



**Buckinghamshire and
Milton Keynes Fire and
Rescue Authority
Final audit results
report**

Year ended 31 March 2021
22 March 2022



EY

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Private and Confidential

22 March 2022

Dear Overview and Audit Committee Members

2021 Audit results report

We have completed our audit of Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority for the year ended 31 March 2021.

We can confirm that we issued an unqualified audit opinion on the financial statements in the form that appears in section 4. We have no matters to report on value for money arrangements.

The audit is designed to express an opinion on the 2020-2021 financial statements and address current statutory and regulatory requirements. This report contains our findings related to the areas of audit emphasis, our views on Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority's accounting policies and judgements and material internal control findings. Each year sees further enhancements to the level of audit challenge and the quality of evidence required to achieve the robust professional scepticism that society expects. We thank the management team for supporting this process.

This report is intended solely for the information and use of the Overview and Audit Committee, other members of the Authority and senior management. It is not intended to be and should not be used by anyone other than these specified parties.

We welcomed the opportunity to discuss the contents of this report with you at the Overview and Audit Committee meeting on 16 March 2022.

Yours faithfully

Neil Harris

Associate Partner

For and on behalf of Ernst & Young LLP

Encl

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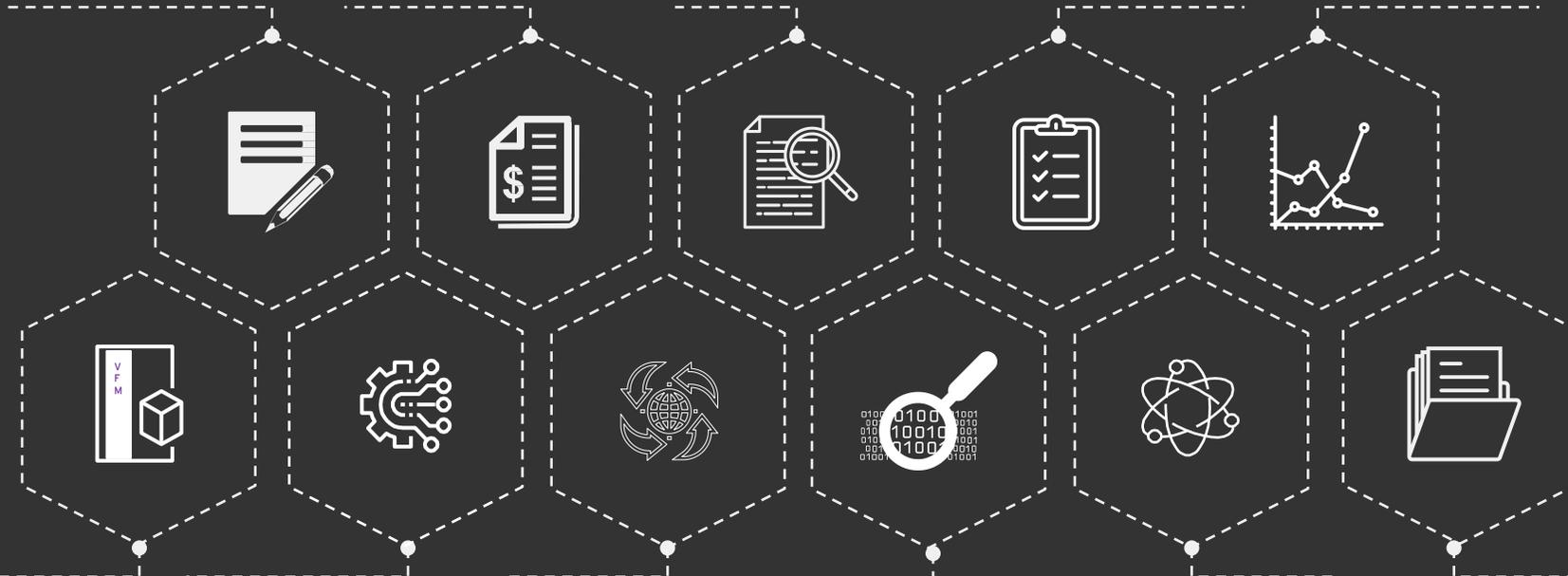
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Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) issued the "Statement of responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies". It is available from the PSAA website (<https://www.psa.co.uk/audit-quality/statement-of-responsibilities/>). The Statement of responsibilities 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 and further guidance (updated April 2018)" issued by the 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 in legislation, and covers matters of practice and procedure which are of a recurring nature.

This report is made solely to the Overview and Audit Committee and management of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority in accordance with the statement of responsibilities. Our work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Overview and Audit Committee, and management of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority those matters we are required to state to them in this 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 Overview and Audit Committee and management of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority for this report or for the opinions we have formed. It should not be provided to any third-party without our prior written consent.



01 Executive Summary

Executive Summary

Scope update

In our audit planning report tabled at the 21 July Overview and Audit 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 exceptions:

- ▶ **Changes in materiality:** We updated our planning materiality assessment using the draft consolidated results and have also reconsidered our risk assessment. Based on our materiality measure of gross expenditure on the provision of services, we have updated our overall materiality assessment to £748k (Audit Planning Report – £884k). This results in updated performance materiality, at 75% of overall materiality, of £561k, and an updated threshold for reporting misstatements of £37k.

Additional audit procedures as a result of Covid-19

Other changes in the entity and regulatory environment as a result of Covid-19 that have not resulted in an additional risk, but result in the following impacts on our audit strategy were as follows:

Information Produced by the Entity (IPE): We identified an increased risk around the completeness, accuracy, and appropriateness of information produced by the entity due to the inability of the audit team to verify original documents or re-run reports on-site from the Authority's systems. We undertook the following to address this risk:

- Used the screen sharing function of Microsoft Teams to evidence re-running of reports used to generate the IPE we audited; and
- Agreed IPE to scanned documents or other system screenshots.



Executive Summary

Status of the audit

Our audit work in respect of the Authority opinion is substantially complete. However, we have not yet carried out the procedures on the Whole of Government Accounts, since we are yet to receive the NAO instructions on this for 2020/21.

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 Authority's Whole of Government Accounts consolidation pack. We are satisfied that this work does not have a material effect on the financial statements or on our value for money conclusion.

Therefore, we have issued an unqualified opinion on the Authority's financial statements in the form which appears at Section 4.

Executive Summary

Auditor responsibilities under the new Code of Audit Practice 2020

Under the Code of Audit Practice 2020 we are still required to consider whether the Authority has put in place 'proper arrangements' to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness on its use of resources. The 2020 Code requires the auditor to design their work to provide them with sufficient assurance to enable them to report to the Authority a commentary against specified reporting criteria (see below) on the arrangements the Authority has in place to secure value for money through economic, efficient and effective use of its resources for the relevant period.

The specified reporting criteria are:

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

Status of the audit - Value for Money

We have completed our work on the value for money (VFM) risk assessment and did not identify any risks of significant weaknesses against the three reporting criteria we are required to consider under the NAO's 2020 Code.

Executive Summary

Audit differences

There are some adjusted audit differences arising from our audit, these consisted of;

- Inconsistency - Pensions note 28a incorrectly showed actuarial gains/losses as £76,029k, where as the pensions reserves note showed the same item at £68,000k. The correct figure was £68,000k, note 28a note was amended.
- Officer remuneration note - One person was missing from the table in the banding £110k to £114k. This has been corrected in the final statements.

There were also some small amendments made to the disclosure notes.

The unadjusted differences were made up of;

Known misstatement:

- Asset Held for Sale - the Authority had not included the costs to sell of £55,000 in their valuation.

Judgemental misstatements:

- Our creditor testing identified an overstated by £347 in our representative sample, which when extrapolated across the population was calculated as an error of £51,536.
- Our expenditure testing identified error arising from 2019/2020 expenditure being recorded in 2020/21 which overstated expenditure by £239.50 in our representative sample. When extrapolated across the population this was calculated as an error of £108k.
- There is a £32k discrepancy between the NBV of the Joint Control Room disclosed in the Authority's accounts compared to the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority's unaudited accounts. This has not been corrected, it is not material to the accounts but has been reported to you due to the sensitive nature of related party disclosures.

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 not yet performed the procedures required by the National Audit Office (NAO) on the Whole of Government Accounts submission. The NAO (National Audit Office) are currently reviewing the Data Collection Tool and it will not be available until summer 2022. We will audit this once your officers have the updated software and have been able to submit their entries.

We have no other matters to report.

Executive Summary

Areas of audit focus

In our Audit Plan we identified a number of key areas of focus for our audit of the financial report of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority. This report sets out our observations and status in relation to these areas, including our views on areas which might be conservative and areas where there is potential risk and exposure. Our consideration of these matters and others identified during the period is summarised within the "Areas of Audit Focus" section of this report.

Audit findings and conclusions: Significant risk - Misstatements due to fraud or error - Management override

We have not identified any material misstatements arising from fraud in revenue and expenditure recognition and management override.

Audit findings and conclusions: Significant risk - Misstatements due to fraud or error - Inappropriate capitalisation of revenue expenditure

We have not identified any material misstatements arising from fraud in revenue and expenditure recognition and the inappropriate capitalisation of revenue.

Audit findings and conclusions : Significant risk - Valuation of Blue Light Hub

We have not identified any material misstatements arising from the valuation of the Blue Light Hub.

Audit findings and conclusions : Area of audit focus - Valuation of land and buildings

We have not identified any material misstatements arising from the valuation of land and buildings.

Audit findings and conclusions : Area of audit focus - Pension liability valuation & actuarial assumptions

We have not identified any material misstatements arising from the pension liability valuation and actuarial assumptions.

Audit findings and conclusions : Area of audit focus - Going concern disclosure

We have not identified any material misstatements arising from the going concern disclosure.

We request that you review these and other matters set out in this report to ensure:

- ▶ There are no residual further considerations or matters that could impact these issues
- ▶ You concur with the resolution of the issue
- ▶ There are no further significant issues you are aware of to be considered before the financial report is finalised

There are no matters, other than those reported by management or disclosed in this report, which we believe should be brought to the attention of the Overview and Audit Committee or Management.



Executive Summary

Control observations

We have adopted a fully substantive approach, and so have not tested the operation of controls. We have, however, updated our understanding of the key processes and the controls which are in place to detect or prevent error. Through this work, 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 and which is unknown to you.

Independence

We can confirm that we remain independent of the Authority.

Please refer to Section 10 for our update on Independence.



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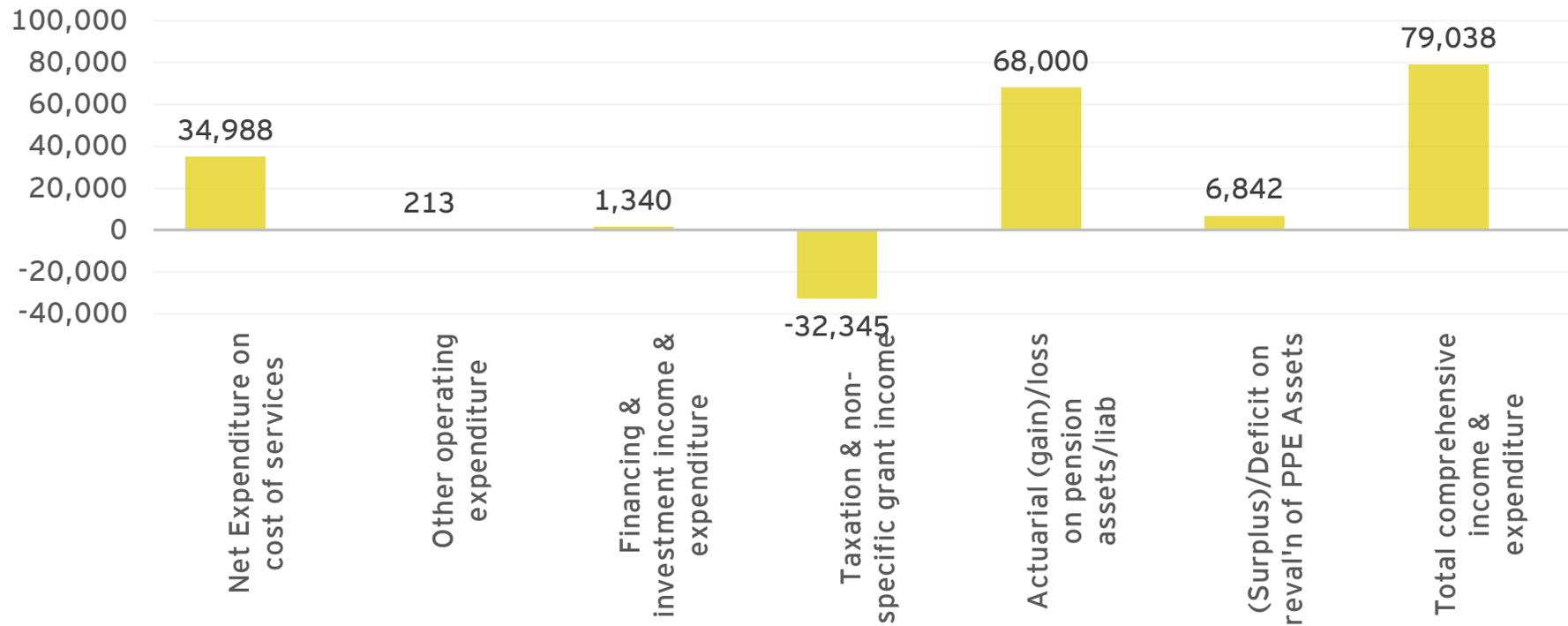
Understanding Financial Statements



Understanding Financial Statements

Key components of net expenditure

The provision of services for the year ended 31 March 2021 was £4,196k deficit, a decrease in deficit of £6,317k from the prior year. During the year there were no significant events that impacted the underlying financial position of the Authority. The following provides an overview of the material items:



Our audit procedures consider the nature of the Authority's results including the impact of non-recurring and recurring items where the size is variable although judgmental. Such an assessment provides a useful insight into the underlying net expenditure and outturn.



03

Areas of Audit Focus



Areas of Audit Focus

Significant risk

Risk of misstatements due to fraud or error - Management override

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.

What did we do and what judgements did we focus on?

We:

- ▶ Identified fraud risks during the planning stages.
- ▶ Enquired of 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.
- ▶ Tested journals at year-end to ensure that there were no unexpected or unusual postings.
- ▶ Reviewed accounting estimates for evidence of management bias.
- ▶ Looked for and investigated any unusual transactions.

We used our data analytics capabilities to assist with our work, including journal entry testing. We assessed journal entries for evidence of management bias and evaluated for business rationale. We specifically reviewed any elements where judgement could influence the financial position or performance of the Authority in a more positive or more favourable way.

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 or management bias. We have not identified any other transactions during our audit which appeared unusual or outside the normal course of business.



Areas of Audit Focus

Significant risk

**Misstatements due to fraud or error -
Inappropriate capitalisation of revenue
expenditure**

What is the risk?

Under ISA 240, management is in a unique position to perpetrate fraud through the override of controls. We have considered the main areas where management may have the incentive and opportunity to do this.

From our risk assessment, we have assessed that the risk could manifest itself through the inappropriate capitalisation of revenue expenditure to improve the financial position of the general fund.

Capitalised revenue expenditure can be funded through borrowing with only minimal MRP charges recorded in the general fund, deferring the expenditure for 30+ years when the borrowing is repaid.

What judgements are we focused on?

We focus on whether expenditure is properly capitalised in its initial recognition, or whether subsequent expenditure on an asset enhances the asset or extends its useful life.

For 2020/21, property, plant and equipment additions totalled £4,206k. We will consider whether this figure is complete, the asset is in existence and whether the asset has been valued correctly in the statement of accounts.

What did we do?

We have:

- ▶ Tested additions to property, plant and equipment to ensure that the expenditure incurred and capitalised is clearly capital in nature; and
- ▶ Sought to identify and understand the basis for any significant journals transferring expenditure from revenue to capital codes on the general ledger at the end of the year.

As there was no expenditure classified as revenue financed from capital under statue (REFCUS in the 2020/21 financial statements, we did not undertake any testing in this area.

We have utilised our data analytics capabilities to assist with our work, including journal entry testing. We assessed journal entries more generally for evidence of management bias and evaluated them for business rationale.

What are our conclusions?

Our testing has not identified any material misstatements from inappropriate capitalisation of revenue expenditure.





Areas of Audit Focus

Significant risk

Valuation of Blue Light Hub

What is the risk?

The Blue Light Hub has now been completed and is being valued for the first time for the 2020/21 financial statements.
Management is required to make material judgemental inputs and apply estimation techniques to calculate the year-end balances for it to be recorded in the balance sheet.
Therefore there is a risk that the Blue Light Hub could be materially mis-stated in the financial statements.

What judgements are we focused on?

The value of the Blue Light Hub is £12.4m in 2020/21.

Management is required to make material judgemental inputs and apply estimation techniques to calculate the year-end balances recorded in the balance sheet.

ISAs (UK and Ireland) 500 and 540 require us to undertake procedures on the use of management experts and the assumptions underlying fair value estimates.

What did we do?

We have:

- ▶ Considered the work performed by the Authority's valuers, including the adequacy of the scope of the work performed, their professional capabilities and the results of their work;
- ▶ Reviewed 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 potential impact of Covid-19 on valuation uncertainties;
- ▶ Tested accounting entries to ensure they have been correctly processed in the financial statements; and
- ▶ We have engaged EY Real Estates, valuation specialists to assist the audit team to gain assurance that the valuation of the Blue Light Hub is materially correct.

What are our conclusions?

Our audit did not identify any material misstatements in the valuation of the Blue Light Hub.





Areas of Audit Focus

Other areas of audit focus

Valuation of land and buildings (inherent risk)

What is the risk?

We identified the valuation of land and buildings as an area of audit focus in our Audit Planning Report discussed at the Overview and Audit Committee on 21 July 2021. The fair value of Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE) and Investment Properties (IP) represent significant balances in the Authority'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.

What judgements are we focused on?

The value of property, plant and equipment was £33m in 2019/20 and is now being reported at £39m for 2020/21.

As this is one of the largest accounting estimates on the balance sheet and one subject to a high degree of subjectivity we deem the valuation of property, plant and equipment to represent an inherent risk of material misstatement.

ISAs (UK and Ireland) 500 and 540 require us to undertake procedures on the use of management experts and the assumptions underlying fair value estimates.

What did we do?

We have:

- ▶ Considered the work performed by the Authority'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 if there were any specific changes to assets that have occurred and that these have been communicated to the valuer;
- ▶ Considered changes to useful economic lives as a result of the most recent valuation; and
- ▶ Tested that accounting entries had been correctly processed in the financial statements.

What are our conclusions?

We have not identified any issues with the data sent to, and the report produced by, the Authority's valuer.

Our sample testing of valuations back to key asset information used by the valuer showed that the valuations carried out were reasonable.

No issues were identified with the economic lives of assets.

Our testing of the journals for the valuation adjustments confirmed they have been accurately processed in the financial statements.

Our work did not identify any material issues we need to report to you.



Areas of Audit Focus

Other areas of audit focus

Pension liability valuation (inherent risk)

What is the risk?

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

The Authority's pension fund deficit is a material estimated balance and the Code requires that this liability be disclosed on the Authority's balance sheet. At 31 March 2021 this totalled £357 million.

The information disclosed is based on the IAS 19 report issued to the Authority by the actuary to Buckinghamshire Council and also the Firefighters Pension Fund.

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.

What did we do?

We have:

- ▶ Liaised with the auditors of Buckinghamshire Council, to obtain assurances over the information supplied to the actuary in relation to Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority;
- ▶ Assessed the work of the LGPS pension fund actuary and the Firefighters pension fund actuary (Barnet Waddingham) 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 Authority's financial statements in relation to IAS19.

In addition:

- ▶ In response to the revised requirements of ISA540, the auditing standard on accounting estimates, we amended our audit approach based on procedures to evaluate management's process. The revised standard requires auditors to test the method of measurement of accounting estimates to determine whether the model is appropriately designed, consistently applied and mathematically accurate, and that the integrity of the assumptions and the data has been maintained in applying the model. Neither we, nor PWC as consulting actuaries commissioned by the NAO for all local government sector audits, are able to access the detailed models of the actuaries in order to evidence these requirements. Therefore, we modified our planned approach and undertook alternate procedures to create an auditor's estimate, to provide a different method of gaining assurance. We employed the services of an EY Pensions specialist to review the Council's IAS19 reports and run a parallel actuarial model which was compared to that produced by Barnett Waddingham (BW).

What are our conclusions?

The accounting entries and disclosures made within the Authority's financial statements had been carried out correctly based on the information the Authority received from the actuary.

We have found no issues regarding the pension liability valuation.



Areas of Audit Focus

Going concern

Going concern disclosures (inherent risk)

What is the risk?

There is a presumption that the Authority will continue as a going concern for the foreseeable future. However, the Authority is required to carry out a going concern assessment that is proportionate to the risks it faces. In light of the continued impact of Covid-19 on its income sources, there is a need for the Authority to ensure its going concern assessment, including its cashflow forecast, is thorough and appropriately comprehensive. The Authority is then required to ensure that its going concern disclosure within the statement of accounts adequately reflects its going concern assessment and in particular highlights any uncertainties it has identified. We consider the unpredictability of the current environment to give rise to a risk that the Authority will not appropriately disclose the key factors relating to going concern, underpinned by managements assessment with particular reference to Covid-19.

What did we do?

We have:

- ▶ Continued to assess the adequacy of disclosures required in 2020/21, and the impact on our opinion, should these be inadequate;
- ▶ Obtained management's going concern assessment and review for any evidence of bias and consistency with the accounts;
- ▶ Reviewed the financial modelling and forecasts prepared by the Authority. This considered key assumptions, stress testing applied to those assumptions and considered the risk to cashflow up to at least 12 months after the signing date of the accounts and opinion;
- ▶ Ensured that an appropriate going concern disclosure has been made within the financial statements; and
- ▶ Considered the impact on our audit report and compliance with EY consultation requirements, if such are determined appropriate.

What are our conclusions?

We have reviewed the appropriateness of management's going concern assessment, including:

- Disclosure note and basis of preparation.
- Financial modelling and forecasting.
- Cashflow forecasts.

We are satisfied that management's going concern disclosure appropriately reflects the Authority's forecast viability and liquidity up to at least 12 months from the date the 2020-2021 accounts are authorised for issue (to end of March 2023). We have not identified any material uncertainties with the continuity of service provision, and based on our assessment have not needed to consult on the Authority's disclosure and the work we have performed with our professional practice team.



04 Audit Report



Audit Report

Audit report

Our opinion on the financial statements

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements and the firefighters' pension fund financial statements of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority for the year ended 31 March 2021 under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. The financial statements comprise the:

- ▶ Movement in Reserves Statement,
- ▶ Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement,
- ▶ Balance Sheet,
- ▶ Cash Flow Statement
- ▶ the related notes 1 to 31.
- ▶ and include the firefighters' pension fund financial statements comprising the Fund Account, the Net Assets Statement and the related notes 1 to 6.

The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21.

In our opinion the financial statements:

- ▶ give a true and fair view of the financial position of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority as at 31 March 2021 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 2020/21.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report below. We are independent of the Authority 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

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Chief Financial Officer's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the authority's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Chief Financial Officer with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report. However, because not all future events or conditions can be predicted, this statement is not a guarantee as to the authority's ability to continue as a going concern.



Audit Report

(audit report continued)

Our opinion on the financial statements

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the Statement of Accounts 2020/21, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Chief Financial Officer 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.

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 course of 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 themselves. 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.

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 Authority;
- ▶ 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;
- ▶ we make an application for judicial review under Section 31 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014;
- ▶ we are not satisfied that the Authority has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2021.

We have nothing to report in these respects.

Responsibility of the Chief Financial Officer

As explained more fully in the Statement of the Responsibilities set out on page 18, the Chief Financial Officer is responsible for the preparation of the Statement of Accounts, which includes the Authority financial statements and the firefighters pension fund financial statements, in accordance with proper practices as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21, and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view and for such internal control as the directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Chief Finance Officer 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.



Audit Report

(audit report continued)

Our opinion on the financial statements

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. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect irregularities, including fraud. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error, as fraud may involve deliberate concealment by, for example, forgery or intentional misrepresentations, or through collusion. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below. However, the primary responsibility for the prevention and detection of fraud rests with both those charged with governance of the entity and management.

- ▶ We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks that are applicable to the Authority and determined that the most significant are:
 - Local Government Act 1972,
 - Local Government Act 2003,

- The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended in 2018 and 2020,
- The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, and
- The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

In addition, the Authority has to comply with laws and regulations in the areas of anti-bribery and corruption, data protection, employment Legislation, tax Legislation, general power of competence, procurement and health & safety.

- ▶ We understood how Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority is complying with those frameworks by understanding the incentive, opportunities and motives for non-compliance, including inquiring of management, head of internal audit, those charged with governance and obtaining and reading documentation relating to the procedures in place to identify, evaluate and comply with laws and regulations, and whether they are aware of instances of non-compliance. We corroborated this through our reading of the Authority's committee minutes, through enquiry of employees to confirm Authority's policies, and through the inspection of employee handbooks and other information. Based on this understanding we designed our audit procedures to identify non-compliance with such laws and regulations. Our procedures had a focus on compliance with the accounting framework through obtaining sufficient audit evidence in line with the level of risk identified and with relevant legislation.
- ▶ We assessed the susceptibility of the Authority's financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur by understanding the potential incentives and pressures for management to manipulate the financial statements, and performed procedures to understand the areas in which this would most likely arise. Based on our risk assessment procedures, we identified manipulation of reported financial performance through inappropriate capitalisation of revenue expenditure and management override of controls to be our fraud risks.



Audit Report

(audit report continued)

Our opinion on the financial statements

- ▶ To address our fraud risk of inappropriate capitalisation of revenue expenditure we tested the Authority's capitalised expenditure to ensure the capitalisation criteria were properly met and the expenditure was genuine.
- ▶ To address our fraud risk of management override of controls, we tested specific journal entries identified by applying risk criteria to the entire population of journals. For each journal selected, we tested specific transactions back to source documentation to confirm that the journals were authorised and accounted for appropriately.

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 reporting criteria issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) in April 2021, as to whether the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority had proper arrangements for financial sustainability, governance and improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The Comptroller and Auditor General determined these criteria as those necessary for us to consider under the Code of Audit Practice in satisfying ourselves whether the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority put in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2021. 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 Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority 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.

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.

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 Authority's Whole of Government Accounts consolidation pack. We are satisfied that this work does not have a material effect on the financial statements or on our value for money conclusion.

In addition, we cannot formally conclude the audit and issue an audit certificate until we have completed our procedures on the Authority's value for money arrangements for the year ended 31 March 2021. We are satisfied that this work does not have a material effect on the financial statements. We will report the outcome of our work on the Authority's arrangements in our commentary on those arrangements within the Auditor's Annual Report. Our audit completion certificate will set out any matters which we are required to report by exception.

Until we have completed these procedures we are unable to certify that we have completed the audit of the accounts 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.



Audit Report

(audit report continued)

Our opinion on the financial statements

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the members of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority, 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 the Authority and the Authority'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
22 March 2022



05 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

We highlight misstatements greater than £37,384 which have been corrected by management that were identified during the course of our audit, or lower if they merit TCWGs attention.

1. Inconsistency - Pensions Note 28a incorrectly showed Actuarial Gains/Losses as £76,029k, where as the Pensions Reserves Note showed Actuarial Gains/Losses as £68,000k. The correct figure was £68,000k, so Note 28a note was amended.
2. Officer remuneration note - One person was missing from the table in the banding £110k to £114k. This has been corrected in the final statements.

Summary of unadjusted differences

Unadjusted Differences:

Known misstatement:

Asset Held for Sale should be measured at the lower of carrying amount and fair value less cost to sell. Fair Value is £495,000, and costs to sell are estimated at £55,000. BMKFA have not included the costs to sell of £55,000 in their valuation. In addition, the cost of sale funded by capital receipts should also be recorded in the analysis of the adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under statutory provisions.

Judgemental misstatements:

Our creditor testing identified an error of creditors being overstated by £347 in our representative sample, which when extrapolated across the population was calculated as an error of £51,536.

Our expenditure testing identified error arising from expenditure from 2019/20 being recorded in 2020/21 which overstated expenditure by £239.50 in our representative sample. When extrapolated across the population this was calculated as an error of £108k.

There is a £32k discrepancy between the NBV of the Joint Control Room disclosed in the Authority's accounts compared to the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority's unaudited accounts. This has not been corrected, it is not material to the accounts but has been reported to TCWG due to the sensitive nature of related party disclosures.



06

Value for Money



Value for money

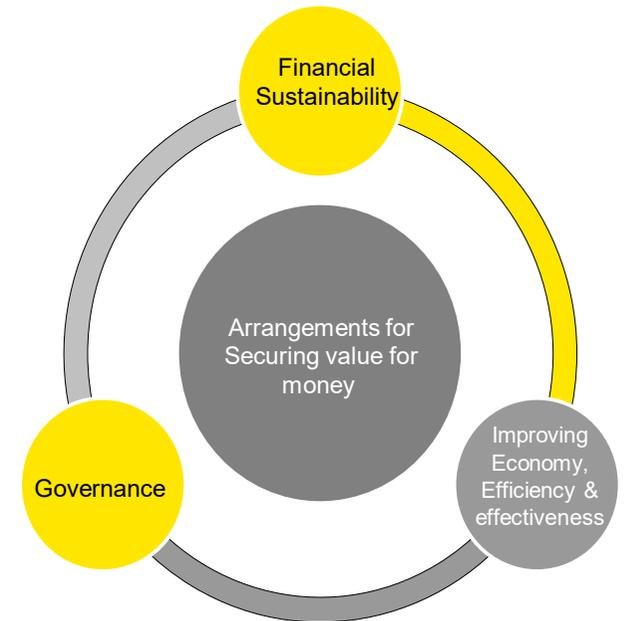
The Authority's responsibilities for value for money (VFM)

The Authority is required to maintain an effective system of internal control that supports the achievement of its policies, aims and objectives while safeguarding and securing value for money from the public funds and other resources at its disposal.

As part of the material published with its financial statements, the Authority is required to bring together commentary on its governance framework and how this has operated during the period in a governance statement. In preparing its governance statement, the Authority tailors the content to reflect its own individual circumstances, consistent with the requirements set out in the Cipfa code of practice on local authority accounting. This includes a requirement to provide commentary on its arrangements for securing value for money from their use of resources.

Status of our VFM work

We have completed our work on your value for money arrangements but have not identified any significant weaknesses. We will report our final outcome, any significant weaknesses identified and associated recommendations in our Annual Audit Report.





07 Other reporting issues

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 2020/21 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 2020/21 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

Alongside 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 not yet been provided with the scope of work by the NAO, however, we expect it to be consistent with prior years. As the authority is below the expected threshold of £500m, we expect to have no issues to raise.

Other reporting issues

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.

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 comment in respect of these.



08

Assessment of Control Environment



Assessment of Control Environment

Financial controls

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.

Reliance on internal audit

We have reviewed Internal Audit reports issued to management during the period to 31 March 2021 to ensure that any financial statement risks identified are considered in determining the extent of our audit procedures.



09

Data Analytics



Data Analytics - 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.

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.

Journal entry data criteria – 31 March 2021



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.



10 Independence

Relationships, services and related threats and safeguards

The FRC Ethical Standard requires that we provide details of all relationships between Ernst & Young (EY) and the Authority, and its members and senior management, including all services provided by us and our network to the Authority, its members and senior management, and other services provided to other known connected parties that we consider may reasonably be thought to bear on the our integrity or objectivity, including those that could compromise independence and the related safeguards that are in place and why they address the threats.

There are no relationships from 1 April 2020 to the date of this report, which we consider may reasonably be thought to bear on our independence and objectivity.

Services provided by Ernst & Young

The next page includes a summary of the fees that you have paid to us in the year ended 31 March 2021 in line with the disclosures set out in FRC Ethical Standard and in statute.

As at the date of this report, there are no future services which have been contracted and no written proposal to provide non-audit services has been submitted.

We confirm that we have not undertaken non-audit work.

EY Transparency Report 2021

Ernst & Young (EY) has policies and procedures that instil professional values as part of firm culture and ensure that the highest standards of objectivity, independence and integrity are maintained.

Details of the key policies and processes in place within EY for maintaining objectivity and independence can be found in our annual Transparency Report which the firm is required to publish by law. The most recent version of this Report is for the year end 30 June 2021:

[EY UK 2021 Transparency Report | EY UK](#)

Fees

As part of our reporting on our independence, we set out below a summary of the fees paid for the year ended 31 March 2021. We confirm that we have not undertaken non-audit work outside the NAO Code requirements. We have complied with Auditor Guidance Note 1 issued by the NAO.

Description	Final Fee 2020/21 £	Planned Fee 2020/21 £	Final Fee 2019/20 £
Total Audit Fee - Code work	24,162	24,162	24,162
Proposed increase to the scale fee due to changes in work required to address professional and regulatory requirements and scope associated with risk (Note 1)	27,745	27,745	22,196
Additional Fees (Note 2):			
- Additional work on land & buildings	2,819	TBC	1,473
- Additional work on pensions	2,120	TBC	790
- VFM additional procedures	4,987	TBC	-
- Covid-19 inefficiencies	3,854	TBC	1,501
- Going concern assessment & disclosure	0	TBC	1,560
- Revised auditing standard for estimates	1,906	TBC	-
Non-audit work	0	0	0
Total	67,593	TBC	51,682

Note 1 - The proposed increase to the scale fee to £46,358 reflects the increased risk and complexity facing all public sector bodies, adjusted for our knowledge and risk assessment for this Authority (£12,000) as well as the changes and incremental increase in regulatory standards (£9,000). We have also adjusted the baseline fee to reflect our current assessment of the Authority's readiness for audit, including data analytics, quality of working papers (£1,196). The proposed increase in the baseline fee is relatively consistent with other Fire and Rescue Authorities of a similar size, risk profile and complexity that EY audits. For 2020/21, the figure has been increased to reflect the 25% increased rates set by the PSAA.

Note 2 - The impact of Covid-19 on the audit, going concern, estimates and VfM additional procedures will also impact the work that is required to be done. As we near the conclusion of the audit, we will be in a position to quantify the impact of these additional procedures and where we propose a variation to the Authority's scale fee.

On both points, we will continue to discuss and share with the Chief Financial Officer our assessment of the audit fees required to safeguard audit quality and our professional standards. We will also report our proposed final position in the Audit Results Report to the Overview and Audit Committee. We intend to report to PSAA at this stage our assessment of the changes required to the baseline fee from £24,162 to £51,907. In doing so, we will notify PSAA whether the Authority agree, partially agree or do not agree with our assessment. PSAA are ultimately responsible for determining the scale fee and any variations to it.



11

Appendices

Appendix A

Required communications with the Overview and Audit Committee

There are certain communications that we must provide to the those charged with governance of UK entities. 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 overview and audit 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, presented at the Overview and Audit Committee on 21 July 2021.
Planning and audit approach	Communication of the planned scope and timing of the audit, any limitations and the significant risks identified. When communicating key audit matters this includes the most significant risks of material misstatement (whether or not due to fraud) including those that have the greatest effect on the overall audit strategy, the allocation of resources in the audit and directing the efforts of the engagement team.	Audit planning report, presented at the Overview and Audit Committee on 21 July 2021.
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, presented at the Overview and Audit Committee on 16 March 2022.

Appendix A

		 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 related to going concern ▶ Whether the use of the going concern assumption is appropriate in the preparation and presentation of the financial statements ▶ The appropriateness of related disclosures in the financial statements 	Audit results report, presented at the Overview and Audit Committee on 16 March 2022.
Misstatements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Uncorrected misstatements and their effect on our audit opinion, unless prohibited by law or regulation ▶ 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, presented at the Overview and Audit Committee on 16 March 2022.
Subsequent events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Enquiry of the audit committee where appropriate regarding whether any subsequent events have occurred that might affect the financial statements. 	Audit results report, presented at the Overview and Audit Committee on 16 March 2022.
Fraud	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Enquiries of the audit committee to determine whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud affecting the entity ▶ 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 entity, any identified or suspected fraud involving: <ul 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 the Overview and Audit Committee responsibility. 	Audit results report, presented at the Overview and Audit Committee on 16 March 2022.

Appendix A

		Our Reporting to you
Required communications	What is reported?	When and where
Related parties	<p>Significant matters arising during the audit in connection with the entity's related parties including, when applicable:</p> <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 entity 	Audit results report, presented at the Overview and Audit Committee on 16 March 2022.
Independence	<p>Communication of all significant facts and matters that bear on EY's, and all individuals involved in the audit, objectivity and independence.</p> <p>Communication of key elements of the audit engagement partner's consideration of independence and objectivity such as:</p> <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 <p>Communications whenever significant judgements are made about threats to objectivity and independence and the appropriateness of safeguards put in place.</p>	<p>Audit planning report, presented at the Overview and Audit Committee on 21 July 2021.</p> <p>Audit results report, presented at the Overview and Audit Committee on 16 March 2022.</p>
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. 	Audit results report, presented at the Overview and Audit Committee on 16 March 2022.
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 audit committee into possible instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations that may have a material effect on the financial statements and that the audit committee may be aware of 	Audit results report, presented at the Overview and Audit Committee on 16 March 2022.

Appendix A

		Our Reporting to you
Required communications	What is reported?	When and where
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, presented at the Overview and Audit Committee on 16 March 2022.
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. 	<p>Audit planning report, presented at the Overview and Audit Committee on 21 July 2021.</p> <p>Audit results report, presented at the Overview and Audit Committee on 16 March 2022.</p>
Written representations we are requesting from management and/or those charged with governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Written representations we are requesting from management and/or those charged with governance 	Audit results report, presented at the Overview and Audit Committee on 16 March 2022.
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, presented at the Overview and Audit Committee on 16 March 2022.
Auditors report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Key audit matters that we will include in our auditor's report ▶ Any circumstances identified that affect the form and content of our auditor's report 	Audit results report, presented at the Overview and Audit Committee on 16 March 2022.

Management representation letter

Management Rep Letter

[To be prepared on the entity's letterhead]

[Date]

Ernst & Young
400 Capability Green
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU1 3LU

Dear Neil,

Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire and Rescue Authority - Audit for the year ended 31 March 2021

This letter of representations is provided in connection with your audit of the consolidated and [Authority] financial statements of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority ("the Authority") for the year ended 31 March 2021. 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 Authority's financial position of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority as of 31 March 2021 and of its financial performance (or operations) and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21.

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, 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

1. 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 2020/21.
2. We acknowledge, as members of management of the Authority, 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 Authority, the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21, and are free of material misstatements, including omissions. We have approved the financial statements.
3. The significant accounting policies adopted in the preparation of the financial statements are appropriately described in the financial statements.
4. As members of management of the Authority, we believe that the 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 2020/21 that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. We have disclosed to you any significant changes in our processes, controls, policies and procedures that we have made to address the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on our system of internal controls.
5. 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 Authority financial statements taken as a whole. We have not corrected these differences identified and brought to our attention by the auditor because [specify reasons for not correcting misstatement].

Management representation letter

Management Rep Letter (continued)

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

1. We acknowledge that we are responsible for determining that the Authority's activities are conducted in accordance with laws and regulations and that we are responsible for identifying and addressing any non-compliance with applicable laws and regulations, including fraud.

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

3. 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.

4. We have no knowledge of any identified or suspected non-compliance with laws or regulations, including fraud that may have affected the Authority (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 consolidated or Authority'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 Authority's activities, its 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

1. 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.

2. All material transactions have been recorded in the accounting records and all material transactions, events and conditions are reflected in the financial statements, including those related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. We have made available to you all minutes of the meetings of the Authority, the Executive Committee and the Overview and Audit Committee held through the year to the most recent meeting on the following date: [list date].

4. We confirm the completeness of information provided regarding the identification of related parties. We have disclosed to you the identity of the Authority'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 year ended, as well as related balances due to or from such parties at the year end. These transactions have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed in the financial statements.

5. We believe that the methods, significant assumptions and the data we used in making accounting estimates and related disclosures are appropriate and consistently applied to achieve recognition, measurement and disclosure that is in accordance with CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21.

6. We have disclosed to you, and the Authority has 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.

Management representation letter

Management Rep Letter (continued)

7. From 11 November 2020, the date of our last management representation letter, through the date of this letter we have disclosed to you any unauthorized access to our information technology systems that either occurred or to the best of our knowledge is reasonably likely to have occurred based on our investigation, including of reports submitted to us by third parties (including regulatory agencies, law enforcement agencies and security consultants), to the extent that such unauthorized access to our information technology systems is reasonably likely to have a material impact to the financial statements, in each case or in the aggregate.

D. Liabilities and Contingencies

1. 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.
2. We have informed you of all outstanding and possible litigation and claims, whether or not they have been discussed with legal counsel.
3. We have recorded and/or disclosed, as appropriate, all liabilities related to litigation and claims, both actual and contingent.

E. Going Concern

1. The Statement of Accounting Policies in the financial statements discloses all the matters of which we are aware that are relevant to the Authority's ability to continue as a going concern, including significant conditions and events, our plans for future action, and the feasibility of those plans.

F. Subsequent Events

1. There have been no events, including events related to the COVID-19 pandemic, subsequent to year end which require adjustment of or disclosure in the financial statements or notes thereto.

G. Other information

1. We acknowledge our responsibility for the preparation of the other information. The other information comprises the narrative statement.
2. We confirm that the content contained within the other information is consistent with the financial statements.

H. Ownership of Assets

1. Except for assets recognised as right-of-use assets in accordance with IFRS 16 Leases, the Authority has satisfactory title to all assets appearing in the balance sheet, and there are no liens or encumbrances on the Authority's assets, nor has any asset been pledged as collateral. All assets to which the Authority has satisfactory title appear in the balance sheet.
2. All agreements and options to buy back assets previously sold have been properly recorded and adequately disclosed in the financial statements.
3. There are no formal or informal compensating balance arrangements with any of our cash and investment accounts.

I. Reserves

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

J. Contingent Liabilities

1. 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).

Management representation letter

Management Rep Letter (continued)

2. 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, except for matters of routine, normal, recurring nature none of which involves any allegations of noncompliance with laws or regulations that should be considered for disclosure in the financial statements or as a basis for recording a loss contingency.

K. Use of the Work of a Specialist

1. We agree with the findings of the specialists that we engaged to evaluate the fair value of property, plant and equipment and the IAS19 actuarial valuations of pension 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.

L. Pension Liability and PPE Estimates

1. We confirm that the significant judgments made in making the pension liability and property, plant and equipment have taken into account all relevant information and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic of which we are aware.

2. We believe that the selection or application of the methods, assumptions and data used by us have been consistently and appropriately applied or used in making the pension liability and property, plant and equipment estimates.

3. We confirm that the significant assumptions used in making the pension liability and property, plant and equipment estimates appropriately reflect our intent and ability to carry out the specific courses of action on behalf of the entity.

4. We confirm that the disclosures made in the financial statements with respect to the accounting estimates, including those describing estimation uncertainty and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, are complete and are reasonable in the context of CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21.

5. We confirm that appropriate specialized skills or expertise has been applied in making the pension liability and property, plant and equipment estimates.

6. We confirm that no adjustments are required to the accounting estimates and disclosures in the consolidated and parent entity financial statements, including due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

M. Retirement benefits

1. 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,

Director of Finance and Chief Financial Officer

Chairman of the Overview and Audit Committee

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