



Audit Completion Report

Chesterfield Borough Council

Year ending 31 March 2020

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

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Mazars LLP is the UK firm of Mazars, an international advisory and accountancy group. Mazars LLP is registered by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales.

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Standards and Audit Committee Members
Chesterfield Borough Council
Town Hall
Rose Hill
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14 September 2020

Dear Members

Audit Completion Report – Year ended 31 March 2020

We are pleased to present our Audit Completion Report for the year ended 31 March 2020. The purpose of this document is to summarise our audit conclusions.

The scope of our work, including identified significant audit risks and other areas of management judgement, was outlined in our Audit Strategy Memorandum which we presented in February 2020. Since we issued our Audit Strategy Memorandum the UK has been subject to the challenges and restrictions of COVID-19. We have reviewed our Audit Strategy Memorandum and concluded that the original significant audit risks and other areas of management judgement remain appropriate.

One implication of COVID-19 for the Council was that the deadlines for submission of the draft and audited financial statements were pushed back to 31 August and 30 November respectively. Despite the revised deadlines we acknowledge the difficulties encountered by your team during accounts preparation and audit, and would like to express our thanks for the assistance of your team during our audit.

If you would like to discuss any matters in more detail then please do not hesitate to contact me on 07795 506 766.

Yours faithfully

Mark Dalton
Mazars LLP

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VAT number: 839 8356 73

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose of this report and principal conclusions

The Audit Completion Report sets out the findings from our audit of Chesterfield Borough Council ('the Council') for the year ended 31 March 2020, and forms the basis for discussion at the Standards and Audit Committee meeting on 23 September 2020.

The detailed scope of our work as your appointed auditor for 2019/20 is set out in the National Audit Office's (NAO) Code of Audit Practice. Our responsibilities and powers are derived from the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and, as outlined in our Audit Strategy Memorandum, our audit has been conducted in accordance with International Standards of Auditing (UK) and means we focus on audit risks that we have assessed as resulting in a higher risk of material misstatement.

Sections 2 and 5 of this report outline the detailed findings from our work on the financial statements and our conclusion on the Council's arrangements to achieve economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. Section 2 also includes our conclusions on the audit risks and areas of management judgement in our Audit Strategy Memorandum. The significant audit risks were:

- Management override of control
- Valuation of Property, Plant and Equipment, Investment Properties and Assets held for Sale
- Valuation of net pensions liability

Status of our work

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

Opinion on the financial statements

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

Value for Money conclusion

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

Whole of Government Accounts (WGA)

The NAO has not yet issued its Group Instructions regarding the audit work required and its timetable for audit reporting. The Council is expected to again be below the threshold requiring a detailed review of your WGA submission, and we would expect to be able to provide the information required by NAO by the reporting deadline once confirmed.

Wider powers

The 2014 Act requires us to give an elector, or any representative of the elector, the opportunity to question us about the accounting records of the Council and to consider any objection made to the accounts. We have received no such objections or questions. Further details on the exercise of our wider powers are provided in section 2.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Status of our audit work

The changes to the year-end timetable, the Council's and Mazars' working arrangements and other pressures during the COVID-19 pandemic period has lead to a number of challenges during the 2019/20 year-end accounts closedown and audit process. The financial statements and Value for Money conclusion audit work for the year is substantially complete but there are matters outstanding at the time of preparing this report, including the normal review and completion processes. The matters outstanding at the time of preparing this report are summarised below. We will provide the Standards and Audit Committee with an update in relation to these and any other matters at its 23 September 2020 meeting and in a follow-up letter, prior to signing the auditor's report.

Audit area	Status	Description of outstanding matters
Property, plant and equipment, Investment Properties and Assets held for Sale		We are finalising our sample testing of valuations and completing our testing in relation to the significant audit risk identified in our Audit Strategy Memorandum. The level of detailed testing needed to address the significant risk and to meet our regulators' expectations is high but no material issues have been identified from the work carried out to date. We are anticipating further guidance on the form of the audit opinion wording that should be used against the backdrop of COVID-19. We currently expect that the declaration of uncertainty in property valuations caused by Covid19 will lead to an emphasis of matter paragraph in the audit opinion. We provide more information on this matter at page 7.
Pensions		Part of our assurance over the net pensions liability is derived from specified procedures commissioned from the external auditors of the Derbyshire Pension Fund. We are yet to receive their final report for our consideration. We provide more information on this matter at page 8.
Bank Letter		There is one outstanding bank verification response. We are working with management to follow this up with the third party that has not yet responded.
Whole of Government Accounts (WGA)		NAO Group Instructions for local authority audits are not yet available and WGA returns and audit certificates cannot be issued at the present time. We provide more information on this matter at page 11.
Audit Quality Control and Completion Procedures		Our audit work is undergoing final stages of review by the Engagement Lead. In addition, there are residual procedures to complete, including updating post balance sheet event considerations to the point of issuing the opinion and obtaining final management representations.

Status

-  Likely to result in material adjustment or significant change to disclosures within the financial statements
-  Potential to result in material adjustment or significant change to disclosures within the financial statements
-  Not considered likely to result in material adjustment or change to disclosures within the financial statements

Our audit approach

We provided details of our intended audit approach in our Audit Strategy Memorandum presented to the Standards and Audit Committee in February 2020. We have not made any changes to our audit approach since we issued our Audit Strategy Memorandum.

Materiality

We set materiality at the planning stage of the audit at £2.0m using a benchmark of 2% of Gross Operating Expenditure. Our final assessment of materiality is unchanged. We set our trivial threshold (the level under which individual errors are not communicated to the Standards and Audit Committee), at £60k based on 3% of overall materiality.



2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (CONTINUED)

Misstatements and internal control recommendations

Section 3 confirms that we have no internal control recommendations to report to you.

Section 4 summarises the position in relation to any adjusted or unadjusted misstatements noted as part of our audit as at the time of issuing this report. If any additional misstatements are noted on completion of the outstanding work, these will be reported to the Standards and Audit Committee in a follow-up letter.



2. SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS

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

- our audit conclusions regarding significant risks and key areas of management judgement outlined in the Audit Strategy Memorandum;
- our comments in respect of the accounting policies and disclosures that you have adopted in the financial statements. On page 10 we have concluded whether the financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the financial reporting framework and commented on any significant accounting policy changes that have been made during the year;
- any further significant matters discussed with management; and
- any significant difficulties we experienced during the audit.

Significant risks and key areas of management judgement

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

Significant risk

Management override of controls

Description of the risk

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

How we addressed this risk

We addressed this risk through performing audit work over accounting estimates, journal entries and significant transactions outside the normal course of business or otherwise unusual.

Findings to date

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

2. SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS (CONTINUED)

Significant risk **Valuation of Property, Plant and Equipment, Investment Properties and Assets held for Sale**

The Council's accounts contain material balances and disclosures relating to its holding of property, plant and equipment, investment properties and assets held for sale, with the majority of land and building assets required to be carried at valuation. The Council has adopted a rolling programme for valuations which should see all land and buildings revalued over a five year cycle. Due to high degree of estimation uncertainty associated with those held at valuation, we determined there was a significant risk in this area.

How we addressed this risk

In relation to the valuation of property, plant & equipment, investment properties and assets held for sale we:

- Critically assessed the Council's valuer's scope of work, qualifications, objectivity and independence to carry out the required programme of revaluations;
- Considered whether the overall revaluation methodologies used by the Council's valuer's were in line with industry practice, the CIPFA Code of Practice and the Council's accounting policies;
- Reviewed the reasonableness of the indices applied by the valuer and considered any movement in valuation between the revaluation date and the year end;
- Critically assessed the treatment of the upward and downward revaluations in the Council's financial statements with regards to the requirements of the CIPFA Code of Practice; and
- Critically assessed the approach that the Council adopted to ensure that any assets not subject to revaluation in 2019/20 were materially correct, including considering the robustness of that approach in light of the valuation information reported by the Council's valuer's.

Findings to date

We are finalising our sample testing of valuations and completing our testing in relation to the significant audit risk identified in our Audit Strategy Memorandum. The level of detailed testing needed to address the significant risk and to meet our regulators' expectations is high but no material issues have been identified from the work carried out to date. We will update the Standards and Audit Committee if any significant reporting issues emerge from the testing in progress in these areas.

At the outset of the Covid19 outbreak, set out an expectation that valuers are likely to conclude that there is "material uncertainty" over the valuation of land and buildings at the balance sheet date. The Council's valuer has followed guidance issued by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors and as expected their valuation report concludes that, due the impact of COVID-19 on the property market, there is "material uncertainty" over the valuation of land and buildings and investment properties at the balance sheet date. This is to be disclosed in the notes to the final draft Statement of Accounts. We expect, in line with normal practice, to include reference to this disclosure as an 'emphasis of matter' in our audit report. Our draft Auditor's Report at Appendix B will be updated for any 'emphasis of matter' paragraph we include.

2. SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS (CONTINUED)

Significant risk **Valuation of net pensions liability**

The Council's accounts contain material liabilities relating to the local government pension scheme. The Council uses an actuary to provide an annual valuation of these liabilities in line with the requirements of IAS 19 Employee Benefits. Due to the high degree of estimation uncertainty associated with this valuation, we determined there is a significant risk in this area.

How we addressed this risk

In relation to the valuation of the Council's defined benefit pension liability we:

- Critically assessed the competency, objectivity and independence of the Derbyshire Pension Fund's Actuary, Hymans Robertson;
- Liaised with the auditors of the Derbyshire Pension Fund to gain assurance that the controls in place at the Pension Fund which support the IAS 19 valuation process were operating effectively;
- Test payroll transactions at the Council to provide assurance over the pension contributions which are deducted and paid to the Pension Fund by the Council;
- Reviewed the appropriateness of the Pension Asset and Liability valuation methodologies applied by the Pension Fund Actuary, and the key assumptions included within the valuation. This included comparing them to expected ranges, utilising information provided by PWC, the consulting actuary engaged by the National Audit Office; and
- Agreed the data in the IAS 19 valuation report provided by the Fund Actuary for accounting purposes to the pension accounting entries and disclosures in the Council's financial statements.

Findings to date

The procedures we have undertaken to date have not identified any material errors or uncertainties in the financial statements.

Part of our assurance over the net pensions liability is derived from specified procedures commissioned from the external auditors of the Derbyshire Pension Fund. We are yet to receive their final report for our consideration.

In July 2019, MHCLG consulted on the proposed remedy for the 'McCloud' and 'Sargeant' cases. This indicates that the approach adopted for 2018/19 and 2019/20 is likely to have led to an overstatement of the pension fund liability as at 31 March 2020. Management has obtained an updated valuation report regarding these liabilities and confirmed the updated valuation is not materially different to the original report received. Management do not propose to amend the draft financial statements for this matter and we say more on this at page 13. A further legal case (the 'Goodwin' case) has emerged. Management do not expect the impact of this case to be material but we have requested that management liaise with the Fund's Actuary to support their judgement.

We will update the Standards and Audit Committee if any significant reporting issues emerge from these areas.

2. SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS (CONTINUED)

Management judgement

Flexible Use of Capital Receipts

Description of the management judgement

There are strict rules in place which restrict authorities from spending capital receipts on revenue items. Recent directions from the Secretary of State allow authorities to use capital receipts generated in the years 2016 until 2021 to fund revenue expenditure if it is designed to generate ongoing revenue savings from service reform or any transformational project. There are though rules in place designed to ensure transparency and proper use of these flexibilities. The Council has budgeted in 2019/20 to use around £0.4m of capital receipts, under this option, to support revenue expenditure.

How we addressed this judgement

We reviewed these transactions and the Council's reporting of the use of these flexibilities to determine whether the Secretary of State's statutory guidance was being complied with.

Audit conclusion

Our audit procedures have not identified any matters we need to report to you regarding the Council's compliance with statutory guidance regarding its use in 2019/20 of £0.4m of capital receipts to support revenue expenditure.

Management judgement

Provision for Business Rate Appeals against the Rating List

Description of the management judgement

Management need to make an assumption over the likely level of appeals that will be successful based on their rating knowledge.

How our audit addressed this area of management judgement

We reviewed the basis of the Council's calculation of its provision and assessed whether the provision had been calculated and recorded in accordance with the Council's accounting policy.

Audit conclusion

The procedures we have undertaken have not identified any material errors or uncertainties in the financial statements, or other matters that we wish to bring to Members' attention.

2. SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS (CONTINUED)

Qualitative aspects of the Council's accounting practices

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

Our detailed audit work started on an early version of the draft accounts in the week commencing 27 July 2020, the planned start date for the audit. The final draft accounts were provided to us and published on 10 August 2020, well in advance of the 31 August 2020 deadline for 2019/20. The published accounts were of a good quality and only a small number of audit adjustments arising from the work carried out to date have been required. Although the timetable changes for the accounts completion and audit and other work pressures meant there were some initial delays in receiving the full set of supporting working papers they have overall been of a good standard. Officers are continuing to respond promptly to our audit queries and information requests.

Significant matters discussed with management

Significant matters discussed with management during our audit and which had implications for our audit testing and reporting included:

- The impact of COVID-19 on the Council's business, including any potential impact on risks of material misstatement. This included the disclosures required regarding the key sources of estimation uncertainty that management has made in preparing the Statement of Accounts. The Council's valuer has followed RICS guidance and as expected their valuation report concludes that, due to the impact of COVID-19 on the property market, there is "material uncertainty" over the valuation of land and buildings and investment properties at the balance sheet date. This has now been disclosed in the notes to the final draft Statement of Accounts.
- The Council's adoption of the 'going concern' principle in preparing the Statement of Accounts. The 'going concern' status is confirmed through the 2019/20 local government accounting code, and must also follow International Accounting Standard (IAS) 1: Presentation of Financial Statements. We must comply with a revised ISA (UK) 570 Going Concern, effective for periods commencing on or after 15 December 2019. The above, combined with the impact of COVID-19, means an additional level of scrutiny is required over the going concern assertion in 2019/20. In particular management's explicit considerations of whether the financial statement disclosure for going concern should more explicitly describe the impact of COVID-19.
- The Council's response to relevant legal cases which impact on the valuation of certain pension liabilities. These included the proposed remedy for the 'McCloud' case (which emerged initially in 2018/19 and was reported on in our previous Audit Completion Report) which is likely to have led to an overstatement of the original estimate of the Council's pension fund liability as at 31 March 2020. Management has obtained an updated valuation report regarding the McCloud liabilities and confirmed the updated valuation is not materially different to the original report received. Management do not propose to amend the draft financial statements for this matter and we say more on this at page 13. A further legal case (the 'Goodwin' case) has emerged. Management do not expect the impact of this case to be material but we have requested that management liaise with the Fund's Actuary to support their judgement.
- Work required by our regulators and other risks emerging during the year. As highlighted in our Audit Strategy Memorandum, as a result of independent quality reviews, in particular by the Financial Reporting Council, of our audit work and that of other audit suppliers we have needed to increase the level of work we do on defined benefit pension schemes and valuation of property, plant and equipment. This and other issues emerging during the year have had an impact on the fee required to complete the audit and we will discuss any fee variation request with management on completion of our audit work and update the Committee. All fee variation requests are subject to approval from PSAA.

Significant difficulties during the audit

During the course of the audit we have had the full co-operation of management. The changes to the Council's and Mazars' working arrangements in response to COVID-19, the changes to the national timetable and other pressures across the sector have led to a number of challenges during the year-end accounts closedown and audit process for management and ourselves. There have understandably been some difficulties in carrying out our normal audit procedures and obtaining the audit evidence required to complete the audit. We continue to work with management to complete any remaining audit work and resolve audit queries and are grateful for the co-operation and support provided.

2. SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS (CONTINUED)

Wider responsibilities

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

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

We have not exercised any of these powers as part of our 2019/20 audit.

The 2014 Act also gives rights to local electors and other parties, such as the right to ask questions of the auditor and the right to make an objection to an item of account. We have not received any questions or objections.

Possible delay in Audit certificate

The issue of the Audit Certificate confirms that we have discharged all of our audit responsibilities and that the audit is formally 'closed'. The Audit Certificate would normally be published in our Auditor's Report on the Statement of Accounts alongside the accounts opinion and value for money conclusion. The NAO has not yet issued its Group Instructions for local authority audits. If it looks that these Instructions are to be significantly delayed then we may agree with management to issue the Auditor's Report, but without the Audit Certificate. We would then issue the Audit Certificate separately as soon as we are able to do so. We will update the Standards and Audit Committee when more information is known but at this stage the draft Auditor's Report at Appendix B assumes that we are able to issue the Audit Certificate alongside the accounts audit opinion and value for money conclusion.



3. INTERNAL CONTROL RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

Based the audit work carried out this year, we have not identified any significant control deficiencies in 2019/20 that we are required to report to you and there were none reported in 2018/19 which we were required to follow up.



4. SUMMARY OF MISSTATEMENTS

No material misstatements have been identified during our audit work to date.

A small number of disclosure amendments to the notes to the Statement of Accounts have been agreed with management to correct minor errors. As described at page 10 the notes to the draft Statements are to be amended to include reference to the material uncertainty over the valuation of land and buildings and investment properties, as reported by the Council's valuer. There are no other significant amendments that we are required to highlight in this report.

Unadjusted misstatements

The unadjusted misstatements identified during the course of the audit work completed so far above the trivial reporting threshold of £60k are summarised below. Any unadjusted misstatements above the trivial threshold need to be included in the Management Letter of Representation (Appendix A).

	Draft Statements May 2020 IAS19 Report £000s	September 2020 IAS19 Report £000s	Difference £000s
1 Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement – Past Service Cost	1,095	435	(660)
Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement – Total comprehensive Income and Expenditure	(17,960)	(17,300)	660
Balance Sheet – Net Pension Liability	(60,893)	(60,233)	660
Balance Sheet - Pension Reserve	60,893	60,233	(660)

The draft Statements have been prepared based on the IAS19 actuarial valuation received May 2020. Management has in September 2020 obtained a further valuation report from the Actuary, to take into account changes to the valuation approach for the McCloud liability.

Management do not propose to amend the Statement of Accounts for these differences on the grounds of materiality. The Audit Committee will be updated on any additional unadjusted differences at its 23 September 2020 meeting.

5. VALUE FOR MONEY CONCLUSION

Introduction

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

The overall criterion is that, 'in all significant respects, the Council had proper arrangements to ensure it took properly informed decisions and deployed resources to achieve planned and sustainable outcomes for taxpayers and local people.' To assist auditors in reaching a conclusion on this overall criterion, the following sub-criteria are set out by the NAO:

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

Our approach

Our overall approach is set out in our Audit Strategy Memorandum and involves a detailed risk assessment at the planning stage to identify whether or not a Value for Money (VFM) risk exists. Risk, in the context of our VFM work, is the risk that we come to an incorrect conclusion rather than the risk of the arrangements in place at the Council being inadequate. As set out in our Audit Strategy Memorandum, for the 2019/20 financial year, we identified no significant audit risks. We did though identify the Council's medium term financial sustainability as a matter which we needed to keep under close review during our audit

Before drawing our conclusion we have:

- Reviewed the 2019/20 financial performance and forecasts during the year and considered the Council's financial outturn position as presented in the financial statements.
- Reviewed the 2020/21:
 - Revenue and Capital budgets and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)
 - Treasury Management Strategy, incorporating the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy and Capital and Investment Strategies
- Considered the Council's latest financial monitoring information and its updated medium term outlook
- Updated our risk assessment for any new or emerging issues through discussions with management and updating our review of committee reports;
- Reviewed the Council's Annual Governance Statement for any significant issues; and
- Considered the general findings from our audit work in other areas

From the work performed, no new significant VFM risks were identified and we have no additional matters to report.



5. VALUE FOR MONEY CONCLUSION

Our approach (continued)

In April 2020 NAO issued an update to its VFM guidance to auditors which set out how local auditors should approach considering the impact of COVID-19 on their 2019-20 VFM arrangements conclusion risk assessment. The guidance states that auditors should generally consider local bodies' arrangements and their response to the pandemic as part of their 2020/21 work on VFM arrangements, and that only where there is a clear indication of a significant failure of arrangements during the 2019/20 financial year as a result of COVID-19 would it be appropriate to raise a 2019/20 significant risk. We have not identified any significant failures in the Council's arrangements during 2019/20 and are satisfied that no additional significant VFM risks have been identified in relation to these matters.

Other observations

The COVID-19 lockdown occurred in the final two weeks of the Council's financial year and the impact on the 2019/20 financial outcome was not significant. The 2019/20 £107k underspend for the year was close to earlier forecasts and has been transferred to general reserves to support future spending.

The immediate impact of COVID-19 on the Council's 2020/21 financial position has been significant. At Quarter 1 of 2020/21 the Council was forecasting a net £3.2m deficit for the year, compared to the opening planned surplus of £16k. Income was forecast to be £5.8m lower than budget (largely through the closure of leisure centres and other venues and falls in car parking fees) although Government Grants and savings of around £2.6m were expected to mitigate the net overspend. Income collection rates are expected to be lower for the year but the understanding of the issues is not likely to be fully clear until Quarter 2 reporting was complete.

The full financial impact of COVID-19 in the medium term is not yet certain. The initial outbreak has impacted on the Council's ability to enact its original 2020/21 plan, including income generation and expenditure reductions. We recognise the Council is working through the implications and considerations through business planning and financial planning updates. The 2020/21 budget and MTFP assumptions are continuing to be revisited and updated and it is important the Council continues to ensure its financial resilience is assured over the medium term. There is also an acknowledgement that national funding reviews are unlikely to now take place as originally planned, so creating more uncertainty for the medium term.

The Council's response to the pandemic will be a major focus of our 2020/21 audit and value for money assessment under the new Code of Audit Practice framework and supporting NAO guidance. We will continue to liaise with management and update our understanding of the Council's arrangements as part of our risk assessment and reporting in the new financial year.

Our overall Value for Money conclusion

We have completed our procedures and, as set out in our draft auditor's report included at Appendix B, we intend to issue an unqualified Value for Money conclusion for the 2019/20 financial year.



APPENDIX A

DRAFT MANAGEMENT REPRESENTATION LETTER

Mazars LLP
Park View House
58 The Ropewalk
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xx September 2020

Dear Sirs

Chesterfield Borough Council - audit for year ended 31 March 2020

This representation letter is provided in connection with your audit of the financial statements of Chesterfield Borough Council (the Council) for the year ended 31 March 2019 for the purpose of expressing an opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2019/20 (the Code) and applicable law.

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

My responsibility for the financial statements and accounting information

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

My responsibility to provide and disclose relevant information

I have provided you with:

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

I confirm as Chief Finance Officer that I have taken all the necessary steps to make me aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that you, as auditors, are aware of this information.

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

Accounting records

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

Accounting policies

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

Accounting estimates, including those measured at fair value

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

Executive summary

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APPENDIX A

DRAFT MANAGEMENT REPRESENTATION LETTER (CONTINUED)

Contingencies

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

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

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

There are no contingent gains which should be disclosed.

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

Laws and regulations

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

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

Fraud and error

I acknowledge my responsibility as Chief Finance Officer for the design, implementation and maintenance of internal control to prevent and detect fraud and error.

I have disclosed to you:

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

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

Related party transactions

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

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

Future commitments

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

Subsequent events

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

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

APPENDIX A

DRAFT MANAGEMENT REPRESENTATION LETTER (CONTINUED)

Other matters

I can confirm in relation to the following matters that:

- Brexit - we have assessed the potential impact of the United Kingdom leaving the European Union and that the disclosure in the Narrative Report and note 3 to the Statement of Accounts fairly reflects that assessment.
- COVID-19 - we have assessed the potential impact of the COVID-19 Virus pandemic on the Council and the Statement of Accounts, including the impact of mitigation measures and uncertainties, and are satisfied that the Statement of Accounts and supporting notes fairly reflect that assessment.

Going concern

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

Unadjusted misstatements

I confirm that the effects of the uncorrected misstatements identified at the appendix to this letter are immaterial, both individually and in aggregate, to the financial statements as a whole.

Yours faithfully

Chief Finance Officer

APPENDIX B

DRAFT AUDITOR'S REPORT

TO BE UPDATED FOLLOWING INTERNAL QUALITY REVIEW

Independent auditor's report to the members of Chesterfield Borough Council

Report on the financial statements

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Chesterfield Borough Council for the year ended 31 March 2020, which comprise the Movement in Reserves Statement, Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement, the Housing Revenue Account Income and Expenditure Statement, the Statement of Movements in the Housing Revenue Account, the Collection Fund and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2019/20.

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial position of Chesterfield Borough Council as at 31st March 2019 and of the Council's expenditure and income for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2019/20.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities section of our report. We are independent of the Council in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the ISAs (UK) require us to report to you where:

- the Chief Finance Officer's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is not appropriate; or
- the Chief Finance Officer has not disclosed in the financial statements any identified material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about the Council's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Other information

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Statement of Accounts, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

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

We have nothing to report in this regard.

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DRAFT AUDITOR'S REPORT (CONTINUED)

Responsibilities of the Chief Finance Officer for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Responsibilities of the Chief Finance Officer, the Chief Finance Officer is responsible for the preparation of the Statement of Accounts, which includes the financial statements, in accordance with proper practices as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2019/20, and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view. The Chief Finance Officer is also responsible for such internal control as the Chief Finance Officer determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

The Chief Finance Officer is required to comply with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2019/20 and prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis, unless the Council is informed of the intention for dissolution without transfer of services or function to another entity. The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for assessing each year whether or not it is appropriate for the Council to prepare its accounts on the going concern basis and disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

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

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

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

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

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

We have nothing to report in these respects.

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

Conclusion

On the basis of our work, having regard to the guidance on the specified criterion issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General in April 2020, we are satisfied that, in all significant respects, Chesterfield Borough Council has put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2020.

Basis for conclusion

We have undertaken our review in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General, having regard to the guidance on the specified criterion issued in April 2020, as to whether the Council had proper arrangements to ensure it took properly informed decisions and deployed resources to achieve planned and sustainable outcomes for taxpayers and local people. The Comptroller and Auditor General determined this criterion as that necessary for us to consider in satisfying ourselves whether the Council put in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2020.

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

Responsibilities of the Council

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

APPENDIX B

DRAFT AUDITOR'S REPORT (CONTINUED)

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

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

Use of the audit report

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

Certificate

We certify that we have completed the audit of Chesterfield Borough Council in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Code of Audit Practice.

Mark Dalton

For and on behalf of Mazars LLP

Park View House
58 The Ropewalk
Nottingham
NG1 5DW

September 2020

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APPENDIX C INDEPENDENCE

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

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



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