

Auditor's Annual Report

Mansfield District Council – year ended
31 March 2023

December 2023



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Our reports are prepared in the context of the 'Statement of responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies' issued by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd. Reports and letters prepared by appointed auditors and addressed to members or officers are prepared for the sole use of the Council. No responsibility is accepted to any member or officer in their individual capacity or to any third party.

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01

Section 01: **Introduction**

1. Introduction

Purpose of the Auditor's Annual Report

Our Auditor's Annual Report (AAR) summarises the work we have undertaken as the auditor for Mansfield District Council ('the Council') for the year ended 31 March 2023. Although this report is addressed to the Council, it is designed to be read by a wider audience including members of the public and other external stakeholders.

Our responsibilities are defined by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Code of Audit Practice ('the Code') issued by the National Audit Office ('the NAO'). The remaining sections of the AAR outline how we have discharged these responsibilities and the findings from our work. These are summarised below.



Opinion on the financial statements

Our audit report, issued 14 December 2023, gave an unqualified opinion on the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023.

Our audit was conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Code, and International Standards on Auditing (ISAs).



Value for Money arrangements

In our audit report we reported that we had completed our work on the Council's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources and had not issued recommendations in relation to identified significant weaknesses in those arrangements. Section 3 provides our commentary on the Council's arrangements.



Wider reporting responsibilities

At the date of reporting our work on the Council's Whole of Government Accounts return remains incomplete whilst we wait for instructions from the National Audit Office

02

Section 02:

Audit of the financial statements

2. Audit of the financial statements

The scope of our audit and the results of our opinion

At Appendix A, we have set out the main financial statement risks addressed in our audit – detailed findings were presented to the Governance and Standards Committee on 15 November 2023.

In the table below, we set out the main audit outcomes for 2022/23.

Audit Area	Outcomes
Financial Statements	<p>The purpose of our audit is to provide reasonable assurance to users that the financial statements are free from material error. We do this by expressing an opinion on whether the statements are prepared, in all material respects, in line with the financial reporting framework applicable to the Council and whether they give a true and fair view of the Council's financial position as at 31 March 2023 and of its financial performance for the year then ended.</p> <p>Our audit report, to be issued by December 2023, is expected to give an unqualified opinion on the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023.</p>
Qualitative aspects of the Council's accounting practices	<p>We reviewed the Council's accounting policies and disclosures and concluded they complied with the 2022/23 Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting, appropriately tailored to the Council's circumstances.</p>
Internal Control Recommendations	<p>As part of our audit, we considered the internal controls in place that are relevant to the preparation of the financial statements. We did this to design audit procedures that allow us to express our opinion on the financial statements, but this did not extend to us expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of internal controls. We did not identify any 'High – level 3' recommendations for 2022/23.</p>
Annual Governance Statement	<p>We did not identify any matters where, in our opinion, the governance statement did not comply with the guidance issued by CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting.</p>
Wider responsibilities	<p>Our powers and responsibilities under the 2014 Act are broad and include the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• issue a report in the public interest;• make statutory recommendations that must be considered and responded to publicly;• apply to the court for a declaration that an item of account is contrary to law; and• issue an advisory notice under schedule 8 of the 2014 Act. <p>We have not exercised any of these powers as part of our 2022/23 audit. The 2014 Act also gives rights to local electors and other parties, such as the right to ask questions of the auditor and the right to make an objection to an item of account. No such objections have been raised.</p>

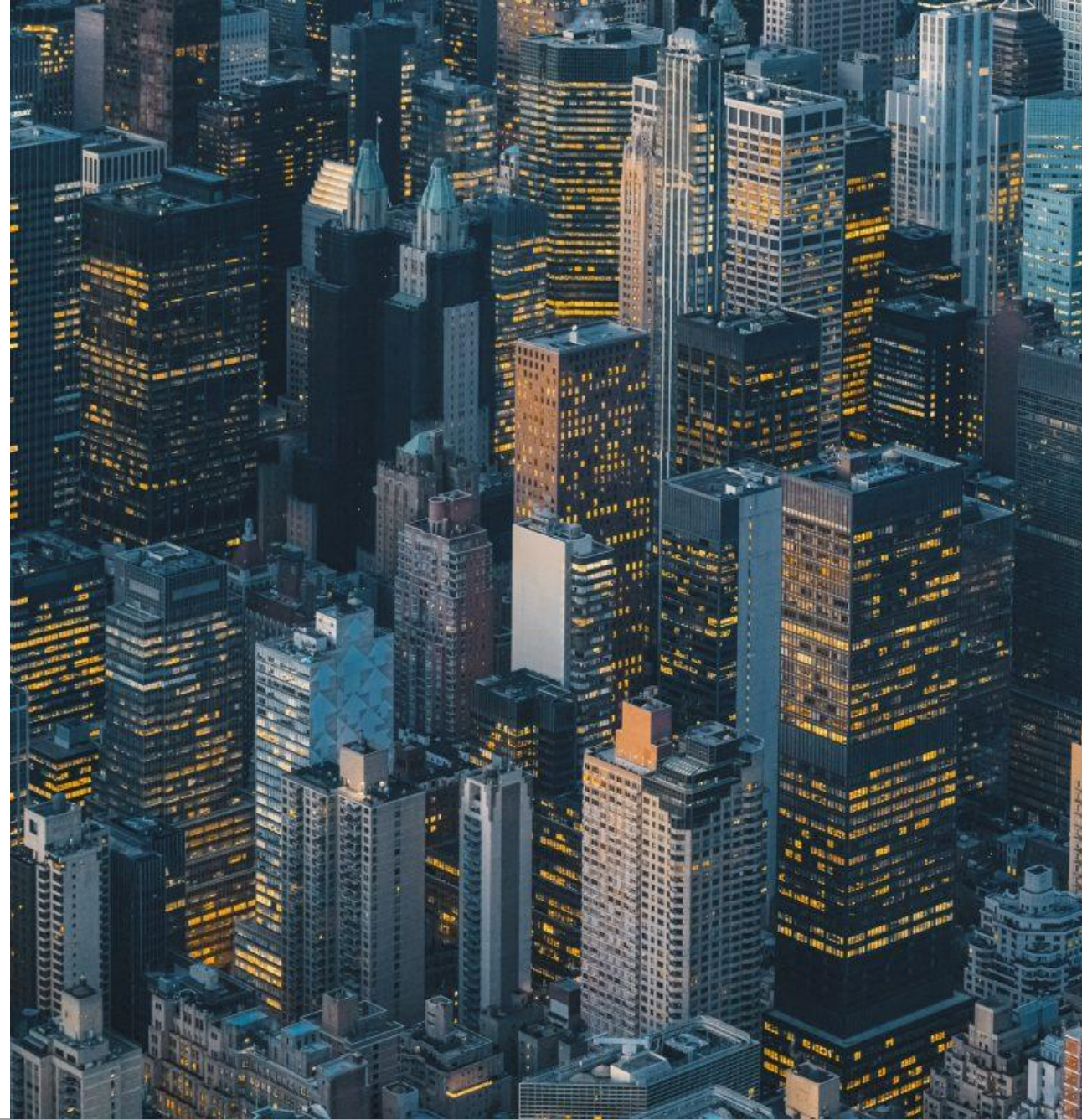
03

Section 03:

Commentary on VFM arrangements

3. Commentary on VFM arrangements

Overall summary



3. VFM arrangements – Overall summary

Approach to Value for Money arrangements work

We are required to consider whether the Council has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. The NAO issues guidance to auditors that underpins the work we are required to carry out and sets out the reporting criteria that we are required to consider. The reporting criteria are:



Financial sustainability - How the Council plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services



Governance - How the Council ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks



Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness - How the Council uses information about its costs and performance to improve the way it manages and delivers its services

Our work is carried out in three main phases.

Phase 1 - Planning and risk assessment

At the planning stage of the audit, we undertake work so we can understand the arrangements that the Council has in place under each of the reporting criteria; as part of this work we may identify risks of significant weaknesses in those arrangements.

We obtain our understanding of arrangements for each of the specified reporting criteria using a variety of information sources which may include:

- NAO guidance and supporting information
- Information from internal and external sources including regulators
- Knowledge from previous audits and other audit work undertaken in the year
- Interviews and discussions with staff and directors

Although we describe this work as planning work, we keep our understanding of arrangements under review and update our risk assessment throughout the audit to reflect emerging issues that may suggest there are further risks of significant weaknesses.

Phase 2 - Additional risk-based procedures and evaluation

Where we identify risks of significant weaknesses in arrangements, we design a programme of work to enable us to decide whether there are actual significant weaknesses in arrangements. We use our professional judgement and have regard to guidance issued by the NAO in determining the extent to which an identified weakness is significant.

Phase 3 - Reporting the outcomes of our work and our recommendations

We are required to provide a summary of the work we have undertaken and the judgments we have reached against each of the specified reporting criteria in this Auditor's Annual Report. We do this as part of our Commentary on VFM arrangements which we set out for each criteria later in this section.

We also make recommendations where we identify weaknesses in arrangements or other matters that require attention from the Council. We refer to two distinct types of recommendation through the remainder of this report:

- **Recommendations arising from significant weaknesses in arrangements**

We make these recommendations for improvement where we have identified a significant weakness in the Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. Where such significant weaknesses in arrangements are identified, we report these (and our associated recommendations) at any point during the audit.

- **Other recommendations**

We make other recommendations when we identify areas for potential improvement or weaknesses in arrangements which we do not consider to be significant but still require action to be taken

The table on the following page summarises the outcomes of our work against each reporting criteria, including whether we have identified any significant weaknesses in arrangements or made other recommendations.

3. VFM arrangements – Overall summary

Overall summary by reporting criteria

Reporting criteria	Commentary page reference	Identified risks of significant weakness?	Actual significant weaknesses identified?	Other recommendations made?
 Financial sustainability	11	No	No	No
 Governance	16	No	No	No
 Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness	19	No	No	No

3. Commentary on VFM arrangements

Financial Sustainability

How the body plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services



3. VFM arrangements – Financial Sustainability

Overall commentary on the Financial Sustainability reporting criteria

Significant weakness in 2021/22	Nil.
Significant weaknesses identified in 2022/23	Nil.

Position brought forward from 2021/22

We reported in our Annual Auditor’s Report for 2021/22, that we had;

- Reviewed the 2021/22 financial performance and forecasts during the year and considered the Council’s financial outturn position as presented in the financial statements;
- Reviewed the 2022/23;
 - Revenue and Capital budgets and Medium-Term Financial Plan;
 - Considered the Council’s latest financial monitoring information and its updated medium-term outlook.
- Updated our risk assessment for any new or emerging issues through discussions with management and updating our review of committee reports;
- Reviewed the Council’s Annual governance Statement for any significant issues; and
- Considered the general findings from our audit work in other areas.

As set out in the table above, there are no indications of a significant weakness in the Council’s arrangements for financial sustainability brought forward from 2021/22. The Council’s underlying arrangements in relation to financial sustainability are not significantly different in 2022/23.

Overall responsibilities for financial governance

We have reviewed the Council’s overall governance framework, including Council and committee reports, the Annual Governance Statement, and Statement of Accounts for 2022/23. These confirm the Council undertook its responsibility to define the strategic aims and objectives, approve budgets and monitor financial performance against budgets and plans to best meet the needs of the Council’s service users.

The Council’s financial planning and monitoring arrangements

Through our review of Council and committee reports, meetings with Officers and relevant work performed on the financial statements, we are satisfied that the Council’s arrangements for budget monitoring remain appropriate, including quarterly reporting to Members and well-established arrangements for year-end financial reporting.

2022/23 Budget Setting and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy

We have read reports to Overview & Scrutiny Committee, the Cabinet and Council covering budget setting for 2022/23 and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. We also met regularly with Officers throughout the year.

In our view, the Budget Report for 2022/23 adequately explains revenue and capital budgets, with a sufficient link to specific business units, as well as an explanation on the impact to the general fund balance. There is no indication of excessive use of capital flexibilities to support revenue expenditure, nor has our work on the financial statements highlighted any concerns regarding the Council’s policy for setting the Minimum Revenue Provision.

There is no indication that the Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy and budget setting process is not aligned to supporting plans given the Council has a track record of delivering against budget.

2022/23 Statement of Financial Position

We carried out a high-level analysis of the financial statements subject to our audit, including the Movement in Reserves Statement and the Balance Sheet, our work to date has not highlighted any risks of significant weakness in arrangements or indicators of a risk to the Council’s financial sustainability.

3. VFM arrangements – Financial Sustainability

Overall commentary on the Financial Sustainability reporting criteria

Council assets

During the year, we have discussed an issue relating to an asset owned by the Council, which was generating c£2m annual revenue for the Council. Through a sequence of events, payments from the leaseholder to the Council stopped placing the revenue stream at risk creating a concern over what would happen to the potential reduction in income to the Council's financial position.

The Council's arrangements to assess and manage the impact involved:

- Engaging external legal advise
- Reviewing historic records, including legal agreements
- Reviewing the impact on the general fund for the income loss.

As matters developed, the Council is now involved in a legal claim for settlement of overdue amounts and taking steps to review the leasehold arrangements going forwards.

The financial sustainability of the Council would be clearly challenged by losing £2m income per annum, but not in the short-term, and the risk is mitigated further by the legal claim to recoup funds.

From our discussions with Officers, in terms of arrangements, there were terms in the contract that prevented the lease being reassigned to a new company without Mansfield's agreement, plus a legal agreement 'guaranteeing' the income on any transfer. We have confirmed that the Council have undertaken an exercise to limit the risk in the rest of their portfolio. There are arrangements in place for asset management, income collection, and also financial planning and budgetary control in place..

We have also considered the impact on the Council's financial position by reviewing performance to date for 2023/24 (see below).

Ultimately, we do not believe the situation gives rise to a significant weakness in arrangements. However, it

does highlight the significant pitfalls in managing a property portfolio through and the Council, and Members of the Governance & Standards Committee may wish to obtain specific and detailed assurance on the Council's landlord portfolio, covering profit & loss, income threats and mitigation strategies.

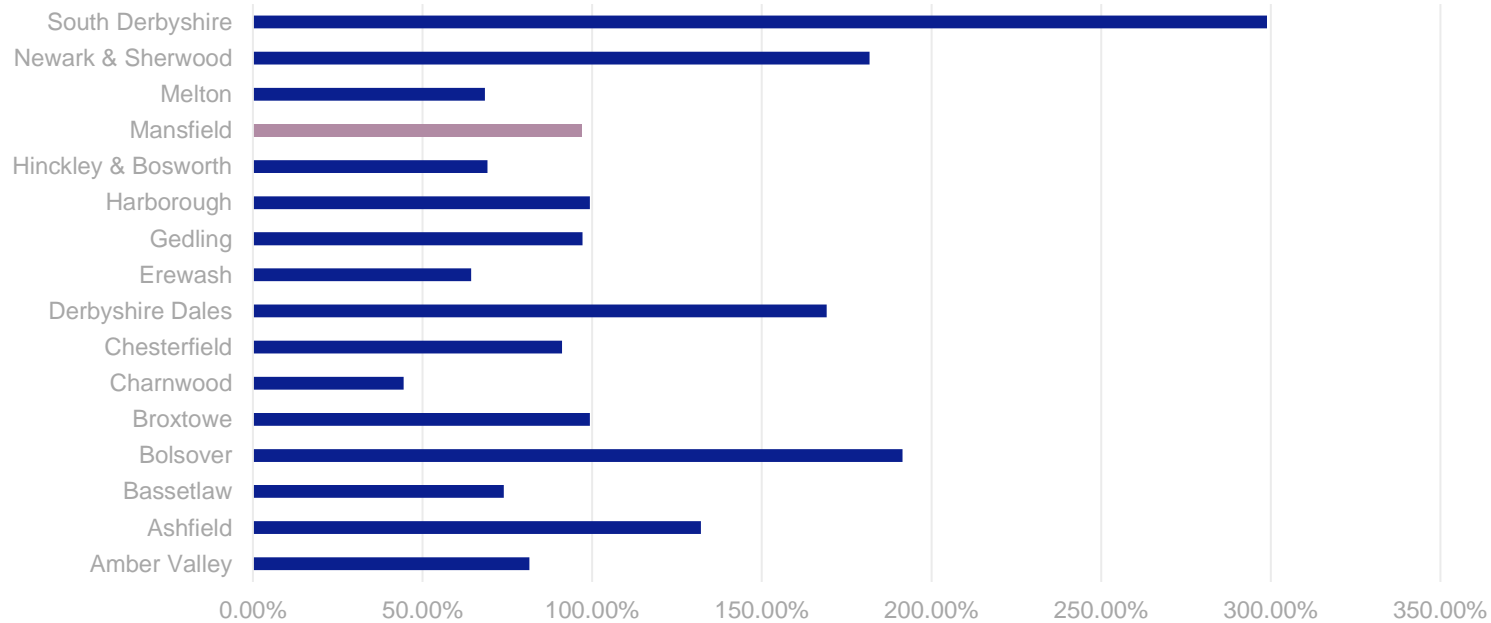
VFM arrangements – Financial Sustainability

Financial sustainability and revenue reserves

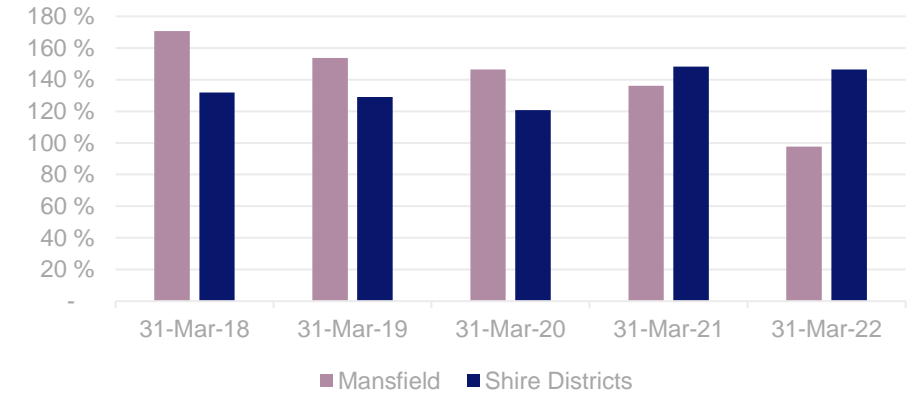
We have also performed a more detailed review of the Council's revenue reserves. We reviewed data published in May 2023 by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on Local authority general fund earmarked and unallocated reserve levels, 2017-18 to 2021-22.

The Council's reserves have generally been above the median since 2018, however the gap reduced over the years and since 2020/21 the reserves have dropped slightly below the median.

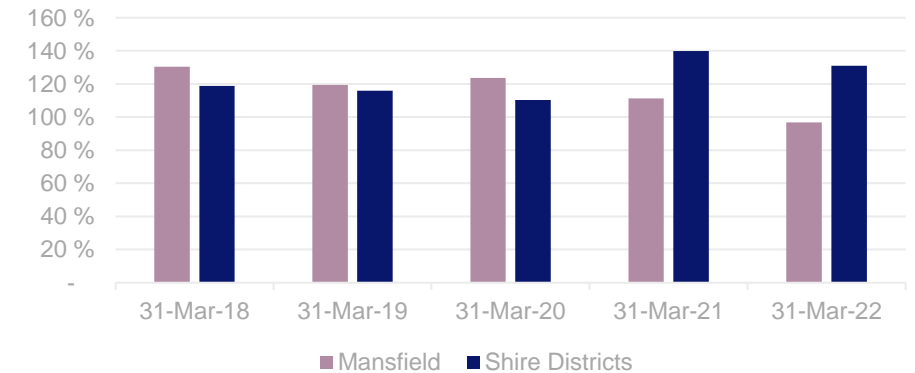
Un-ringfenced reserves as % of Service expenditure adjusted for ring-fenced grants (2021/22)



Un-ringfenced reserve as % of Net Revenue Expenditure - median



Un-ringfenced reserves as % of Service expenditure adjusted for ring-fenced grants - median



Details on the definitions and data quality arrangements are available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-general-fund-earmarked-and-unallocated-reserve-levels-2017-18-to-2021-22>

VFM arrangements – Financial Sustainability

Financial sustainability and reserves (continued)

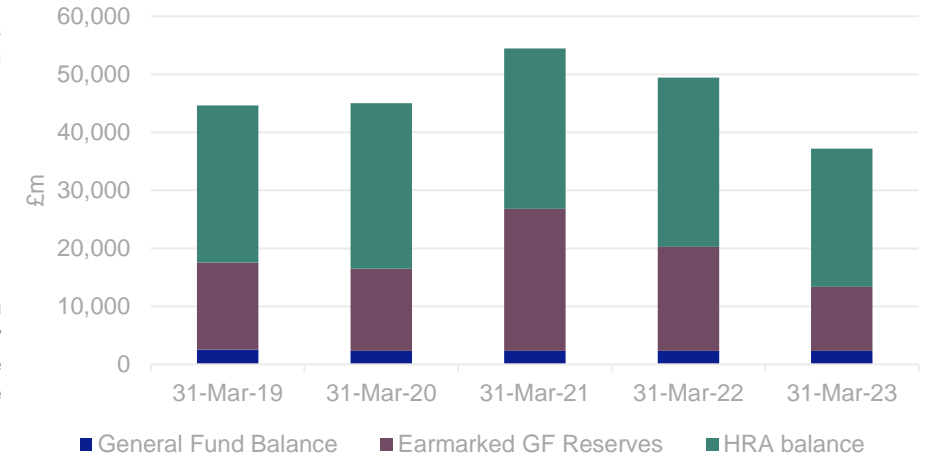
The purpose of the Council's general fund reserve is to meet costs arising from any unplanned or emergency events. It also acts as a financial buffer to help mitigate against the financial risks the Council faces and can be used to a limited degree to 'smooth' expenditure on a one-off basis across years. Whereas earmarked reserves, are set aside for specific purposes.

Through a review of the financial statements, we have considered the Council's revenue reserves over time:

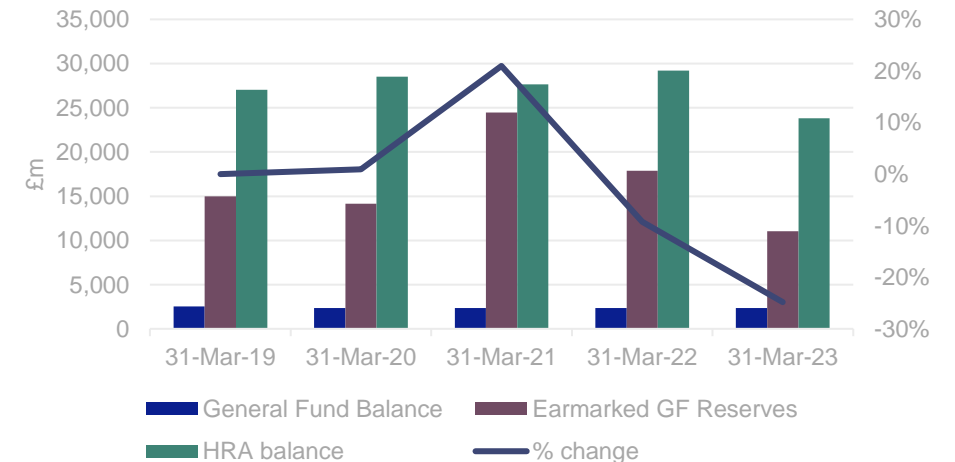
- As set out on the previous page, the Council's opening revenue reserves are slightly below the median for district councils.
- Whilst reserves remain relatively stable, they are finite and they have decreased gradually over the course of the last 5 years.
- We have no concerns over the Council's current approach, but there are local authorities reliant on protecting revenue reserves through accounting adjustments eg funding transformation spend through capital receipts, minimising the minimum revenue provision to repay debt, applying the statutory override for movements in pooled investment funds. These will not provide a long-term solution and, where these have a significant effect, we suggest Members are given clear and transparent information over the effect these measures have on medium term financial planning.

Overall, we are satisfied that the Council's Reserves position does not give rise to a risk of significant weakness in arrangements to secure financial sustainability but is something that needs to be monitored and managed through savings programmes going forwards.

Useable Revenue Reserves: Mansfield District Council

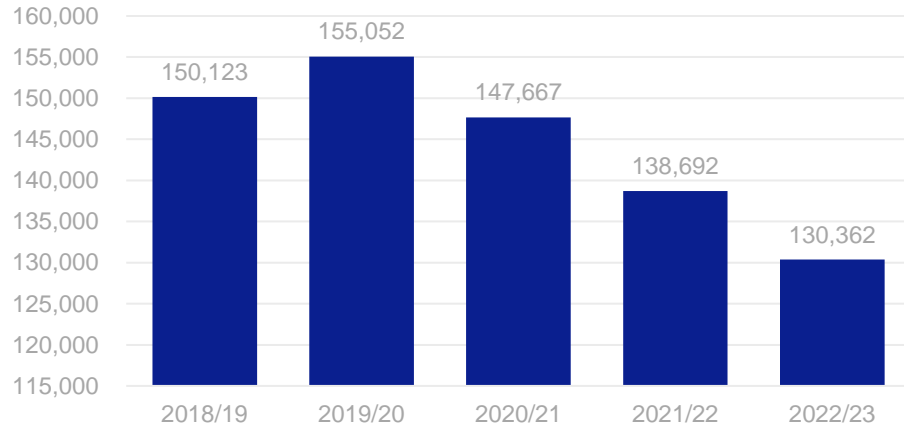


Useable Revenue Reserves: Mansfield District Council

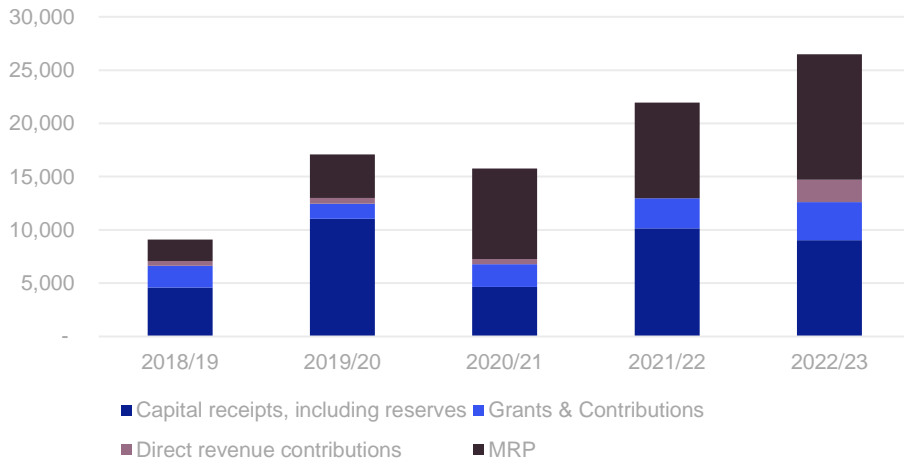


VFM arrangements – Financial Sustainability

Capital financing requirement
£'000



Sources of capital finance
£'000



The Council's capital expenditure and financing

The Council's arrangements for setting and monitoring capital expenditure are consistent with the previous year, which we deem to be adequate.

We considered the Council's capital financing requirement as set out in Note 35 of the financial statements, which has fallen from £150m in 2018/19 to £130m in 2022/23, each decrease representing a declining need to borrow to finance capital expenditure. We also considered the sources of capital finance in the capital programme, which shows over the past five years capital spend has been mainly financed through capital receipts and reserves with more reliance on MRP over the last few years, for example in 2022/23:

- £9m from capital receipts
- £3.6m in grants and contributions
- £2.1m in direct revenue contributions; and
- £11.7m through the Minimum Revenue Provision (a minimum amount, set by law, which the Council must charge to the income & expenditure account, for debt redemption or for the discharge of other credit liabilities).

In 2022/23, the Council spent £17.5m on capital additions per Note 13 of the financial. Our testing of these balances did not identify any material issues.

We are satisfied the council's capital expenditure and capital financing does not give rise to a risk of significant weakness in arrangements.

Based on the above considerations we are satisfied there is not a significant weakness in the Council's arrangements in relation to financial sustainability for the year ended 31 March 2023.

3. Commentary on VFM arrangements

Governance

How the body ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks



3. VFM arrangements – Governance

Overall commentary on the Governance reporting criteria

Significant weakness in 2021/22	Nil.
Significant weaknesses identified in 2022/23	Nil.

Position brought forward from 2021/22

As set out in the table above, there are no indications of a significant weakness in the Council’s arrangements for financial sustainability brought forward from the previous year.

The Authority’s governance structure

Based on our work, we are satisfied that the Council has established governance arrangements, consistent with previous years, in place. These are detailed in the Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement. We have considered both documents against our understanding of the Council as part of our audit.

Our review of corporate governance arrangements confirms the Council has an agreed Constitution, setting out how it operates, how decisions are reached and what procedures are followed to ensure that these are transparent and accountable to local people. Any recommendations for amendments to the Constitution need to be approved by Full Council.

Our review of Council and Committee papers confirms that a template covering report is used for all reports, ensuring the purpose, strategic context, risks, and recommendations are clear. Minutes are published and reviewed by Committees to evidence the matters discussed, challenge and decisions made.

2023/24 Budget Setting and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy

The Council’s budget setting and medium-term financial planning follows a similar process and format to previous years and our review is supported by discussions with officers during the year and experience from prior year audits. The arrangements in place for budget setting and updating the Medium-Term Financial Strategy are as expected for a District Council, with arrangements for: consultation, scrutiny, evaluation of financial risk, alignment to business plans and sources of funding.

We reviewed the Council’s balanced budget for 2023/24 as set by Council in January 2023, which approved a

0% increase in Council Tax.

We read the assumptions underpinning the Medium Term Financial Strategy as included in reports to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. In our view, these include an adequate level of detail over the assumptions and cost pressures facing the council, which are consistent with our experience at similar sized authorities and therefore not unreasonable. In addition, there is sufficient narrative to explain the rationale and key financial risks.

The MTFS shows a deficit on the General Fund revenue budget of £1,339,000 for 2023/24 with annual increases thereafter. Proposals to mitigate this deficit are included within the report and the deficit of £1,339,000 is before savings and efficiencies have been taken into account, and does not assume any potential increases in Council Tax charged to its residents. The figures also do not include any service developments put forward by service areas and do not include any potential supporting finance from the Council’s balances or earmarked reserves. The savings identified in the report total £1,339,000 so would enable the Council to set a balanced budget and retain the general fund balance at the current level of £2,347,000. The Council will need to continue to ensure that any use of reserves to smooth the financial position over the next few years is properly planned and the use of reserves cannot be relied on to provide a long-term solution to funding gaps.

We also reviewed the budget monitoring report to September’s meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee covering expenditure incurred in Quarter 1 of 2023/24. The report gives an overview of the financial position for revenue, supported by adequate detail available within the appendices, ultimately showing that at the end of the financial year, the General Fund is expected to be in a deficit position of £24,000 against its budget, which will mean the amount of general balances held will decrease.

VFM arrangements – Governance

Overall commentary on the Governance reporting criteria

Risk management

The Council has an established risk management framework and systems in place which are built into the governance structure of the organisation.

The Governance and Standards Committee is responsible for overseeing the effectiveness of the Council's risk management arrangements, challenging risk information and escalating issues to the Executive. We have attended meetings of the Committee and reviewed minutes and reports presented during the year, including matters relating to risk. From our attendance at meetings and review of the minutes, we are satisfied there is sufficient evidence of Member oversight of risk management, including holding Officers to account.

The Annual Governance Statement is a critical component of the Council's governance arrangements. It is an evidenced self-assessment by the Council on the Council's governance, assurance and internal control frameworks for the financial year. No significant weaknesses in internal control have been identified from our work to date and Internal Audit have not identified or raised any significant concerns. We reviewed the Annual Governance Statements as part of our work on the financial statements with no significant issues arising.

Audit Committee

The Council has an established Governance and Standards Committee. We have reviewed supporting documents and confirmed the Governance and Standards Committee meets regularly and reviews its programme of work to maintain focus on key aspects of governance and internal control. Our attendance at Governance and Standards Committee has confirmed there is an appropriate level of effective challenge.

Internal Audit

We have met with management and the Head of Internal Audit regularly during the year, reviewed Audit Committee reports and attended Governance and Standards Committee to observe the performance of Internal Audit and the Governance and Standards Committee. We have read the head of internal audit's report presented to July 2023 Governance and Standards committee and are satisfied it does not highlight any significant weaknesses in arrangements

We also confirmed that the Head of Internal Audit Opinion has been adequately reflected in the Annual Governance Statement. No issues arose from our review to indicate there is a significant weakness in the Council's arrangements for governance.

We read The Counter Fraud Annual Report presented to September 2023 Governance and Standards Committee, which provides an overview of the self-assessments completed by the Corporate Assurance Manager of the Council's counter fraud and corruption framework and arrangements against recommended good practice. This summary provides information to enable the Committee to review performance and the effectiveness of the Council's arrangements. The annual report is a key source of assurance for the Committee on the adequacy of Council's counter fraud activities. There is no indication of inadequate arrangements in place at the Council from reviewing the report and its findings.

Monitoring officer and Conduct

We have read and reviewed the Monitoring Officer's six monthly update report for March 2023 as presented to Governance and Standards Committee, there are no matters arising that would indicate a significant weakness in arrangements relating to 2022/23

Overall, we have not identified any indicators of a significant weakness in the Council's arrangements relating to the Governance criteria for the year ended 31 March 2023.

3. Commentary on VFM arrangements

Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness

How the body uses information about its costs and performance to improve the way it manages and delivers its services



3. VFM arrangements – Improving Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness

Overall commentary on the Improving Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness reporting criteria

Significant weakness in 2021/22	Nil.
Significant weaknesses identified in 2022/23	Nil.

Position brought forward from 2021/22

As set out in the table above, there are no indications of a significant weakness in the Council's arrangements brought forward from the prior year.

Corporate Plan and Performance Monitoring

The Council's arrangements are consistent with the prior year, which were deemed adequate, with the Council's Corporate Plan setting out what it wants to achieve for local residents and communities and is published on its website. The Council's overall financial objectives and strategy are documented in the Council's budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy which is reviewed and updated annually.

Our review of minutes and reports confirms the Executive and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive regular reporting on the measures contained within the Council Business Plan. We reviewed the performance outturn for 2022/23 as evidence of the Council's approach to evaluating performance. In our view, reports contain sufficient narrative, including the appendices, to demonstrate that there are adequate arrangements for scrutiny in assessing performance and identifying areas for improvement.

As part of the Council's Performance Management and Continuous Improvement Framework all service areas are required to develop an annual Service Plan which sets out the key activities to be delivered and the measures (performance Indicators) used to monitor the impact of those activities. We reviewed the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Corporate Resources) performance report from May 2023, which included the Service Plan Performance Indicators for all service areas including:

- People and Transformation
- Neighbourhood Services

- Finance
- Law and Governance
- Planning and Regeneration
- Housing
- Health and Communities.

Partnerships and Commissioning

Through our work on the financial statements, our testing of expenditure, and consideration of key financial controls, has not identified any issues relating to procurement.

Overall, we have not identified any indicators of a significant weakness in the Council's arrangements relating to the Improving Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness criteria for the year ended 31 March 2023.

04

Section 04:

**Other reporting responsibilities and
our fees**

4. Other reporting responsibilities and our fees

Matters we report by exception

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 provides auditors with specific powers where matters come to our attention that, in their judgement, require specific reporting action to be taken. Auditors have the power to:

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

We have not exercised any of these statutory reporting powers.

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

Reporting to the NAO in respect of Whole of Government Accounts consolidation data

The NAO, as group auditor, requires us to complete the WGA Assurance Statement in respect of its consolidation data. As at the date of writing, instructions have not yet been received.

4. Other reporting responsibilities and our fees

Fees for work as the Council's auditor

We reported our proposed fees for the delivery of our work under the Code of Audit Practice in our Audit Strategy Memorandum. Having completed our work for the 2022/23 financial year, we can confirm that our fees are as follows:

Area of work	2021/22 Actual fees	2022/23 fees*	2023/24
Planned fee in respect of our work under the Code of Audit Practice	£41,996	£54,667	<i>Published by 30 November</i>
Additional fees in respect of additional testing undertaken to comply with increased regulatory requirements relating to: IAS19 pension liabilities; valuation of land, buildings and investment properties; and group accounts.	£9,966	N/A included in revised scale fee	N/A included in revised scale fee
Additional fees in respect of additional work from the introduction of new auditing standards (ISA 540 estimates)	£2,892	£3,000	N/A included in revised scale fee
Additional fees in respect of additional work from the introduction of new auditing standards (ISA 315)	-	£TBC**	
Audit expert PPE valuations	-	£TBC**	N/A – one off cost
Other additional testing	£1,188	N/A	N/A
Additional fees in respect of the VFM Commentary	£9,294	£7,500	N/A included in revised scale fee
Sub-total: variations	£53,890	£TBC	-
Total fees	£133,530	£TBC	-

*These costs are subject to PSAA review and approval. The Council received **£21,649** of grant funding to meet rising audit costs.

**At the time of issuing this report, the additional fees for 2022/23 have not been agreed with the Council.

Fees for other work

In 2022/23, we were engaged to provide assurance related services on the pooling of housing capital receipts (£3,500).



Appendix

Appendix A: Further information on our audit of the financial statements

Main financial statement audit risks and findings

Our audit approach is risk-based and primarily driven by the issues that we consider lead to a higher risk of material misstatement of the accounts. Once we have completed our risk assessment, we develop our audit strategy and design audit procedures in response to this assessment. Following the risk assessment, we identified risks relevant to the audit of financial statements and the significant audit risks and conclusions reached are set out below:

Audit Risk	Level of audit risk	How we addressed the risk	Audit conclusions
<p>Management override of controls This is a mandatory significant risk on all audits due to the unpredictable way in which such override could occur.</p>	<p>Significant risk: an area that, in our judgment, requires special audit consideration.</p>	<p>We addressed the risk through performing work over accounting estimates, journal entries and considering whether there were any significant transactions outside the normal course of business or otherwise unusual. In addition, we made enquiries of management and used our data analytics and interrogation software to test accounting journals.</p>	<p>There are no significant matters to report.</p>
<p>Valuation of the net pension liability The defined benefit liability relating to the Local Government and Fire-Fighter's pension scheme represents significant balances on the Council's balance sheet and involves a high degree of estimation uncertainty. The Council uses two actuaries to provide an annual valuation of these liabilities in line with the requirements of accounting standards.</p>	<p>Significant risk</p>	<p>Our procedures to address this risk included, but was not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> critically assessing the competency, objectivity and independence of each actuary; liaising with the auditors of the Lincolnshire Pension Fund to gain assurance that the controls in place at the Pension Fund are designed and implemented correctly. This included the processes and controls in place to ensure data provided to the Actuary by the Pension Fund for the purposes of the valuation is complete and accurate; reviewing the appropriateness of the Pension Asset and Liability valuation methodologies applied by the Pension Fund Actuaries, and the key assumptions included within the valuations, including comparing them to expected ranges using a consulting actuary; agreeing the data in the valuation report provided by the Fund Actuaries for accounting purposes to the financial statements; and considering whether the pension asset should be capped. 	<p>Following amendments to the financial statements, there were no significant matters to report.</p>
<p>Valuation of land & buildings, council dwellings and investment properties Land, Building and Investment Property assets are significant balances on the Council's balance sheet and the valuation of these assets is complex and is subject to a number of management assumptions and judgements.</p>	<p>Significant risk</p>	<p>Our procedures to address this risk included, but was not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> considering whether the overall valuation methodologies used by the Council's valuers are in line with industry practice, the CIPFA Code of Practice and the Council's accounting policies; assessing whether valuation movements are in line with market expectations by using third party information to provide information on regional valuation trends; critically assessing the approach that the Council adopts to ensure assets that are not subject to revaluation are materially correct; and engaging our own valuation expert to support our testing of a sample of individual valuations back to source records to ensure appropriateness and to gain assurance over whether the correct accounting treatment has been applied. 	<p>Following amendments to the financial statements, there were no significant matters to report.</p>

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