

NOTICE OF MEETING

Meeting: AUDIT COMMITTEE

Date and Time: FRIDAY, 27 JULY 2018, AT 9.30 AM*

Place: COMMITTEE ROOM 1, APPLETREE COURT,
LYNDHURST

Telephone enquiries to: Lyndhurst (023) 8028 5000
023 8028 5588 - ask for Andy Rogers
E-mail: andy.rogers@nfdc.gov.uk

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

***Members of the public may speak in accordance with the Council's public participation scheme:**

- (a) immediately before the meeting starts, on items within the Committee's terms of reference which are not on the public agenda; and/or**
 - (b) on individual items on the public agenda, when the Chairman calls that item.**
- Speeches may not exceed three minutes. Anyone wishing to speak should contact the name and number shown above.**

Bob Jackson
Chief Executive

Appletree Court, Lyndhurst, Hampshire. SO43 7PA
www.newforest.gov.uk

This Agenda is also available on audio tape, in Braille, large print and digital format

AGENDA

Apologies

1. MINUTES

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 31 May 2018 as a correct record.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To note any declarations of interest made by members in connection with an agenda item. The nature of the interest must also be specified.

Members are asked to discuss any possible interests with Democratic Services prior to the meeting.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

To note any issues raised during the public participation period.

4. AUDIT RESULTS REPORT 2017/18 (Pages 1 - 44)

To receive the report of the External Auditor, including the Management Representation Letter.

5. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (Pages 45 - 50)

To consider the Annual Governance Statement for 2017/18.

6. ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT 2017/18 (TO FOLLOW)

To consider the Annual Financial Report.

7. AUDIT COMMITTEE WORK PLAN (Pages 51 - 52)

To consider the Audit Committee's Work Plan.

8. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

To:

Councillors:

A D O'Sullivan (Chairman)
J G Ward (Vice-Chairman)
A R Alvey
W G Andrews

Councillors:

J D Heron
Mrs E L Lane
Miss A Sevier
C A Wise

New Forest District
Council

Audit results report

Year ended 31 March 2018

July 2018



Building a better
working world

16 July 2018



Dear Audit Committee Members

We are pleased to attach our audit results report for the forthcoming meeting of the Audit Committee. This report summarises our preliminary audit conclusion in relation to the audit of the New Forest District Council for 2017/18.

We have substantially completed our audit of New Forest District Council (the Council) for the year ended 31 March 2018.

We confirm that we expect to issue an unqualified audit opinion on the financial statements in the form that appears in Section 3, before the statutory deadline of 31 July 2018. We also have no matters to report on your arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in your use of resources.

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

We would like to thank your staff for their help during the engagement.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss the contents of this report with you at the Audit Committee meeting on 27 July 2018.

Yours faithfully

Kevin Suter

Associate Partner

For and on behalf of Ernst & Young LLP

Encl

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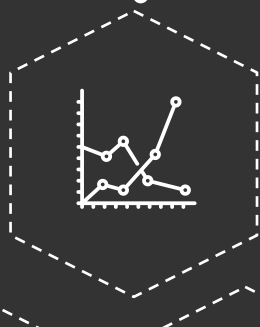
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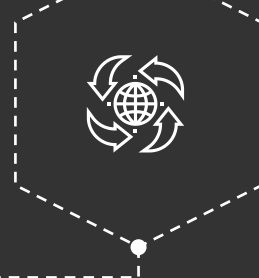
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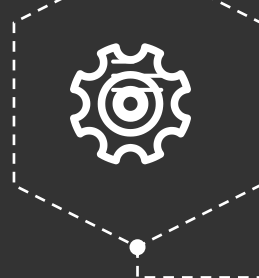
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In April 2015 Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) issued "Statement of responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies". It is available from the via the PSAA website (www.PSAA.co.uk). The Statement of responsibilities serves as the formal 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 (updated February 2017)" 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 Audit Committee and management of New Forest District Council in accordance with the statement of responsibilities. Our work has been undertaken so that we might state to them 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 Audit Committee and management of New Forest District Council for this report or for the opinions we have formed. It should not be provided to any third-party without our prior written consent.



01

Executive Summary

Overview of the audit

Scope and Materiality

In our Audit Plan, presented at the March 2018 Audit Committee meeting, we provided you with an overview of our audit scope and approach for the audit of the financial statements. We carried out our audit in accordance with this plan.

We planned our procedures using materiality of £2,051k. We have reassessed this based on the actual results for the financial year and have increased this amount to £2,143k. The threshold for reporting audit differences has increased from £103k to £107k. The basis of our assessment of materiality has remained consistent with prior years at 2% of gross expenditure.

We also identified areas where misstatement at a lower level than our overall materiality level might influence the reader and developed an audit strategy specific to these areas, including:

- Remuneration disclosures including exit packages [strategy applied: we agreed all disclosures in the remuneration report back to source data, and exit packages to the agreed and approved amounts]
- Related party transactions [strategy applied: we tested the completeness of related party disclosures and the accuracy of all disclosures by checking back to supporting evidence]

Status of the audit

We have completed all of our audit work, the following matters are outstanding at the time of writing this report:

- Outstanding sample items on Debtors and Non-Domestic Rates Appeals provision
- Review of the final version of the financial statements
- Completion of subsequent events review
- Receipt of the signed Letter of Representation
- Approval of the accounts by the Audit Committee on 27 July 2018

We expect to issue the audit certificate at the same time as the audit opinion on 27 July 2018.

Executive Summary

Audit differences

There are two unadjusted audit differences arising from our audit, one relating to a prior year unadjusted error and one relating to a difference on the IAS19 valuation, where there is a difference between the actual at 31 March 2018 and the estimate.

We have identified audit differences with an aggregated impact of £3,690k which have been adjusted by management.

Details can be found in Section 4 Audit Differences.

Areas of audit focus

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

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

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

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

Control observations

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

As part of our work, we obtained an understanding of internal control sufficient to plan our audit and determine the nature, timing and extent of testing performed. Although our audit was not designed to express an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control, we are required to communicate to you significant deficiencies in internal control identified during our audit.

There are no matters we wish to report.



Executive Summary

Value for money

We have considered your arrangements to take informed decisions; deploy resources in a sustainable manner; and work with partners and other third parties. Our risk assessment considered both the potential financial impact of any issues identified, and also the likelihood that the issue will be of interest to local taxpayers, the Government and other stakeholders. This has resulted in the identification of no significant risks at planning and this is consistent with our year end findings.

We have no matters to report about your arrangements to secure economy efficiency and effectiveness in your use of resources.

Other reporting issues

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

We have performed the procedures required by the National Audit Office (NAO) on the Whole of Government Accounts submission, as the Council is below the specified audit threshold of £500 million, we did not perform any audit procedures on the consolidation pack. We have no matters to report.

We have no other matters to report.

Independence

Please refer to Section 9 for our update on independence. There are no issues to report.



02 Areas of Audit Focus



Areas of Audit Focus

Significant risk

Misstatements due to fraud or error

What is the risk?

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

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

We identify and respond to this fraud risk on every audit engagement.

What judgements are we focused on?

We focused on the following:

- ▶ Understanding the risks of fraud and the controls put in place to address those risks by management and how the Audit Committee oversees management's processes over fraud.
- ▶ Considering the effectiveness of management's controls designed to address the risk of fraud.
- ▶ Determining an appropriate strategy to address those identified risks of fraud.
- ▶ Performing mandatory procedures in respect of journal entries, estimates and significant unusual transactions.

What did we do?

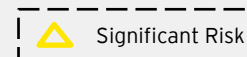
- ▶ Wrote to the s151 officer, Chair of the Audit Committee, Head of Internal Audit and Monitoring Officer in this regard and reviewed their responses.
- ▶ Documented our understanding of the controls relevant to this significant risk and considered they have been appropriately designed.
- ▶ Tested the appropriateness of journal entries recorded in the general ledger and other adjustments made in preparing the financial statements.
- ▶ Reviewed accounting estimates for evidence of management bias.
- ▶ Evaluated the business rationale for any significant unusual transactions.

What are our conclusions?

We have not identified any material weaknesses in controls or evidence of material management override.

We have not identified any instances of inappropriate judgements being applied.

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





Areas of Audit Focus

Significant risk

Risk of fraud in revenue and expenditure recognition

What is the risk?

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

Having assessed the key income and expenditure streams of the Council, we judged that there was material opportunity and incentive for the incorrect classification of revenue spend as capital expenditure.

What judgements are we focused on?

We focused on:

- ▶ Understanding the controls put in place by management relevant to this significant risk
- ▶ Considering whether or not purchase invoices were being inappropriately classified as capital and REFCUS
- ▶ Whether management were inappropriately processing journals that transferred amounts from revenue to capital

What did we do?

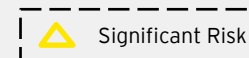
- ▶ Documented our understanding of the controls relevant to this significant risk and confirmed they have been appropriately designed.
- ▶ Obtained breakdown of capital additions in the year and reviewed the descriptions to identify any items that could be revenue in nature.
- ▶ Amended our sample sizes when testing additions and REFCUS to reflect the existence of this risk. Agreed samples to source documentation to ensure the capital/revenue split was reasonable.
- ▶ Designed journal procedures to identify and review adjustment manual journals that moved amounts from revenue codes to capital codes.

What are our conclusions?

Our testing did not identify any material misstatements from revenue and expenditure recognition.

Capital additions and REFCUS were appropriately classified.

Overall our audit work did not identify any material issues or unusual transactions to indicate any misreporting of the Authority's financial position.





Areas of Audit Focus

Other areas of audit focus

Property, Plant and Equipment Valuation

What is the risk?

Material misstatement of the net assets of the Council as a result of inappropriate judgemental inputs and/or estimation techniques to calculate the year-end balances recorded in the balance sheet.

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

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

What did we do?

In line with the Code of Local Authority Accounting, the Authority have performed a revaluation of property, plant and equipment during 2017/18. We have:

- ▶ Considered the work performed by the Council's in house valuer, including the adequacy of the scope of the work performed, their professional capabilities and the results of their work;
- ▶ Challenged the assumptions used by the Council's valuer by reference to external evidence;
- ▶ Sample tested key asset information used by the valuers in performing their valuation (e.g. building areas to support valuations based on price per square metre);
- ▶ 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.

What are our conclusions?

Our work performed has not identified any risks of material misstatement, the fair value of Property, Plant and Equipment are recorded correctly in the balance sheet.



Areas of Audit Focus

Other areas of audit focus

Valuation of Council Dwellings

What is the risk?

Material misstatement of the net assets of the Authority as a result of inappropriate judgemental inputs and/or estimation techniques to calculate the year-end balances recorded in the balance sheet.

The value of Council Dwellings represents a significant balance in the Council's accounts and are subject to valuation changes, impairment reviews and depreciation charges. Management is required to make material judgemental inputs and apply estimation techniques to calculate the year-end balances recorded in the balance sheet. The basis of the depreciation calculation is also required to be amended in 2017/18 as previous transitional arrangements have ended.

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

What judgements are we focused on?

We focused on the following:

- ▶ The adequacy of the scope of the work performed by the value including their professional capabilities
- ▶ The reasonableness of the underlying assumptions used by the Authority's expert valuer
- ▶ Revised calculation of HRA depreciation, following 'proper practices' in 2017/18.

What did we do?

- ▶ Evaluate the changes in your application of the Beacon Methodology;
- ▶ Understand the movement in the valuation of Council Dwellings and whether this gives rise to a significant risk for 2017/18;
- ▶ Consider the annual cycle of valuations to ensure that Council Dwellings have been valued within a 5 year rolling programme as required by the Code;
- ▶ Review Beacons that are not subject to valuation in 2017/18 to confirm that the remaining Council Dwellings are not materially misstated; and
- ▶ Test accounting entries have been correctly processed in the financial statements
- ▶ Evaluate the revised method of HRA depreciation and the levels of componentisation, to supporting evidence and benchmarking to other authorities

What are our conclusions?

Our work performed over the valuation of Council Dwellings has not identified any material misstatements.

In term of the revised method of HRA depreciation, we have challenged the methodology and the assumptions made by management, along with performing benchmarking against other authorities. This has resulted in an audit difference which is included with further detail in section 4.



Areas of Audit Focus

Other areas of audit focus

Pension Liability Valuation

What is the risk?

The Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting and IAS19 require the Council to make extensive disclosures within its financial statements regarding the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) in which it is a scheduled body.

The Council's current pension fund deficit is a material and sensitive item and the Code requires that this liability be disclosed on the Council's balance sheet. The information disclosed is based on the IAS 19 report issued to the Council by the actuary to the administering body. Accounting for this scheme involves significant estimation and judgement.

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

What judgements are we focused on?

We focused on the following:

- ▶ The reasonableness of the underlying assumptions used by the Council's expert - Hymans Robertson.
- ▶ Ensuring the information supplied to the actuary in relation to New Forest District Council was complete and accurate
- ▶ Ensuring the accounting entries and disclosures made in the financial statements were consistent with the report from Aon Hewitt.

What did we do?

- ▶ Liaised with the auditors of the administering authority (Hampshire County Council), to obtain assurances over the information supplied to the actuary in relation to New Forest District Council.
- ▶ Assessed the work of the Pension Fund actuary including the assumptions they have used by relying on the work of PWC - Consulting Actuaries commissioned by National Audit Office for all Local Government sector auditors, and considering any relevant reviews by the EY actuarial team.
- ▶ Reviewed and tested the accounting entries and disclosures made within the Council's financial statements in relation to IAS19.

What are our conclusions?

Our testing has not identified any material misstatements of the Council's liability or related disclosures in this regard.

We have obtained the relevant assurances from Hampshire County Council, assessed the work of the Pension Fund actuary as well as relying on the work of Pwc which has been reviewed by the EY actuarial team.

There is a difference on the Hampshire Pension Fund figures, between the Actuary's estimate of the total net assets of the Fund which is £6,582M and the actual total net assets of the Fund per HPF's accounts which is £6,613m. Therefore, a total difference of £31m.

Of this difference, 2.56% relates to NFDC and is included on our differences schedule in section 4.



Areas of Audit Focus

Other areas of audit focus

Restatement of the CIES and EFA

What is the risk?

The Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting requires the Council to present the net cost of services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account, and its Expenditure & Funding Account, in accordance with the operating structure of the Council.

During the year, the Portfolios have changed within the Local Authority. This change will require a full retrospective restatement of impacted statements.

What did we do?

- ▶ Reviewed the expenditure and funding analysis, CIES and associated notes.
- ▶ Reviewed the analysis of how these figures are derived, how the ledger system has been re-mapped to reflect the Council's change in organisational structure and how overheads are apportioned across the service areas reported.
- ▶ Agreed the restated comparative figures back to the Council's segmental analysis and supporting working papers.

What are our conclusions?

We have not identified any misstatements through our work performed on the restatement of the CIES and EFA.



03 Audit Report



Audit Report

Draft audit report

Our opinion on the financial statements

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of New Forest District Council for the year ended 31 March 2018 under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. The financial statements comprise the:

- ▶ Movement in Reserves Statement;
- ▶ Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement;
- ▶ Balance Sheet;
- ▶ Cash Flow Statement;
- ▶ and the related notes 1 to 55;
- ▶ Housing Revenue Account Income and Expenditure Statement, the Movement on the Housing Revenue Account Statement, and related notes 1 to 7; and
- ▶ Collection Fund and the related notes 1 to 7

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 2017/18.

In our opinion the financial statements:

- ▶ give a true and fair view of the financial position of New Forest District Council as at 31 March 2018 and of its expenditure and income for the year then ended; and
- ▶ have been prepared properly in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2017/18.

Basis for opinion

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

We are independent of the 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 the Comptroller and Auditor General's (C&AG) AGN01, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

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

- ▶ the Responsible Financial (s151) Officer's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is not appropriate; or
- ▶ the Responsible Financial (s151) 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 other information comprises the information included in the Annual Financial Report 2017/2018 set out on pages 5 to 14, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Responsible Financial (s151) Officer is responsible for the other information.

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

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.



Audit Report

Our opinion on the financial statements

If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of the other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

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

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit, having regard to the guidance issued by the C&AG in November 2017, we are satisfied that, in all significant respects, New Forest District Council put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2018.

Matters on which we report by exception

We report to you if:

- ▶ in our opinion the annual governance statement is misleading or inconsistent with other information forthcoming from the audit or our knowledge of the Council;
- ▶ we issue a report in the public interest under section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014;
- ▶ we make written recommendations to the audited body under Section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014;
- ▶ we make an application to the court for a declaration that an item of account is contrary to law under Section 28 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014;
- ▶ we issue an advisory notice under Section 29 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014; or
- ▶ we make an application for judicial review under Section 31 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

We have nothing to report in these respects

Responsibility of the Responsible Financial (s151) Officer

As explained more fully in the Statement of Responsibilities set out on page 4, the Responsible Financial (s151) Officer is responsible for the preparation of the Annual Financial Report 2017/2018, 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 2017/18, and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view.

In preparing the financial statements, the Responsible Financial (s151) Officer is responsible for assessing the Council's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Authority either intends to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

The 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.

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 <https://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities>. This description forms part of our auditor's report.



Audit Report

Our opinion on the financial statements

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

We have undertaken our review in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice, having regard to the guidance on the specified criterion issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) in November 2017, as to whether New Forest District Council had proper arrangements to ensure it took properly informed decisions and deployed resources to achieve planned and sustainable outcomes for taxpayers and local people. The Comptroller and Auditor General determined this criterion as that necessary for us to consider under the Code of Audit Practice in satisfying ourselves whether New Forest District Council put in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2018.

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, New Forest District Council had put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

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

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

Certificate

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

Use of our report

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



04 Audit Differences





Audit Differences

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

Summary of adjusted differences

We highlight the following misstatements greater than £1,606,875 which have been corrected by management that were identified during the course of our audit:

- ▶ £3,146k HRA depreciation which was initially based on a calculation using a useful life for the structure of housing of 146 years.
- ▶ One other adjustment with a value of £543k relating to a reclassification between other land & buildings, and assets held for sale.

There were two unadjusted differences

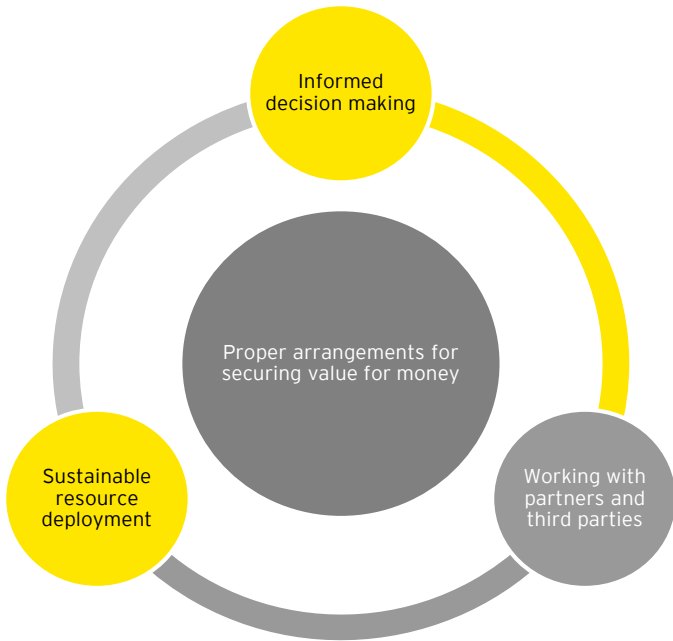
- ▶ £799k relating to New Forest’s share of the pension fund asset difference, as detailed in Section 2.
- ▶ £204k relating to a prior year unadjusted error, this is purely the turnaround impact in 2017/18.



05

Value for Money Conclusion





Background

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

For 2017/18 this is based on the overall evaluation criterion:

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

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

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

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

Overall conclusion

Our risk assessment supports the planning of sufficient work to enable us to deliver a safe conclusion on arrangements to secure value for money and enables us to determine the nature and extent of further work that may be required. If we do not identify any significant risks there is no requirement to carry out further work. Our risk assessment considered both the potential financial impact of the any issues and also the likelihood that an issue will be of interest to local taxpayers, the Government and other stakeholders.

Our procedures have not identified any significant risks around your arrangements. We therefore expect having no matters to report about your arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in your use of resources.



06 Other reporting issues



Other reporting issues

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

We must give an opinion on the consistency of the financial and non-financial information in the New Forest District Council Financial Report for the year ended 2017/18 with the audited financial statements

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

Financial information in the New Forest District Council Financial Report for the year ended 2017/18 was consistent with the audited financial statements.

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

Whole of Government Accounts

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

We have no issues to raise.

Other reporting issues

Other powers and duties

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

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

Other matters

As required by ISA (UK&I) 260 and other ISAs specifying communication requirements, we must tell you significant findings from the audit and other matters if they are significant to your oversight of the Authority’s financial reporting process. This includes 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;
- Related parties;
- External confirmations;
- Going concern; and
- Consideration of laws and regulations.

Other reporting issues

Other matters

IFRS 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers The 2018/19 Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting for the United Kingdom determines how IFRS 15 Revenue from Customers with Contracts will be adopted by local government bodies. In your view IFRS 15 will not have a material impact on this Authority's financial statements as the income streams of the Authority are not complex, with a significant proportion of government grants and taxation.

IFRS 9 Financial Instruments: The 2018/19 Code introduces IFRS 9 on financial instruments and this will make changes to the accounting for investments and introduces a new model for financial assets including new classifications and the introduction of an expected credit loss model for particular asset types. The transitional reporting requirements for IFRS 9 have been adopted such that the preceding financial year does not require restatement. Based on the current values this will have a material impact on the Authority and we will work with them on this transition.



07

Assessment of Control Environment



Assessment of Control Environment

Financial controls

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

As part of our audit of the financial statements, we obtained an understanding of internal control sufficient to plan our audit and determine the nature, timing and extent of testing performed. 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 not identified any significant deficiencies in the design or operation of an internal control that might result in a material misstatement in your financial statements of which you are not aware.



08

Data Analytics



Use of Data Analytics in the Audit

Data analytics – Income & expenditure testing, payroll testing and journals

Analytics Driven Audit

Data analytics

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

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

In 2017/18, our use of these analysers in the Council's audit included covered general income and expenditure, payroll costs and journals to identify and focus our testing on those entries we deem to have the highest inherent risk to the audit.

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

Journal Entry Analysis

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

Payroll Analysis

We also use our analysers in our payroll testing. We obtain all payroll transactions posted in the year from the payroll system and perform completeness analysis over the data, including reconciling the total amount to the General Ledger trial balance. We then analyse the data against a number of specifically designed procedures.



Independence

Confirmation



We confirm that there are no changes in our assessment of independence since our confirmation in our audit planning board report dated 7 February 2018.

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

We consider that our independence in this context is a matter which you should review, as well as us. It is important that you consider the facts known to you and come to a view. If you would like to discuss any matters concerning our independence, we will be pleased to do this at the meeting of the Audit Committee on 27 July 2018.

We confirm we have undertaken non-audit work outside the PSAA Code requirements in relation to our work on the New Forest District Council.

Independence

Fee analysis

As part of our reporting on our independence, we set out below a summary of the fees paid for the year ended 31 March 2018.

We confirm that we have undertaken no non-audit work outside the PSAA Code requirements.

	Final Fee 2017/18	Planned Fee 2017/18	Scale Fee 2017/18	Final Fee 2016/17
	£	£	£	£
Total Audit Fee - Code work	56,461*	55,482	55,482	56,462
Housing Benefit Certification	5,492**	5,492	5,492	4,253
Total Fee	61,953	60,974	60,974	60,715

*The final fee for our audit work, of £56,461, will be confirmed following the presentation of this report at the Audit Committee. We have discussed the additional fee of £979, for the additional work on the restatement of the CIES and EFA as a result of the changes to the Council's Portfolio structure. We will also need to agree the additional fee of £979 with PSAA Ltd.

** Our final fee for our work on the Housing Benefit subsidy claim will be confirmed following completion of the work by the deadline of 30 November 2018; and reported in our certification report.







10 Appendices

Appendix A

Required communications with the Audit Committee

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

			 Our Reporting to you
Required communications	 What is reported?	  When and where	
Terms of engagement	Confirmation by the Resources, Audit and Performance 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.	The statement of responsibilities serves as the formal terms of engagement between the PSAA's appointed auditors and audited bodies.	
Planning and audit approach	Communication of the planned scope and timing of the audit, any limitations and the significant risks identified.	Audit planning report - March 2018	
Significant findings from the audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Our view about the significant qualitative aspects of accounting practices including accounting policies, accounting estimates and financial statement disclosures ▶ Significant difficulties, if any, encountered during the audit ▶ Significant matters, if any, arising from the audit that were discussed with management ▶ Written representations that we are seeking ▶ Expected modifications to the audit report ▶ Other matters if any, significant to the oversight of the financial reporting process 	Audit results report - July 2018	

Appendix B




		Our Reporting to you
Required communications	What is reported?	When and where
Going concern	<p>Events or conditions identified that may cast significant doubt on the entity's ability to continue as a going concern, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Whether the events or conditions constitute a material uncertainty ▶ Whether the use of the going concern assumption is appropriate in the preparation and presentation of the financial statements ▶ The adequacy of related disclosures in the financial statements 	No conditions or events were identified, either individually or together to raise any doubt about New Forest District Council's ability to continue for the 12 months from the date of our report
Misstatements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Uncorrected misstatements and their effect on our audit opinion ▶ The effect of uncorrected misstatements related to prior periods ▶ A request that any uncorrected misstatement be corrected ▶ Material misstatements corrected by management 	Audit results report- July 2018
Subsequent events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Enquiry of the Authority Committee where appropriate regarding whether any subsequent events have occurred that might affect the financial statements. 	Audit results report- July 2018
Fraud	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Enquiries of the Authority Committee to determine whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud affecting the Authority ▶ Any fraud that we have identified or information we have obtained that indicates that a fraud may exist ▶ Unless all of those charged with governance are involved in managing the Authority, any identified or suspected fraud involving: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Management; b. Employees who have significant roles in internal control; or c. Others where the fraud results in a material misstatement in the financial statements. ▶ The nature, timing and extent of audit procedures necessary to complete the audit when fraud involving management is suspected ▶ Any other matters related to fraud, relevant to Resources, Audit and Performance Committee responsibility. 	<p>Audit results report - July 2018</p> <p>Enquiries were made during the audit, and there are no issues to report to you.</p>

Appendix B




Our Reporting to you

Required communications	What is reported?	When and where
Related parties	<p>Significant matters arising during the audit in connection with the Authority'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 Authority 	<p>Audit results report - July 2018</p> <p>No issues to report.</p>
Independence	<p>Communication of all significant facts and matters that bear on EY's, and all individuals involved in the audit, objectivity and independence.</p> <p>Communication of key elements of the audit engagement partner's consideration of independence and objectivity such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The principal threats ▶ Safeguards adopted and their effectiveness ▶ An overall assessment of threats and safeguards ▶ Information about the general policies and process within the firm to maintain objectivity and independence <p>Communications whenever significant judgments are made about threats to objectivity and independence and the appropriateness of safeguards put in place.</p>	<p>Audit Planning Report - March 2018</p> <p>Audit Results Report - July 2018</p>

Appendix B

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

Appendix B

		 Our Reporting to you
Required communications	 What is reported?	 When and where
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 - July 2018
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 - July 2018 No issues to report.
Auditors report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Any circumstances identified that affect the form and content of our auditor's report 	Audit results report - July 2018 No circumstances identified.
Fee Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Breakdown of fee information when the audit planning report is agreed ▶ Breakdown of fee information at the completion of the audit ▶ Any non-audit work 	Audit planning report - March 2018 Audit results report - July 2018

Management representation letter

Management Rep Letter

To be prepared on the entity's letterhead

Ernst & Young Wessex House, 19 Threefield Lane, Southampton, SO14 3QB

This letter of representations is provided in connection with your audit of the financial statements of New Forest District Council ("the Council") for the year ended 31 March 2018. 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 New Forest District Council as of 31 March 2018 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended in accordance with CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2017/18.

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

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

A. Financial Statements and Financial Records

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 2017/18.
2. We acknowledge 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 and of its expenditure and income of the Authority in accordance with the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2017/18 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. We believe that the Authority 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 2017/18 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.

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 internal controls to prevent and detect fraud.

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

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

- ▶ involving financial statements;

- ▶ related to laws and regulations that have a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the 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

Management representation letter

Management Rep Letter

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 as agreed in terms of the audit engagement.
 - ▶ Additional information that you have requested from us for the purpose of the audit and
 - ▶ Unrestricted access to persons within the entity from whom you determined it necessary to obtain audit evidence.
2. All material transactions have been recorded in the accounting records and are reflected in the financial statements.
3. We have made available to you all minutes of the meetings of the Council and Audit Committees held through the year to the most recent meeting on the following date: 27 July 2018.
4. We confirm the completeness of information provided regarding the identification of related parties. We have disclosed to you the identity of the Authority's related parties and all related party relationships and transactions of which we are aware, including sales, purchases, loans, transfers of assets, liabilities and services, leasing arrangements, guarantees, non-monetary transactions and transactions for no consideration for the 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 significant assumptions we used in making accounting estimates, including those measured at fair value, are reasonable.
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.

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 litigation and claims, both actual and contingent.

E. Subsequent Events

1. There have been no events subsequent to period end which require adjustment of or disclosure in the financial statements or notes thereto.

F. Accounting Estimates

1. We believe that the significant assumptions we used in making accounting estimates, including those measured at fair value, are reasonable.
2. Accounting estimates recognised or disclosed in the financial statements:
 - ▶ We believe the measurement processes, including related assumptions and models, we used in determining accounting estimates is appropriate and the application of these processes is consistent.
 - ▶ The disclosures relating to accounting estimates are complete and appropriate in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework.
 - ▶ The assumptions we used in making accounting estimates appropriately reflects our intent and ability to carry out specific courses of action on behalf of the entity, where relevant to the accounting estimates and disclosures.
 - ▶ No subsequent event requires an adjustment to the accounting estimates and disclosures included in the financial statements.

Management representation letter

Management Rep Letter

G. 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.

H. Use of the work of a specialist

1. We agree with the findings of the specialists that we engaged to evaluate the Local Government Pension Fund balances and have adequately considered the qualifications of the experts 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 experts 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.

Yours Faithfully,

Alan Bethune
Responsible Financial (S151) Officer

I confirm that this letter has been discussed and agreed at the New Forest District Council Audit Committee on 27 July 2018.

Cllr Alan O'Sullivan
Chairman of the Audit Committee

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ED None

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THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL 2017/18

1. Scope of Responsibility

New Forest District Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law, proper standards are adhered to and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. It has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999, to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to best value. In discharging this overall responsibility New Forest District Council is required to have in place proper arrangements for the Governance of the Council's affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions and arrangements for the management of risk.

New Forest District Council has approved and adopted a code of good governance, which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government". This statement explains how New Forest District Council has complied with the code and also meets the requirements of regulation 13 of the Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015 in relation to the publication of a statement of corporate governance.

2. The Purpose of the Governance Framework

The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, as well as the culture and values, by which the authority is directed and controlled and its activities, through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the community. It enables the authority to monitor the achievements of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost effective services.

The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure in delivery of policies, achieving aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks materialising and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

3. The Governance Framework

The good governance framework centres on the following 7 core principles:

A	Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of law.
B	Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.
C	Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits.
D	Determining the interventions necessary to optimize the achievement of the intended outcomes.
E	Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.
F	Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.
G	Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.

The Council's Corporate Plan "Delivering for our Communities", sets out the Council's overarching vision, values and strategy and sets out what the Council aims to achieve for the period 2016 - 2020. The Council aims to deliver good quality services that provide value for money and which are aligned to the needs and priorities of the local community.

The Council is concerned to ensure quality of service delivery, with special consideration to lesser financial resource availability and uses a variety of mechanisms to assess this. This helps inform future service delivery.

The Council continually revises its Medium Term forecast according to latest information received around likely funding levels and expenditure increases. The Council's current strong financial position and on-going efficiencies programme (including the development of new income generation), in order to protect the front-line service delivery, underpinned by the healthy General Fund reserve will enable the Council to respond to changes accordingly.

The Council has also developed, over the years, a number of successful joint or collaborative working arrangements with the public and other agencies. This has continued into 2017/18 with the New Forest National Park Authority and the Ringwood Gateway.

The Council's Constitution sets out how the Council operates, including the roles, responsibilities and relationships between Council, the Executive (Cabinet), Audit Committee and other bodies such as the Overview and Scrutiny Panels and Officers in respect of policy and decision-making processes. There is a comprehensive scheme of delegations to officers to ensure timely decision-making. The Constitution also sets out details on Codes of Conduct and key policies such as Financial Regulations and Contract Standing Orders as to Contracts. It is important that the Council operates efficiently and transparently and is accountable to the local people.

The Constitution is reviewed and updated where opportunities for improvement are identified.

The Risk Management Framework is in place to ensure that risks to the Council in achieving its strategic objectives, both at a corporate and service level, are more consciously identified, assessed and managed. It aligns risk with existing arrangements, in particular the performance management framework with an assessment of risk forming part of the Service Planning processes.

In 2016 CIPFA/SOLACE carried out a review of their framework to ensure that it still reflects the environment in which Councils are operating and to also reflect the International framework which had been developed by CIPFA and the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC) in 2014. As a result of their review in April 2016 CIPFA/SOLACE published a new framework document "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016 Edition" with the key focus of governance processes and structures centring on the attainment of sustainable economic, societal and environmental outcomes. Council approved the revised code in April 2017 which follows the recommended text in the CIPFA/SOLACE framework.

4. Review of Effectiveness

The Council has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. The review of effectiveness is informed by the work of senior officers within the authority who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the Internal Audit's annual report, and also by comments made by the external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates.

This Council has always maintained a strong internal control environment and sees risk management as an integral part of everyday management. It has long established principles on the way its business is conducted enabling good governance and control of risk. Factors that influence the control environment include; integrity, ethics, operating style and the way management and members assign responsibility and authority.

A Summary of the review activities undertaken during 2017/18 are included below:

1. The Constitution and other Council Policies were reviewed and improvements implemented including:
 - Development of the Local Plan
 - Counter Fraud Strategy, whistleblowing and anti-money laundering policies
 - Access to information policy, reviewed in light of the Council's restructuring (and will be reviewed again in light of GDPR)
 - The Council's publication scheme has been reviewed, and is constantly updated.
2. Adaptations have been made during the year to the Councils executive and service management teams, two years on from the original inception of the new structure implemented by the then new Chief Executive. The changes further demonstrate the Council's willingness to be flexible and adapt to specific needs and requirements:
 - The number of Executive Heads has reduced from 4 to 3 during the year, and the Section 151 officer position has been re-evaluated, taking on the overall management of the largest financial services, and re-positioned as a member of the Executive Management Team.
 - A review of Service Management within Housing has resulted in the realignment of services between 2 new Service Manager Positions, and the merging of Housing Planned Maintenance with Building Works.
3. The Leader of the Council undertook a review of the Cabinet, and increased Portfolio Holder numbers from 6 to 8. The Council's budgets have been re-aligned to the new Portfolio Structure.
4. The Council's arrangements for financial management and reporting are sound and are well documented. Proposals for expenditure and income are supported by a business case. These are scrutinised initially by EMT and the Service Portfolio Holder prior to inclusion as a formal bid to Cabinet and the Council. The planning process also includes a review of proposals by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panels, before final proposals and the council tax levels are considered and approved by the Council each year.
5. Financial monitoring is achieved by regular budgetary control reports to nominated budget holders, Executive Management Team, the relevant Portfolio Holder, and the Cabinet. All elected Members have access to Cabinet Agendas and the financial reports; a process is in place to enable members to request additional, more detailed information and question any financial issues. Strong Overview and Scrutiny arrangements in place with an annual report published to Cabinet.
6. In line with the continuous improvement culture of the Council, it is recognised that all Members and Officers of the Council must have the skills, knowledge and capacity that they need to discharge their responsibilities effectively.
7. The responsibility of S151 (Chief Financial Officer) is placed with the Head of Finance. The Executive Head of Governance and Regulation is the Monitoring Officer. All committee reports are reviewed by members of the Executive Management Team, as well as being provided to the Executive Head of Governance and Regulation (who is also the Council's Solicitor), prior to any decisions being made. This safeguards the Council to ensure legal decisions are taken and that decisions consider the Council's corporate priorities and risks.
8. The Council's financial management arrangements conform to the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2010). A review of the Council's Financial Regulations has been completed and the new regulations presented to and endorsed by the Audit Committee. The new regulations went live during April 2018, following approval by full Council.

9. The Performance Management framework ensures strategic monitoring with a focus on organisational and service based indicators reflecting the aims and objectives of the Corporate Plan. Performance indicators are reviewed during the year.
10. The Audit Committee met regularly and training has been provided. Training is available to all members to ensure they are clear in their responsibilities in providing an independent assurance to the Council in relation to the effectiveness of the Council's internal control environment. In accordance with Regulation 6 of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015.
11. The Audit Committee considered the Council's Risk Management Framework during 2017/18, and endorsed the Council's approach to risk management.
12. New Contract Standing Orders went live during the latter part of 2017/18 following a review conducted by the Service Manager for Legal and the Procurement Manager. Contract threshold values were increased allowing enhanced autonomy to Service Managers across the Council and improving the likelihood of suppliers in the local economy being awarded contracts. The central procurement team now focuses on assisting with high level contracts and has devolved low spending to Services.
13. Internal Audit forms part of the internal control framework. It is a mandatory function whose primary aim is to ensure that the Chief Financial Officer's responsibilities, to maintain proper control over the Council's financial affairs as defined by Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, are fully met. The Audit Committee has reviewed and approved the risk based audit plan and progress reports against the audit plan throughout the year. This risk based audit plan was also approved by the Section 151 Officer. The Committee has also received reports and updates from the External Auditor.
14. The Internal Audit function operates to the Standards as set out in the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. Internal Auditors are trained and have acted independently, objectively and ethically at all times. The Internal Audit Charter was approved during the year.
15. The Principal Auditor's annual opinion report, concluded that whilst Internal Audit are unable to give absolute assurance, the results of the reviews completed during the year have resulted in his overall opinion that:
 - sufficient assurance work has been carried out to allow me to form a reasonable conclusion on the adequacy and effectiveness of New Forest District Council's internal control environment
 - New Forest District Council's framework of governance, risk management and control is 'Reasonable' and audit testing has demonstrated controls to be working in practice
 - where weaknesses have been identified through internal audit review, the Council's Internal Audit Team worked with management to agree appropriate corrective actions and a timescale for improvement.
16. A review was conducted on how internal audit at the Council is undertaken. Following a period of transition, the Council is looking forward to benefitting from being a part of the Southern Internal Audit Partnership from April 2018.
17. Ernst & Young acts as the Council's independent external auditor. The Section 151 Officer and Chair of Audit Committee have responded openly to the External Auditor under the requirements of the International Auditing Standards.
18. There have been no significant governance or internal control issues raised by Senior Management.
19. All organisations, worldwide face increasing cyber related threats. The Council maintains sound standards and continually reviews opportunities to further strengthen these. ICT has reviewed the ICT Security Policy during 2017/18 to include emerging Cyber Security risks.

20. Internal Audit has reported an adequate opinion on the overall control environment; however the following audit areas have received high priority recommendations that have not been resolved promptly:
- Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard Accreditation
 - Business Continuity - whilst some Services have a Business Continuity plan a stronger Corporate approach is required.
21. The Council will need to develop an accurate and up to date partnership register to ensure the terms of reference, the risks of collaborative working and the added value of partnership working is reviewed and suitably documented.

5. Significant Governance Issues

Whilst there have been a number of improvements made throughout the year, the Council constantly strives for continuous improvement. The following significant areas will be included in the action plan:

1. Implementation of uncompleted high priority audit recommendations (as per point 20 within section 4)
2. Review and develop the ICT Security Policy to include emerging Cyber Security risks

6. Certification

To the best of our knowledge, governance arrangements, as defined above, have been in place at New Forest District Council for the year ended 31st March 2018 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and statement of accounts.

We propose to take steps over the coming year to address those areas identified above to further enhance our governance arrangements. We are satisfied that these steps will address the need for improvements that were identified during the review of effectiveness, and will monitor their implementation and operation as part of our next annual review.

<i>Signed:</i>	<i>Signed:</i>
Leader of the Council	Chief Executive

<i>Date:</i>	<i>Date:</i>
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Annual Governance Statement 2017/18 Action Plan

Business Continuity Arrangements	To review Business Continuity arrangements	Service Manager (Business Improvement & Customer Services) Civil Contingencies and CCTV Manager	March 2019
PCI Accreditation	To agree the Council's strategy with regards to achieving the necessary accreditation	Head of Finance, Service Manager ICT, ICT Security Manager	March 2019
ICT Security Policy/ Cyber Risk	Review and develop the ICT Security Policy to include emerging Cyber Security risks	ICT Security Manager	March 2019
Partnerships	To review partnership arrangements to:- develop terms of reference, identify risks in collaborative working, ensure added value of partnership working is explicit, produce accurate and up to date Partnerships Register	Executive Head – Resources	Sept 2019

AUDIT COMMITTEE – 27 JULY 2018

AUDIT COMMITTEE – WORK PLAN

1.0 WORK PLAN

- 1.1 This report details the draft work plan for the Audit Committee for 2018/19.
- 1.2 The work plan may evolve during the year, due to, for example, any changes in legislation, change relating to the External Auditor timetables, or new reports which need to be brought to the attention of the Committee.

2.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 There are no financial consequences directly arising from this report.

3.0 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY, CRIME AND DISORDER AND ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

- 3.1 There are no equality and diversity, crime or disorder or environmental matters directly associated with this report.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1. That the Audit Committee considers and approves the Work Plan as appended and informs Officers of any requested changes.

For Further Information Contact:

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Andy.rogers@nfdc.gov.uk

Audit Committee Work Plan 2018/19

DATE	WORK / REPORTS
26 October 2018	Treasury Management Mid-Year Monitoring Report 2018/19 Internal Audit Progress Report Against the Audit Plan Dates for future meetings
25 January 2019	External Audit Plan Summary Strategic Risk Register Treasury Management Strategy External Auditor – Annual Audit Letter Certification of Claims and Returns Annual Report Internal Audit Progress Against the Audit Plan
	(Provisional Dates)
29 March 2019	External Audit Planning Report 2018/19 Internal Audit Progress Report 2018/19 Internal Audit Plan 2019/20 Internal Audit Charter 2019/20 Fraud Update Report Risk Update
31 May 2019	Treasury Management Out-turn Report 20/08/19 Local Code of Good Governance Review Draft Annual Governance Statement Draft Annual Financial Report Final Accounts Bad Debts Write-offs 20/08/19 Procurement Waivers 2018/19 Annual Internal Audit and Opinion Report 2018/19
26 July 2019	Audit Results Report 2018/19 Annual Governance Statement 2018/19 Annual Financial Report 2018/19