19	Planned Fee 2018/19	Scale Fee 2018/19	Final Fee 2017/18
	£	£	£	£
Total Audit Fee – Code work	TBC	*56,138	40,138	86,127
Non-audit services – Housing Benefit Subsidy Claim Certification	TBC	**4,500	N/A	8,844
Total fees	TBC	60,638	40,138	94,971

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*There will be additional fees because of the Council's group structure and the identification of Castle Quay valuation as a significant risk, as reported in the audit planning report.

** The fee for housing benefit work is the base fee and does not include any extended testing; however in the past some extended testing has always been required in order to comply with DWP expectations, so the actual fee is likely to be higher. From 2018-19 onwards the work falls outside the PSAA regime and is subject to a separate fee proposal and engagement terms.



10

Appendices

Audit approach update

We summarise below our approach to the audit of the balance sheet and any changes to this approach from the prior year audit.

Our audit procedures are designed to be responsive to our assessed risk of material misstatement at the relevant assertion level. Assertions relevant to the balance sheet include:

- Existence: An asset, liability and equity interest exists at a given date
- Rights and Obligations: An asset, liability and equity interest pertains to the entity at a given date
- Completeness: There are no unrecorded assets, liabilities, and equity interests, transactions or events, or undisclosed items
- Valuation: An asset, liability and equity interest is recorded at an appropriate amount and any resulting valuation or allocation adjustments are appropriately recorded
- Presentation and Disclosure: Assets, liabilities and equity interests are appropriately aggregated or disaggregated, and classified, described and disclosed in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework. Disclosures are relevant and understandable in the context of the applicable financial reporting framework





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Balance sheet category	Audit Approach in current year	Audit Approach in prior year	Explanation for change
Trade receivables	Substantively tested all assertions	Substantively tested all assertions	No change
Trade payables	Substantively tested all assertions	Substantively tested all assertions	No change
Investments	Substantively tested all assertions	Substantively tested all assertions	No change
Tangible fixed assets	Substantively tested all assertions	Substantively tested all assertions	No change
Cash	Substantively tested all assertions	Substantively tested all assertions	No change
Borrowing	Substantively tested all assertions	Substantively tested all assertions	No change
Capital grants receipts in advance	Substantively tested all assertions	Substantively tested all assertions	No change
Pensions liability	Substantively tested all assertions	Substantively tested all assertions	No change

Appendix B

Required communications with Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee





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

			 Our Reporting to you
Required communications	 What is reported?	  When and where	
Terms of engagement	Confirmation by the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee of acceptance of terms of engagement as written in the engagement letter signed by both parties.	The statement of responsibilities serves as the formal terms of engagement between the PSAA's appointed auditors and audited bodies	
Our responsibilities	Reminder of our responsibilities as set out in the engagement letter.	Audit planning report	
Planning and audit approach	Communication of the planned scope and timing of the audit, any limitations and the significant risks identified.	Audit planning report	
Significant findings from the audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our view about the significant qualitative aspects of accounting practices including accounting policies, accounting estimates and financial statement disclosures • Significant difficulties, if any, encountered during the audit • Significant matters, if any, arising from the audit that were discussed with management • Written representations that we are seeking • Expected modifications to the audit report • Other matters if any, significant to the oversight of the financial reporting process 	Audit results report	

Appendix B

		Our Reporting to you
Required communications	What is reported?	When and where
Going concern	<p>Events or conditions identified that may cast significant doubt on the entity's ability to continue as a going concern, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether the events or conditions constitute a material uncertainty • Whether the use of the going concern assumption is appropriate in the preparation and presentation of the financial statements • The adequacy of related disclosures in the financial statements 	No conditions or events were identified, either individually or together to raise any doubt about Cherwell District Council's ability to continue for the 12 months from the date of our report
Misstatements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncorrected misstatements and their effect on our audit opinion • The effect of uncorrected misstatements related to prior periods • A request that any uncorrected misstatement be corrected • Material misstatements corrected by management 	Audit results report
Subsequent events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee where appropriate about whether any subsequent events have occurred that might affect the financial statements. 	
Fraud	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee to determine whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud affecting the Authority • Any fraud that we have identified or information we have obtained that indicates that a fraud may exist • Unless all of those charged with governance are involved in managing the Authority, any identified or suspected fraud involving: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Management; b. Employees who have significant roles in internal control; or c. Others where the fraud results in a material misstatement in the financial statements. • The nature, timing and extent of audit procedures necessary to complete the audit when fraud involving management is suspected • Any other matters related to fraud, relevant to Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee responsibility. 	Audit results report

Appendix B

		 Our Reporting to you
Required communications	 What is reported?	  When and where
Related parties	Significant matters arising during the audit in connection with the Authority's related parties including, when applicable: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-disclosure by management • Inappropriate authorisation and approval of transactions • Disagreement over disclosures • Non-compliance with laws and regulations • Difficulty in identifying the party that ultimately controls the Authority 	Audit results report
Independence	Communication of all significant facts and matters that bear on EY's, and all individuals involved in the audit, objectivity and independence. Communication of key elements of the audit engagement partner's consideration of independence and objectivity such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principal threats • Safeguards adopted and their effectiveness • An overall assessment of threats and safeguards • Information about the general policies and process within the firm to maintain objectivity and independence Communications whenever significant judgments are made about threats to objectivity and independence and the appropriateness of safeguards put in place.	Audit planning report Audit results report

Appendix B

		Our Reporting to you
Required communications	What is reported?	When and where
External confirmations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management's refusal for us to request confirmations Inability to obtain relevant and reliable audit evidence from other procedures. 	All confirmations requested have been received
Consideration of laws and regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject to compliance with applicable regulations, matters involving identified or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations, other than those which are clearly inconsequential and the implications thereof. Instances of suspected non-compliance may also include those that are brought to our attention that are expected to occur imminently or for which there is reason to believe that they may occur Enquiry of the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee into possible instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations that may have a material effect on the financial statements and that the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee may be aware of 	We have asked management and those charged with governance. We have not identified any material instances or non-compliance with laws and regulations
Significant deficiencies in internal controls identified during the audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant deficiencies in internal controls identified during the audit. 	Audit results report

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Appendix B

		Our Reporting to you
Required communications	What is reported?	When and where
Group Audits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An overview of the type of work to be performed on the financial information of the components An overview of the nature of the group audit team's planned involvement in the work to be performed by the component auditors on the financial information of significant components Instances where the group audit team's evaluation of the work of a component auditor gave rise to a concern about the quality of that auditor's work Any limitations on the group audit, for example, where the group engagement team's access to information may have been restricted Fraud or suspected fraud involving group management, component management, employees who have significant roles in group-wide controls or others where the fraud resulted in a material misstatement of the group financial statements. 	Audit results report
Written representations we request from management and/or those charged with governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written representations we request from management and/or those charged with governance 	Audit results report
Material inconsistencies or misstatements of fact identified in other information which management has refused to revise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Material inconsistencies or misstatements of fact identified in other information which management has refused to revise 	Audit results report
Auditors report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any circumstances identified that affect the form and content of our auditor's report 	Audit results report
Fee Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breakdown of fee information when the audit planning report is agreed Breakdown of fee information at the completion of the audit Any non-audit work 	Audit Planning Report Audit Results Report
Certification work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summary of certification work 	Certification Report

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Outstanding matters

The following items relating to the completion of our audit procedures are outstanding at the date of the release of this report:

Item	Actions to resolve	Responsibility
Review procedures	Final Engagement Leader and Manager review of the final position on concluded work, audit adjustments and reporting	EY
Statement of accounts	Receipt and review of the final version of the accounts	EY and management
Management representation letter	Receipt of signed management representation letter	Management and Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee
Subsequent events review	Completion of subsequent events procedures to the date of signing the audit report	EY and management
Journals testing	Currently ongoing	EY and management
Income & expenditure	Currently ongoing	EY
Group accounts (delayed due to late reporting by subsidiary auditors and technical issues)	Review of subsidiary audit approach and findings; consideration of reliance and subsequent testing required; disclosures in group accounts	EY and management (in the event of any amendments to the group financial statements)
Property, plant & equipment and investment property	Largely completed	EY
Grant income	Currently ongoing	EY and management
All other disclosures	Currently ongoing	EY

Management representation letter

Management Rep Letter

Ernst & Young
1 More London Place
London
SE1 2AF

Dear Neil

This letter of representations is provided in connection with your audit of the financial statements of Cherwell District Council ("the Council") for the year ended 31st March 2019. We recognise that obtaining representations from us concerning the information contained in this letter is a significant procedure in enabling you to form an opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of Cherwell District Council as of 31st March 2019 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended in accordance with the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2018/19.

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

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

A. Financial Statements and Financial Records

We have fulfilled our responsibilities, under the relevant statutory authorities, for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with [the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2018/19

We acknowledge, as members of management of the Group and Council, our responsibility for the fair presentation of the financial statements. We believe the financial statements referred to above give a true and fair view of the financial position, financial performance (or results of operations) and cash flows of the Group and Council in accordance with the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2018/19 and are free of material misstatements, including omissions. We have approved the financial statements.

The significant accounting policies adopted in the preparation of the financial statements are appropriately described in the financial statements.

As members of management of the Group and Council, we believe that the Group and Council have a system of internal controls adequate to enable the preparation of accurate financial statements in accordance with the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2018/19, that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

We believe that the effects of any unadjusted audit differences, summarised in the accompanying schedule, accumulated by you during the current audit and pertaining to the latest period presented are immaterial, both individually and in the aggregate, to the financial statements taken as a whole.

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

We acknowledge that we are responsible to determine that the Group and Council's activities are conducted in accordance with laws and regulations and that we are responsible to identify and address any non-compliance with applicable laws and regulations, including fraud.

We acknowledge that we are responsible for the design, implementation and maintenance of internal controls to prevent and detect fraud.

We have disclosed to you the results of our assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud.

Management representation letter

Management Rep Letter

We have no knowledge of any identified or suspected non-compliance with laws or regulations, including fraud that may have affected the Council (regardless of the source or form and including without limitation, any allegations by “whistleblowers”), including non-compliance matters:

- involving financial statements;
- related to laws and regulations that have a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the Group and Council’s financial statements;
- related to laws and regulations that have an indirect effect on amounts and disclosures in the financial statements, but compliance with which may be fundamental to the operations of the Group and Council’s activities, their ability to continue to operate, or to avoid material penalties;
- involving management, or employees who have significant roles in internal controls, or others; or

in relation to any allegations of fraud, suspected fraud or other non-compliance with laws and regulations communicated by employees, former employees, analysts, regulators or others.

C. Information Provided and Completeness of Information and Transactions

We have provided you with:

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

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

Unrestricted access to persons within the entity from whom you determined it necessary to obtain audit evidence.

All material transactions have been recorded in the accounting records and are reflected in the financial statements.

We have made available to you all minutes of the meetings of the Council and its relevant committees (or summaries of actions of recent meetings for which minutes have not yet been prepared) held through the year to the most recent meeting on the following date: 31 July 2019.

We confirm the completeness of information provided regarding the identification of related parties. We have disclosed to you the identity of the Group and Council’s related parties and all related party relationships and transactions of which we are aware, including sales, purchases, loans, transfers of assets, liabilities and services, leasing arrangements, guarantees, non-monetary transactions and transactions for no consideration for the period ended, as well as related balances due to or from such parties at the [period] end. These transactions have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed in the financial statements.

We believe that the significant assumptions we used in making accounting estimates, including those measured at fair value, are reasonable.

We have disclosed to you, and the Group and Council have complied with, all aspects of contractual agreements that could have a material effect on the financial statements in the event of non-compliance, including all covenants, conditions or other requirements of all outstanding debt.

D. Liabilities and Contingencies

All liabilities and contingencies, including those associated with guarantees, whether written or oral, have been disclosed to you and are appropriately reflected in the financial statements.

We have informed you of all outstanding and possible litigation and claims, whether or not they have been discussed with legal counsel.

ISA (UK) 501.12

We have recorded and/or disclosed, as appropriate, all liabilities related litigation and claims, both actual and contingent, and have disclosed in the financial statements all guarantees that we have given to third parties.

Management representation letter

Management Rep Letter

E. Subsequent Events

Other than described in the financial statements, there have been no events subsequent to period end which require adjustment of or disclosure in the financial statements or notes thereto.

F. Other information

We acknowledge our responsibility for the preparation of 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.

We confirm that the content contained within the other information is consistent with the financial statements.

G. Reserves

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

H. Contingent Liabilities

We are unaware of any violations or possible violations of laws or regulations the effects of which should be considered for disclosure in the financial statements or as the basis of recording a contingent loss (other than those disclosed or accrued in the financial statements).

We are unaware of any known or probable instances of non-compliance with the requirements of regulatory or governmental authorities, including their financial reporting requirements, and there have been no communications from regulatory agencies or government representatives concerning investigations or allegations of non-compliance.

I. Use of the Work of a Specialist

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

Estimates

When we have identified a significant or higher risk estimate, we may include the following representation(s) (refer to ESTIMATES 12):

PPE Valuations and Pensions Liability Estimates

We believe that the measurement processes, including related assumptions and models, used to determine the accounting estimate(s) have been consistently applied and are appropriate in the context of the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2018/19.

We confirm that the significant assumptions used in making the estimates for PPE and Pensions Liability appropriately reflect our intent and ability to carry out specific courses of action on behalf of the entity.

We confirm that the disclosures made in the financial statements with respect to the accounting estimate(s) are complete and made in accordance with the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2018/19.

Management representation letter

Management Rep Letter

We confirm that no adjustments are required to the accounting estimate(s) and disclosures in the financial statements due to subsequent events.

K. Retirement benefits

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

Yours faithfully,

Adele Taylor – Executive Director of Finance (interim)

Mike Kerford-Byrnes - Chairman of the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee

About EY

EY is a global leader in assurance, tax, transaction and advisory services. The insights and quality services we deliver help build trust and confidence in the capital markets and in economies the world over. We develop outstanding leaders who team to deliver on our promises to all of our stakeholders. In so doing, we play a critical role in building a better working world for our people, for our clients and for our communities.

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ED None

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