

Audit of Accounts Report – Swansea Bay City Deal Joint Committee

Audit year: 2020-21

Date issued: July 2021

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Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg. This document is also available in Welsh.

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We intend to issue an unqualified audit report on your Accounts. There are some issues to report to you prior to their approval.

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Audit of Accounts Report

Introduction

- 1 We summarise the main findings from our audit of your 2020-21 accounts in this report.
- 2 We have already discussed these issues with the Section 151 officer and his team.
- 3 Auditors can never give complete assurance that accounts are correctly stated. Instead, we work to a level of 'materiality'. This level of materiality is set to try to identify and correct misstatements that might otherwise cause a user of the accounts into being misled.
- 4 We set this level at £118,785 for this year's audit.
- 5 There are some areas of the accounts that may be of more importance to the reader and we have set a lower materiality level for these, as follows:
 - Senior Staff Remuneration - £1,000
 - Related Party disclosures for officers and members - £1000
- 6 Although we have completed the majority of our audit work at the time of drafting this report, we have yet to complete:
 - the final review of our audit file; and
 - our final review of the revised 2020-21 financial statements.
- 7 We would also like to draw to the attention of the Committee that on the 28th of July 2021, local government electors may exercise their rights under sections 30 and 31 of Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 to question the Auditor General about or make objections to the joint committee's accounts for the year ended 31 March 2021. Should any issues arise from this process we would need to consider these before being able to certify the joint committee's financial statements. We will provide a verbal update of this situation to the Committee at its meeting on 29th July 2021.
- 8 In our professional view, we have complied with the ethical standards that apply to our work; remain independent of yourselves; and, our objectivity has not been compromised in any way. There are no relationships between ourselves and yourselves that we believe could undermine our objectivity and independence.

Impact of COVID-19 on this Year's Audit

- 9 The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on all aspects of our society and continues to do so. You are required by law to prepare accounts and it is of considerable testament to the commitment of your accounts team that you have succeeded in doing so this year in the face of the challenges posed by this pandemic. We are extremely grateful to the professionalism of the team in supporting us to complete our audit in such difficult circumstances.
- 10 The pandemic has unsurprisingly affected our audit and we summarise in **Exhibit 1** the main impacts. Other than where we specifically make recommendations, the

detail in **Exhibit 1** is provided for information purposes only to help you understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on this year’s audit process.

Exhibit 1 – impact of COVID-19 on this year’s audit

<p>Timetable</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The deadline for completing your accounts was 31/05/2021. • We received the draft accounts on 10/06/2020. • Our deadline for completing our audit was 29/07/21 • We expect your audit report to be signed on 30/07/21
<p>Electronic signatures</p>	<p>The current plan is for the Committee to approve the 2020-21 financial statements at its virtual meeting on 29/07/21. If still necessary at the time of approval and signing, we will accept electronic signatures. We anticipate that your audit report will be signed electronically.</p>
<p>Audit evidence</p>	<p>We received the majority of audit evidence in electronic format and have used various techniques to ensure its validity. Where we have been unable to obtain certain audit evidence due to it not being available electronically we have devised alternative audit methodologies to obtain sufficient audit evidence. Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • officers provided electronic working papers in accordance with our agreed working paper schedule; • officers provided audit evidence to the audit team via email; and • officers were available by video conferencing for discussions, and for the sharing of on-screen information/evidence.
<p>Other</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video conferencing has enabled the audit team to correspond effectively with officers throughout the audit. • Video conference based Committee meetings have enabled us to proficiently discharge our responsibility for reporting to those charged with governance.

11 We will be reviewing what we have learned for our audit process from the COVID-19 pandemic and whether there are innovative practices that we might adopt in the future to enhance that process.

Proposed Audit Opinion

- 12 We intend to issue an unqualified audit opinion on this year's accounts once you have provided us with a Letter of Representation based on that set out in **Appendix 1**.
- 13 We issue a 'qualified' audit opinion where we have material concerns about some aspects of your accounts; otherwise we issue an unqualified opinion.
- 14 The Letter of Representation contains certain confirmations we are required to obtain from you under auditing standards along with confirmation of other specific information you have provided to us during our audit.
- 15 Our proposed audit report is set out in **Appendix 2**.

Significant Issues arising from the Audit

Uncorrected misstatements

- 16 There are no misstatements identified in the accounts, which remain uncorrected.

Corrected misstatements

- 17 There were initially misstatements in the accounts that have now been corrected by management. However, we believe that these should be drawn to your attention and they are set out with explanations in **Appendix 3**.

Other Significant Issues arising from the Audit

- 18 In the course of the audit, we consider a number of matters relating to the accounts and report any significant issues arising to you. There was one issue arising in these areas this year as shown in **Exhibit 2**:

Exhibit 2 – significant issues arising from the audit

Significant issues arising from the audit		
<p>Collation of Declarations of Interest and disclosure of related party transactions</p>	<p>In order to support the related party transactions disclosed in the 2020-21 financial statements, we reviewed all declarations of interests obtained from officers and members of the following committees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Joint Committee• Programme Board• Economic Strategy Board <p>Weaknesses in the process of collating and recording declarations of interest were identified and reporting on in 2019-20.</p> <p>It is pleasing to note that improvements have been made in 2020-21. However, we identify several declarations which had not been updated during 2020-21. We are of the opinion that this process would be more robust if members of all the above committees were required to provide an annual declaration even if this was a nil return.</p>	<p>Requesting annual updates from all members of the relevant committees relating to their declaration of interests would be an improvement to the governance internal controls</p>

Appendix 1

Final letter of representation

[Audited body's letterhead]

Auditor General for Wales
Wales Audit Office
24 Cathedral Road
Cardiff
CF11 9LJ

[Date]

Representations regarding the 2020-21 financial statements

This letter is provided in connection with your audit of the financial statements of Swansea Bay City Deal joint committee for the year ended 31 March 2021 for the purpose of expressing an opinion on their truth and fairness and their proper preparation.

We confirm that to the best of our knowledge and belief, having made enquiries as we consider sufficient, we can make the following representations to you.

Management representations

Responsibilities

We have fulfilled our responsibilities for:

- The preparation of the financial statements in accordance with legislative requirements and CIPFA's Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom UK 2020-21; in particular the financial statements give a true and fair view in accordance therewith.
- The design, implementation, maintenance and review of internal control to prevent and detect fraud and error.

Information provided

We have provided you with:

- Full access to:
 - all information of which we are aware that is relevant to the preparation of the financial statements such as books of account and supporting documentation, minutes of meetings and other matters;

- additional information that you have requested from us for the purpose of the audit; and
- unrestricted access to staff from whom you determined it necessary to obtain audit evidence.
- The results of our assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud.
- Our knowledge of fraud or suspected fraud that we are aware of and that affects the Committee and involves:
 - management;
 - employees who have significant roles in internal control; or
 - others where the fraud could have a material effect on the financial statements.
- Our knowledge of any allegations of fraud, or suspected fraud, affecting the financial statements communicated by employees, former employees, regulators or others.
- Our knowledge of all known instances of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial statements.
- The identity of all related parties and all the related party relationships and transactions of which we are aware.

Financial statement representations

All transactions, assets and liabilities have been recorded in the accounting records and are reflected in the financial statements.

Significant assumptions used in making accounting estimates, including those measured at fair value, are reasonable.

Related party relationships and transactions have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed.

All events occurring subsequent to the reporting date which require adjustment or disclosure have been adjusted for or disclosed.

All known actual or possible litigation and claims whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial statements have been disclosed to the auditor and accounted for and disclosed in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework.

The financial statements are free of material misstatements, including omissions. The effects of uncorrected misstatements identified during the audit are immaterial, both individually and in the aggregate, to the financial statements taken as a whole.

Representations by those charged with governance

We acknowledge that the representations made by management, above, have been discussed with us.

We acknowledge our responsibility for the preparation of true and fair financial statements in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework. The financial statements were approved by the Committee on 10 September 2021.

We confirm that we have taken all the steps that we ought to have taken in order to make ourselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that it has been communicated to you. We confirm that, as far as we are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which you are unaware.

Signed by:

Section 151 officer

Date:

Signed by:

Chair of the Committee

Date:

Appendix 2

Proposed Audit Report

The independent auditor's report of the Auditor General for Wales to the members of Swansea Bay City Deal Joint Committee

Opinion on financial statements

I have audited the financial statements of:

- Swansea Bay City Deal Joint Committee for the year ended 31 March 2020 under the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004.

Swansea Bay City Deal's financial statements comprise the Movement in Reserves Statement, the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement, and the related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020-21.

In my opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial position of Swansea Bay City Deal Joint Committee as at 31 March 2021 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with legislative requirements and international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020-21.

Basis of opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing in the UK (ISAs (UK)) and Practice Note 10 'Audit of Financial Statements of Public Sector Entities in the United Kingdom'. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of my report. I am independent of the Joint Committee in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in the UK including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and I have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that the use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work I have performed, I have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Joint Committee's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of

accounting for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

My responsibilities and the responsibilities of the responsible financial officer with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other Information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual statement of accounts other than the financial statements and my auditor's report thereon. The Responsible Financial Officer is responsible for the other information contained within the annual statement of accounts. My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in my report, I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. My responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If I identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, I am required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact.

I have nothing to report in this regard.

Report on other requirements

Opinion on other matters

In my opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of my audit:

- the information contained in the Narrative Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and the Narrative Report has been prepared in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020-21;
- The information given in the Annual Governance Statement for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and the Annual Governance Statement has been prepared in accordance with guidance.

Matters on which I report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the Joint Committee and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified material misstatements in the Narrative Report or the Annual Governance Statement.

I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters, which I report to you, if, in my opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for my audit have not been received from branches not visited by my team;
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- I have not received all the information and explanations I require for my audit.

Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the responsible financial officer for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts set out on pages 22 and 23, the responsible financial officer is responsible for the preparation of the statement of accounts, which give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the responsible financial officer determines is necessary to enable the preparation of statements of accounts that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the statement of accounts, the responsible financial officer is responsible for assessing the Joint Committee'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 deemed inappropriate.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

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

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. I design procedures in line with my responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud.

My procedures included the following:

- Enquiring of management, the Joint Committee's head of internal audit and those charged with governance, including obtaining and reviewing supporting documentation relating to the Joint Committee's policies and procedures concerned with:
 - identifying, evaluating and complying with laws and regulations and whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance;
 - detecting and responding to the risks of fraud and whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud; and
 - the internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations.
- Considering as an audit team how and where fraud might occur in the financial statements and any potential indicators of fraud. As part of this discussion, I identified potential for fraud in the posting of unusual journals; and
- Obtaining an understanding of the Joint Committee's framework of authority as well as other legal and regulatory frameworks that the Joint Committee operates in, focusing on those laws and regulations that had a direct effect on the financial statements or that had a fundamental effect on the operations of the Joint Committee.

In addition to the above, my procedures to respond to identified risks included the following:

- reviewing the financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with relevant laws and regulations discussed above;
- enquiring of management, the Joint Committee and legal advisors about actual and potential litigation and claims;
- reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance and the Joint Committee; and
- in addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, testing the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments; assessing whether the judgements made in making accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluating the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business.

I also communicated relevant identified laws and regulations and potential fraud risks to all audit team and remained alert to any indications of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations throughout the audit.

The extent to which my procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is affected by the inherent difficulty in detecting irregularities, the effectiveness of the Joint Committee's controls, and the nature, timing and extent of the audit procedures performed.

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

Certificate of completion of audit

I certify that I have completed the audit of the accounts of Swansea Bay City Deal Joint Committee in accordance with the requirements of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 and the Auditor General for Wales' Code of Audit Practice.

Adrian Crompton
Auditor General for Wales
30 July 2021

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Appendix 3

Summary of Corrections Made

During our audit we identified the following misstatements that have been corrected by management, but which we consider should be drawn to your attention due to their relevance to your responsibilities over the financial reporting process. None of these errors had any impact on the Total comprehensive income figure for 2020-21.

Exhibit 3: summary of corrections made

Value (£)	Nature of correction	Reason for correction
£18,215,278	Financial Instruments – Note 11 The note per the draft statements provided for audit, only disclosed the in-year movement and omitted the balance brought forward.	To ensure compliance with the CIPFA code
£54,000,000	Movement in Reserves Statement The general fund and capital grants unapplied balances in the movement in reserves statement as 31 March 2021 were inconsistent with those disclosed in the balance sheet. The balance sheet figures were correct and there was an adjustment of £54,000,000 made to both the general fund and capital grants unapplied figures in the movement in reserves statement.	The Movement in Reserves Statement was amended in line with CIPFA code requirements.
£34,398	Cashflow Statement The draft cashflow did not reflect the Investment Income received in year within the Investing Activities section of the Cashflow.	The Cashflow Statement was amended in line with CIPFA code requirements.

Not applicable

Some minor narrative revisions and disclosure amendments. We have not listed these items as the amounts involved have been classified as trivial.

To improve clarity of the financial statements

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Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a
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