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RUSHMOOR BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE, AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

*at the Council Offices, Farnborough on
Wednesday, 29th January, 2025 at 7.00 pm*

To:

Cllr A.H. Crawford (Chairman)
Cllr Bill O'Donovan (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr A. Adeola
Cllr Gaynor Austin
Cllr C.W. Card
Cllr Rhian Jones
Cllr M.J. Roberts
Cllr M.D. Smith
Cllr Sarah Spall
Cllr P.G. Taylor
Cllr Jacqui Vosper

Non-Voting Member:

Mr. Tom Davies – Independent Member (Audit)

Standing Deputies:

Cllr Leola Card, Cllr Lisa Greenway, Cllr Julie Hall, Cllr S.J. Masterson, Cllr T.W. Mitchell, Cllr M.J Tennant

Enquiries regarding this agenda should be referred to the Committee Administrator,
Lucy Bingham, Democratic Services, Tel. (01252 398128) or email
lucy.bingham@rushmoor.gov.uk.

A G E N D A

6. **ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS/EXTERNAL AUDIT OPINION - UPDATE –**
(Pages 1 - 52)

To receive the Executive Head of Finance's Report No. FIN2422 (copy attached), which sets out the Annual Statement of Accounts and the External Audit Opinion (copy attached).

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT MEETINGS

Members of the public may ask to speak at the meeting on any of the items on the agenda by writing to the Committee Administrator at the Council Offices, Farnborough by 5.00 pm two working days prior to the meeting.

Rushmoor Borough Council Audit results report

Year ended 31 March 2024

23 January 2025



Audit and Governance committee
Rushmoor Borough Council
Council Office, Farnborough Road
Farnborough, Hants
GU14 7 JU

23 January 2025

Dear Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards Committee Members

2023/24 Audit results report

We are pleased to attach our audit results report, summarising the status of our audit for the forthcoming meeting of the Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards Committee. We will update the Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards Committee at its meeting scheduled for 29 January 2025 on further progress to that date and explain the remaining steps to the issue of our final opinion.

The audit is designed to express an opinion on the 2023/24 financial statements and address current statutory and regulatory requirements. This report contains our findings related to the areas of audit emphasis, our views on Rushmoor Borough Council's (the Council) accounting policies and judgements and material internal control findings.

This report considers the impact of Government proposals, which have now been enacted through secondary legislation, to clear the backlog in local audit and put the local audit system on a sustainable footing. The proposals recognise that timely, high-quality financial reporting and audit of local bodies is a vital part of our democratic system. Not only does it support good decision making by local bodies, by enabling them to plan effectively, make informed decisions and manage their services, it ensures transparency and accountability to local taxpayers. All stakeholders have a critical role to play in addressing the audit backlog.

The Audit Committee, as the Council's body charged with governance, has an essential role in ensuring that it has assurance over both the quality of the draft financial statements prepared by management and the Council's wider arrangements to support the delivery of a timely and efficient audit. We will consider and report on the adequacy of the Council's external financial reporting arrangements and the effectiveness of the audit committee in fulfilling its role in those arrangements as part of our assessment of Value for Money arrangements and consider the use of other statutory reporting powers to draw attention to weaknesses in those arrangements where we consider it necessary to do so.

Given that Statutory Instrument 2024/907 "The Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2024 ("SI 2024/907") imposes a backstop date of 28 February 2025 by which date we are required to issue our opinion on the financial statements, we have considered whether the time constraints imposed by the backstop date mean that we cannot complete all necessary procedures to obtain sufficient, appropriate audit evidence to support the opinion and fulfil all the objectives of all relevant ISAs (UK).

We have also taken into account SI 2024/907 and Local Authority Reset and Recovery Implementation Guidance Notes issued by the National Audit Office and endorsed by the Financial Reporting Council, together with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the National Audit Office's 2020 Code of Audit Practice, the Statement of Responsibilities issued by Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) Ltd, auditing standards and other professional requirements.

As reported in our 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 Audit Completion Reports, we issued disclaimed audit reports on the Council's financial statements for 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 under the arrangements to reset and recover local government audit. Although we have commenced limited work to rebuild assurance ahead of the 2023/24 backstop date, we have not obtained sufficient evidence to be able to conclude that the financial statements are free from material and pervasive misstatement. Taken together with the requirement to conclude our work by the 2023/24 back stop date, the lack of evidence over these movements and balances mean we are unable to conclude that the 2023/24 financial statements are free from material and pervasive misstatements. We therefore anticipate issuing a disclaimed 2023/24 audit opinion.

This report is intended solely for the information and use of the Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards Committee, and management, and is not intended to be and should not be used by anyone other than these specified parties.

Yours faithfully

Simon Mathers

Partner

For and on behalf of Ernst & Young LLP

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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/managing-audit-quality/statement-of-responsibilities-of-auditors-and-audited-bodies/statement-of-responsibilities-of-auditors-and-audited-bodies-from-2023-24-audits>). 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 July 2021)” 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 Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards Committee and management of Rushmoor in accordance with the statement of responsibilities. Our work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards Committee and management of Rushmoor 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 Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards Committee and management of Rushmoor for this report or for the opinions we have formed. It should not be provided to any third-party without our prior written consent.



BOARDROOM



01 Executive Summary

Executive Summary – Context for the audit

Context for the audit - Department for Levelling-up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and Financial Reporting Council (FRC) measures to address local audit delays

Timely, high-quality financial reporting and audit of local bodies is a vital part of our democratic system. It supports good decision making by local bodies and ensures transparency and accountability to local taxpayers. There is general agreement that the backlog in the publication of audited financial statements by local bodies has grown to an unacceptable level and there is a clear recognition that all stakeholders in the sector need to work together to address this. Reasons for the backlog across the system have been widely reported and include:

- ▶ Lack of capacity within the local authority financial accounting profession.
- ▶ Increased complexity of reporting requirements within the sector.
- ▶ Lack of capacity within audit firms with public sector experience.
- ▶ Increased regulatory pressure on auditors, which in turn has increased the scope and extent of audit procedures performed.

MHCLG (formerly DLUHC) has worked collaboratively with the FRC, as incoming shadow system leader, and other system partners, to develop and implement measures to clear the backlog. SI 2024/907, together with the updated National Audit Office Code of Audit Practice 2024 and the Local Authority Reset and Recovery Implementation Guidance, have all been developed to ensure auditor compliance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)). The approach to addressing the backlog consists of three phases:

- ▶ Phase 1: Reset involving clearing the backlog of historic audit opinions up to and including financial year 2022/23 by 13 December 2024.
- ▶ Phase 2: Recovery from Phase 1, starting from 2023/24, in a way that does not cause a recurrence of the backlog by using backstop dates to allow assurance to be rebuilt over multiple audit cycles. The backstop date for audit of the 2023/24 financial statements is 28 February 2025.
- ▶ Phase 3: Reform involving addressing systemic challenges in the system and embedding timely financial reporting and audit.

As reported in our Audit Completion Reports to the Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards Committee we issued disclaimed audit reports on the Council's financial statements for 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 under the arrangements to reset and recover local government audit. Although we have commenced limited work to rebuild assurance ahead of the 2023/24 backstop date, we have not obtained sufficient evidence to have reasonable assurance over all closing balances. As a result of the 2022/23 disclaimed audit report, we do not have assurance over the brought forward balances from 2022/23 (the opening balances). This means we do not have assurance over 2023/24 in-year movements and some closing balances. We also do not have assurance over the 2022/23 comparative amounts disclosed in the 2023/24 financial statements. Taken together with the requirement to conclude our work by the 2023/24 back stop date, the lack of evidence over these movements and balances mean we are unable to conclude that the 2023/24 financial statements are free from material and pervasive misstatement of the financial statements. We therefore anticipate issuing a disclaimed 2023/24 audit opinion.

A summary of the assurances we have gained from our 2023/24 audit procedures is set out at Appendix A.



Executive Summary

Scope update

In our Audit Planning Report presented at the 23 July 2024 Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards 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.

Status of the audit

Our audit work in respect of the Council opinion is substantially complete. The following items relating to the completion of our audit procedures were outstanding at the date of this report.

- ▶ Receipt of the IAS 19 assurance letter from the auditor of Hampshire Pension Fund;
- ▶ Completion of audit work on property, plant and equipment and investment property;
- ▶ Receipt of the bank confirmation for RBH;
- ▶ Completion of final review procedures across a number of areas which could lead to further issues to resolve;
- ▶ Review of the final version of the financial statements to ensure all adjustments have been made correctly;
- ▶ Completion of subsequent events review; and
- ▶ Receipt of the signed management representation letter

Details of each outstanding item, actions required to resolve and responsibility is included in Appendix C.

Given that the audit process is still ongoing, we will continue to challenge the remaining evidence provided and the final disclosures in the Annual Report and Accounts which could influence our final audit opinion.

Value for Money

In our Audit Planning Report dated 23 July 2024, we reported that we had not completed our value for money (VFM) risk assessment. Having updated and completed the planned procedures in these areas we did identify a risk of significant weakness and actual significant weakness in the Council's VFM arrangements. See Section 3 of the report for further details.

Audit differences

- ▶ Uncorrected misstatements increase operating profit by £2.6 million which all relate to current-year differences
- ▶ Management have not yet corrected any of the misstatements identified
- ▶ Disclosure misstatements (refer to section 5)

Executive Summary (cont'd)

Other Reporting Issues

We have reviewed the information presented in the Annual Governance Statement for consistency with our knowledge of the Council. We have the following matter to report as a result of this work. The Annual Governance Statement did not include the internal audit opinion .

We have not yet completed the procedures required by the National Audit Office (NAO) on the Whole of Government Accounts.

Control observations

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. However, we have identified some areas where controls could be strengthened. Specifically:

- ▶ Our testing of PPE additions and revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute (REFCUS) in the period identified that staff timesheets used to support capitalised labour costs were not subject to management review.

Please refer to section 5 for our full assessment of the control environment and related recommendations for improvement.

Independence

We have not identified any issues regarding independence. Please refer to Section 8 for our update on Independence.

Executive Summary (cont'd)

Areas of audit focus

Risk/area of focus	Risk identified	Details
Misstatement due to fraud or error	Fraud risk	Based on our work completed we have not identified any material weaknesses in controls or evidence of material management override, instances of inappropriate judgements being applied; or any other transactions during our audit which appear unusual or outside the council's normal course of business. Our work is subject to final manager and partner review.
Risk of fraud in revenue and expenditure recognition, through inappropriate capitalisation of revenue expenditure	Fraud risk	Based on our work completed on additions and REFCUS Testing, we have not identified any material weaknesses in controls or evidence of inappropriate capitalisation of revenue expenditure. Our work is subject to final manager and partner review.
Valuation on investment property	Significant risk	Our work in this area is in progress. We have submitted our queries to management and await their responses.
Valuation of land and buildings valued under the depreciated replacement cost (DRC) method and the existing use value (EUV) method	Significant risk	Our work in this area is in progress. We have submitted our queries to management and await their responses.
Pension Liability Valuation and the IAS 19 valuations	Inherent risk	Material errors have been identified due to the actuary using incorrect assumptions, which have been corrected by management. We have been unable to complete our work in this area as we are waiting for certain confirmations from the auditors of Hampshire Pension Fund. Our work is subject to final manager and partner review.
IFRS 16	New Inherent risk	Our work in this area is complete. Only very limited progress has been made by the Council to prepare for the full implementation of IFRS 16 in the 2024/25 financial statements. We consider this to be a qualitative weakness in the Council's arrangements for financial reporting. See section 7 of this report for further details.
Going concern disclosure	New Inherent risk	Management is in the process of updating its assessment and disclosure so that it makes reference to a material uncertainty on going concern.

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

- ▶ There are no 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 Governance Committee.



02 Areas of Audit Focus

Areas of Audit Focus

Presumptive risk of management override of controls - Misstatements due to fraud or error

Significant Risk

What is the risk, and the key judgements and estimates?

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

As identified in ISA (UK) 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 is the status of our work?

Based on our work undertaken as at the date of this report, we have not identified any material weaknesses in controls or evidence of management override, instances of inappropriate judgements being applied, or any other transactions during our audit which appear unusual or outside the Council's normal course of business.

Our work over journals completed to date has not identified any indication of management override.

For our review of the potential bias in management estimates, our testing in respect of the asset valuations and NDR appeals provision key accounting estimates is complete. The difference between the actual provision and the auditors' prediction is greater than the allowable threshold. We are waiting for a response from management to explain this difference.

Our testing in respect of the key accounting estimate of the Pension Assets and Liabilities valuation is ongoing. We are waiting for IAS 19 assurances from the auditor of Hampshire Pension Fund to be able to fully complete our work, but no instances of management override have been noted based on the work undertaken to date.

Our response to the key areas of challenge and professional judgement

We carried out the following procedures:

- ▶ We identified fraud risks during the planning stages.
- ▶ We inquired of management about risks of fraud and the controls put in place to address those risks
- ▶ We sought to understand the oversight given by those charged with governance of management's processes over fraud
- ▶ We discussed with those charged with governance the risks of fraud in the entity, including those risks that are specific to the entity's business sector (those that may arise from economic industry and operating conditions)
- ▶ We considered the effectiveness of management's controls designed to address the risk of fraud
- ▶ We determined an appropriate strategy to address those identified risks of fraud
- ▶ We performed mandatory procedures regardless of specifically identified fraud risks, including testing of journal entries and other adjustments in the preparation of the financial statements
- ▶ We undertook procedures to identify significant unusual transactions
- ▶ We considered whether management bias was present in the key accounting estimates and judgements in the financial statements


What else did we do?

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

As part of our risk evaluation, we considered the need to perform other audit procedures not referred to above. We concluded that those procedures included under the 'risk of Inappropriate capitalisation of revenue expenditure' were required. See the following page for the results of work in this area.

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Areas of Audit Focus

presumptive risk of management override of controls - Inappropriate capitalisation of revenue expenditure -
(Significant Risk and Fraud Risk)  Significant Risk

What is the risk, and the key judgements and estimates?

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, which states that auditors should also consider the risk that material misstatements may occur by the manipulation of expenditure recognition.

We have assessed the risk is most likely to occur through the inappropriate capitalisation of revenue expenditure.

What are our conclusions

Our work to test additions and REFCUS testing is complete subject to final review. We have identified no material inappropriate capitalisation of revenue expenditure. However, our testing identified that staff timesheets used to support capitalised labour costs were not subject to management review. We consider this to be a weakness in internal control and have raised an associated recommendation for improvement in section 6 of this report.

Our response to the key areas of challenge and professional judgement

We performed the following procedures:

- ▶ We tested Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE) additions to ensure that the expenditure incurred and capitalised is clearly capital in nature. To do this:
 - ▶ We assessed whether the capitalised spend clearly enhanced or extended the useful life of an asset rather than simply repairing or maintaining an asset.
 - ▶ We considered whether any development or other related capitalised costs were directly attributable to bringing an asset into operational use and therefore appropriate to capitalise.
- ▶ We assessed whether the capitalised spend clearly enhances or extends the useful life of asset rather than simply repairing or maintaining the asset on which it is incurred.
- ▶ We considered whether any development or other related costs that have been capitalised are reasonable to capitalise i.e. the costs incurred are directly attributable to bringing the asset into operational use.
- ▶ We tested Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital Under Statute (REFCUS), to ensure that it is appropriate for the revenue expenditure incurred to be financed from ringfenced capital resources.
- ▶ Performed procedures 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.

Areas of Audit Focus (cont'd)

Valuation of Investment Property (Significant risk)

▲ Significant Risk

What is the risk?

The authority uses the discounted cash flow (DCF) model to measure the fair value of some of its investment properties and financial assets. The significant unobservable inputs used in the fair value measurement include management assumptions regarding rent growth, vacancy levels (for investment properties) and discount rates - adjusted for regional factors (for both investment properties and some financial assets). Significant changes in any of the unobservable inputs would result in a significantly lower or higher fair value measurement for the investment properties and financial assets.

These valuation methods involve higher risk estimates due to the significant assumptions and judgements involved, which trigger the use of experts by both management and EY.

These estimates heighten the risk of material error.

What is the status of our work

Our work in this area is in progress. We have submitted our queries to management and await their responses.


Our response to the key areas of challenge and professional judgement

We performed the following procedures:

- ▶ Considered the work performed by the Council's valuers, including the adequacy of the scope of the work performed, their professional capabilities and the results of their work.
- ▶ Sample tested key asset information used by the valuers in performing their valuation (e.g. rental agreements).
- ▶ Considered the annual cycle of valuations to ensure that assets have been valued as required by the code and internal guidance. We also considered if there were any specific changes to assets that have occurred and verified that these had been communicated to the valuer.
- ▶ Considered changes to useful economic lives as a result of the most recent valuation; and
- ▶ Tested accounting entries have been correctly processed in the financial statements.

Areas of Audit Focus (cont'd)

Valuation of land and buildings and valued under the depreciated replacement cost (DRC) method and the existing use value (EUV) method (Significant risk)

Significant Risk 

What is the risk?

We have disaggregated land and building assets to identify those where we think the significant risk lies. We have associated the risk to those assets that are valued using the DRC and EUV valuation methods.

These valuation methods involve higher risk estimates due to the significant assumptions and judgements involved, which trigger the use of experts by both management and EY.

These estimates heighten the risk of material error.

What is the status of our work

Our work in this area is in progress. We have submitted our queries to management and await their responses.

Our response to the key areas of challenge and professional judgement

We performed the following procedures:

- ▶ Considered the work performed by the Council's valuers, including the adequacy of the scope of the work performed, their professional capabilities and the results of their work.
- ▶ Sample tested key asset information used by the valuers in performing their valuation (e.g. floor plans to support valuations based on price per square metre).
- ▶ Considered the annual cycle of valuations to ensure that assets have been valued as required by the code and internal guidance. We also considered if there were any specific changes to assets that have occurred and verified that these had been communicated to the valuer.
- ▶ Reviewed assets not subject to valuation in 2023/24 to confirm that the remaining asset base is not materially misstated;
- ▶ Considered changes to useful economic lives as a result of the most recent valuation; and
- ▶ Tested accounting entries have been correctly processed in the financial statements.

Other areas of audit Focus

Pension Liability and IAS 19 Valuations (Inherent Risk)

What is the risk, and the key judgements and estimates?

The Local Authority Accounting Code of Practice and IAS 19 require the Council to make extensive disclosures within its financial statements regarding its membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme administered by the Council.

The Council's pension fund deficit is a material estimated balance, and the Code requires that this liability be disclosed on the Council's balance sheet. At 31 March 2024 this totalled £130 million.

The information disclosed is based on the IAS 19 report issued to the Council by the actuary to the Council.

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

Our response to the key areas of challenge and professional judgement

- ▶ We liaised with the auditors of Hampshire Pension Fund, to obtain assurances over the information supplied to the actuary in relation to the Council.
- ▶ We assessed the work of the pension fund actuary including the assumptions they used by relying on the work of PWC - Consulting Actuaries commissioned by the National Audit Office for all local government sector auditors and considered any relevant reviews by the EY actuarial team.
- ▶ We evaluated the reasonableness of the Pension Fund actuary's calculations by comparing them to the outputs of our own auditor's specialist's model. These were independently assessed as being outside an acceptable range of <0.2%. The Council has requested a revised report from the actuary and will be posting the correcting journal entries. The revised report is within the allowable threshold.
- ▶ We reviewed and tested the accounting entries and disclosures made within the Council's financial statements in relation to IAS 19.

What are our conclusions?

Our testing for the defined pension liability is substantially complete. From the work completed to date we have identified material errors or adjustments that we wish to bring to your attention.

We have not yet received the IAS 19 Assurance Letter from the auditor of the Hampshire Pension Fund.

IFRS 16 (Inherent Risk)

Incorrect disclosures in relation to IFRS 16 Lease

Mandatory implementation of IFRS 16 Leases has been deferred until 2024/25 (though voluntary adoption is permitted and encouraged). IFRS 16 leases is a complex standard that will require a substantial amount of data gathering followed by a number of policy choice decisions.

Impact assessment disclosures are required in the 2023/24 financial statements and the Council needs to ensure that it is prepared for the implementation of this standard

We:

- ▶ Obtained an understand the Council's process for implementing the new leases standard by completing a preparedness enquiries assessment with management.

What are our conclusions?

Our work in this area is complete. Only very limited progress has been made to prepare for the full implementation of IFRS 16 in the 2024/25 financial statements. As a result, the Council has been unable to quantify the likely impact of adopting the standard in 2024/25 as part of disclosures in the 2023/24 financial statements. We consider this to be a qualitative weakness in the Council's arrangements for financial reporting. See section 7 of this report for further details.

Areas of Audit Focus (cont'd)

Going concern

As part of our going concern review we have concluded that there are material uncertainties which may cast doubt on the Council's forecasts which could require an increase in planned income or a reduction in costs to ensure all services levels are maintained. This is primarily due to the high level of short-term borrowing, required savings target and disposal of assets necessary to maintain financial sustainability. In particular, the Council would be unable to stay liquid for the going concern assessment period if it is not able to refinance short-term borrowing due for repayment. Management recognise this and have recognised this material uncertainty in its going concern assessment and disclosure. We also consider this issues to be relevant to our VFM responsibilities and have considered a related risk in the Council's arrangements for financial sustainability in our 2023/24 VFM approach - see Section 3 of this report for further details.

As we now intend to issue a disclaimer of opinion no assurance in respect of going concern will be given as part of our audit report.



03 Value for Money

Value for Money

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

The Council 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 Council 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 NAO Code of Audit Practice. This includes a requirement to provide commentary on its arrangements for securing value for money from their use of resources.

Risk assessment and status of our work

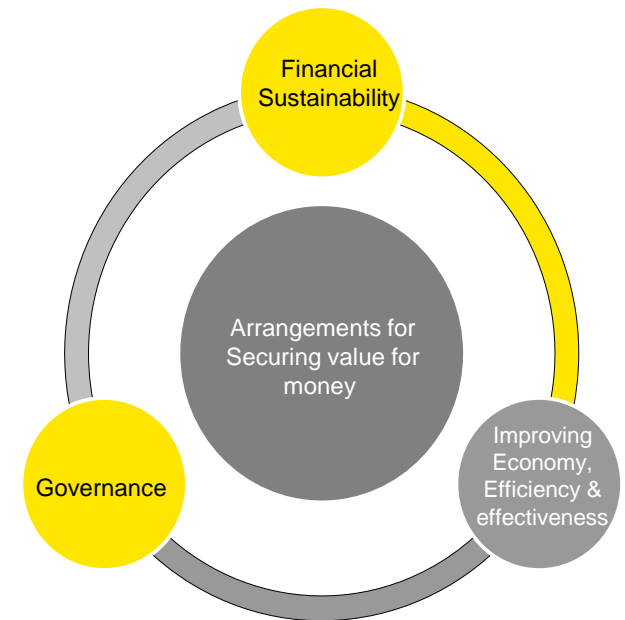
We are required to consider whether the Council has made 'proper arrangements' to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness on its use of resources.

Our value for money planning and the associated risk assessment is focused on gathering sufficient evidence to enable us to document our evaluation of the Council's arrangements, to enable us to draft a commentary under three reporting criteria (see below). This includes identifying and reporting on any significant weaknesses in those arrangements and making appropriate recommendations.

We will provide a commentary on the Council arrangements against three reporting criteria:

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

We have completed our detailed VFM work and identified a risk of significant weakness as documented on the next page.



Value for Money (cont'd)

Risk of significant weakness in VFM arrangements

What is the risk of significant weakness?

The high level of short-term borrowings without sufficient income to finance the repayments as well as increase in interest costs have resulted in a financial uncertainty.

The MTFS Equalisation reserve is being used to balance the budget in the short-term and will be depleted over the MTFS period leading to a deficit position during 2023/24

What arrangements did this impact?

Financial Sustainability:

How the Council plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services

What did we do?

Our approach focused on:

- Review of the Council's cash flow forecasting and external Financial Resilience Review undertaken by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA).
- Understand the future savings plans factored into the Financial Resilience Review against the budget outturn report to determine if those savings plans are realistic.
- Ensure that the going concern note as disclosed in the updated accounts, reflects the financial uncertainty

Findings

We will issue our VFM narrative commentary in our 2023/24 Auditor's Annual Report which we expect to issue in May 2025. Based on our work undertaken to date we are likely to conclude that the Council does not have adequate arrangements to plan and manage its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services.



04 Audit Report

Audit Report Section of ARR

Expected modification to the audit report

As reported in our 2022/23 Audit Completion Report dated 13 December 2024, we issued a disclaimed audit report on the Authority's financial statements for 2022/23 under the arrangements to reset and recover local government audit.

As a result of the 2022/23 disclaimed audit report, we do not have assurance over the brought forward balances from 2022/23 (the opening balances). This means we do not have assurance over 2023/24 in-year movements and some closing balances. We also do not have assurance over the 2022/23 comparative amounts disclosed in the 2023/24 financial statements.

Taken together with the requirement to conclude our work by the 2023/24 back stop date, the lack of evidence over these movements and balances mean we are unable to conclude that the 2023/24 financial statements are free from material and pervasive misstatement of the financial statements.

We therefore anticipate issuing a disclaimed 2023/24 audit opinion.

The form and content of the Audit Report will be shared with the Section 151 officer to enable you to formally authorise the 2023/24 financial statements for issue.



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

Management have not yet provided us with an updated set of accounts. All misstatements identified to date are therefore reported as unadjusted and set out on the following page. We expect management to make adjustments in the final set of accounts for the identified misstatements above our reporting threshold of £913k.

Audit Differences (cont'd)

Summary of adjusted differences

In addition we highlight the following misstatements to the financial statements and/or disclosures which were not corrected by management. We ask that the Audit Committee request of management that these uncorrected misstatements be corrected or a rationale as to why they are not corrected be considered and approved by the Audit Committee and provided within the Letter of Representation:

Uncorrected misstatements 31 March 2024 (Currency'000)	Effect on the current period:		Net assets (Decrease)/Increase			
	OCI Debit/(Credit)	Income statement Debit/(Credit)	Assets current Debit/ (Credit)	Assets non- current Debit/ (Credit)	Liabilities current Debit/ (Credit)	Liabilities non- current Debit/ (Credit)
Errors						
Known differences:						
➤ Overstatement of interest accrued		(286 694)			286 694	
➤ Duplicate assets included in FAR		1 225 000		(1 225 000)		
➤ Overstatement in the pension liability		(3 510 000)			3 510 000	
Balance sheet totals				(1 225 000)	3 796 694	
Income effect of uncorrected misstatements (before tax)		(2 571 694)				

Uncorrected disclosure misstatements

Note 40 of the financial statements: Details of the Virgin Media Case was not disclosed

Note 1 Accounting policy for the capitalisation of borrowing costs not included in the accounts

Note 27 Cash flow statement. The amount disclosed as non-cash does not agree to the listing provided

Note 14 Pension liability. There is a difference between the number of individuals disclosed as redundancy and disclosed as members exit and the actuarial report

Uncorrected misstatement in the collection fund

There is a variance of £3.3 million between our expected NNDR income and the amount reported by the council. This exceeds our variance threshold of £913k. We have asked management to provide us with an explanation of the variances

These amounts that we identified that are individually and in aggregate material to the presentation and disclosures of the consolidated financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024.



06

Assessment of Control Environment

Assessment of Control Environment

Financial controls

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

As part of our audit of the financial statements, we obtained an understanding of internal control sufficient to plan our audit and determine the nature, timing and extent of testing performed. As we have adopted a fully substantive approach, we have therefore not tested the operation of controls.

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 identified a recurrence of the following control, reported in our 2019/20 Audit Results Report findings.

- Provision of property information: We have reported on the critical delays in the provision of property information to support the material PPE and IP valuations in the Council's Balance Sheet. This included a lack of management challenge of key assumptions informing the valuations. Management should ensure that appropriate challenge of assumptions informing the valuation of PPE and IP is factored into its arrangements for production and quality review of the 2024/25 financial statements. We have raised an associated recommendation for improvement on the following page.

Outside of this we also identified one further control deficiency as part of our own work which we consider on the following page.

We had no further matters to report.

Assessment of Control Environment (cont'd)

Area → REFCUS → Rating → **Moderate**

Observation → Systems need to be improved to track and evidence the actual time taken by the staff who worked on projects charged to REFCUS. Based on our testing the pay costs of staff working on those projects has been charged to REFCUS on an estimated basis.

Impact → It is difficult for management to evidence the amount of staff time charged to projects financed as REFCUS is accurate.

Recommendation 1

Management should ensure that there is evidence of appropriate review of timesheets to support pay costs capitalised as REFCUS.

Management comment →

Area → PPE/IP → Rating → **Moderate**

Observation → We have reported on the critical delays in the provision of property information to support the material PPE and IP valuations in the Council's Balance Sheet. This included a lack of management challenge of key assumptions informing the valuations

Impact → This will result in delays in completing the audit and/or impact the audit opinion

Recommendation 2

Management should ensure that when they have appropriate supporting information readily available to support the valuation made by the specialist. There should also be evidence that management have challenged the assumptions used in the valuation.

Management comment →



07

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 Rushmoor Borough Council Statement of Accounts 2023/24 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.

Our review of the Financial information in the Rushmoor Council Statement of Accounts 2023/24 and published with the financial statements is still in progress, we will update the Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards Committee on 29 January if we identify any findings during our procedures.

Our review of the Annual Governance Statement and can confirm it is statements is still in progress, we will update the Audit and Governance Committee on 27 November if we identify any findings during our procedures.

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 performed the procedures required by the National Audit Office (NAO) on the Whole of Government Accounts submission. We cannot issue our Audit Certificate until these procedures are complete

Other powers and duties

We have a duty under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (the Act) to consider whether to report on any matter that comes to our attention in the course of the audit, either for the Council 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 Reporting Issues (cont'd)

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 one issue to bring to your attention around the Council's arrangements for the adoption of the financial reporting standard IFRS 16 Leases which we consider to be a qualitative weakness in the Council's financial reporting arrangements. IFRS 16 will become effective for the local authorities for the 2024/25 financial year. Although we have been informed that management has identified the leases that it considers will be in the scope for the implementation of IFRS 16:

- ▶ We have not been provided with a full listing of those leases.
- ▶ The Council has not identified the relevant lease categorisations.
- ▶ All significant data points have not been identified, collected, logged and checked.
- ▶ Relevant accounting policy choices have not yet been determined.
- ▶ Transitional and ongoing accounting arrangements are therefore not yet clear.

Other Reporting Issues (cont'd)

Other matters (continued)

This has meant that the Council has not been able to quantify the likely impact of the transition to IFRS 16 in its 2023/24 financial statements. The disclosure included in the 2023/24 financial statements as part of Note 60, Accounting Standards that have been issue but have not yet been adopted, only notes that the likely impact is material and does not explain why quantification of the impact has not been possible. Progress in this area now needs to be accelerated as a matter of urgency.

Recommendation 3

Accelerate the rate of progress in arrangements for the implementation of IFRS 16 so the Council is able to comply fully with the requirements of the standard in its 2024/25 financial statements.

Management Response:

xx

ISA (UK) 315 (Revised): Identifying and Addressing the Risks of Material Misstatement

ISA 315 is effective from FY 2022/23 onwards and is the critical standard which drives the auditor's approach to the following areas:

- Risk Assessment
- Understanding the entity's internal control
- Significant risk
- Approach to addressing significant risk (in combination with ISA 330)

Given that we have disclaimed the 2022/23 audit of the financial statements we have undertaken ISA (UK) 315 (Revised) procedures for the first time in 2023/24.

The International Auditing & Assurance Standards Board (IAASB) concluded that whilst the existing version of the standard was fundamentally sound, feedback determined that it was not always clear, leading to a possibility that risk identification was not consistent. The aims of the revised standard is to:

- Drive consistent and effective identification and assessment of risks of material misstatement
- Improve the standard's applicability to entities across a wide spectrum of circumstances and complexities ('scalability')
- Modernise ISA 315 to meet evolving business needs, including:
 - how auditors use automated tools and techniques, including data analytics to perform risk assessment audit procedures; and
 - how auditors understand the entity's use of information technology relevant to financial reporting.
- Focus auditors on exercising professional scepticism throughout the risk identification and assessment process.

Other Reporting Issues (cont'd)

ISA (UK) 315 (Revised): Identifying and Addressing the Risks of Material Misstatement

We set out the findings and conclusions from our work to implement ISA 315 in the table below.

Audit Procedures

We performed the following procedures:

We obtained an understanding of the IT processes related to the IT applications of the Council. The Council has two relevant IT applications for the purposes of ISA 315 risk assessment (Integra, Pay360 and iWorld)

We performed procedures to determine if there are typical controls missing or control deficiencies identified and evaluated the consequences for our audit strategy.

When we have identified controls relevant to the audit that are application controls or IT dependent manual controls, where we do not gain assurance substantively, we performed additional procedures to assess:

- ▶ Manage entity-programmed changes IT process
- ▶ Manage vendor supplied changes
- ▶ Manage security settings
- ▶ Manage user access
- ▶ Job scheduling and managing IT

Audit findings and conclusions

Our work in this area is complete. Based on the procedures performed, no significant issues were identified in our review of the various processes, including the design and implementation effectiveness of relevant controls around the financial statement close process.

We have not tested the operation of any controls through this review.



08

Independence

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 your company, and its directors and senior management and its affiliates, including all services provided by us and our network to your company, its directors and senior management and its affiliates, and other services provided to other known connected parties that we consider may reasonably be thought to bear on our integrity or objectivity, including those that could compromise independence and the related safeguards that are in place and why they address the threats.

Relationships

There are no relationships from 01 April 2023 to the date of this report, which we consider may reasonably be thought to bear on our independence and objectivity.

Services provided by EY

There are no services provided by EY from 1 April 2023 to the date of this report, which we consider may reasonably be thought to bear on our independence and objectivity.

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.

EY Transparency Report 2024

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 28 June 2024: [ey-uk-2024-transparency-report.pdf](#)

Independence - Fees

The duty to prescribe fees is a statutory function delegated to Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government.

This is defined as the fee required by auditors to meet statutory responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Audit Practice and supporting guidance published by the National Audit Office, the financial reporting requirements set out in the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting published by CIPFA/LASAAC, and the professional standards applicable to auditors' work.

As set out in our Audit Planning Report the agreed fee presented was based on the following assumptions:

- ▶ Officers meeting the agreed timetable of deliverables;
- ▶ Our financial statements opinion and value for money conclusion being unqualified;
- ▶ Appropriate quality of documentation is provided by the Council; and
- ▶ The Council has an effective control environment
- ▶ The Council complies with PSAA's Statement of Responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies. See <https://www.psa.co.uk/managing-audit-quality/statement-of-responsibilities-of-auditors-and-audited-bodies/statement-of-responsibilities-of-auditors-and-audited-bodies-from-2023-24-audits/>. In particular the Council should have regard to paragraphs 26 - 28 of the Statement of Responsibilities.

If any of the above assumptions prove to be unfounded, we seek a variation to the agreed fee. Details of our proposed scale fee variations for the audit of the Council are set out in the fee analysis on this page.

	Current Year	Note ref	Prior Year
	£m	£m	£m
Scale Fee	£145,266	(1)	£38,376
Additional Work not considered by the scale fee to comply with the requirements of ISA (UK) 315 (Revised)	£20,000-£25,000	(2)	-
Additional work not considered by the scale fee to assess the council's adoption of IFRS 16 and to consider related disclosures in the financial statements	TBC	(2)	-
Other scale fee variations due to the issues identified through the audit	TBC	(3)	-
Total fees	TBC	0	TBC

All fees exclude VAT

(1) Note 1 - PSAA Ltd, in line with the joint statement issued DLUHC (as at that date) and the FRC is responsible for the determination of the final audit fee in respect of 2022/23. In doing so, PSAA Ltd will apply the principles that where auditors have worked in good faith to meet the requirements of the Code of Audit Practice in place at the time the work was conducted (and have reported on work that is no longer required), then they are due the appropriate fee for the work done, including where their procedures were necessary to conclude the audit by the legislatively imposed backstop date by way of a modified or disclaimed opinion and the body is due to pay the applicable fee.

(2) An in-year scale fee variation will be submitted in relation to the work to comply with thin-year requirements of ISA (UK) 315 (Revised). We will report our final proposed scale fee variation on full completion of our work.

(3) An in-year scale fee variation will be submitted in relation to the work performed in the year, any issues identified, and specialists involved in the audit.



09

Appendices

Appendix A – Summary of assurances

Summary of Assurances

As we have set out in Section 5 and the Executive Summary of this report, we anticipate issuing a disclaimer of opinion on the 2023/24 financial statements. Due to the disclaimer of opinion issued on the 2-22/23 financial statements, we do not have assurance over the comparative figures disclosed in the financial statements, the opening balance position on 1 April 2023, the closing reserves balances on 31 March 2024 or the in-year movements recorded in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. This is considered material and pervasive to the 2023/24 financial statements. The table below summarises the audit work we have completed on the 2023/24 financial statements to demonstrate to the committee the level of assurance that has been obtained as a result of the financial statements audit.

Account area	Assurance rating	Summary of work performed
Property, Plant and Equipment ('PPE')	Partial	We have completed testing of the 2023/24 additions and disposals to the fixed asset register, audited the valuation of a sample of assets revalued in 2023/24 and performed procedures to obtain assurance over the existence of assets on the fixed asset register and the Council's right to recognize those assets; however, until we are able to rebuild assurance over PPE additions, disposals and revaluations in the disclaimed periods, we are unable to obtain full assurance over the completeness and valuation of PPE at 31 March 2024.
Investment Property	Substantial*	We are in the process of completing our procedures. Should all matters be resolved, we will have obtained assurance over the closing balance at 31 March 2024.
Intangible Assets	Substantial	We have completed our planned audit procedures in this area and have obtained assurance over the closing balance at 31 March 2024.
Long Term Investments	Substantial	We have completed our planned audit procedures in this area and have obtained assurance over the closing balance at 31 March 2024.
Long Term Debtors	Substantial	We have completed our planned audit procedures in this area and have obtained assurance over the closing balance at 31 March 2024.
Short Term Investments	Substantial	We have completed our planned audit procedures in this area and have obtained assurance over the closing balance at 31 March 2024.
Short Term Debtors	Substantial	We have completed our planned audit procedures in this area and have obtained assurance over the closing balance at 31 March 2024.
Cash and Cash equivalents	Substantial	We have completed our planned audit procedures in this area and have obtained assurance over the closing balance at 31 March 2024.

* Conclusion is subject to full completion of our audit procedures

Appendix A – Summary of assurances

Summary of Assurances

Account area	Assurance rating	Summary of work performed
Creditors (short and long term)	Substantial	We have completed our planned audit procedures in this area and have obtained assurance over the closing balance at 31 March 2024.
Borrowings (short and long term)	Substantial	We have completed our planned audit procedures in this area and have obtained assurance over the closing balance at 31 March 2024.
Provisions (short and long term)	Substantial	We have completed our planned audit procedures in this area and have obtained assurance over the closing balance at 31 March 2024.
Grants received in advance	None	We have completed our planned audit procedures in this area and have obtained assurance over the closing balance at 31 March 2024, but, as we do not have assurance over the opening balance position at 1 April 2023, we are unable to obtain assurance that all of the in-year movements recorded in the statement are accurate.
Local Government Pension Scheme Liability	Substantial*	Other than the outstanding IAS 19 assurance confirmation from the Hampshire Pension Fund, we have completed our planned audit procedures in this area and have obtained assurance over the closing balance at 31 March 2024.
Reserves	None	We have completed our work on the movements in reserves in 2023/24 but, until we have completed our work programme on the rebuilding of assurance following the disclaimed audit opinions, we are unable to obtain assurance over the useable and unusable reserves of the Council reported in the financial statements. We will provide more information on our proposed approach for rebuilding of assurance as part of our 2024/25 audit planning reports.
Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	Partial	We have completed our planned testing on the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in 2023/24 but, as we do not have assurance over the opening balance position at 1 April 2023, we are unable to obtain assurance that all of the in-year movements recorded in the statement are accurate.
Collection Fund	Partial	We have not been able to complete all of our planned testing on the Collection Fund in 2023/24, but, as we do not have assurance over the opening balance position at 1 April 2023, we are unable to obtain assurance that all of the in-year movements recorded in the statement are accurate.
Cash Flow Statement	Partial	We are still in progress with regards to our planned audit procedures on the Cashflow Statement in 2023/24 but, as we do not have assurance over the opening balance position at 1 April 2023, we are unable to obtain assurance that all of the in-year movements recorded in the statement are accurate.
Other Disclosures	Partial*	We have completed of our planned audit procedures on the Other Disclosures in 2023/24 but, as we do not have assurance over the opening balance position at 1 April 2023, we are unable to obtain assurance that all of the in-year movements recorded in the statement are accurate.

* Conclusion is subject to full completion of our audit procedures

Appendix B - Required communications with the Audit Committee

Required communications with the Audit Committee

There are certain communications that we must provide to the Audit Committees 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 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 - July 2024
Planning and audit approach	<p>Communication of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The planned scope and timing of the audit ▶ Any limitations on the planned work to be undertaken ▶ The planned use of internal audit ▶ The significant risks identified <p>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.</p>	Audit Planning Report - July 2024
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 Planning Report - July 2024

Appendix B - Required communications with the Audit Committee (cont'd)

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 - January 2025
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 - January 2025
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: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Management; b. Employees who have significant roles in internal control; or c. Others where the fraud results in a material misstatement in the financial statements. ▶ The nature, timing and extent of audit procedures necessary to complete the audit when fraud involving management is suspected ▶ Matters, if any, to communicate regarding management's process for identifying and responding to the risks of fraud in the entity and our assessment of the risks of material misstatement due to fraud ▶ Any other matters related to fraud, relevant to Audit Committee responsibility. 	Audit Results Report - January 2025

Appendix B - Required communications with the Audit Committee (cont'd)

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 - January 2025
Independence	<p>▶ Communication of relevant information to those charged with governance, to enable them to provide concurrence on the non-audit services being provided.</p> <p>For public interest entities and listed companies, communication of minimum requirements as detailed in the FRC Revised Ethical Standard 2019:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Relationships between EY, the company and senior management, its affiliates and its connected parties ▶ Services provided by EY that may reasonably bear on the auditors' integrity, objectivity and independence ▶ Related safeguards ▶ Fees charged by EY analysed into appropriate categories such as statutory audit fees, tax advisory fees, other non-audit service fees ▶ A statement of compliance with the Ethical Standard, including any non-EY firms or external experts used in the audit 	Audit Results Report - January 2025
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 - January 2025
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 Governance Committee into possible instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations that may have a material effect on the financial statements and that the Governance Committee may be aware of 	Audit results report - January 2025

Appendix B - Required communications with the Audit Committee (cont'd)

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 - January 2025
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 - January 2025
System of quality management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ How the system of quality management (SQM) supports the consistent performance of a quality audit 	Audit Results Report - January 2025
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 - January 2025
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 - January 2025

Appendix C – Outstanding matters

Outstanding matters

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

Item	Actions to resolve	Responsibility
Property, plant and equipment and Investment property.	We are awaiting on responses on queries raised to management.	EY and management
Cash and cash equivalents	We are awaiting on the bank confirmation for RBH	EY and management
Pension Liability	We are awaiting the IAS 19 Assurance letter from Hampshire Pension Fund auditors and the final adjustments to the accounts based on the updated IAS 19 report.	EY and management
Final reviews by manager and partner	There are a number of area of execution that are subject to manager and partner review and there may be further matters arising from the review process. We have not listed each of the areas in detail here.	EY
Annual Report and accounts	Review of the final version of the financial statements to ensure all adjustments have been made correctly Incorporation of EY review comments on disclosure notes	EY and management
Management representation letter	Receipt of signed management representation letter	EY, Management and audit and governance committee
Subsequent events review	Completion of subsequent events procedures to the date of signing the audit report	EY and management

Until all our audit procedures are complete, we cannot confirm the final form of our audit opinion as new issues may emerge or we may not agree on final detailed disclosures in the Annual Report. At this point no issues have emerged that would cause us to modify our opinion, but we should point out that key disclosures on going concern remain to be finalised and audited.

Appendix D – Draft management representation letter

Draft management representation letter

As the audit work is ongoing, we have included below an indicative version of the draft letter. The final wording will be inserted here in the final version of this document.

Management Rep Letter

To be prepared on the entity's letterhead
[Date]

Simon Mathers
Ernst & Young LLP
Grosvenor House
Grosvenor Square
Southampton
SO15 2BE

This letter of representations is provided in connection with your audit of the financial statements of Rushmoor Borough Council (“the Council”) for the year ended 31 March 2024. 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 Council financial position of Rushmoor Borough Council as of 31 March 2024 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended in accordance with the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023/24 (as amended by the Update to the Code and Specifications for Future Codes for Infrastructure Assets (November 2022)).

We understand that the purpose of your audit of our financial statements is to express an opinion thereon and that your audit was conducted in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK), 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 2023/24 (as amended by the Update to the Code and Specifications for Future Codes for Infrastructure Assets (November 2022)).

Appendix D – Management representation letter (cont'd)

Draft management representation letter

As the audit work is ongoing, we have included below an indicative version of the draft letter. The final wording will be inserted here in the final version of this document.

Management Rep Letter

2. We acknowledge, as members of management of the Council, our responsibility for the fair presentation of the financial statements. We believe the financial statements referred to above give a true and fair view of the financial position, financial performance (or results of operations) and cash flows of the Council in accordance with the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023/24 (as amended by the Update to the Code and Specifications for Future Codes for Infrastructure Assets (November 2022)), 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 Council, we believe that the Council has 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 2023/24 (as amended by the Update to the Code and Specifications for Future Codes for Infrastructure Assets (November 2022)), that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

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 financial statements taken as a whole. We have not corrected these differences identified by and brought to the attention from the auditor because [specify reasons for not correcting misstatement].
6. We confirm the Council does not have securities (debt or equity) listed on a recognized exchange.

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

1. We acknowledge that we are responsible to determine that the Council's activities are conducted in accordance with laws and regulations and that we are responsible to identify and address any non-compliance with applicable laws and regulations, including fraud.
2. We acknowledge that we are responsible for the design, implementation and maintenance of a system of internal control to prevent and detect fraud and that we believe we have appropriately fulfilled those responsibilities.

Appendix D – Management representation letter (cont'd)

Draft management representation letter

As the audit work is ongoing, we have included below an indicative version of the draft letter. The final wording will be inserted here in the final version of this document.

Management Rep Letter

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 Council (regardless of the source or form and including without limitation, any allegations by “whistleblowers”), including non-compliance matters:
 - involving financial improprieties;
 - related to laws and regulations that have a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the Council’s financial statements;
 - related to laws and regulations that have an indirect effect on amounts and disclosures in the financial statements, but compliance with which may be fundamental to the operations of the Council’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.

Appendix D – Management representation letter (cont'd)

Draft management representation letter

As the audit work is ongoing, we have included below an indicative version of the draft letter. The final wording will be inserted here in the final version of this document.

Management Rep Letter

2. All material transactions have been recorded in the accounting records and are reflected in the financial statements.
3. We have made available to you all minutes of the meetings of the Council, Cabinet and Governance Committee (or summaries of actions of recent meetings for which minutes have not yet been prepared) held through the year to the most recent meeting on the following date: 27 January 2025.
4. We confirm the completeness of information provided regarding the identification of related parties. We have disclosed to you the identity of the Council's related parties and all related party relationships and transactions of which we are aware, including sales, purchases, loans, transfers of assets, liabilities and services, leasing arrangements, guarantees, non-monetary transactions and transactions for no consideration for the period ended, as well as related balances due to or from such parties at the 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 the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023/24 (as amended by the Update to the Code and Specifications for Future Codes for Infrastructure Assets (November 2022)).
6. We have disclosed to you, and the Council 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.

Appendix D – Management representation letter (cont'd)

Draft management representation letter

As the audit work is ongoing, we have included below an indicative version of the draft letter. The final wording will be inserted here in the final version of this document.

Management Rep Letter

7. From the date of our last management representation letter through the date of this letter we have disclosed to you, to the extent that we are aware, any (1) 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, and (2) ransomware attacks when we paid or are contemplating paying a ransom, regardless of the amount.

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, and have disclosed in the financial statements all guarantees that we have given to third parties.

E. Going Concern

1. Note 1 to the financial statements discloses all the matters of which we are aware that are relevant to the Council'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. Other than described in Note 6 to the financial statements, there have been no events subsequent to period end which require adjustment of or disclosure in the financial statements or notes thereto.

Appendix D – Management representation letter (cont'd)

Draft management representation letter

As the audit work is ongoing, we have included below an indicative version of the draft letter. The final wording will be inserted here in the final version of this document.

Management Rep Letter

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. Climate-related matters

1. We confirm that to the best of our knowledge all information that is relevant to the recognition, measurement, presentation and disclosure of climate-related matters has been considered.
2. The key assumptions used in preparing the financial statements are, to the extent allowable under the requirements of the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023/24 (as amended by the Update to the Code and Specifications for Future Codes for Infrastructure Assets (November 2022), aligned with the statements we have made in the other information or other public communications made by us.

I. Ownership of Assets

1. Except for assets capitalised under finance leases, the Council has satisfactory title to all assets appearing in the balance sheet, and there are no liens or encumbrances on the Council's assets, nor has any asset been pledged as collateral. All assets to which the Council has satisfactory title appear in the balance sheet

J. Reserves

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

K. 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).

Appendix D – Management representation letter (cont'd)

As the audit work is ongoing, we have included below an indicative version of the draft letter. The final wording will be inserted here in the final version of this document.

Management Rep Letter

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 as matters of routine, normal, recurring nature (e.g., examinations by bank and insurance examiners or examinations by taxing authorities) 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.

L. Use of the Work of a Specialist

1. We agree with the findings of the specialists that we engaged to evaluate the property, plant and equipment and investment property valuations, the IAS 19 liability, and the business rates appeals provision 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.

M. Estimates

1. We confirm that the significant judgments made in making the property, plant and equipment and investment property valuations, the IAS 19 liability, and the business rates appeals provision estimates have taken into account all relevant information 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 property, plant and equipment and investment property valuations, the IAS 19 liability, and the business rates appeals provision estimates.
3. We confirm that the significant assumptions used in making the property, plant and equipment and investment property valuations, the IAS 19 liability, and the business rates appeals provision estimates appropriately reflect our intent and ability to carry out any specific courses of action on behalf of the entity.

Appendix D – Management representation letter (cont'd)

Draft management representation letter

As the audit work is ongoing, we have included below an indicative version of the draft letter. The final wording will be inserted here in the final version of this document.

Management Rep Letter

4. We confirm that the disclosures made in the financial statements with respect to the accounting estimate, including those describing estimation uncertainty, are complete and are reasonable in the context of the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023/24 (as amended by the Update to the Code and Specifications for Future Codes for Infrastructure Assets (November 2022)).
5. We confirm that appropriate specialized skills or expertise has been applied in making the property, plant and equipment and investment property valuations, the IAS 19 liability, and the business rates appeals provision estimates.
6. We confirm that no adjustments are required to the accounting estimates and disclosures in the financial statements

N. 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,

(Chief Financial Officer)

(Chairman of the Governance Committee)

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Ernst & Young LLP, 1 More London Place, London, SE1 2AF.

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