

Date: 13 February 2026

Those Charged with Governance
Avon Fire Authority
Police & Fire Headquarters
Valley Road
Portishead
Bristol
BS20 8JJ

Dear Sirs and Madams

Avon Fire Authority – Audit Completion Report

We are pleased to attach our Audit Completion Report. This report summarises our audit conclusions, highlights the key findings arising from our work and details a number of points that we would like to discuss further with you.

We have initially discussed the contents of our report with management and incorporated their comments where relevant.

This report is intended to be solely for the information and use of management and those charged with governance of the Avon Fire Authority (the Authority) and should not be shared with anyone beyond the Authority without our prior approval.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the finance team for the co-operation and assistance afforded to us during the course of the audit.

Kind regards

Yours faithfully

Bishop Fleming Audit Limited

Bishop Fleming Audit Limited

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1. Executive summary

Status of audit

The scope of our work is set in accordance with the National Audit Office's Code of Audit Practice (the Code) and the International Standards on Auditing (ISAs) (UK). Our work is planned to provide a focused and robust audit. We are required to provide an independent opinion as to whether the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Authority at the year end and of its expenditure and income for the year then ended;
- have been prepared properly in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2024/25; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

Our audit is complete, and we have issued an unmodified audit report.

Key audit issues

Within our Audit Plan which was presented to the Audit, Governance and Oversight Committee on 14 March 2025, we outlined a number of risks that we considered to be of particular significance to the audit. Our plan also detailed our planned approach for addressing each of these risks.

The specific significant risks highlighted were as follows:

- Management override of controls;
- Valuation of land and buildings; and
- Valuation of the pension fund net liability.

Our audit work has been satisfactorily completed on each of the above areas and is further detailed in section 2 of this report.

Audit Adjustments

During the course of our work, adjustments were identified and, on agreement of management, were adjusted in the financial statements.

Further adjustments were proposed but not made, as those charged with governance do not consider them to be material to the financial statements. We accept this explanation.

Full details of the adjustments identified are included in section 6 to this report.

Management Letter Points and Internal Control Matters

A number of control points were identified during the course of our work and these are further detailed in section 7 to this report. Of the matters noted, none are considered to have an important effect on your system of internal control.

Value for Money

We are also required to satisfy ourselves that the Authority has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2025. The Code requires us to report on the Authority's arrangements under three specified reporting criteria:

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

Our prior year's value for money work as reported in the 2023/24 Auditor's Annual Report to the Fire Authority highlighted 'significant weaknesses' in the arrangements for governance. These significant weaknesses related to issues identified following an inspection by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) summarised in their report issued in November 2023. The Fire Authority has been taking action to address the issues identified. Following the most recent visit from HMICFRS in July 2025, they have identified that whilst good progress has been made, there are still issues and that some recommendations are yet to be addressed. Our audit work in relation to assessing the arrangements in place at the Authority raises some concern that progress is still required in respect of two 'causes of concern'. The Authority must promptly implement the required actions to strengthen its arrangements to secure economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in its use of resources. We have therefore concluded that the significant weaknesses highlighted in the Fire Authority's arrangements still applied during the 2024/25 financial year.

The results of the Value for Money work are reported separately in our Auditor's Annual Report.

Independence

The FRC Ethical Standard and ISA 260 requires us to communicate with you on a timely basis on all significant facts and matters that bear upon our independence and objectivity. The aim of these communications is to ensure full and fair disclosure by us to those charged with governance on matters in which you have an interest.

We are not aware of any relationships that, in our professional judgment, may reasonably be thought to bear on our independence or the objectivity of the audit engagement team.

We confirm that in our professional judgment, Bishop Fleming is independent within the meaning of regulatory and professional requirements and the objectivity of the audit engagement partner and audit staff has not been compromised.

We consider that our independence in this context is a matter that should be reviewed by both you and ourselves. It is therefore important that you consider the facts of which you are aware and come to a view. Should you have any specific matters that you wish to discuss, please contact us.

2. Introduction

Responsibilities of the audited body

The audited body is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for making available to us all the information and explanations we consider necessary. Therefore, it is essential that it confirms that our understanding of all matters referred to in this report are appropriate, having regard to its knowledge of the particular circumstances.

We would point out that the matters dealt with in this report came to our attention during the conduct of our normal audit procedures which are designed primarily for the purpose of expressing our opinion on the financial statements of Avon Fire Authority.

In consequence, our work did not encompass a detailed review of all aspects of the system and controls and cannot be relied upon necessarily to disclose possible frauds or other irregularities, or to include all possible improvements in internal control that a more extensive special examination might reveal.

Materiality

In carrying out our audit work we have considered whether the financial statements are free from 'material misstatement'. Materiality is an expression of the relative significance of a particular matter in context of the financial statements as a whole.

In general, misstatements, including omissions, are considered to be material if, individually or in aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial statements.

The assessment of whether a misstatement is material in the context of the financial statements is a matter of professional judgement and will have regard to both the size and the nature of the misstatement, or a combination of both. It is also affected by our perception of the financial information needs of users of the financial statements.

	Basis of materiality	Amount
Avon Fire Authority	2% of gross expenditure	£1,177,000

Audit report

We have issued an unmodified audit report on the financial statements of Avon Fire Authority for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Letter of Representation

The draft letter of representation is attached at Appendix 1.

Update on our planned approach

Our audit work was carried out in accordance with our Audit Plan in response to the perceived audit risks. No matters were identified which required us to change our approach and no additional risks were identified.











Confidentiality

This document is strictly confidential and although it has been made available to those charged with governance to facilitate discussions, it may not be taken as altering our responsibilities to the Fire Authority arising under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (the Act) and from the Code. The contents of this report should not be disclosed to third parties without our prior written consent.




3. Accounts and audit process

The preparation of the financial statements is a vital process for the management of the Authority and one which should be performed on a timely basis. We met with senior officers as part of our planning work to discuss how we would work together to make the audit process effective.

We discussed key accounting issues early, so they could be considered before the audit commenced.

	Current Year	Previous Year
Readiness for audit		
Quality of financial statements		
Accuracy of financial records		
Quality of working papers		
Availability of Staff		

Key (Impact on audit approach)

- None or limited impact 
- Some impact 
- Significant impact 

We invested significant time into the audit running as smoothly as possible. At the start of the audit, we held planning meetings. During the final audit, we had regular calls with the finance team. In addition to this, the team had an on-site presence during the final audit visit.

As a result of the investment made by both parties, the audit has generally proceeded very smoothly, although some areas have taken longer to audit than we had expected. These included the Firefighter's Pension Fund.

We are keen to continually improve our service and the effectiveness of the process and, therefore, will hold a debrief discussion with management to identify areas where this might be possible.

Readiness for audit

We were provided with a copy of the draft financial statements in line with the timetable agreed before the start of the audit and as outlined in our Audit Plan.

Information requested during the onsite fieldwork was generally provided promptly to our staff. This made the core audit work progress relatively smoothly, although there were delays in some areas. Most notable was in respect of evidence from the Fire Authority's external valuer and pension fund provider, which we recognise is not something the Fire Authority can fully control.

Quality of financial statements

We have not identified any significant omissions from the draft financial statements.

Accuracy of financial records

The majority of the underlying financial records were accurate, agreed to the information provided in the audit file and were easy to understand.

Quality of working papers

The quality of the working papers and supporting evidence provided was generally good, this led to minimal follow up queries and ensured the audit proceeded smoothly when information was received.

Availability of Staff

Key members of the finance team made themselves available to us throughout the audit where possible. We were kept informed of any instances when staff were not available.

4. Audit risks

Significant risks:

Management override of controls	
Significant Risk <p>We are required by auditing standards (ISA 240) to consider fraud and management override of controls to be a significant risk for all audits as no matter how strong a control environment, there is the potential for controls to be overridden or bypassed.</p>	Work done and conclusion <p>To address this risk, we have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• reviewed the reasonableness of accounting estimates and critical judgements made by management;• tested journals with a material impact on the results for the year; and• considered a sample of other journals with key risk attributes. <p>In testing journals, we used data analytics tools to interrogate the whole population of journals posted in the year and focus on those with key risk factors.</p> <p>We have not identified any material errors from our work carried out.</p>

Valuation of land and buildings

Significant Risk

There is a risk over the valuation of land and buildings due to the high degree of estimation uncertainty, and judgements involved in build valuations.

Work done and conclusion

To address this risk, we have:

- documented our understanding of the processes and controls put in place by management, and evaluate the design of the controls;
- reviewed the instructions provided to the valuer and the valuer's skills and expertise, in order to determine if we can rely on the management expert;
- written to the valuer to confirm the basis on which the valuation was carried out;
- confirmed that the basis of valuation for assets valued in year is appropriate based on their usage;
- reviewed the appropriateness of assumptions used in the valuation of land and buildings. For assets not formally revalued in the year we assessed how management has satisfied itself that these assets are not materially different from the current value at the year-end;
- reviewed accuracy and completeness of information provided to the valuer, such as floor areas;
- tested a sample of revaluations made during the year to ensure that they have been input correctly into the Fire Authority's asset register; and
- formed our own expectations regarding the movement in property values and comparing this to the valuations reflected in the Fire Authority's financial statements, following up valuation movements that appear unusual.

We have not identified any material errors from our work carried out.

Valuation of the pension fund net liability

Significant Risk

There is a risk over the valuation of the pension fund net liability due to the values involved and the high degree of estimation uncertainty, due to the sensitivity of the estimate to changes in key assumptions.

Work done and conclusion

To address this risk, we have:

- documented our understanding of the processes and controls put in place by management, and evaluate the design of the controls;
- reviewed the instructions provided to the actuary and the actuary's skills and expertise, in order to determine if we can rely on the management expert;
- considered the accuracy and completeness of the information provided to the actuary;
- ensured that the disclosures in the financial statements in respect of the pension fund liability are consistent with the actuarial report from the actuary;

Valuation of the pension fund net liability

- carried out procedures to confirm the reasonableness of the actuarial assumptions made by reviewing the report of the consulting actuary (as auditor's expert) and performing any additional procedures suggested within the report; and
- obtained assurances from the auditor of Avon Pension Fund in respect of the controls around the validity and accuracy of membership data, contributions data and benefits data sent to the actuary by the pension fund and the fund assets valuation in the pension fund financial statements.

We have not identified any material issues from our work. However, there have been some misstatements below our materiality level (which remain unadjusted) as outlined in Section 6.

The Fire Authority is a member of two defined benefit pension schemes, the Firefighters' Pension Scheme and the Avon Local Government Pension Scheme ('LGPS').

Our findings showed the assumptions used are consistent with our expectations and those used by other actuaries at 31 March 2025. Before consideration of the impact of an asset ceiling, the pension valuation on the LGPS has moved from a net deficit position of £4.671m to a surplus position of £0.302m.

The key driver of that change was the increase in the discount rate used by the actuaries in the LGPS, which results in a decrease in the net present value of your share of the scheme liabilities.

Key assumptions	2024	2025
Discount rate	4.9%	5.8%

Under IFRS, additional guidance is provided in IFRIC 14 on the extent to which a defined benefit pension asset should be recognised. The actuary has produced an asset ceiling report that demonstrates that by following the guidance in IFRIC 14 none of this asset should be recognised and a liability of £3.521m is recognised instead. This adjustment effectively allows for ongoing commitments to contributions to the pension scheme into the future, over and above the expected service charge.

The Fire Authority's share of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme's liability has decreased (from £506m to £459m).

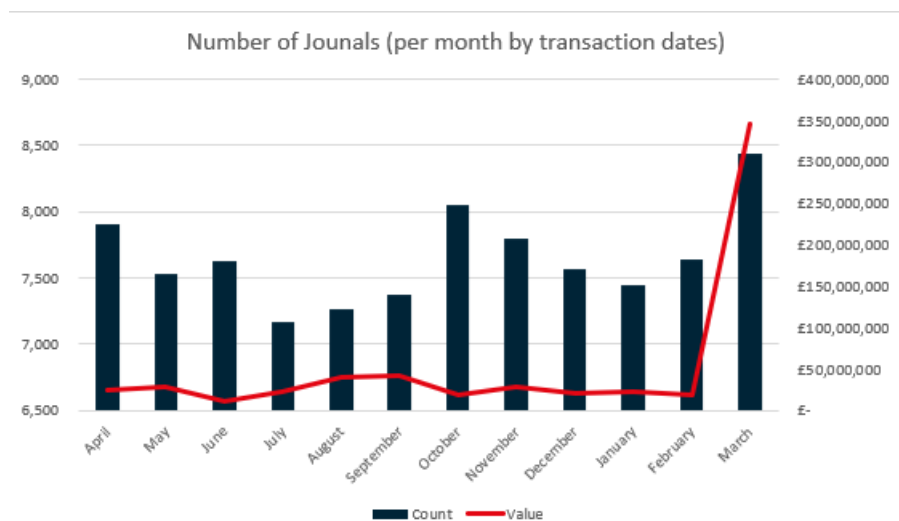
As part of our planning, we rebutted the risks of fraud in revenue recognition (required under the ISAs) and fraud in expenditure recognition (required under the Financial Reporting Council's Practice Note 10: Audit of Financial Statements and regularity of public sector bodies in the United Kingdom).

Other risks:

Implementation of IFRS 16 Leases

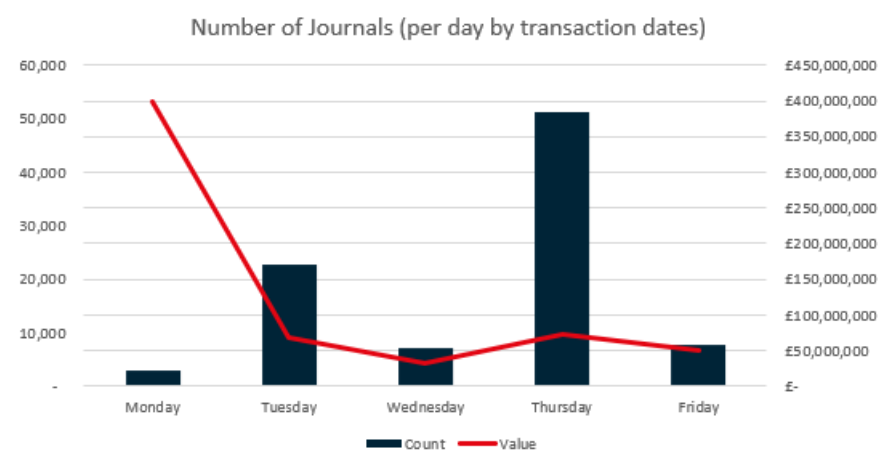
Other risk	Work done and conclusion
<p>2024/25 was the first year in which local government bodies were required to implement the provisions of IFRS 16 leases.</p> <p>There is a risk that the Fire Authority has not appropriately complied with IFRS 16.</p>	<p>To address this risk, we have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Documented our understanding of the processes and controls put in place by management for identifying lease contracts, including those not covered by the transitional arrangements, and evaluate the design of the controls;• Reviewed the appropriateness of assumptions used in calculating the estimate;• Reviewed the completeness and accuracy of the data gathering exercise;• Confirmed the appropriateness of application of exemptions for existing contracts such as short term and low value leases;• Reviewed the required transitional disclosures and the application of the adjustment to the opening balances; and,• Tested a sample of leases for accuracy in calculating the right of use asset and lease liabilities. <p>The implementation of IFRS 16 resulted in Right of Use assets of £735k being brought onto the balance sheet as at 1 April 2024 with the balance as at 31 March 2025 being £549k. In addition, there was a further impact of IFRS 16 on the disclosures regarding the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) asset.</p> <p>We assessed the completeness of the lease identification process, as well as the appropriateness of the de-minimus levels used. We reviewed the adjustment made to the opening balance (no prior period adjustment is necessary).</p> <p>We have not identified any material errors from our work in this area.</p>

5. Journal Insights



This graph represents the number and total value of journals posted each month.

For most of the year, a consistent number of journals are posted each month. There is a spike in October due to the Apprenticeship Levy for August, September and October being posted within this month. In addition, there is a large spike to March which would reflect the processing of year-end transactions. These movements are therefore in line with expectations.



This graph represents the number and total value of journals posted by day of the week.

This is in line with our expectations. The high number and value on Tuesdays and Thursdays are when the BACS runs are completed.

6. Audit Adjustments

In accordance with the requirements of International Standards on Auditing, we must communicate all adjusted and unadjusted items identified during our audit work, other than those which we believe to be clearly insignificant.

Adjusted items

All adjusted misstatements are set out in detail below along with the impact on the key statements for the year ended 31 March 2025:

	Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement		Balance sheet	
	Dr	Cr	Dr	Cr
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Note 14, Property, Plant and Equipment – Land & Buildings ¹	-	-	-	488
Note 25, Revaluation Reserve – Adjustment to revaluation of assets ¹	-	-	488	-
Note 23, Short Term Provisions ²	-	-	-	257
Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement– Cost of Services ²	257	-	-	-
Total	257	-	488	745

1. To adjust for the double counting of the Gross Internal Area during the valuation of the Lansdown Control Centre
2. To add in a provision for a claim against the Authority regarding asbestos

Misclassifications and adjustments to disclosures

The table below provides details of any misclassification and disclosure changes identified during the audit.

Misclassification/ Disclosure change	Audit comment	Adjusted?
Note 14, Property, Plant and Equipment	To remove the £260k Assets held for sale from this note (as this does not form part of Property, Plant and Equipment)	✓

Unadjusted items

The table below provides details of adjustments identified during the 2024/25 audit which have not been made within the final set of financial statements. The Audit, Governance and Oversight Committee is required to approve management's proposed treatment of all items recorded within the table below. (These are also set out in the Letter of Representation.)

	Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement		Balance sheet	
	Dr	Cr	Dr	Cr
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement– Firefighter Pension Top up Grant ¹	187	-	-	-
Top-Up Grant Debtor ¹	-	-	-	187
Defined Benefit Pension Schemes – Investment Assets ²	-	-	97	-
Pensions Reserve ²	-	-	-	97
Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement– Firefighter Pension Top up Grant ³	215	-	-	-
Top-Up Grant Debtor ³	-	-	-	215

Total	402	0	97	499
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1. This would be to adjust for the incorrect calculation of employer contributions with regards to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme.
2. To reflect estimation differences identified during the audit of the Pension Fund.
3. This would be to adjust for the incorrect calculation of employee contributions with regards to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme.

7. Management letter points and internal control systems

The Fire Authority's management is responsible for the identification, assessment and monitoring of risk, for developing, operating and monitoring the systems of internal control and for providing assurance to the Audit, Governance and Oversight Committee as 'Those Charged with Governance' that it has done so.

In accordance with the terms of our engagement we have not provided a comprehensive statement of all issues which may exist in the accounting and internal control systems or of all improvements which may be made, but outline below our observations arising from the audit; none of which are considered significant.

KEY:



Observations refer to issues that are so fundamental to the system of internal control that management should address immediately to minimise the risk of a material misstatement within the financial statements.






Observations refer mainly to issues that have an important effect on the system of internal control and, if left uncorrected could potentially lead to a material misstatement within the financial statements.




Observations refer to issues that would, if corrected, improve internal control in general and engender good practice, but is unlikely to have a material impact on the financial statements.

Current Year Issues

Error in Gross Internal Areas of buildings	
 <p>It was noted during our testing of building valuations that the Gross Internal Areas (GIA) was double counted for the Lansdown control centre.</p> <p>This resulted in the Authority being required to ask the valuers for an updated valuation of its buildings, which resulted in the overall Net Book Value of Property, Plant and Equipment decreasing by £488k.</p>	<p><u>Recommendation</u></p> <p>Management should review the areas maintained on file for property assets to ensure that the source data for valuations is accurate.</p> <p><u>Management comment</u></p> <p>This was an isolated incident arising in relation to the areas quoted on this particular site drawing. It has since been updated by the Head of Premises. All other drawings accurately reflect the GIA for each site owned by the Service.</p>
Management challenge of bad debt provisions	
 <p>The Authority's accounts include provisions for bad debts for Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rate areas for different Councils. The provisions used are calculated by applying percentages which Management receive from the respective Councils. These percentages are accepted without challenge.</p>	<p><u>Recommendation</u></p> <p>Management should ensure that the calculations behind these figures are understood and challenged where necessary.</p> <p><u>Management comment</u></p> <p>Our year end process going forwards will consider scrutiny and challenge around information provided from our four unitary authorities to ensure we have assurance over associated balances within the financial statements.</p>

Signed SLAs	
	
<p>Bristol City Council provide the Authority with financial services and payroll services. Service Level Agreements (SLAs) exist for these, but these were signed in 2020 expired on 31 March 2023.</p> <p>Whilst there are signed 'Extension of Service Provision' letters which roll forward the terms of the SLAs, no new SLAs have been agreed.</p>	<p><u>Recommendation</u></p> <p>SLAs should be in place and up to date for the provision of such services, which should take into account and any updates in circumstances.</p> <p><u>Management comment</u></p> <p>We accept that the current SLAs we are working with are old and best practice would involve a review and update. We are currently in the process of entering into a new contract with BCC for the financial services, which will be effective from April 2026. Rather than reviewing and updating the existing SLAs, new SLAs will be agreed as part of this process from the start of the 26/27 financial year.</p>

Prior Year Issues – Unresolved

Employee right to work documents	
	
<p><u>Prior Year Finding</u></p> <p>It was noted as part of our employee existence testing that there was one instance where an ID was not available for an employee who had left the Authority in October 2023.</p> <p><u>2024-25 update</u></p> <p>Testing on employee right to work documents to be finalised. So far, there have been issues in obtaining photo ID for various employees.</p>	<p><u>Recommendation</u></p> <p>We recommend that copies of photo identification and all other documents required by statute are to be maintained for the relevant period (2 years after the end of employment).</p> <p><u>2023-24 Management comment</u></p> <p>Recommendation is noted. We will look at the one known missing ID to consider any remedy needed for that particular case and any further learning for future. There has been high turnover in the only Recruitment role in the service over the last 2 years and this has resulted in some inconsistencies within processes which may have contributed to this finding. This has now been addressed through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o process maps being captured and updated for recruitment and onboarding processes o new automated induction and onboarding checklists and processes being launched (Corporate Staff) and adapted/rolled out for other staff groups imminently o an internal audit of all right to work checks/documentation is being undertaken (nearing completion) for all staff o retention schedule will be reviewed to ensure all stated period remain accurate in line with legislation and/or best practice o plans to develop a business case for an applicant tracking system which will automate many of the current manual processes, reducing the risk of human error with onboarding processes <p><u>2024-25 Management comment</u></p> <p>The examples picked up as part of the audit process will be reviewed to ensure this is rectified. The Service does request three forms of ID from each candidate as part of the recruitment process, and job offers require evidence of right to work in order to be unconditional. A recent restructure to the Recruitment Department, as a result of the People Services Restructure, means Recruitment now falls within Organisational Development, which should add further resilience to</p>

these processes. We will continue to keep them under review to ensure they are working effectively.

Blank journal descriptions



Prior Year Finding

It was noted from our testing of manual journals that there was a high number of journal lines posted with blank descriptions.

2024-25 update

A few journals were noted to have blank descriptions. 2/4 of journal with blank descriptions identified have a description on the first line. The other 2 identified do not have a description on the journal.

Recommendation

We recommend that all journals are posted with accurate and descriptive journal descriptions.

2023-24 Management comment

We believe this has arisen when journals have multiple lines and the description is only included on the first line of the journal. We will ensure the description is included on all lines of a journal posting going forwards.

2024-25 Management comment

This has been investigated by the Finance team, and it appears all the journals posted by AFRS staff contain descriptions. However, it appears that bulk journal uploads posted by Bristol City Council, on AF&RS behalf, do have blank descriptions. We will investigate whether this can be rectified going forwards.

Management challenge for Collection Fund debtors



Prior Year Finding

It was noted during our testing of debtors that for Collection Fund debtor balances, the client's management do not provide challenge to the other authorities in relation to the balances included in the accounts which relate to Avon Fire's share of the Collection Fund balances.

2024-25 update

On understanding the process of collection fund debtors, it was noted that a sense check is carried out but there is no challenge on the authorities in relation to the balances.

Recommendation

We recommend that management gain an understanding of the process by which the billing authorities establish the Collection Fund debtor balances. Management should then seek to challenge the billing authorities in relation to the debtor balances where appropriate.

2023-24 Management comment

Recommendation noted. We will explore ways to increase our understanding of the collection fund balances, with the Unitary Authorities, to allow for valuable challenges to be raised, if required.

2024-25 Management comment

We will continue to critically review collection fund balances with our Unitary Authorities and will ensure this process involves raising challenges, as necessary, to gain assurance over those balances.

Related party declarations



Prior Year Finding

It was noted during our testing of related party transactions, that declarations of interest had not been received for two Councillors.

2024-25 update

There are currently two declarations outstanding for the audit.

Recommendation

We recommend that management put procedures in place to ensure that all declarations are received by the year-end.

2023-24 Management comment

Processes will be reviewed for the year ended March 2025 to help ensure declarations are received from all Members and Officers.

2024-25 Management comment

Management made every effort to obtain related party declarations from all Members of the Fire Authority for the 24/25 year-end. This included several different members of staff following up on missing forms on multiple occasions, as well as reminders and printed copies being taken to committee meetings. There are difficulties sometimes due to Members leaving the Authority part way through the year. We are pleased to confirm, by December 2025, we have now received all related party declarations from Members.

Prior Year Issues – Resolved

Source data for valuations



Prior Year Finding

It was noted during our testing of building valuations that the client was unaware where the Gross Internal Areas (GIAs), which are the key piece of data for the revaluations, originated from.

Moreover, our testing identified that there were number of differences between the GIAs used by the valuer, and those on the floorplans of the buildings.

This resulted in the Authority being required to ask the valuers for an updated valuation of its buildings, which resulted in the overall Net Book Value of Property, Plant and Equipment increasing by £1,297k.

2024-25 update

Floorplans were updated for the 2023/24 audit. There were no similar issues identified during 2024/25. Although there was a duplication of a GIA (as detailed in a separate Management Letter Point), this is a separate and isolated issue.

Assets under construction



Prior Year Finding

It was noted from our testing of assets under construction that the Bedminster site (valued at £815,000) was operational during the refurbishment and should have been included in land and buildings.

2024-25 update

There are no assets under construction in 2024/25. The issue is therefore resolved.

8. Other matters

Other information

We are required to give an opinion on whether the other information published with the audited financial statements (for example, the Narrative Statement and Annual Governance Statement) is materially inconsistent with the financial statement or our knowledge as obtained during the audit.

We have nothing to report in this respect.

Reporting by exception

We are required to report to you by exception the following matters, if:

- the Annual Governance Statement does not comply with “Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework 2016 Edition” published by CIPFA/SOLACE; or
- we issue a report in the public interest under section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014; or
- we make a written recommendation to the Fire Authority under section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 in the course of, or at the conclusion of the audit; or
- 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 in the course of, or at the conclusion of the audit; or
- we issue an advisory notice under Section 29 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 in the course of, or at the conclusion of the audit; or
- we make an application for judicial review under Section 31 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, in the course of, or at the conclusion of the audit.

We have nothing to report on these matters.

The 2014 Act also gives rights to local electors and other parties, such as the right to ask questions of the auditor and the right to make an objection to an item of account. No such objections have been raised.

Going concern

Our work has not identified a material uncertainty related to going concern. We are satisfied that management’s use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Value for money arrangements

We are required to satisfy ourselves that the Fire Authority has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2025. The Code requires us to report on the Fire Authority’s arrangements under three specified reporting criteria:

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

We asked management to complete an evidenced self-assessment of the Fire Authority’s arrangements. We then reviewed the evidence provided and carried out follow-up work as appropriate to consider whether there are any significant weaknesses in the Fire Authority’s arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

We have identified significant weaknesses in the arrangements, and the results of the Value for Money work are reported separately in our Auditor's Annual Report.

Whole of Government accounts work

Alongside our work on the financial statements, we also review and report to the National Audit Office on the Fire Authority's Whole of Government Accounts (WGA) return. The extent of our review, and the nature of our report, is specified by the National Audit Office.

We have not yet completed the limited procedures required in the National Audit Office's group instructions in respect of our work on the Fire Authority's WGA submission. This will be done alongside issuing the audit opinion on the Fire Authority's accounts.

Audit certificate

At the end of the audit, as auditors, we are required to certify the completion of the audit. The effect of this certificate is to close the audit and marks the point when the auditor's responsibilities in respect of the audit of the period covered by the certificate have been discharged.

We will be unable to issue our audit certificate alongside the auditor's opinion on the accounts until we have received confirmation from the NAO that no additional work (beyond submission of the Assurance Statement) will be required in respect of the Whole of Government Accounts exercise.

Audit fees

Our final fee for the 2024/25 audit is set out below:

	Fee proposed at planning stage (£)	Final fee (subject to approval by PSAA) (£)
PSAA scale fee 2024/25	104,678	104,678
Fee variation 1 – Additional procedures in relation to the implementation of IFRS 16	TBC	6,092
Fee variation 2 – Additional procedures in relation to the significant weakness on VFM	TBC	2,756
Fee variation 3 – Additional time required to resolve the work around the regarding provisions	N/A	6,323
Fee variation 4 – Additional procedures required for audit of pension disclosures to ensure compliance with IFRIC 14	N/A	1,341
Total (excluding VAT)	TBC	121,190

We can confirm that we have not undertaken any non-audit work at the Fire Authority during the year.

Appendices



1. Letter of representation

Bishop Fleming Audit Limited
Salt Quay House
4 North East Quay
Sutton Harbour
Plymouth
Devon
PL4 0BN

[Date]

Dear **Sirs**

Avon Fire Authority

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

The following representations are made on the basis of enquiries of management and staff with relevant knowledge and experience such as we consider necessary in connection with your audit of the Avon Fire Authority financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025. These enquiries have included inspection of supporting documentation where appropriate, and are sufficient to satisfy ourselves that we can make each of the following representations. All representations are made to the best of our knowledge and belief.

1. General

We have fulfilled our responsibilities for the preparation of the Fire Authority's financial statements in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards and the CIPFA/ LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2024/25 (the Code) and applicable law and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view and for making accurate representations to you.

All the transactions undertaken by the Fire Authority have been properly reflected and recorded in the accounting records.

All the accounting records have been made available to you for the purpose of your audit of the Fire Authority. We have provided you with unrestricted access to all appropriate persons within the Fire Authority, and with all other records and related information requested, including minutes of all Fire Authority and Committee meetings.

The financial statements are free of material misstatements, including omissions.

The effects of uncorrected misstatements (as set out in the appendix to this letter) are immaterial both individually and in total.

2. Internal control and fraud

We acknowledge our responsibility for the design, implementation and maintenance of internal control to prevent and detect fraud and error, and we believe that we have appropriately fulfilled these responsibilities. We have disclosed to you the results of our risk assessment that the financial statements may be misstated as a result of fraud.

We have disclosed to you all instances of known or suspected fraud affecting the Fire Authority involving management, employees who have a significant role in internal control or others where fraud could have a material effect on the financial statements.

We have also disclosed to you all information in relation to allegations of fraud or suspected fraud affecting the Fire Authority's financial statements communicated by current or former employees, analysts, regulators or others.

3. Assets and liabilities

The Fire Authority has satisfactory title to all assets and there are no liens or encumbrances on the Fire Authority's assets, except for those that are disclosed in the notes to the financial statements.

Significant assumptions used by us in making accounting estimates, including those measured at fair value, are reasonable. Such accounting estimates include PPE and pension liability valuations.

All actual liabilities, contingent liabilities and guarantees given to third parties have been recorded or disclosed as appropriate.

We have no plans or intentions that may materially alter the carrying value and, where relevant, the fair value measurements or classification of assets and liabilities reflected in the financial statements.

4. Accounting estimates

The methods, data and significant assumptions used by us in making accounting estimates and their related disclosures are appropriate to achieve recognition, measurement and disclosure that is reasonable in the context of the applicable financial reporting framework.

5. Legal claims

We have disclosed to you all claims in connection with litigation that have been, or are expected to be, received and such matters, as appropriate, have been properly accounted for and disclosed in the financial statements.

6. Laws and regulations

We have disclosed to you all known instances of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial statements.

We confirm that all correspondence with our Regulators has been made available to you.

7. Related parties

Related party relationships and transactions comply with the Fire Authority's financial regulations, relevant requirements of the Code and have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed in the financial statements. We have disclosed to you all relevant information concerning such relationships and transactions and are not aware of any other matters which require disclosure in order to comply with regulatory, legislative and accounting standards requirements.

8. Subsequent events

All events subsequent to the date of the financial statements which require adjustment or disclosure have been properly accounted for and disclosed.

9. Going concern

We believe that the Fire Authority's financial statements should be prepared on a going concern basis on the grounds that the financial reporting framework applicable to local government bodies means that the anticipated continued provision of entity's services in the public sector is normally sufficient evidence of going concern. We have not identified any material uncertainties related to going concern.

10. Annual Governance Statement

We are satisfied that the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) fairly reflects the Fire Authority's risk assurance and governance framework and we confirm that we are not aware of any significant risks that are not disclosed within the AGS.

11. Narrative Report

The disclosures within the Narrative Report fairly reflect our understanding of the Fire Authority's financial and operating performance over the period covered by the Fire Authority's financial statements.

12. Other

Add specific representations as required – see template.

We acknowledge our legal responsibilities regarding disclosure of information to you as auditors and confirm that so far as we are aware, there is no relevant audit information needed by you in connection with preparing your audit report of which you are unaware.

We have taken all the appropriate steps in order to make ourselves aware of any relevant audit/ other information and to establish that you are aware of that information.

Yours faithfully

.....

Signed on behalf of the Audit, Governance and Oversight Committee of Avon Fire Authority

[Date]

2. Required communications with the Audit, Governance and Oversight Committee

Under the auditing standards, there are certain communications that we must provide to the Audit, Governance and Oversight Committee as those charged with governance. These include:

Required communication	Where addressed
Our responsibilities in relation to the financial statement audit and those of management and those charged with governance.	Audit Plan
The planned scope and timing of the audit including any limitations, specifically including with respect to significant risks.	Audit Plan
With respect to 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 is corrected; and • in writing, corrected misstatements that are significant. 	Audit Completion Report
With respect to fraud communications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enquiries of those charged with governance to determine whether they have a knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud affecting the entity; • any fraud that we have identified or information we have obtained that indicates that fraud may exist; and • a discussion of any other matters related to fraud. 	Audit Completion Report Discussions at committees
Significant matters arising during the audit in connection with the entity's related parties.	Audit Completion Report
Significant findings from the audit including: <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; and • other matters significant to the oversight of the financial reporting process or otherwise identified during the audit that we believe will be relevant to the Committee when fulfilling their responsibilities. 	Audit Completion Report
Significant deficiencies in internal controls identified during the audit.	Audit Completion Report
Where relevant, any issues identified with respect to authority to obtain external confirmations or inability to obtain relevant and reliable audit evidence from other procedures.	Audit Completion Report
Audit findings regarding non-compliance with laws and regulations	Audit Completion Report Discussions at committees
Significant matters in relation to going concern.	Audit Completion Report
Indication of whether all requested explanations and documents were provided by the entity.	Audit Completion Report
Confirmation of independence and objectivity of the firm and engagement team members.	Audit Plan Audit Completion Report



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