

Date: 19th November 2024

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

Those Charged with Governance
Dartmoor National Park Authority
Parke
Bovey Tracey
Newton Abbot
TQ13 9JQ

Dear Sirs and Madams

Dartmoor National Park 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.

We have discussed the contents of our report with management and have 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 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

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bishop Fleming LLP". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

BISHOP FLEMING LLP

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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 31 March 2024;
- have been prepared properly in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023/24; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

We have issued an unmodified audit report.

Key audit issues

Within our Audit Plan which was presented to the Audit and Governance Committee in May 2024, 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 risks highlighted were as follows:

- Management override of controls;
- Fraud in revenue recognition;
- Fraud in expenditure recognition;
- 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

Three 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 2024. The National Audit Office's Code of Audit Practice requires us to report on the Authorities 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 work has not identified any significant weaknesses; see section 8 for more details. 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 Dartmoor National Park 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
Dartmoor National Park Authority	2% of gross expenditure	£140,700

The level of materiality is unchanged since our Audit Plan.

Audit report

We have issued an unmodified audit report on the financial statements of Dartmoor National Park Authority for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Representation Letter

The representation letter 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.

Our audit is now complete.

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 Authority arising under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (the Act) and from the Code of Audit Practice. The contents of this report should not be disclosed to third parties without our prior written consent.

3. Audit and accounts 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.

Readiness for audit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Quality of financial statements	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Accuracy of financial records	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Quality of working papers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Availability of Staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Key (Impact on audit approach)

None or limited impact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Some impact	<input type="checkbox"/>
Significant impact	<input type="checkbox"/>

We invested significant time into the audit running as smoothly as possible. In addition to carrying out a review of the predecessor auditor's working papers, we also met with Grant Thornton to discuss key issues and to ensure that we had a clear understanding of the prior year audit. At the start of the audit, we held planning meetings with key management personnel. During the final audit, we had regular calls and face to face meetings with the finance team and with the Section 151 Officer. In addition to this, the whole team, including the manager and the key audit partner had an on-site presence during the final audit visits.

As a result of the investment made by both parties, the audit has proceeded very smoothly, although some areas have taken slightly longer to audit than we would normally anticipate. We consider this to largely be related to this being our first year at the Authority, and are unlikely to be present during the audit of the next financial year.

We would like to specifically thank the Section 151 Officer, Angela Stirland for her continued support and availability throughout the audit.

We are keen to continually improve our service and the effectiveness of the process and, therefore, will hold a debrief discussion with the Head of Business Support 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.

Quality of financial statements

We have not identified any significant omissions from the draft financial statements. However, our work has found one classification error that management have agreed to amend. Further details on this are available in section 6.

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. That being said, some reports provided to us were in difficult to manipulate formats such as PDF and TXT formats. However, this is largely a function of the Authority's ageing "FINEST" system. A different finance system will be in place in the coming year which we expect will be able to produce more user-friendly reports.

Quality of working papers

While the quality of the working papers and supporting evidence provided was generally good, although there were some areas where audit evidence provided was not appropriate leading to additional follow up queries being required. This is quite normal during a first-year audit and we expect this to improve in future years as we get to understand the Authority further. As previously mentioned, the new finance system should aide officers in this regard going forwards.

Availability of Staff

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

4. Audit risks

Management override of controls

Significant Risk

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.

Work done and conclusion

To address this risk, we have:

- 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.

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.

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

Fraud in revenue recognition

Significant Risk

There is also a presumption under auditing standards that the risk of fraud in revenue recognition is considered to be a significant risk area.

Work done and conclusion

Having considered the risk factors set out in ISA240 and the nature of the revenue streams of the Authority, we have concluded that the risk of fraud arising from revenue recognition can be rebutted because:

- There is little incentive to manipulate revenue recognition;
- Opportunities to manipulate revenue recognition are very limited; and
- The culture and ethical framework of local authorities, including Dartmoor National Park Authority, mean that all forms of fraud are seen as unacceptable.

We did not identify any material errors from our work carried out.

Fraud in expenditure recognition

Significant Risk

Practice Note 10: Audit of Financial Statements and regularity of public sector bodies in the United Kingdom sets out that the risk of fraud related to expenditure is also relevant.

We consider that the risk of fraud at the Authority to be around the cut-off at year end.

Work done and conclusion

At the planning stage, we considered whether we have any significant concerns about fraudulent financial reporting of expenditure which would need to be treated as a significant risk for the audit.

We concluded that this was not a significant risk for Dartmoor National Park Authority because:

- expenditure is well controlled, and the Authority has a strong control environment; and
- the Authority has clear and transparent reporting of its financial plans and financial position.

We did not identify any material errors from the work carried out.

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 Authority's asset register; and
- form our own expectations regarding the movement in property values and comparing this to the valuations reflected in the Authority's financial statements, following up valuation movements that appear unusual.

We did not identify any material errors in the course of 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;
- 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 Devon 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.

At the time of reporting, assurance from the auditor of the pension fund has not yet been provided, therefore our work on this area remains incomplete.

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

5. Other audit and financial reporting matters

Valuation of the Pension Fund

The macro-economic environment has had a significant effect on the actuarial valuation of the Authority's share of Local Government Pension Scheme, with net liability reported by the Authority's actuary through their IAS 19 report reducing significantly in the last two years. For 2023/24, the initial net position reported by the actuary was a net asset of £1,867k. As pension assets are not "realisable" assets in practice, the pension position has been reduced by the amount of the asset, effectively capping it at zero. The present value of unfunded pension obligations of £120k pushes the final net position into a liability of £120k.

Across the Local Government Sector accounting surpluses have become more prevalent. IFRIC 14 provides guidance from the International Financial Reporting Interpretations Committee on the extent to which an IAS 19 surplus can be recognised on the balance sheet and whether any additional liability needs to be recognised in respect of onerous funding commitments. The sector-wide approach to applying IFRIC 14 has developed over the last year as IAS 19 surpluses are becoming more common. This has resulted in some actuaries revising their approach when producing 'asset ceiling' calculations that adopt the principles set out in IFRIC 14.

On production of the asset ceiling report for the valuation as at 31 March 2024 the Council's Actuary, Barnett Waddingham, determined that no additional liability should be recognised to reflect an onerous funding commitment that results from some Authorities' commitments to make secondary contributions over the funding horizon period set out at the Triennial Valuation. This sector-wide issue has therefore had no effect on the financial statements of the Authority.

Consideration of ongoing litigation

On the 8 October 2024, the Supreme Court heard an appeal concerning the right of members of the public to cbackback or wild camp on certain areas of common land under the Dartmoor Commons Act 1985.

If the Court were to rule against the Authority, they could be liable to pay costs associated with defending the case.

Management has considered whether this meets the threshold to disclose a contingent liability or to recognise a provision in the Statement of Accounts. We have reviewed their considerations and also sought correspondence from the Authority's legal team, and have concluded that there is no way of determining the likely outcome of the case. In addition, there is no way of determining any amounts that could be payable. As such there is no reliable estimate.

We are therefore satisfied that the Authority does not need to include disclosure within the Statement of Accounts.

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

There are no adjusted items to report.

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?
Misclassification of Land as Assets under construction (AUC)	Land, which had been purchased with some minor development occurring subsequently, had been incorrectly included within AUC. The total value of this error was £845k. This adjustment has no cash impact.	✓
Disclosure adjustment to actual pension benefits paid	The Authority's actuary prepares their actuarial valuation using estimated values for pension benefits paid. Upon the conclusion of the audit of the Devon Pension fund, the assurance letter we obtained showed that there was a £186k difference between the estimated and actual figures, which was material. Management have adjusted the pension disclosure. This has no effect on the face of the accounts and is a non-cash adjustment.	✓

Unadjusted items

The table below provides details of adjustments identified during the 2023/24 audit which have not been made within the final set of financial statements. The Audit 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
Overstatement of the Depreciation Charge for Parke	-	46,202	46,202	-
Understatement of PPE due to differences in GIA data		16,948	16,948	-
Total	-	63,150	63,150	-

7. Management letter points and internal control systems

The 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 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

Classification of Land in Assets Under Construction	
<p>We identified that an addition for the purchase of Land at Buckfastleigh Moor for £845k had been incorrectly classified within Assets Under Construction.</p> <p>Management have adjusted the financial statements for this amount.</p>	<p><u>Recommendation</u></p> <p>We recommend that Management consider the nature of assets when determining their classification in the PPE note.</p> <p><u>Management comment</u></p> <p>The Authority had not fully expensed the capital grant received at the end of the year. Although the Authority did meet the conditions of the grant, some construction work was still to be completed at the time. The Authority wanted to reflect the cost of the asset in its entirety. We have agreed to reclassify the asset.</p>

Useful Life of Assets	
	
<p>Our testing of depreciation identified that certain Buildings have been given a shorter Useful Life, which has in turn then led to a significant increase in the depreciation charge.</p> <p>Management have not made an adjustment for this on the grounds that it is not material to the financial statements.</p>	<p><u>Recommendation</u></p> <p>We recommend in future that management base the Useful life of Buildings of the assets expected utility to the entity, meaning if an asset is to be used past any pause in contract, the asset should be depreciated to the end of the lease. This treatment is in line with the CIPFA code.</p> <p><u>Management comment</u></p> <p>The lease breakpoint was considered at the time as an appropriate date to depreciate the asset. The Authority will review and adjust in the 2024/25 Statement of Accounts.</p> <p>The Authority will review and adjust in the 2024/25 Statement of Accounts.</p>

Retention of building plan GIA data	
	
<p>Our testing of the gross internal area (GIA) data used in the building valuations identified that there are minor differences between the data held in the Authority's "Terrier" database, and the measurements used by the valuer. This produced a £17k expected difference in valuations.</p> <p>Management have decided not to adjust as it is not considered material to the financial statements.</p>	<p><u>Recommendation</u></p> <p>We recommend that management and the valuer work together to be able to store accurate building plan data to support future valuations.</p> <p><u>Management comment</u></p> <p>It should be noted that the Authority and valuer do work closely, holding meetings prior to the revaluation exercise. The Authority will ensure agreement on planning data held in the future.</p>

Prior Year Issues – Resolved

Issue	Resolution
<p>Annual Governance Statement (AGS)</p> <p>The Authority is required to undertake a review of its system of internal control in accordance with best practice. Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework (2016), published by CIPFA, recommends this review should be reported in an AGS.</p> <p>The preparation and publication of an AGS in accordance with Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework (2016) would fulfil the statutory requirements across the UK for a local authority to conduct a review at least once in each financial year of the effectiveness of its system of internal control.</p> <p>The Authority has duly prepared the draft 2022-23 AGS alongside the financial statements. Our review of Authority’s 2022-23 AGS indicated that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In certain areas the Authority’s AGS did not explicitly report the requirements and compliance of “Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework (2016)” guidance. For example, the AGS is required to include an opinion on how the authority has behaved with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values. This has not been included. <p>Enhancing overall compliance with applicable AGS guidance, would result in strengthening stakeholders’ understanding of the Authority’s AGS.</p>	<p>The Authority has prepared their 2023/24 Annual Governance Statement in line with the requirements of “Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework (2016)”</p> <p>We consider the matter to be resolved.</p>

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 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 Authority has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2024. The Code of Audit Practice 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.

We asked management to complete an evidenced self-assessment of the 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 Authority’s arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

We have not identified any significant weakness 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 Authorities 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 received group instructions from the National Audit Office in respect of our work on the Authorities WGA submission. We are unable to commence our work in this area until such instructions have been received.

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 2023/24 audit is set out below:

	Fee proposed at planning stage (£)	Final fee (subject to approval by PSAA) (£)
PSAA scale fee 2023/24	£39,635	£39,635
Fee variation for additional procedures in relation to revisions to ISA 315	TBC	£5,650
Total (excluding VAT)	TBC	£45,285

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

1. Letter of representation

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

[Date]

Dear Sirs and Madams

DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

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 Authorities financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024. 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 Authorities financial statements in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards and the CIPFA/ LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023/24 (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 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 Authority. We have provided you with unrestricted access to all appropriate persons within the Authority, and with all other records and related information requested, including minutes of all 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 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 Authorities financial statements communicated by current or former employees, analysts, regulators or others.

3. Assets and liabilities

The Authority has satisfactory title to all assets and there are no liens or encumbrances on the Authorities 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 valuations, pension liability.

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 Authorities 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 Authorities 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 Authorities 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 Authorities financial and operating performance over the period covered by the Authorities financial statements.

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 Committee of Dartmoor National Park Authority

[Date]

2. Required communications with the Audit Committee

Under the auditing standards, there are certain communications that we must provide to the Audit 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 audit 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; • suspected 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 audit 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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