

# Audit of Accounts Report Powys Pension Fund

Audit year: 2020-21

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We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh and English. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to delay. Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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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 annual report and accounts in this report.
- 2 We have already discussed these issues with officers.
- 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 £7,715,000 for this year's audit.
- 5 There are some areas of the accounts that may be of more importance to the reader and therefore have set a lower materiality level for related party transactions disclosures of £5,000.
- 6 We have now substantially completed this year's audit although we are yet to complete our internal file review. We will provide a verbal update to the Committee should there be any matters arising from our file review.
- 7 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

- 8 The COVID-19 pandemic continues to have a significant impact on all aspects of our society. 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.
- 9 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

<b>Timetable</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Section 151 Officer certified the draft accounts on 29 September.</li><li>• As a result of prioritising our resources to work on the Council’s statutory accounts audit, we did not commence our audit of the draft accounts until 11 October.</li><li>• We expect your audit report to be signed on 29 November following receipt of the signed approved accounts and Annual Report and ahead of the 1 December statutory deadline for publishing the Annual Report.</li></ul>
<b>Electronic signatures</b>	As a result of the pandemic the use of electronic signatures are permissible for both the Council and Audit Wales.
<b>Audit evidence</b>	<p>The entirety of our financial audit was undertaken remotely. Despite the challenging circumstances Council staff fully engaged in the audit process and effectively supported the audit by providing good quality draft accounts with supporting working papers and responded to audit queries on a timely basis.</p> <p>Specifically, Council officers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• provided working papers in accordance with our agreed Audit Deliverables Report;</li><li>• provided audit evidence to the audit team in electronic form via e-mail or a shared folder accessible to both Council and Audit Wales staff; and</li><li>• were available by video conferencing for discussions, and for the sharing of on-screen information/evidence.</li></ul>

- 10 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

- 11 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**.
- 12 We issue a ‘qualified’ audit opinion where we have material concerns about some aspects of your accounts; otherwise we issue an unqualified opinion.
- 13 The Letter of Representation contains certain confirmations we are required to obtain from you under auditing standards.

14 Our proposed audit report is set out in **Appendix 2**.

## Significant issues arising from the audit

### Uncorrected misstatements

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

### Corrected misstatements

16 As a result of our audit there have been a small number of adjustments to the accounts and annual report and they are summarised, for information, in **Appendix 3**.

### Other significant issues arising from the audit

17 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 are no such issues arising from our audit.

## Recommendations

18 There are no recommendations arising from our audit.

# Appendix 1

## Final Letter of Representation

*[Audited body's letterhead]*

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

18 November 2021

### Representations regarding the 2020-21 financial statements

This letter is provided in connection with your audit of the financial statements of Powys Pension Fund for the year ended 31 March 2021 for the purpose of expressing an opinion on their truth and fairness.

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 the CIPFA 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 Powys Pension Fund 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.
- The methods, the data and the significant assumptions used in making accounting estimates, and their related disclosures are appropriate to achieve recognition, measurement or disclosure that is reasonable in the context of the applicable financial reporting framework.
- 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 the Governance and Audit Committee

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 Governance and Audit Committee on 18 November 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:

Signed by:

Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer  
18 November 2021

Chair of Governance and Audit  
Committee  
18 November 2021

# Appendix 2

## Proposed Audit Report

### The independent auditor's report of the Auditor General for Wales to the members of Powys County Council as administering authority for Powys Pension Fund

#### Opinion on financial statements

I have audited the financial statements of Powys Pension Fund for the year ended 31 March 2021 under the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004. Powys Pension Fund's financial statements comprise the fund account, the net assets 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 transactions of the pension fund during the year ended 31 March 2021, and of the amount and disposition at that date of its assets and liabilities;
- 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 pension fund 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 pension fund'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 report 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 report. 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 annual report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and the annual report has been prepared in accordance with the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013.

### **Matters on which I report by exception**

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the pension fund and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified material misstatements in the annual report.

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 financial statements, the responsible financial officer is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements, 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 financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the responsible financial officer is responsible for assessing the pension fund'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 and those charged with governance, including obtaining and reviewing supporting documentation relating to Powys Pension Funds 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; and
- Obtaining an understanding of Powys Pension Fund's framework of authority as well as other legal and regulatory frameworks that Powys Pension Fund 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 Powys Pension Fund.

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 about actual and potential litigation and claims;
- reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance and the administering authority; 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 Powys Pension Fund'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](http://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 Powys Pension Fund 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  
29 November 2021

24 Cathedral Road  
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# Appendix 3

## Summary of Corrections Made

Some adjustments have been made to the Financial Statements as a result of our audit. These have been corrected by management. A summary of the most significant corrections made are summarised below.

### Exhibit 2: summary of corrections made

Value of correction	Nature of correction
£6.5m	<b>Net Assets Statement - Private Equity Investments</b> Private equity investments were increased as the certified draft financial statements included estimated figures based on the December valuations for some of the private equity investment held. These were replaced with the actual March figures which had been available when the draft account was certified in September
N/A	<b>Note 12b – Analysis of Investments by Fund Manager</b> The investments relating to BlackRock Global Investors Ltd have been reclassified from 'Investments managed by the WPP asset pool' to 'Investments managed outside WPP asset pool'.
N/A	<b>Other narrative and disclosure amendments</b> Several other narrative and presentational amendments have been made to the financial Statements, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Note 12 (Investments) has been amended to comply with the Code and provide more information on the negative derivatives balance;</li><li>• The narrative within Note 19 (Stock Lending) has been amended to better disclose the stock lending position of the Pension Fund; and</li><li>• Some additional disclosures have been included within the Annual Report to comply with CIPFA's annual reporting guidance.</li></ul>





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We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh and English.  
Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg.