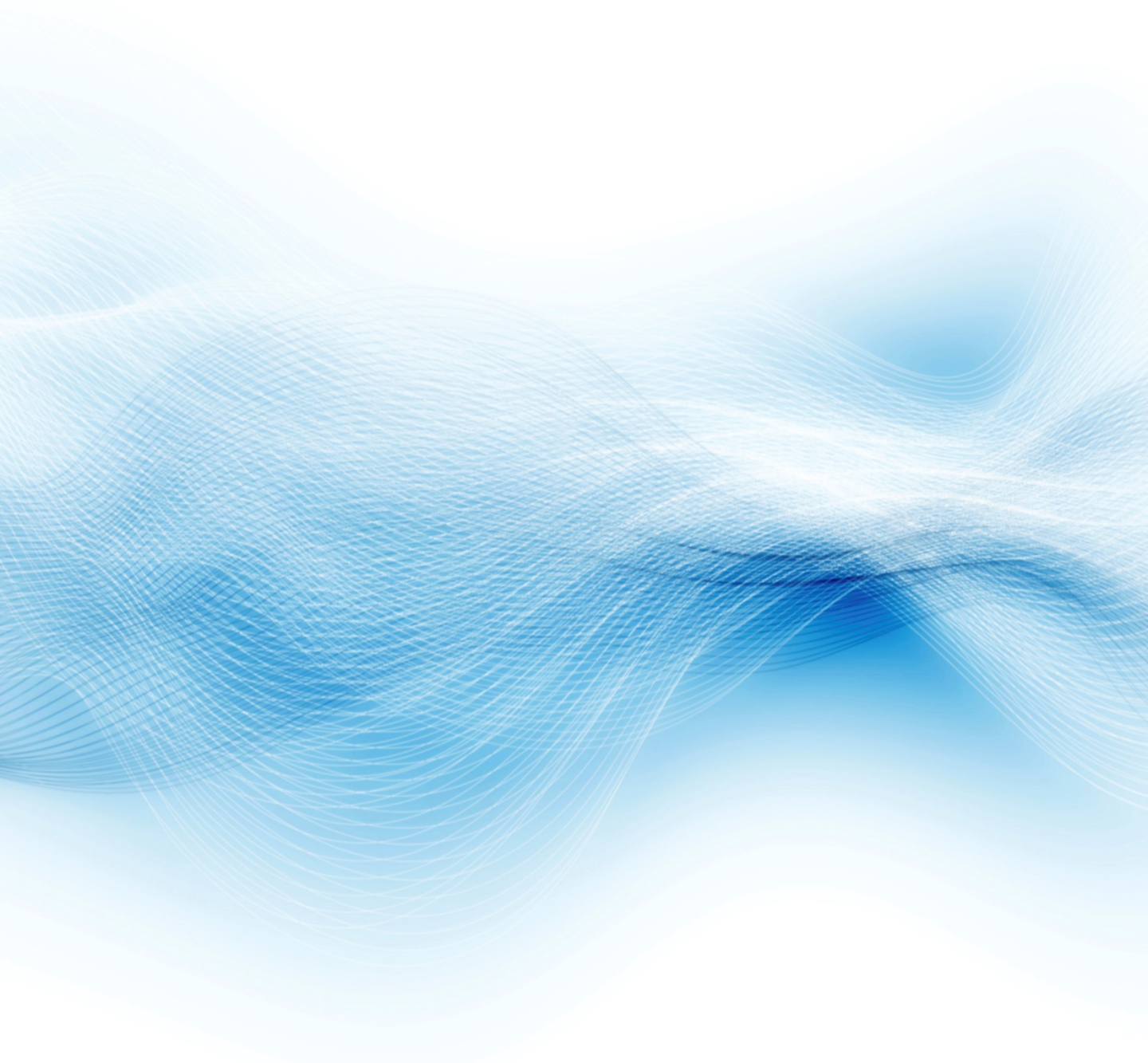


Audit Completion Report

Lincolnshire County Council

Year ending 31 March 2019



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Our reports are prepared in the context of the ‘Statement of responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies’ and the ‘Appointing Person Terms of Appointment’ issued by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited.

Reports and letters prepared by appointed auditors and addressed to the Council are prepared for the sole use of the Council and we take no responsibility to any member or officer in their individual capacity or to any third party.

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Audit Committee Members

Lincolnshire County Council
County Offices
Newland, Lincoln
LN1 1YL

16 July 2019

Dear Members

Audit Completion Report – Year ended 31 March 2019

We are pleased to present our Audit Completion Report for the year ended 31 March 2019. The purpose of this document is to summarise our audit conclusions.

The scope of our work, including identified significant audit risks and other areas of management judgement, was outlined in our Audit Strategy Memorandum which we presented in March 2019. We have reviewed our Audit Strategy Memorandum and concluded that the original significant audit risks and other areas of management judgement remain appropriate.

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

If you would like to discuss any matters in more detail then please do not hesitate to contact me on 0787 597 4291.

Yours faithfully

Mark Surridge
Mazars LLP

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We are registered to carry on audit work in the UK and Ireland by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales. Details about our audit registration can be viewed at www.auditregister.org.uk under reference number C001139861.
VAT number: 839 8356 73

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose of this report and principal conclusions

The Audit Completion Report sets out the findings from our audit of ('the Council') for the year ended 31 March 2019, and forms the basis for discussion at the Audit Committee meeting on 22 July 2019.

The detailed scope of our work as your appointed auditor for 2018/19 is set out in the National Audit Office's (NAO) Code of Audit Practice. Our responsibilities and powers are derived from the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and, as outlined in our Audit Strategy Memorandum, our audit has been conducted in accordance with International Standards of Auditing (UK) and means we focus on audit risks that we have assessed as resulting in a higher risk of material misstatement. Sections 2 and 5 of this report outline the detailed findings from our work on the financial statements and our conclusion on the Council's arrangements to achieve economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. Section 2 also includes our conclusions on the audit risks and areas of management judgement in our Audit Strategy Memorandum, which include:

Significant Audit Risks:

- Management override of controls
- Expenditure Recognition
- Revenue Recognition
- Valuation of property, plant and equipment (PPE), investment properties (IP) and assets held for sale (AHFS)
- Valuation of net defined benefit liability

Key Judgement Areas:

- Provision for business rate appeals against the rating list
- Minimum revenue provision (MRP)

Status of our audit work

This first year audit carried out by Mazars has been challenging, given the tight timescale for us to complete the work and for management to respond to our audit queries, We have though substantially completed our work on the financial statements and Value for Money conclusion for the year ended 31 March 2019. At the time of preparing this report the matters outstanding, which we will continue to work on up to the date of the Committee's meeting, include:

- Finalising our work in testing the significant risk areas identified in our relating to the PPE, AHFS and IP valuations, including clearing our queries with the Council's valuer and other officers
- Finalising our work in relation to the significant risk areas relating to the net Pensions liability, including reviewing the assurances to be provided by the Pension Fund auditor, reviewing the latest IAS19 valuation report and the disclosures in the final set of the financial statements. We also need to review and act on the latest PwC report (for NAO) on the Actuaries' work regarding estimating pension liabilities following the GMP/McCloud judgements. The timeliness of our work in this area has been impacted by this national issue that has resulted in the majority of local authorities having to obtain a revised valuation impacted all local authorities
- Receiving the requested evidence requested from officers to complete our non-pay, debtors and creditors testing, and finalising our testing of journals
- Checking the amendments to the draft financial statements proposed by management to correct matters identified during the audit.
- Clearing any remaining quality control review points and completing the remaining audit closure steps.

We will update the Audit Committee at its 22 July 2019 meeting on these and any other matters arising from the audit.

Our audit approach

We provided details of our intended audit approach in our Audit Strategy Memorandum presented to the Audit Committee in March 2019. We have not made any changes to our audit approach since we presented our Audit Strategy Memorandum.

Materiality

We set materiality at the planning stage of the audit at £22,098k using a benchmark of 2% of the Council's 2017/18 Gross Operating Expenditure. Our final assessment of materiality, based on the final financial statements and qualitative factors, was at to leave materiality at the same value. We set our trivial threshold (the level under which individual errors are not communicated to the Audit Committee), at the planning stage of the audit at £663k, and again our final assessment has been to keep this threshold at the same value.



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Key findings of our work

As we outline below, our work is substantially complete. Subject to the satisfactory completion of the outstanding work, at the time of issuing this report we have the following conclusions:

Opinion on the financial statements

We anticipate issuing, subject to completing the remaining audit procedures, an unqualified opinion, without modification, on the amended financial statements. Our proposed audit opinion is included in the draft auditor's report in Appendix B.

Value for Money conclusion

We anticipate concluding that the Council had proper arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. Our draft auditor's report, including proposed conclusion, is provided in Appendix B.

Whole of Government Accounts (WGA)

We anticipate completing our work on your WGA submission, in line with the group instructions issued by the NAO, by the deadline of 13 September 2019.

Wider powers

The 2014 Act requires us to give an elector, or any representative of the elector, the opportunity to question us about the accounting records of the Council and to consider any objection made to the accounts. We have received no such objections or questions from local electors.

Misstatements and internal control recommendations

At Section 3 we have confirmed that, based on the audit work completed to date, there are no identified significant control deficiencies we are required to report to the Audit Committee.

At Section 4 we have summarised the audit misstatements identified during the audit work to date that we are required to report to the Audit Committee.

2. SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS

Set out below are the significant findings from our audit that include:

- our audit conclusions regarding significant risks and key areas of management judgement outlined in the Audit Strategy Memorandum;
- our comments in respect of the accounting policies and disclosures that you have adopted in the financial statements. On page 11 we have concluded that the financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the financial reporting framework and provide commentary on any significant accounting policy changes that have been made during the year; and
- any significant difficulties we experienced during the audit.

Significant risks and key areas of management judgement

As part of our planning procedures we considered the risks of material misstatement in the Council's financial statements that required special audit consideration and reported these to you in our Audit Strategy Memorandum. Our risk assessment is a continuous process and we regularly consider whether new significant risks have arisen and how we intend to respond to these risks. No new risks have been identified since we issued our Audit Strategy Memorandum.

Significant risk

Management
override of controls

Management at various levels within an organisation are in a unique position to perpetrate fraud because of their ability to manipulate accounting records and prepare fraudulent financial statements by overriding controls that otherwise appear to be operating effectively. Due to the unpredictable way in which such override could occur there is a risk of material misstatement due to fraud on all audits.

How we addressed this risk

We addressed this risk by:

- Documenting our understanding of the processes and controls in place to mitigate the risks identified, and walk through those processes and controls to confirm our understanding;
- Testing the appropriateness of journal entries recorded in the general ledger and other material adjustments made in the preparation of the financial statements;
- Evaluating the business rationale for any significant transactions outside the course of the business;
- Understanding the oversight given by those charged with governance of management process over fraud;
- Making enquiries of management and Internal Audit regarding actual or any suspicions of fraud;
- Considering whether the Council's accounting policies are consistent with industry standards;

Clarification from the Audit Strategy Memorandum

In our Audit Strategy Memorandum we also said we would:

- Review the calculation of management's material accruals, estimates and provisions for evidence of management bias;
- Sample test accruals and provisions based on established testing thresholds; and
- Review material aspects of capital expenditure on property plant and equipment to ensure it meets the relevant accounting requirements to be capitalised.

This work has been performed, with no issues arising. However, we wish to clarify that this testing was not to address this Significant Risk, they formed part of our standard risk audit procedures.

Audit conclusion

Our audit procedures have not identified any material errors or uncertainties in the financial statements, or other matters that we wish to bring to Members' attention in relation to management override of controls.

2. SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS (CONTINUED)

Significant risk

Expenditure recognition

Description of the risk

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

Having considered the factors for expenditure recognition, we believe the risk is focused on the year-end balance sheet and in particular the completeness and valuation of payables, specifically those that are material and manually accrued.

Relevant account balances

Cost of Services (Expenditure)

Creditors

How we addressed this risk

We addressed this risk by:

- Ensuring the accounting policies in relation to expenditure recognition and recognition of accruals are appropriate and consistently applied.
- Testing year end manual expenditure accruals to confirm that they have been correctly valued and categorized and are correctly treated as a creditor of the authority.
- Carrying out cut-off testing, and testing for unrecorded liabilities, to confirm expenditure has been coded to the correct accounting year.

Audit conclusion

Our work to date has not identified any material errors in the financial statements

2. SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS (CONTINUED)

Significant risk

Description of the risk

Revenue recognition

Under ISA 240 there is a presumed risk that revenue may be misstated due to improper revenue recognition. Having considered the factors for revenue recognition, we believe the risk is focused on the year-end balance sheet and in particular the existence and accuracy of receivables, specifically those that are material, subject to manual intervention and/or significant estimation.

Relevant account balances

Cost of Services (income)

Debtors

How we addressed this risk

We addressed this risk by:

- Ensuring the accounting policies in relation to revenue recognition and recognition of accruals are appropriate and consistently applied.
- Testing year end manual income accruals to confirm that they have been correctly valued and categorized and are correctly treated as a debtor of the authority.
- Carrying out cut-off testing to confirm income has been coded to the correct accounting year.

Audit conclusion

Our work to date has not identified any material errors in the financial statements

2. SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS (CONTINUED)

Significant risk

Valuation of property, plant and equipment, investment properties and assets held for sale

Description of the risk

The Council's accounts contain material balances and disclosures relating to its holding of property, plant and equipment, investment properties and assets held for sale, with the majority of land and building assets required to be carried at valuation. Due to high degree of estimation uncertainty associated with those held at valuation, we have determined there is a significant risk in this area.

Relevant account balances

Where relevant, Cost of Services (Expenditure) for any impairment charges

Those items of Property, Plant and Equipment held at valuation being Other Land and Buildings and Surplus Assets as described in Note 14.

Assets held for sale

Investment Properties

How we addressed this risk

There has been no change in our planned audit strategy. We do however, wish to clarify our approach, which results in minor changes of how the tests performed are described versus our Audit Strategy Memorandum.

We addressed this risk through performing the following audit work:

- Reconciling valuations from the valuer's report had been recorded in the Fixed Asset Register
- Testing a sample of assets valued during the year to valuation reports
- Where material, testing the basis for impairment of assets, the value and correct accounting treatment
- Critically assessing the Council's valuer's scope of work and methodology used
- Considering the impact of any assets not valued during the year

In our Audit Strategy Memorandum we also said we would test a sample of capital expenditure in 2018/19 where material to confirm that the additions are appropriately valued in the financial statements. This work has been performed, with no issues arising. However, we wish to clarify that this testing was not to address this Significant Risk, it formed part of our standard risk audit procedures.

Audit conclusion

Our work to date has not identified any material errors in the financial statements

Our work, however, is ongoing and we will provide an update to the Audit Committee on the day of the meeting.

2. SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS (CONTINUED)

Significant risk

Valuation of net defined pension liability

Description of the risk

The Council's accounts contain material liabilities relating to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). The Council uses an actuary to provide an annual valuation of these liabilities in line with the requirements of IAS 19 Employee Benefits. Due to the high degree of estimation uncertainty associated with this valuation, we have determined there is a significant risk in this area.

Relevant account balances

Net defined pension liability

How we addressed this risk

There has been no change in our planned audit strategy. We do however, wish to clarify our approach, which results in minor changes of how the tests performed are described versus our Audit Strategy Memorandum. We addressed this risk through performing the following audit work:

- Reviewing the appropriateness of the Pension Asset and Liability valuation methodologies applied by the Pension Fund Actuary, and the key assumptions included within the valuation. This included comparing them to expected ranges, utilising information provided by PWC, the consulting actuary engaged by the National Audit Office; and
- Agreeing the data in the IAS 19 valuation report provided by the Fund Actuary for accounting purposes to the pension accounting entries and disclosures in the Council's financial statements.

In addition, we

- Critically assessed the competency, objectivity and independence of the Lincolnshire Pension Fund's Actuary, Hymans Robertson;
- Liaised with the auditors of the Pension Fund to gain assurance regarding the valuation of the pension assets and that the controls in place at the Pension Fund are operating effectively. This included the processes and controls in place to ensure data provided to the Actuary by the Pension Fund for the purposes of the IAS 19 valuation is complete and accurate;
- Performed a walkthrough of payroll transactions at the Council to understand how pension contributions which are deducted and paid to the Pension Fund by the Council (note, our Audit Strategy Memorandum implied we would perform detailed tests, which was an incorrect transposition from our Audit file);

Audit conclusion

The procedures we have undertaken to date have not identified any material errors or uncertainties in the financial statements, or other matters that we wish to bring to Members' attention. Our audit work is however in progress and we will update the Audit Committee on any significant matters which affect our audit conclusion.

All local authorities have been affected by an accounting issue that impacts the value of pension liabilities. Two on-going legal cases (Guaranteed Minimum Pensions and McCloud/Sergeant) have created uncertainty over whether pension liabilities are fairly stated. The Council's actuary (via the Pension Fund) did not make an allowance in its actuarial valuation for either of these cases and early guidance given to councils was that the impact would not be material. The Council, as with nearly all local authorities in England, prepared the financial statements on this basis. In our view, these cases give rise to at least a constructive obligation, which is required to be recognised under IAS 19.

The Council received an updated IAS19 valuation report on 4 July 2019 to take into account the implications of the GMP and McCloud judgments. This resulted in material differences from the original report used to prepare the draft financial statements and management are amending the financial statements for these differences. We have summarised the amendments at page 11.

2. SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS (CONTINUED)

Key area of management judgment

Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)

Description of the judgment

Local authorities are normally required each year to set aside some of their revenues as provision for debt in respect of capital expenditure financed by borrowing or long term credit arrangements, by reference to the prior year's closing Capital Financing Requirement. The amount to be set aside each year is not prescribed although an overarching principle of prudence is expected to be adopted. This is supported by statutory guidance as to how this could be achieved and the Council is required to have regard to this in setting its MRP policy. Management judgement is therefore exercised in determining the level of its prudent provision.

How we addressed this management judgement

We addressed this judgment through performing the following audit work:

- Reviewing the Council's MRP policy to ensure that it has been developed with regard to the statutory guidance;
- Assessing whether the provision has been calculated and recorded in accordance with the Council's policy;
- Assessing whether the amount provided for the period is appropriate, taking into account the Council's Capital Financing Requirement; and
- Confirming that any charge has been accounted for in accordance with the Code.

Audit conclusion

Our audit procedures have not identified any material errors or uncertainties in the financial statements in relation to the Council's MRP

Key area of management judgment

Accounting for the schools Private Finance Initiative and other school assets and liabilities

Description of the judgment

The Council's 2017/18 financial statements set out its accounting policies in relation to these, and their inclusion on the balance sheet. These assets and liabilities are material and the accounting treatment is based on management judgement and interpretation of the relevant accounting standards.

How we addressed this management judgement

We addressed this judgment through performing the following audit work:

- reviewing the assessments carried out by management relating to the accounting treatment of these assets and liabilities and challenging the reasonableness of judgments management has made; and
- Substantively testing these areas as part of our planned 2018/19 testing programmes..

Audit conclusion

Our audit procedures have not identified any material errors or uncertainties in the financial statements in relation to this area of management's judgement.

2. SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS (CONTINUED)

Qualitative aspects of the Council's accounting practices

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

Draft accounts were received from the Council in advance of the 31 May 2019 deadline and were complete. We also received the requested working papers ahead of our audit visit and officers have responded to audit queries and requests for additional information as the audit has progressed.

Significant difficulties during the audit

During the course of the audit we did not encounter any significant difficulties and we have had the full co-operation of management and staff. We will meet with officers ahead of the 2019/20 audit to provide feedback on the detailed working papers and any improvement opportunities for other areas related to the accounts production and audit processes.

A challenging aspect of the audit related to the actuarial valuation of the Pension Liability that, as explained on page 9, impacted all local authorities and participants in a local government pension scheme. The Council prepared the draft financial statements based on guidance that had been issued at the time, however our view was that the actuarial valuations should have taken into account both the McCloud and GMP judgements. We raised our concerns at an early stage, however this is a complex area, required third party input, and within compressed reporting deadlines meant that the work performed presented some challenges for all parties.

Wider responsibilities

Our powers and responsibilities under the 2014 Act are broad and include the ability to:

- issue a report in the public interest;
- make statutory recommendations that must be considered and responded to publicly;
- apply to the court for a declaration that an item of account is contrary to law; and
- issue an advisory notice under schedule 8 of the 2014 Act.

We have not exercised any of these powers as part of our 2018/19 audit.

The 2014 Act also gives rights to local electors and other parties, such as the right to ask questions of the auditor and the right to make an objection to an item of account.

We have not received any questions or objections.

Whole of Government Accounts

As in 2017/18 the work required to issue the Whole of Government Accounts Auditor's Assurance Report is not expected to be completed by 31 July 2019, with the national deadline now confirmed as 13 September 2019. The Audit Certificate will be issued when that reporting requirement has been met.

3. INTERNAL CONTROL RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of our audit is to express an opinion on the financial statements. As part of our audit we have considered the internal controls in place relevant to the preparation of the financial statements. We do this in order to design audit procedures to allow us to express an opinion on the financial statement and not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control, nor to identify any significant deficiencies in their design or operation.

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

At this stage, based the audit work carried out, we have not identified any significant control deficiencies that we are required to report to you. Our assessment of the Council's IT general controls is still in progress though and we are awaiting information requested from Serco and Council Managers before we can finalise the audit work. We were informed by our IT audit colleagues in sufficient time that there would be no significant impact on our audit approach. We will update the Audit Committee at its 22 July 2019 meeting if there are any matters arising from that work that we are required to report.



4. SUMMARY OF MISSTATEMENTS

At Section 1 we summarised our approach to setting overall materiality for the audit and confirmed that the overall threshold had been set at £22,098k. No misstatements have been identified, or amendments made to the draft financial statements, above this threshold.

Performance materiality is the amount or amounts set by the auditor at less than materiality for the financial statements as a whole to reduce, to an appropriately low level, the probability that the aggregate of uncorrected and undetected misstatements exceeds materiality for the financial statements as a whole.

We set out below, based on the work completed to date, the misstatements above our performance materiality threshold of £13,259k which management are to amend in the final financial statements. There are no unadjusted misstatements above the level of our trivial threshold of £663k which we are required to report to you.

We will update the Audit Committee if any further reportable misstatements are identified from the remaining audit work in progress.

		Draft Financial Statements £'000	Amended Financial Statements £'000
1	Balance Sheet - Net Pension Liability	1,015,789	1,032,507
	Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement – Cost of Services: Service Costs	61,650	76,987
	Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement – Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure: Net interest expense	24,080	24,261
	Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement – Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure: Re- measurement of net Defined Benefit Pension Liability	90,976	92,176
<p>The draft financial statements have been amended to reflect updated figures as a result of a revised July 2019 actuarial valuation, taking into account assumptions for the potential impact of Guaranteed Minimum Pension equalisation and the outcome of the 'McCloud' judgement relating to the 2014 reforms of the LGPS benefit structure. There are also additional consequential changes to the Pension Fund note and primary financial statements, but none of these items impact the Council's useable balances carried forward.</p>			

5. VALUE FOR MONEY CONCLUSION

Introduction

We are required to form a conclusion as to whether the Council has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. The NAO issues guidance to auditors that underpins the work we are required to carry out in order to form our conclusion, and sets out the criterion and sub-criteria that we are required to consider.

The overall criterion is that, 'in all significant respects, the 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.' To assist auditors in reaching a conclusion on this overall criterion, the following sub-criteria are set out by the NAO:

- Informed decision making
- Sustainable resource deployment
- Working with partners and other third parties

Our Approach

Our overall approach is set out in our Audit Strategy Memorandum and involves a detailed risk assessment at the planning stage to identify whether or not a Value for Money (VFM) exists. Risk, in the context of our VFM work, is the risk that we come to an incorrect conclusion rather than the risk of the arrangements in place at the Council being inadequate. As set out in our Audit Strategy Memorandum, for the 2018/19 financial year, we did not identify any significant risks to our VFM conclusion.

Matters kept under review

In our Audit Strategy Memorandum, we kept the matter of Financial Sustainability under review. Before drawing our conclusion, we have:

- Reviewed the 2018/19 financial performance and forecasts during the year and considered the Council's financial outturn position as presented in the financial statements.
- Reviewed the 2019/20:
 - Revenue and Capital budgets and Medium Term Financial Plan
 - Treasury Management Strategy, incorporating the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy and Capital and Investment Strategies
- Considered the Council's latest financial monitoring information and its updated medium term outlook
- Updated our overall risk assessment for any new or emerging issues through:
 - discussions with management and review of key committee reports
 - considering the latest service performance reports and other regulators' assessments
- Reviewed the Council's Annual Governance Statement for any significant issues
- Considered the general findings from our audit work in other areas.



5. VALUE FOR MONEY CONCLUSION

Findings

Outturn

In 2018 the Council published a two year balanced budget, having previously only published a one year plan. The current plan takes the Council to the end of the period covered by the 4 year grant settlement agreed with central government. The original budget included use of reserves (£1.8m in 2018/19 and £34.0m in 2019/20), including support from the Financial Volatility reserve set aside for this purpose. The outturn presented to the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Board on 27 June 2019 showed a £15m underspend excluding schools and £0.5m use of reserves. The Council's Financial Volatility reserve was increased with a £10m contribution from the underspend. This position demonstrates the Council's ability to deliver in-year financial performance within planned control measures, including the delivery of savings and services in line with plan.

Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and Reserves

The financial position post 2020/21 holds some uncertainties, which is a common issue for all bodies in the local government sector, and the Council's forecast service demands and funding assumptions indicate a likely shortfall in those years that will be met by general and earmarked reserves.

The MTFP includes a risk assessment on key assumptions and is aligned to the Council's plans. It includes identified savings of £27m through to 2021/22 and requires planned use of reserves to maintain a balanced budget. Without further action, the Council's £46m financial volatility reserve will be fully depleted by 2021/22 and after the planned use of £15m from the Adult Social Care earmarked reserve there will be an estimated gap of £20m to be funded out of general and other earmarked reserves. Further work is required to identify specific savings plans for 2020/21 and beyond and the outcome of the Fair Funding review will help inform the Council's plans. There is a recognition by management that the budget and MTFP need to be repositioned to manage the impact on reserves and a range of formal and strengthened budget review arrangements are in place in 2019/20 for this purpose. The identification and delivery of savings will become more difficult over time, but the Council has a strong track record of delivery, as seen by the £15m underspend in 2018/19. This is an area that will be of continued scrutiny and focus and the Council must make substantial progress during 2019/20 to bridge the financial gap in its MTFP.

Our overall Value for Money conclusion

We have completed our procedures and, as set out in our draft auditor's report included at Appendix B, we intend to issue an unqualified Value for Money conclusion for the 2018/19 financial year.



APPENDIX A

DRAFT MANAGEMENT REPRESENTATION LETTER

Mazars LLP
45 Church Street
Birmingham
B2 3RT

22 July 2019

Dear Sirs

Lincolnshire County Council - audit for year ended 31 March 2019

This representation letter is provided in connection with your audit of the financial statements of (the Council) for the year ended 31 March 2019 for the purpose of expressing an opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2018/19 (the Code) and applicable law.

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

My responsibility for the financial statements and accounting information

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

My responsibility to provide and disclose relevant information

I have provided you with:

- access to all information of which we are aware that is relevant to the preparation of the financial statements such as records, documentation and other material;
- additional information that you have requested from us for the purpose of the audit; and
- unrestricted access to individuals within the Council you determined it was necessary to contact in order to obtain audit evidence.

I confirm as Executive Director for Resources that I have taken all the necessary steps to make me aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that you, as auditors, are aware of this information.

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

Accounting records

I confirm that all transactions that have a material effect on the financial statements have been recorded in the accounting records and are reflected in the financial statements. All other records and related information, including minutes of all Council and committee meetings, have been made available to you.

Accounting policies

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

Accounting estimates, including those measured at fair value

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

APPENDIX A

DRAFT MANAGEMENT REPRESENTATION LETTER

(CONTINUED)

Contingencies

There are no material contingent losses including pending or potential litigation that should be accrued where:

- information presently available indicates that it is probable that an asset has been impaired or a liability had been incurred at the balance sheet date; and
- the amount of the loss can be reasonably estimated.

There are no material contingent losses that should be disclosed where, although either or both the conditions specified above are not met, there is a reasonable possibility that a loss, or a loss greater than that accrued, may have been incurred at the balance sheet date.

There are no contingent gains which should be disclosed.

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

Laws and regulations

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

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

Fraud and error

I acknowledge my responsibility as Executive Director for Resources for the design, implementation and maintenance of internal control to prevent and detect fraud and error.

I have disclosed to you:

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

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

Related party transactions

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

I have disclosed identity of the Council's related parties and all related party relationships and transactions of which I am aware.

Future commitments

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

Subsequent events

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

Should further material events occur after the date of this letter which may necessitate revision of the figures included in the financial statements or inclusion of a note thereto, I will advise you accordingly.

APPENDIX A

DRAFT MANAGEMENT REPRESENTATION LETTER (CONTINUED)

Service Concession Arrangements

I am not aware of any material contract variations, payment deductions or additional service charges in 2018/19 in relation to the [Council or Authority's PFI schemes that you have not been made aware of.

Going concern

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

Unadjusted misstatements

I confirm that the effects of any uncorrected misstatements are immaterial, both individually and in aggregate, to the financial statements as a whole.

Yours faithfully

Executive Director for Resources

Independent auditor's report to the members of Lincolnshire County Council

Report on the financial statements

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of for the year ended 31 March 2019, which comprise the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, the Movement in Reserves Statement, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2018/19.

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial position of as at 31st March 2019 and of its expenditure and income for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 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 section of our report. We are independent of the Council in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard as applicable to public interest entities, 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 for Resources's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is not appropriate; or
- the Executive Director for Resources has not disclosed in the financial statements any identified material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about the Council'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 Executive Director for Resources is responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the Annual Governance Statement and information included in the Financial Report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

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

We have nothing to report in this regard.

APPENDIX B

DRAFT AUDITOR'S REPORT (CONTINUED)

Responsibilities of the Executive Director for Resources for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of the Executive Director for Resources's Responsibilities, the Executive Director for Resources 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. The Executive Director for Resources is also responsible for such internal control as the Executive Director for Resources determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

The Executive Director for Resources is required to comply with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2018/19 and prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis, unless the Council is informed of the intention for dissolution without transfer of services or function to another entity. The Executive Director for Resources is responsible for assessing each year whether or not it is appropriate for the Council to prepare its accounts on the going concern basis and disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

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

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

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

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

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

We have nothing to report in these respects.

Conclusion on Lincolnshire County Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources

Conclusion

On the basis of our work, having regard to the guidance on the specified criterion issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General in November 2018, we are satisfied that, in all significant respects, has put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2019.

Basis for conclusion

We have undertaken our review in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General, having regard to the guidance on the specified criterion issued in November 2017, as to whether the 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 in satisfying ourselves whether the 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, the Council had put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

Responsibilities of the Council

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

APPENDIX B

DRAFT AUDITOR'S REPORT (CONTINUED)

Auditor's responsibilities for the review of arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources

We are required under section 20(1)(c) of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 to satisfy ourselves that the Council has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. The Code of Audit Practice requires us to report to you our conclusion relating to proper arrangements. We are not required to consider, nor have we considered, whether all aspects of the Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources are operating effectively.

Use of the audit report

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

Delay in certification of completion of the audit

We cannot formally conclude the audit and issue an audit certificate until we have completed the work necessary to issue our assurance statement in respect of the Council's Whole of Government Accounts consolidation pack. We are satisfied that these matters do not have a material effect on the financial statements or on our conclusion on the Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

Mark Surridge

For and on behalf of Mazars LLP

45 Church Street
Birmingham
B3 2RT

July 2019

APPENDIX C INDEPENDENCE

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

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

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