

Informing the audit risk assessment for Exeter City Council 2023/24

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The contents of this report relate only to the matters which have come to our attention, which we believe need to be reported to you as part of our audit process. It is not a comprehensive record of all the relevant matters, which may be subject to change, and in particular we cannot be held responsible to you for reporting all of the risks which may affect your business or any weaknesses in your internal controls. This report has been prepared solely for your benefit and should not be quoted in whole or in part without our prior written consent. We do not accept any responsibility for any loss occasioned to any third party acting, or refraining from acting on the basis of the content of this report, as this report was not prepared for, nor intended for, any other purpose.

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Purpose

The purpose of this report is to contribute towards the effective two-way communication between Exeter City Council's external auditors and Exeter City Council's Audit & Governance Committee, as 'those charged with governance'. The report covers some important areas of the auditor risk assessment where we are required to make inquiries of the Audit & Governance Committee under auditing standards.

Background

Under International Standards on Auditing (UK), (ISA(UK)) auditors have specific responsibilities to communicate with the Audit & Governance Committee. ISA(UK) emphasise the importance of two-way communication between the auditor and the Audit & Governance Committee and also specify matters that should be communicated.

This two-way communication assists both the auditor and the Audit & Governance Committee in understanding matters relating to the audit and developing a constructive working relationship. It also enables the auditor to obtain information relevant to the audit from the Audit & Governance Committee and supports the Audit & Governance Committee in fulfilling its responsibilities in relation to the financial reporting process.

Communication

As part of our risk assessment procedures we are required to obtain an understanding of management processes and the Council's oversight of the following areas:

- General Enquiries of Management
- Fraud,
- Laws and Regulations,
- Related Parties,
- Going Concern, and
- Accounting Estimates.

Purpose

This report includes a series of questions on each of these areas and the response we have received from Exeter City Council's management. The Audit & Governance Committee should consider whether these responses are consistent with its understanding and whether there are any further comments it wishes to make.

General Enquiries of Management

Question	Management response
<p>1. What do you regard as the key events or issues that will have a significant impact on the financial statements for 2023/24?</p>	<p>Cost of living crisis. Significant inflation, high interest rates and a higher than anticipated national pay settlement. In terms of key event, the Council resolved to significantly reduce the capacity of its housing development company, Exeter City Living Ltd, in October 2023 which resulted in an asset transfer agreement being completed on 26 March 2024.</p>
<p>2. Have you considered the appropriateness of the accounting policies adopted by Exeter City Council? Have there been any events or transactions that may cause you to change or adopt new accounting policies? If so, what are they?</p>	<p>Yes accounting policies reviewed and remain appropriate for 2023/24</p>
<p>3. Is there any use of financial instruments, including derivatives? If so, please explain</p>	<p>CCLA Property Fund and money market funds. Classified as FVTPL, but statutory reversal in place for 2023/24, as extended for 2 years from 1 April 2023 for unrealised fair value movements</p>
<p>4. Are you aware of any significant transaction outside the normal course of business? If so, what are they?</p>	<p>Support measures for those affected by the cost of living crisis and providing support to Ukrainian refugees. Significant transaction in respect of the asset transfer agreement between the Council and Exeter City Living Ltd.</p>

General Enquiries of Management

Question	Management response
5. Are you aware of any changes in circumstances that would lead to impairment of non-current assets? If so, what are they?	No
6. Are you aware of any guarantee contracts? If so, please provide further details	A guarantee to the University of Exeter remains in place for a lease granted to Exeter Science Park Ltd
7. Are you aware of the existence of loss contingencies and/or un-asserted claims that may affect the financial statements? If so, please provide further details	No
8. Other than in house solicitors, can you provide details of those solicitors utilised by Exeter City Council during the year. Please indicate where they are working on open litigation or contingencies from prior years?	Foot Anstey LLP Ashfords LLP Freeths LL Chilcotts Law Limited No instructions concern open litigation or contingences from prior years

General Enquiries of Management

Question	Management response
<p>9. Have any of the Exeter City Council's service providers reported any items of fraud, non-compliance with laws and regulations or uncorrected misstatements which would affect the financial statements? If so, please provide further details</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>10. Can you provide details of other advisors consulted during the year and the issue on which they were consulted?</p>	<p>Various consultants employed in respect of the capital projects, as the Council appoint multi-disciplined teams for QS, design, project management for certain schemes.</p> <p>Barnett Waddingham provide actuarial reports for Devon LGPS</p> <p>The Council subscribes to the Ichabod (local government technical accounting service) for bulletins on emerging accounting issues</p> <p>VAT advice is provided by PSTax</p> <p>JLL were instructed to perform a range of asset valuations, including all investment properties and certain operational assets</p>
<p>11. Have you considered and identified assets for which expected credit loss provisions may be required under IFRS 9, such as debtors (including loans) and investments? If so, please provide further details</p>	<p>Yes, impairment losses are assessed for financial assets exposed to credit risk, including sundry debtors, statutory debtors (e.g. council tax and NDR), rents, investments and loans. A collective assessment approach is taken where a group of receivables have shared risk characteristics. Where loss allowances are calculated for individual financial assets, it is based upon an assessment of the risk of default occurring and estimated losses if default occurs.</p>

Fraud

Matters in relation to fraud

ISA (UK) 240 covers auditors responsibilities relating to fraud in an audit of financial statements.

The primary responsibility to prevent and detect fraud rests with both the Audit & Governance Committee and management. Management, with the oversight of the Audit & Governance Committee, needs to ensure a strong emphasis on fraud prevention and deterrence and encourage a culture of honest and ethical behaviour. As part of its oversight, the Audit & Governance Committee should consider the potential for override of controls and inappropriate influence over the financial reporting process.

As Exeter City Council's external auditor, we are responsible for obtaining reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement due to fraud or error. We are required to maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit, considering the potential for management override of controls.

As part of our audit risk assessment procedures we are required to consider risks of fraud. This includes considering the arrangements management has put in place with regard to fraud risks including:

- assessment that the financial statements could be materially misstated due to fraud,
- process for identifying and responding to risks of fraud, including any identified specific risks,
- communication with the Audit & Governance Committee regarding its processes for identifying and responding to risks of fraud, and
- communication to employees regarding business practices and ethical behaviour.

We need to understand how the Audit & Governance Committee oversees the above processes. We are also required to make inquiries of both management and the Audit & Governance Committee as to their knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud. These areas have been set out in the fraud risk assessment questions below together with responses from Exeter City Council's management.

Fraud risk assessment

Question	Management response
<p>1. Has Exeter City Council assessed the risk of material misstatement in the financial statements due to fraud?</p> <p>How has the process of identifying and responding to the risk of fraud been undertaken and what are the results of this process?</p> <p>How do the Council's risk management processes link to financial reporting?</p>	<p>During 23/24 Internal Audit reviewed fraud risk using their fraud risk table.</p> <p>Horizon scanning, participation in audit groups and networks for updates. Identification of Council services and assessing the risk of fraud for each and recording results in fraud risk table. This information is shared with the Section 151 officer and the PFH with responsibility for Counter Fraud.</p> <p>Any financial risks arising from the Council's risk management processes are taken into consideration as part of the preparing the Council's medium term financial plan and help inform financial plan and help inform decisions on minimum General Fund and HRA working balances as a contingency. Under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 the section 151 officer has a duty to report on the robustness of estimates and adequacy of reserves, appropriate for the risks to which it is exposed.</p>
<p>2. What have you determined to be the classes of accounts, transactions and disclosures most at risk to fraud?</p>	<p>Areas identified as high risk of fraud before mitigations are: ICT, Main Accounting, income Management, Procurement, Creditors, Insurance, Private Sector Waste Services, Taxi Licensing, Social Housing, Housing Right to Buy, Housing Benefit, Payments and Collection, NDR Business Rates, Contract Management and Grants. The only area remaining high after mitigations is ICT/Cyber due to external risks and constantly emerging risks.</p>
<p>3. Are you aware of any instances of actual, suspected or alleged fraud, errors or other irregularities either within Exeter City Council as a whole, or within specific departments since 1 April 2023? If so, please provide details</p>	<p>None</p>

Fraud risk assessment

Question	Management response
<p>4. As a management team, how do you communicate risk issues (including fraud) to those charged with governance?</p>	<p>Internal Audit report on their work to the Audit and Governance Committee on a Quarterly basis.</p> <p>The Corporate Risk Register is reviewed and updated by the Senior Management Board on a Quarterly basis in conjunction with the relevant portfolio holder. This is then presented to the Executive and Audit and Governance Committee for review on a quarterly basis.</p>
<p>5. Have you identified any specific fraud risks? If so, please provide details</p> <p>Do you have any concerns there are areas that are at risk of fraud?</p> <p>Are there particular locations within Exeter City Council where fraud is more likely to occur?</p>	<p>We do not have any specific concerns regarding risk of fraud.</p> <p>No</p> <p>No</p>
<p>6. What processes do Exeter City Council have in place to identify and respond to risks of fraud?</p>	<p>Fraud risk assessment Counter Fraud Strategy Anonymous Whistleblowing DWP shared information NFI Data matching Fighting Fraud Locally self-assessment</p>

Fraud risk assessment

Question	Management response
<p>7. How do you assess the overall control environment for Exeter City Council, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the existence of internal controls, including segregation of duties; and the process for reviewing the effectiveness the system of internal control? <p>If internal controls are not in place or not effective where are the risk areas and what mitigating actions have been taken?</p> <p>What other controls are in place to help prevent, deter or detect fraud?</p> <p>Are there any areas where there is a potential for override of controls or inappropriate influence over the financial reporting process (for example because of undue pressure to achieve financial targets)? If so, please provide details</p>	<p>Internal Audit review the internal control processes and provide assurance to Management. The risk based audit plan determines the areas to be covered each year.</p> <p>Management have agreed remedial action for all high and medium risk issues identified within the Internal Audit reports during the year.</p> <p>Counter fraud and whistleblowing e-learning, articles in the staff newsletters, participation in the NFI matching, online reporting facilities for members of the public.</p> <p>No new areas.</p>
<p>8. Are there any areas where there is potential for misreporting? If so, please provide details</p>	<p>Not that we are aware of</p>

Fraud risk assessment

Question	Management response
<p>9. How does Exeter City Council communicate and encourage ethical behaviours and business processes of it's staff and contractors?</p> <p>How do you encourage staff to report their concerns about fraud?</p> <p>What concerns are staff expected to report about fraud? Have any significant issues been reported? If so, please provide details</p>	<p>Codes of conduct in place, counter fraud/whistleblowing training is undertaken as part of new starter induction e-learning, articles in staff newsletter.</p> <p>Raising awareness in staff newsletters. Whistleblowing policy.</p> <p>Staff are encouraged to report any concerns they may have and all will be appropriately investigated. None</p>
<p>10. From a fraud and corruption perspective, what are considered to be high-risk posts?</p> <p>How are the risks relating to these posts identified, assessed and managed?</p>	<p>S151, Accountants, Contract Managers, Procurement, Planning Officers</p> <p>Their service areas are considered higher when establishing the audit plan.</p>
<p>11. Are you aware of any related party relationships or transactions that could give rise to instances of fraud? If so, please provide details</p> <p>How do you mitigate the risks associated with fraud related to related party relationships and transactions?</p>	<p>No</p> <p>Partnership protocol in place, condition sin Partnership/contract agreement, Pre-procurement vetting process (incl Bribery risks) in place, data matching and NFI.</p>

Fraud risk assessment

Question	Management response
<p>12. What arrangements are in place to report fraud issues and risks to the Audit & Governance Committee?</p> <p>How does the Audit & Governance Committee exercise oversight over management's processes for identifying and responding to risks of fraud and breaches of internal control?</p> <p>What has been the outcome of these arrangements so far this year?</p>	<p>Internal Audit provide a quarterly progress report to the A&G committee. Any concerns would be raised here.</p> <p>Quarterly Internal Audit progress reports. Counter Fraud and Whistleblowing Policies regularly reviewed, updated and approved by the A&G Committee.</p> <p>No issues arising.</p>
<p>13. Are you aware of any whistle blowing potential or complaints by potential whistle blowers? If so, what has been your response?</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>14. Have any reports been made under the Bribery Act? If so, please provide details</p>	<p>No</p>

Law and regulations

Matters in relation to laws and regulations

ISA (UK) 250 requires us to consider the impact of laws and regulations in an audit of the financial statements.

Management, with the oversight of the Audit & Governance Committee, is responsible for ensuring that Exeter City Council's operations are conducted in accordance with laws and regulations, including those that determine amounts in the financial statements.

As auditor, we are responsible for obtaining reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement due to fraud or error, taking into account the appropriate legal and regulatory framework. As part of our risk assessment procedures we are required to make inquiries of management and the Audit & Governance Committee as to whether the body is in compliance with laws and regulations. Where we become aware of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance we need to gain an understanding of the non-compliance and the possible effect on the financial statements.

Risk assessment questions have been set out below together with responses from management.

Impact of laws and regulations

Question	Management response
<p>1. How does management gain assurance that all relevant laws and regulations have been complied with?</p> <p>What arrangements does Exeter City Council have in place to prevent and detect non-compliance with laws and regulations?</p> <p>Are you aware of any changes to the Council's regulatory environment that may have a significant impact on the Council's financial statements?</p>	<p>The Council's Monitoring Officer provides advice on all laws and regulations. The Legal Services team provides professional support to services to assist with compliance. No system of assurance can provide 100% assurance.</p>
<p>2. How is the Audit & Governance Committee provided with assurance that all relevant laws and regulations have been complied with?</p>	<p>Any significant new laws and regulations are highlighted to Council along with the implications. Audit & Governance Committee receive reports on new laws and consultations on Governance related issues.</p>
<p>3. Have there been any instances of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulation since 1 April 2023 with an on-going impact on the 2023/24 financial statements? If so, please provide details</p>	<p>There are no instances of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance to the best of our knowledge.</p>
<p>4. Are there any actual or potential litigation or claims that would affect the financial statements? If so, please provide details</p>	<p>There is no actual or potential litigation or claims that would affect the financial statements to the best of our knowledge.</p>

Impact of laws and regulations

Question	Management response
5. What arrangements does Exeter City Council have in place to identify, evaluate and account for litigation or claims?	The interim Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer are both part of the Strategic Management Board (SMB) and work closely together. Insurance is managed with Finance and reports new claims to our insurers.
6. Have there been any reports from other regulatory bodies, such as HM Revenues and Customs, which indicate non-compliance? If so, please provide details	No

Related Parties

Matters in relation to Related Parties

Exeter City Council are required to disclose transactions with bodies/individuals that would be classed as related parties. These may include:

- bodies that directly, or indirectly through one or more intermediaries, control, or are controlled by Exeter City Council;
- associates;
- joint ventures;
- a body that has an interest in the authority that gives it significant influence over the Council;
- key management personnel, and close members of the family of key management personnel, and
- post-employment benefit plans (pension fund) for the benefit of employees of the Council, or of any body that is a related party of the Council.

A disclosure is required if a transaction (or series of transactions) is material on either side, i.e. if a transaction is immaterial from the Council's perspective but material from a related party viewpoint then the Council must disclose it.

ISA (UK) 550 requires us to review your procedures for identifying related party transactions and obtain an understanding of the controls that you have established to identify such transactions. We will also carry out testing to ensure the related party transaction disclosures you make in the financial statements are complete and accurate.

Related Parties

Question	Management response
<p>1. Have there been any changes in the related parties including those disclosed in Exeter City Council's 2023/24 financial statements? If so please summarise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the nature of the relationship between these related parties and Exeter City Council whether Exeter City Council has entered into or plans to enter into any transactions with these related parties the type and purpose of these transactions 	<p>The group boundary and related parties have been reviewed and there have been two changes to report during 2023/24. On 17 October 2023 the Council resolved to significantly reduce the capacity of Exeter City Living Ltd. The company has been retained for the limited purpose of holding and managing six residential flats in the Guildhall Shopping Centre. An asset transfer agreement was completed on 26 March 2024, whereby the Council acquired all ECL's assets (excluding the six leasehold flats) in return for releasing ECL from its loan obligations.</p> <p>Exeter City Futures Community Interest Company has also ceased to be a related party. Instead, the goals will continue to be delivered through strategies of the Council, Devon County Council, University of Exeter, Exeter College and the Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.</p>
<p>2. What controls does Exeter City Council have in place to identify, account for and disclose related party transactions and relationships?</p>	<p>Regular review of group boundary and assessment of relationships with the Council. Member Services also manage declaration of interests, so that Members/Officers omitted from participating in Council discussions/decisions where appropriate</p>
<p>3. What controls are in place to authorise and approve significant transactions and arrangements with related parties?</p>	<p>As above. Authorisation limits are in place and the Constitution sets out how decisions are made and procedures to be followed, including delegations to officers and deputies and financial regulations.</p>
<p>4. What controls are in place to authorise and approve significant transactions outside of the normal course of business?</p>	<p>As above.</p>

Going Concern

Matters in relation to Going Concern

The audit approach for going concern is based on the requirements of ISA (UK) 570, as interpreted by Practice Note 10: Audit of financial statements and regularity of public sector bodies in the United Kingdom (Revised 2020). It also takes into account the National Audit Office's Supplementary Guidance Note (SGN) 01: Going Concern – Auditors' responsibilities for local public bodies.

Practice Note 10 confirms that in many (but not all) public sector bodies, the use of the going concern basis of accounting is not a matter of significant focus of the auditor's time and resources because the applicable financial reporting frameworks envisage that the going concern basis for accounting will apply where the body's services will continue to be delivered by the public sector. In such cases, a material uncertainty related to going concern is unlikely to exist.

For this reason, a straightforward and standardised approach to compliance with ISA (UK) 570 will often be appropriate for public sector bodies. This will be a proportionate approach to going concern based on the body's circumstances and the applicable financial reporting framework. In line with Practice Note 10, the auditor's assessment of going concern should take account of the statutory nature of the body and the fact that the financial reporting framework for local government bodies presume going concern in the event of anticipated continuation of provision of the services provided by the body. Therefore, the public sector auditor applies a 'continued provision of service approach', unless there is clear evidence to the contrary. This would also apply even where those services are planned to transfer to another body, as in such circumstances, the underlying services will continue.

For many public sector bodies, the financial sustainability of the body and the services it provides are more likely to be of significant public interest than the application of the going concern basis of accounting. Financial sustainability is a key component of value for money work and it is through such work that it will be considered.

Going Concern

Question	Management response
<p>1. What processes and controls does management have in place to identify events and / or conditions which may indicate that the statutory services being provided by Exeter City Council will no longer continue?</p>	<p>The Council has a robust financial management process, including a medium term financial plan and regular budget monitoring. The medium term financial plan is updated every one or two months and issues arising are brought to the attention of the management team. Budget monitoring includes a process for action where overspends are identified, involving either the Director or the Management Team as a whole to ensure mitigating steps are taken. The Council also holds reserves to protect against short, sharp economic (or other) shocks. These are monitored in line with the regular budget monitoring reports.</p>
<p>2. Are management aware of any factors which may mean for Exeter City Council that either statutory services will no longer be provided or that funding for statutory services will be discontinued? If so, what are they?</p>	<p>ECC is not aware of any factors that will impact on statutory services being unable to continue. The mitigations listed above will help to protect against the current economic challenges facing the Country.</p>
<p>3. With regard to the statutory services currently provided by Exeter City Council, does Exeter City Council expect to continue to deliver them for the foreseeable future, or will they be delivered by related public authorities if there are any plans for Exeter City Council to cease to exist?</p>	<p>The City Council is in a position to continue to run its statutory services for the foreseeable future. Whilst there is a gap in funding anticipated over the life of the medium term financial plan, there is a clear plan in place (One Exeter) to address this.</p>
<p>4. Are management satisfied that the financial reporting framework permits Exeter City Council to prepare its financial statements on a going concern basis? Are management satisfied that preparing financial statements on a going concern basis will provide a faithful representation of the items in the financial statements?</p>	<p>Yes, there is no reason to assume that Exeter City Council will cease to be run as going concern. As set out above the financial position is such that there are sufficient safeguards in place to run Council Services for the foreseeable future.</p>

Accounting estimates

Matters in relation to accounting estimates

ISA (UK) 540 (Revised December 2018) requires auditors to understand and assess a body's internal controls over accounting estimates, including:

- The nature and extent of oversight and governance over management's financial reporting process relevant to accounting estimates;
- How management identifies the need for and applies specialised skills or knowledge related to accounting estimates;
- How the body's risk management process identifies and addresses risks relating to accounting estimates;
- The body's information system as it relates to accounting estimates;
- The body's control activities in relation to accounting estimates; and
- How management reviews the outcomes of previous accounting estimates.

As part of this process auditors also need to obtain an understanding of the role of those charged with governance, which is particularly important where the estimates have high estimation uncertainty, or require significant judgement.

Specifically do Audit & Governance Committee members:

- Understand the characteristics of the methods and models used to make the accounting estimates and the risks related to them;
- Oversee management's process for making accounting estimates, including the use of models, and the monitoring activities undertaken by management; and
- Evaluate how management made the accounting estimates?

We would ask the Audit & Governance Committee to satisfy itself that the arrangements for accounting estimates are adequate.

Accounting Estimates - General Enquiries of Management

Question	Management response
1. What are the classes of transactions, events and conditions, that are significant to the financial statements that give rise to the need for, or changes in, accounting estimate and related disclosures?	Critical judgements are disclosed in Note 4 to the accounts. Major sources of estimation uncertainty are disclosed in Note 6. Classes of transactions that are significant include; pension liability, valuation of property, plant and equipment, valuation of investment properties and business rates.
2. How does the Council's risk management process identify and address risks relating to accounting estimates?	We seek professional advice in respect of accounting estimates in respect of asset valuations and the pension scheme. Other accounting estimates are calculated by professionally qualified accountants, in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the UK 2023/24.
3. How does management identify the methods, assumptions or source data, and the need for changes in them, in relation to key accounting estimates?	We seek professional advice in respect of the key accounting estimates and assess the impact of emerging accounting standards as adopted by the Code
4. How do management review the outcomes of previous accounting estimates?	We seek professional advice in respect of whether previous assumptions and estimates need to be updated
5. Were any changes made to the estimation processes in 2023/24 and, if so, what was the reason for these?	JLL were instructed for the valuation of a number of operational properties and investment properties.

Accounting Estimates - General Enquiries of Management

Question	Management response
<p>6. How does management identify the need for and apply specialised skills or knowledge related to accounting estimates?</p>	<p>Accounting estimates that require specialist advice or knowledge are determined following a review of in-house expertise and capacity and are procured externally, where deemed necessary.</p>
<p>7. How does the Council determine what control activities are needed for significant accounting estimates, including the controls at any service providers or management experts?</p>	<p>The instruction of Barnett Waddingham is co-ordinated on behalf of Devon authorities by Devon County Council, as the administering authority to the Devon County Council Pension Fund.</p> <p>The instruction to external valuers specifies that valuations are to be provided in accordance with Internal Financial Reporting Requirements and the current RICS Valuation guidance.</p>
<p>8. How does management monitor the operation of control activities related to accounting estimates, including the key controls at any service providers or management experts?</p>	<p>Specialist advice is provided by suitably qualified professionals</p>
<p>9. What is the nature and extent of oversight and governance over management's financial reporting process relevant to accounting estimates, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Management's process for making significant accounting estimates - The methods and models used - The resultant accounting estimates included in the financial statements. 	<p>Accounting estimates are reported to Audit and Governance Committee as part of approving the annual Statement of Accounts</p>

Accounting Estimates - General Enquiries of Management

Question	Management response
10. Are management aware of any transactions, events, conditions (or changes in these) that may give rise to recognition or disclosure of significant accounting estimates that require significant judgement (other than those in Appendix A)? If so, what are they?	No, other than those set out in Appendix A.
11. Why are management satisfied that their arrangements for the accounting estimates, as detailed in Appendix A, are reasonable?	No changes in accounting estimates, as set out in Appendix A.
12. How is the Audit & Governance Committee provided with assurance that the arrangements for accounting estimates are adequate ?	Accounting estimates are reported to Audit and Governance Committee as part of approving the annual Statement of Accounts.

Appendix A Accounting Estimates

Estimate	Method / model used to make the estimate	Controls used to identify estimates	Whether management have used an expert	Underlying assumptions: - Assessment of degree of uncertainty - Consideration of alternative estimates	Has there been a change in accounting method in year?
Property, Plant and Equipment valuation	<p>Fair value for land/buildings defined as 'existing use' by the Council, but where there is no market based evidence of fair value because of the specialist nature of the asset, depreciated replacement cost is used.</p> <p>Community assets and assets under construction are held at historical cost.</p> <p>Non-property assets with short useful lives and/or low values and infrastructure assets are held at depreciated historical cost.</p>	<p>Full valuations are performed on a rolling basis to cover 20% of assets per annum, but with the top 4 highest value assets re-valued every year. Assets not included in the full valuation are assessed at the reporting date in order to ensure that carrying amounts are not materially different to current values</p>	<p>In-house and external RICS valuers</p>	<p>Degree of uncertainty inherent with any revaluation. We employ professional valuers and rely on expert opinion</p>	<p>No</p>

Appendix A Accounting Estimates

Estimate	Method / model used to make the estimate	Controls used to identify estimates	Whether management have used an expert	Underlying assumptions: - Assessment of degree of uncertainty - Consideration of alternative estimates	Has there been a change in accounting method in year?
Valuation of defined benefit net pension fund liabilities	Valuation of the Pension Fund's assets and liabilities are provided by experts in this field, using financial assumptions that comply with IAS 19.	Specialist advice is provided by the external actuaries. The Council reviews the data to be provided to the actuary by Devon County Council, updating as necessary.	Valuations provided by external actuaries; Barnett Waddingham	The employer is exposed to a number of risks; investment risk, interest rate risk, inflation risk and longevity risk. An annual Pension Fund report is obtained to reflect the actuaries latest estimates and assumptions, in accordance with IAS 19.	No
Impairments	Assets are assessed at each year-end as to whether there is any indication that an asset may be impaired. Where the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated that is lower than the carrying amount of the asset, an impairment loss is recognised.	Specialist advice is instructed to undertake annual impairment reviews	In-house and external RICS valuers	Degree of uncertainty inherent with any revaluation. We employ professional valuers and rely on expert opinion	No

Appendix A Accounting Estimates

Estimate	Method / model used to make the estimate	Controls used to identify estimates	Whether management have used an expert	Underlying assumptions: - Assessment of degree of uncertainty - Consideration of alternative estimates	Has there been a change in accounting method in year?
Accruals	Accruals are made in line with the Council's accruals accounting policy	Regular budget monitoring, engagement with budget holders, mandatory purchase order policy, reviewing the invoice register all support the identification of accruals	Qualified accountants and budget holders	Accruals are made when a reliable estimate can be made.	No
Provisions	Provisions are measured at best estimate (including risks and uncertainties) of the expenditure required to settle the present obligation	Provisions are identified through regular budget monitoring and engagement with budget holders, which flags potential issues to management	VOA data in respect of NDR appeals	Each provision is assessed on an individual basis to ensure it meets criteria of a provision per IAS 37. The degree of uncertainty is assessed when determining whether a provision is the correct treatment for an item.	No

Appendix A Accounting Estimates

Estimate	Method / model used to make the estimate	Controls used to identify estimates	Whether management have used an expert	Underlying assumptions: - Assessment of degree of uncertainty - Consideration of alternative estimates	Has there been a change in accounting method in year?
Investment property valuations	Initially measured at cost and subsequently at fair value. Fair values are based upon Level 2 measurements; being prices for similar assets and liabilities in active markets	Annual revaluations are performed in accordance with Accounting Code requirements	External RICS valuers	Degree of uncertainty inherent with any revaluation. We employ professional valuers and rely on expert opinion	No
Council dwelling valuations	Existing Use Value – Social Housing, valuations use the beacon method, which is based on estimated vacant possession value, adjusted to reflect continuing occupation by a secure tenant	Full valuations are performed every 5 years and interim desktop valuations are performed in the intervening financial years to ensure the carrying amounts are not materially different at the reporting date	In-house valuers with external advice for beacon valuations	Degree of uncertainty inherent with any revaluation. We employ professional valuers and rely on expert opinion	No

Appendix A Accounting Estimates

Estimate	Method / model used to make the estimate	Controls used to identify estimates	Whether management have used an expert	Underlying assumptions: - Assessment of degree of uncertainty - Consideration of alternative estimates	Has there been a change in accounting method in year?
Depreciation	Straight line depreciation, except reducing balance method for vehicles	Significant components in relation to the total cost of an asset are depreciated separately and asset lives and residual values are also assessed and adjusted if appropriate	In-house and external RICS valuers	Depreciation reflects the consumption of assets and assumptions are made in respect of the level of repairs and maintenance in relation to individual assets. In-house valuers benefit from records of property condition, planned maintenance and capital enhancements. External valuers perform inspections and liaise with the in-house valuers for further property information.	No



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