



Annual Audit Report

West Dunbartonshire Integration Joint Board – year ended 31 March 2026

September 2026

Audit and Performance Committee
West Dunbartonshire Integration Joint Board
16 Church Street
Dumbarton
G82 1QL
29 September 2026

I am pleased to present our Annual Audit Report (“AAR”) for West Dunbartonshire Integration Joint Board for the year ended 31 March 2026. The purpose of this report is to summarise our audit findings and conclusions.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the responsibilities set out within the Audit Scotland’s Code of Audit Practice (“the Code”) and for the sole benefit of the Audit and Performance Committee. Except where required by law or regulation, it should not be used, quoted or made available to any other parties without our prior written consent.

We appreciate the courtesy and co-operation extended to us by West Dunbartonshire Integration Joint Board throughout our audit. We would be happy to discuss the contents of this report, or any other matters regarding our audit, with you in more detail.

Yours faithfully,



Tom Reid (Director)

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Forvis Mazars LLP

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The logo for Forvis Mazars, featuring the word "forvis" in a blue sans-serif font above the word "mazars" in a darker blue sans-serif font.

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This document is to be regarded as confidential to West Dunbartonshire Integration Joint Board. It has been prepared for the sole use of the Audit and Performance Committee as the appropriate committee charged with governance. No responsibility is accepted to any other person in respect of the whole or part of its contents. Our written consent must first be obtained before this document, or any part of it, is disclosed to a third party.

01

Executive Summary

Executive summary

Scope

We have been engaged to audit the financial statements of West Dunbartonshire Integration Joint Board (“the IJB”) for the year ended 31 March 2026 which are prepared in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2025-26 (“the Code”).

We have conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (‘ISAs’), relevant ethical and professional standards, and the requirements set out in the Audit Scotland’s Code of Audit Practice 2021. Our responsibilities and powers are derived from our appointment by the Accounts Commission under the Part VII of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

Audit status

Our audit procedures are now complete.

Areas of focus and audit approach, and significant findings

We have not made any changes to our initial risk assessment and planned audit approach that was communicated to the Audit and Performance committee in our Annual Audit Plan. Our significant risks and other areas of focus are set out in the ‘*Audit approach and risk summary*’ Section 2, with a summary of our audit approach over those areas. Significant findings from our audit are set out in the ‘*Significant findings*’ Section 3.

Audit misstatements

We have identified no adjusted or unadjusted misstatements above our reporting threshold.

Significant control deficiencies

We did not identify any significant deficiencies in internal control.

The non-significant control observations that we have identified to date are set out in ‘*Appendix A: Internal control conclusions*’.

Executive summary (continued)

Audit opinion

We have issued an unqualified opinion, without modification, as set out in Appendix C.

Wider scope

We have reported one significant risk in relation to financial sustainability. We have also raised a recommendation regarding vision, leadership and governance. We have no significant wider scope risks to report in relation to arrangement in financial management and use of resources to improve outcomes arrangements. Further details have been provided in the ‘*Wider scope*’ Section 6 of this report.

Best Value

We have no risks to report regarding the Best Value arrangements that the IJB has in place in relation to the vision and leadership; governance and accountability; effective use of resources; partnerships and collaborative working; working with communities; sustainability; and fairness and equality arrangements that the IJB has in place. Further details have been provided in the ‘*Best Value*’ Section 7 of this report.

Management Commentary and Annual Governance Statement opinion

We have no matters to report in respect of the Management Commentary or the Annual Governance Statement preparation as it is consistent with the financial statements and has been prepared in accordance with statutory guidance issued under the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 and Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016. Our proposed Management Commentary and Annual Governance Statement opinion is included in the draft auditor’s report in Appendix C.

Matters on which we report by exception

We are required by the Accounts Commission for Scotland to report to you if, during the course of our audit, we have found that adequate accounting records have not been kept; the financial statements and the audited part of the Remuneration Report are not in agreement with the accounting records; or we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit. We have nothing to report in respect of these matters.

Other information

We are required to report on whether the other information (comprising of the Management Commentary, Annual Governance Statement, Statement of Responsibilities and the unaudited parts of the Remuneration Report), is materially inconsistent with the financial statements; is materially inconsistent with our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit; or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. No inconsistencies have been identified and we have issued an unmodified opinion in this respect.

Wider reporting powers

Section 101 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 requires us to give any person interested, the opportunity to question us about the accounting records of the IJB and to consider any objection made to the accounts. We received no such objections to the accounts.

Executive summary (continued)

Qualitative aspects of IJB's accounting practices

We have reviewed IJB's accounting policies and disclosures and conclude that they comply with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2025-26, appropriately tailored to the IJB's circumstances.

Unaudited accounts were received from the IJB on 26 June 2026 and were of a good quality.

Significant matters discussed with management

During our audit, we did not communicate any significant matters to management:

Other matters of significance

We encountered no significant difficulties during our audit and had no significant disagreements with management. There was effective co-operation and communication between Forvis Mazars, management, and the Audit and Performance committee during our audit. All requested information and explanations were provided to us.

Other matters we are required by ISA (UK) 260 *Communication with Those Charged with Governance* to communicate to you have been set out in Appendix E.

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Audit approach and risk summary

Audit approach and risk summary

Changes to our audit approach

There have been no changes to the audit approach we communicated in our Annual Audit Plan, issued on 3 March 2026.

Materiality

Our provisional materiality at the planning stage of our audit was set at £5,558k using a benchmark of 2% of gross revenue expenditure at surplus/deficit level as per the Annual Audit Plan. Our performance materiality was provisionally set to £4,168k.

The following significant judgements have been made in determining the financial statement materiality amounts:

- that the main users of the financial statements are the Scottish Government, other IJBs, local authorities, regulators, elected members, the local community, and other stakeholders;
- that the primary aggregate that users tend to focus on is gross revenue expenditure, as it reflects the extent of services commissioned by the IJB;
- that the IJB's objective is not to maximise profits, as it has no shareholders. Instead, its focus is on delivering its key priorities. The services provided to the local community are primarily funded by the Scottish Government through the IJB's partner organisations, West Dunbartonshire Council and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde.
- that as part of our audit, we have gained an understanding that the IJB has a well established and experienced finance team capable of applying the relevant Accounting Standards. Additionally, the Audit and Performance Committee members demonstrate good ability to scrutinise financial information at a high level.

In determining the performance materiality levels, we made the following significant judgements:

- that we are now in the fourth year of our audit appointment and therefore have a more mature and detailed understanding of the IJB's operations, risks, and financial environment;
- that the financial reporting process does not involve significant journal adjustments, which decreases the risk of misstatement;
- that the IJB has a strong control environment, which reduces the likelihood of pervasive misstatements;
- that the IJB's transactions are neither few nor straightforward;
- that we have not identified significant errors in prior periods; and
- management has demonstrated a willingness to promptly identify, disclose, and correct matters where they arise.

Based on the final financial statement figures and other qualitative factors mentioned above, the final overall materiality we applied was £5,853k (final performance materiality: £4,390k; final clearly trivial threshold: £176k).

Internal audit

As per our Annual Audit Plan, we did not use the work of internal audit during the course of our audit. We did obtain a copy of the reports issued by internal audit relating to the financial period under audit and contacted the Chief Internal Auditor. There are no adverse findings to report.

Audit approach and risk summary (continued)

Significant risks	Fraud risk	Judgement	Error	Substantive audit procedures	Tests of controls	Misstatement identified	Control recommendations	Conclusion	ref to finding
Management override of controls	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	Risk is satisfactorily addressed.	12

Significant findings

Significant findings

The significant findings from our audit include our conclusions regarding the significant risks we identified and other key areas of judgement, which are set out in this .

Significant risks

Management override of controls
Description of risk Management at various levels within an organisation are in a unique position to perpetrate fraud because of their ability to manipulate accounting records and prepare fraudulent financial statements by overriding controls that otherwise appear to be operating effectively. Due to the unpredictable way in which such override could occur, there is a risk of material misstatement due to fraud on all audits. You should assess this risk as part of your oversight of the financial reporting process.
How we addressed this risk We addressed this risk through performing audit work over: • accounting estimates: by evaluating the methods and assumptions used by management to develop the estimate; • journal entries: testing any journals that meet our fraud risk criteria and other adjustments made in preparing the financial statements; and • significant transactions: considering and testing any significant transactions outside the normal course of business or otherwise unusual.
Audit conclusion We have reviewed the bad debt provision and confirmed that the judgements and estimates made by management in determining the provision are reasonable. We did not identify any journal entries posted in preparation of the accounts that met our risk criteria. We have tested and confirmed significant adjustments, including resource transfers between partner bodies, which were included in the preparation of the financial statements. Our work has provided the assurance we sought and has not highlighted any material issues to bring to your attention.

Significant findings (continued)

Wider responsibilities – statutory reporting

The 1973 Act allows any persons interested to inspect the accounts to be audited and the underlying accounting records of the IJB. The act also allows any persons interested to object to the accounts. No such objections have been raised

We are required to notify the Controller of Audit when circumstances indicate that a statutory report may be required.

- Section 102(1) of the 1973 Act allows us to prepare a report to the Commission about the IJB's accounts; matters that have arisen during the audit that should be brought to the attention of the public; or the performance of the IJB in their duties relating to Best Value. We confirm no such reports have been prepared.
- Section 102(3) of the 1973 Act allows us to make a special report to the Commission if an item of account is contrary to law; there has been a failure on someone's part to bring into account a sum which ought to have been brought into account; a loss has been incurred or deficiency caused by the negligence or misconduct of a person, or by the failure of a body to carry out a duty imposed on them by any enactment; or a sum which ought to have been credited or debited to one account of a body has been credited or debited to another account and the body has not taken, or is not taking, steps to remedy the matter. We confirm no such reports have been prepared.
- Section 97A of the 1973 Act allows us to undertake or promote comparative and other studies to make and publish recommendations for the securing by local government bodies of Best Value, improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the provision of services by local government bodies and improving the financial or other management of local government bodies. We confirm no such studies or recommendations have been prepared.

Summary of misstatements

Summary of misstatements

Adjusted and Unadjusted misstatements

Our overall materiality, performance materiality, and clearly trivial (reporting) threshold were reported in our Annual Audit Plan, issued on 3rd March 2026. Any subsequent changes to those figures are set out in the *'Executive summary'* Section of this report.

We have identified no misstatements above our reporting threshold, or that we deem to be material by nature, as at the date of this report.

Disclosure misstatements

We identified the following disclosure misstatements during our audit that have been corrected by management:

- **Note 11 - Related party Transactions**

- The Code requires bodies to disclose related parties that exert significant influence through legislation and grant funding. The IJB has added an additional disclosure in the 2025/26 accounts to include the Scottish Government as one such related party. This is because the Scottish Government can exert significant influence through legislation and funding of the IJB's partner bodies, therefore indirectly influencing the financial and operating policy decisions of the IJB.

There were also adjustments to the annual report and accounts for other minor disclosure, consistency or presentational matters.

We identified the following disclosure misstatements during our audit that have not been corrected by management:

- **Provisions**

- The unaudited accounts included a provision of £546k (24/25: £487k) in the balance sheet for unrecovered charges for specific social care delegated services. We have recommended in prior year audits (2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25) that officers amend the short-term debtors balance to show it net of the bad debt provision. Officers decided not to make this adjustment on the basis that by presenting the balance as a provision, the IJB is recognising the uncertainty associated with it and improving visibility to readers of the accounts. The IJB's contribution from the Council is net of income received from levying charges and other income. If any debt is written off, the IJB accounts for the impact. However, ultimately if the IJB cannot cover its costs then the Council would have to account for any deficit in line with the Integration Scheme.
- We have accepted the IJB's accounting treatment because the amount disclosed is not material and an alternative accounting treatment would have no impact on total net assets recorded in the balance sheet.

We will obtain written representations confirming that, after considering the unadjusted disclosure misstatements, both individually and in aggregate, in the context of the annual report and financial statements taken as a whole, no adjustments are required.

Fraud considerations

Fraud considerations

We have a responsibility to plan and perform our audit to obtain reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Your responsibilities

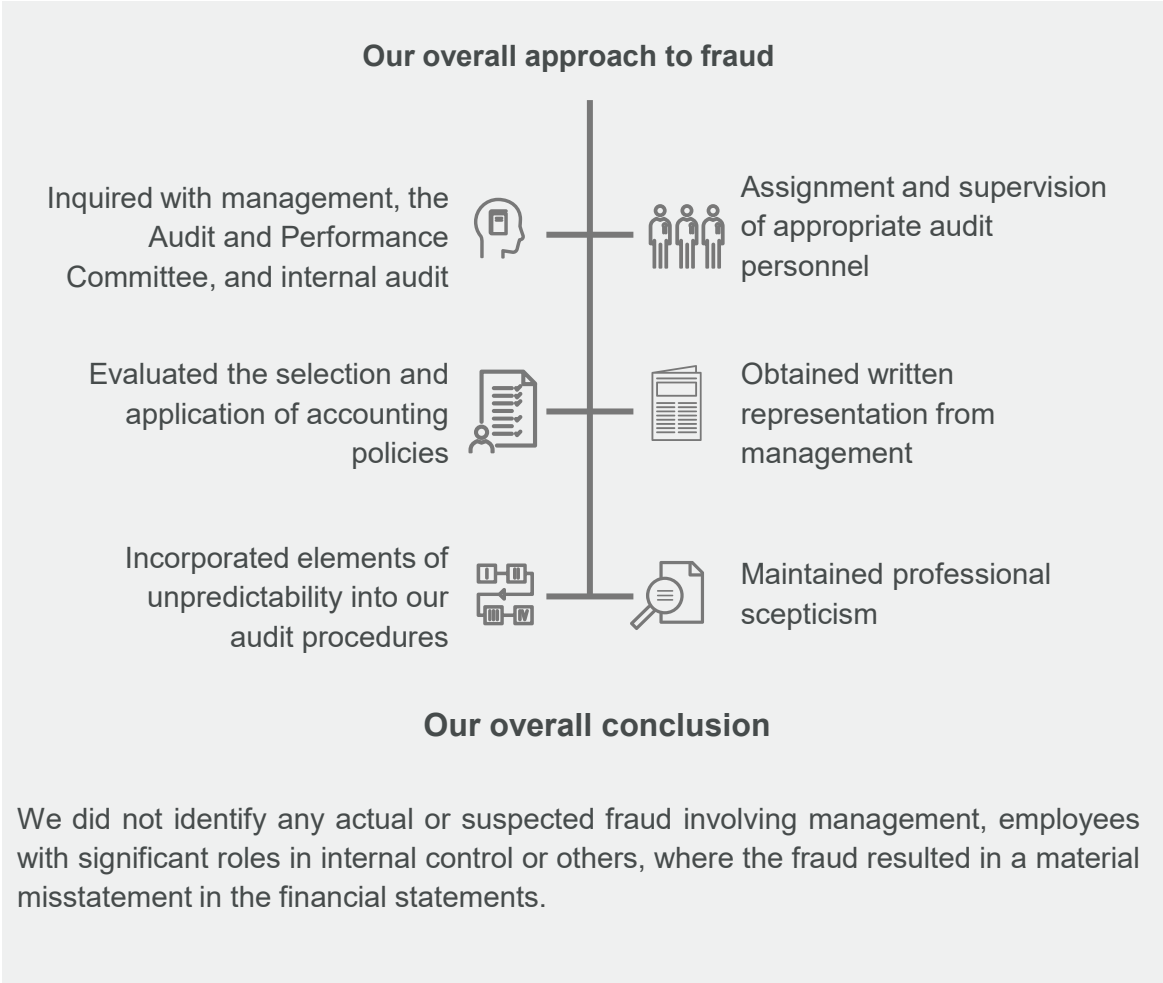
Management has primary responsibility for the prevention and detection of fraud. It is important that management, with your oversight, place a strong emphasis on fraud prevention, which may reduce opportunities for fraud to take place, and fraud deterrence, which could persuade individuals not to commit fraud because of the likelihood of detection and punishment. This involves a commitment to creating a culture of honesty and ethical behaviour which is reinforced by your active oversight.

Our responsibilities

We have a responsibility for obtaining reasonable assurance that the financial statements taken as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. The distinguishing factor between fraud and error is whether the underlying action that results in a misstatement is intentional or unintentional. Two types of intentional misstatements are relevant to us – misstatements resulting from fraudulent financial reporting, and misstatements resulting from the misappropriation of assets.

ISA presumed fraud risks

As set out in the *'Audit approach and risk summary'*, the risks of fraud in management override of controls were identified as significant risks.



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Wider scope

Commentary on Wider Scope

Overall Summary



Commentary on Wider Scope

Wider Scope summary

As auditors appointed by the Auditor General of Scotland, our Wider Scope responsibilities are set out in the Code of Audit Practice 2021. The Code requirements broaden the scope of the 2025/26 audit and allow us to use a risk-based approach to report on our consideration of the IJB’s performance and make recommendations for improvement and, where appropriate, conclude on the IJB’s performance.

The Code’s Wider Scope framework is categorised into four areas:

- financial management;
- financial sustainability;
- vision, leadership and governance; and
- use of resources to improve outcomes.

Overall summary by reporting criteria

From the satisfactory conclusion of our audit work, we have the following conclusions:

Reporting criteria	Commentary reference	Possible significant risks?	Significant risks identified?	Other recommendations made?
Financial management	21	No	No	No
Financial sustainability	26	Yes – see risk 1 on 29	Yes – see recommendation 1 on 29	No
Vision, leadership and governance	31	No	No	Yes – See recommendation 2 on 36
Use of resources to improve outcomes	37	No	No	No

Commentary on Wider Scope

Financial management

Financial management is concerned with financial capacity, sound budgetary processes and whether the control environment and internal controls are operating effectively.



Financial management (continued)

Our overall assessment

Area assessed	Our findings	Our judgements	Significant risks identified
Financial management culture	The IJB have established a strong financial management culture supported by a comprehensive framework of procedures, regular financial reporting, and effective governance arrangements. During 2025/26, the control environment was further strengthened through the development of a 'Financial Management Processes and Procedures' Manual in June 2026 along with the introduction of structured budget holder training, responding positively to recommendations arising from the previous year's audit. The implementation of refreshed budget holder training and the new Financial Management Processes and Procedures Manual occurred after the end of the 2025/26 financial year. As a result, the full benefits of these strengthened arrangements were not realised during most of the period under review. The benefits from these will be seen from 2026/27 onwards. Financial planning, monitoring, forecasting and reporting are embedded throughout the organisation, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities for budget holders, finance staff and senior management. Financial management arrangements are supported by an experienced and suitably qualified finance function, led by a Chief Financial Officer operating in accordance with statutory responsibilities. Longer-term financial planning arrangements are well developed, including the Medium-Term Financial Outlook (MTFO) which forecasts income and expenditure and identifies funding gaps for a three year period from 2024/25 to 2027/28, incorporating scenario planning of future cost pressures, funding assumptions, savings requirements and reserve utilisation. Strategic planning arrangements demonstrate clear alignment between financial resources, service priorities and anticipated future demand.	The IJB has effective financial arrangements in place. Financial monitoring, forecasting and longer-term planning arrangements are operating effectively and have contributed to a strong financial performance during 2025/26. While significant future financial sustainability challenges remain, these risks are recognised, transparently reported and actively managed through established financial planning processes.	No significant risks identified

Financial management (continued)

Our overall assessment

Area assessed	Our findings	Our judgements	Significant risks identified
Accountability	Financial Regulations provide a clear framework of responsibilities for the Board, Chief Officer, Chief Financial Officer and budget holders, while documented procedures reinforce expectations regarding budget setting, monitoring and financial reporting. Financial and performance information is reported regularly through established governance structures, including the Board and Audit and Performance Committee. Reporting arrangements provide comprehensive information on budget performance, forecast outturn positions, savings delivery, reserve movements, performance against strategic objectives and key financial risks. Performance reporting is aligned with the Strategic Plan and National Health and Wellbeing Outcomes. Board members receive regular updates on service performance and improvement activity, supported by reporting against a broad range of performance indicators and associated improvement actions. The IJB demonstrated effective budgetary control during the year. Approved savings and service redesign efficiencies of £5.484 million were largely delivered, with 98% achieved or on track for delivery. The IJB reported a surplus on service provision of £4.908 million prior to reserve movements, while unearmarked reserves increased from £3.576 million to £4.773 million, exceeding the target reserve level of 2% by 0.07% of net expenditure.	The IJB's budget monitoring arrangements support financial accountability. Roles, responsibilities and reporting requirements are clearly presented, and members are provided with sufficient information to scrutinise performance, monitor financial risks and oversee delivery of strategic objectives. The IJB has delivered a surplus position and increased reserves in a difficult economic environment.	No significant risks identified

Financial management (continued)

Our overall assessment

Area assessed	Our findings	Our judgements	Significant risks identified
Arrangements to prevent and detect fraud, error and other irregularities, bribery and corruption	The IJB does not maintain its own fraud and corruption policies but relies on the frameworks of its partner bodies, West Dunbartonshire Council (the Council) and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHSGGC). Consistent with prior years , the Council and NHSGGC provide comprehensive anti-fraud measures. These include dedicated fraud teams, whistleblowing channels, and regularly reviewed policies. NHSGGC has a Fraud Response Plan and a staff Code of Conduct covering ethical behaviour, gifts, contracts, and whistleblowing. West Dunbartonshire Council also has a Code of Conduct covering these areas. The IJB has adopted its own Code of Conduct for Board members, covering areas such as declarations of interest and lobbying, and its own Local Code of Good Governance. These documents support ethical standards and transparency at Board level. Independent assurance is provided through Internal Audit activity. The Chief Internal Auditor concluded that reasonable assurance could be placed upon the adequacy and effectiveness of governance, risk management and internal control arrangements during 2025/26 and reported no significant control weaknesses.	The IJB has effective arrangements in place to prevent and detect fraud, error and financial irregularity. Financial regulations, internal controls, internal audit assurance and governance oversight collectively provide a strong control environment. No significant weaknesses in internal control arrangements were identified during 2025/26, and ongoing improvements to procedures and training further strengthen the organisation's control framework.	No significant risks identified

Financial management (continued)

Follow up of previously-reported recommendations

In September 2025 we reported one recommendations to the IJB to address risks identified from our Wider Scope audit for financial management. As part of our work in 2025/26, we followed up the progress made by the IJB against the recommendations made, and determined whether the risk remained during the year.

	Financial management finding as previously reported	Management response and implementation timeframe	Work undertaken and judgements made in 2025/26	Conclusions reached
1	Financial Management (Training for budget holders) – Level 3 Training materials are available to support budget holders to scrutinise their budgets. However, the IJB does not provide regular refresher training. There is a risk that budget holders may not consistently apply procedures which could affect the accuracy of budget monitoring and reporting. Recommendation The IJB should ensure refresher training is provided to budget holders to ensure procedures are understood and consistently applied.	Management Response In parallel with the actions agreed by management in response to Internal Audit's similar recommendation to review the adequacy of refresher training for budget holders, draft training materials will be finalised and rolled out in a phased way throughout the next year. Implementation timescale Training materials finalised by November 2025 and phased roll-out, incorporating feedback throughout 2026.	Progress against the recommendation The IJB has implemented the recommendation. During 2026, management developed and delivered a structured budget holder training programme covering budget holder responsibilities, financial regulations, variance reporting, budget monitoring, savings monitoring and financial governance arrangements. Attendance records and participant feedback confirmed that training was delivered and positively received by participants. Management also introduced a Financial Management Processes and Procedures Manual in June 2026, providing a documented framework covering budget setting, financial monitoring, financial reporting and governance responsibilities. These actions strengthen the financial control environment and promote a more consistent approach to budget management across the organisation. Both the refresher training and the new procedures manual were implemented in June 2026, after the 2025/26 financial year-end and following approval of the 2026/27 budget. Consequently, the benefits of the enhanced arrangements were not available throughout most of the audit period or during the 2026/27 budget-setting process.	Conclusions Complete. The recommendation has been implemented through the introduction of budget holder refresher training and the development of a Financial Management Processes and Procedures Manual. These arrangements address the underlying concern identified in the prior year and strengthen support available to budget holders. No evidence was identified that weaknesses in budget monitoring or financial reporting arose from the prior issue. However, implementation took later than anticipated and therefore the improved arrangements were not in operation for most of 2025/26.

Commentary on Wider Scope

Financial sustainability

Financial sustainability looks forward to the medium and longer term to consider whether the body is planning effectively to continue to deliver its services or the way in which they should be delivered.



Financial sustainability

Significant risks

We have outlined below the significant risk in arrangements that we presented in our Annual Audit Plan, issued on 3 March 2026 and the work undertaken to respond to this.

Significant Risk in Arrangements Identified	Work undertaken and the results of our work
1 Financial sustainability West Dunbartonshire Integration Joint Board (IJB) is forecasting significant budget gaps in future years. Initial budget outlooks project significant funding gap for 2026/27 of ~£12.8million, reduced by using a superannuation reserve allocation to bring budget gap to approximately £9.7million. The IJB is considering budget options for 2026/27 and its partner organisations are still to agree their funding contributions. As in previous years, the IJB expects to use reserves to balance the budget. The IJB's un earmarked reserves were 1.62% of net expenditure at 31 March 2025, which is below the contingency level of 2% in its reserves policy. The scale of the savings the IJB needs to make, in the context of the national pressures facing community health and social care service, put its financial sustainability at risk.	Work undertaken The IJB has established comprehensive financial planning arrangements through its MTFO, annual budget setting process, strategic risk management framework and regular financial performance reporting. The IJB achieved a favourable draft outturn position in 2025/26, reporting an adjusted underspend of £0.400 million in the June 2026 report and delivering approximately 98% (£5.394 million) of planned savings. A reserves strategy remains in place and continues to be applied through the annual budget-setting and financial planning process. As at 31 March 2026, the IJB held unearmarked reserves of £4.773 million, representing approximately 2.07% of net expenditure and therefore marginally exceeding the policy target of 2%. Earmarked reserves totalled £18.542 million, bringing total reserves to £23.315 million. Approximately 62% of earmarked reserves are expected to be utilised during 2026/27. Whilst savings delivery and financial monitoring arrangements are well developed, some of the favourable financial performance achieved during 2025/26 reflects non-recurring factors, including workforce vacancies, recruitment delays and staff turnover. The Annual Report also highlights continuing uncertainty arising from annual funding settlements and the impact this may have on workforce planning, service transformation and delivery of recurring savings. The Strategic Needs Assessment identifies a declining population, projected to fall from approximately 89,120 in 2025 to 77,308 by 2047, alongside an increasingly ageing population and growing prevalence of long-term health conditions. The IJB demonstrates a strong understanding of long-term pressures facing health and social care services. The MTFO includes multi-year financial forecasting and has quantified scenario planning through Best Case, Mid-Range and Worst-Case projections covering the period to 2027/28. These scenarios model variations in key assumptions including pay inflation, demographic pressures, prescribing costs, partner funding, Scottish Living Wage uplifts and wider service demand pressures. Results of our work We have determined that governance arrangements are generally effective. The IJB demonstrates a good understanding of its medium and longer-term financial challenges and has established appropriate governance, monitoring and reporting arrangements to mitigate emerging risks. However, future financial balance is dependent upon successful delivery of recurring savings, workforce plans and transformation programmes and there remains challenges around the planned use of reserves. As such, we have raised a recommendation on 29.

Financial sustainability (continued)

Our overall assessment

Area assessed	Our findings	Our judgements	Significant risks identified
Financial planning	The Board approved the IJB's MTFO in November 2024, which provided a three-year financial forecast and high level ten-year projection of financial gaps. In addition to this, management update the budget gap figures on an annual basis. Financial sustainability is recognised as the most significant strategic financial risk facing the organisation and is appropriately reflected as the highest-rated risk within the Strategic Risk Register. During the 2025/26 period the reserves position strengthened significantly with total reserves increasing to £23.315 million, including £18.542 million of earmarked reserves held for clearly defined purposes. Reserve utilisation is subject to governance oversight and is incorporated into medium-term financial planning arrangements. Despite the positive outturn position for 2025/26, significant medium and longer-term financial sustainability challenges remain, which are prevalent across the public sector. The approved 2026/27 budget required £5.136 million of reserve utilisation to achieve financial balance. While this approach is consistent with the Reserves Policy, current plans indicate that approximately 62% of earmarked reserves will be utilised during 2026/27. The IJB is actively monitoring the demographic, operational and service pressures projected to affect future financial sustainability through its Strategic Needs Assessments (SNA). These pressures are reflected within strategic planning and financial assumptions. This ties in with the MTFO which identifies substantial future funding gaps of £8.567 million in 2027/28 and £12.373 million in 2028/29 after planned savings and management actions have been applied.	The IJB are aware of the financial risks in the coming years and are actively monitoring and preparing savings plans to attempt to mitigate the financial impact. The MTFO demonstrates many of the characteristics expected of effective medium-term financial planning and provides a sound basis for strategic decision-making. However, opportunities remain to strengthen quantified sensitivity analysis and scenario planning to improve understanding of the potential impact of changes in key assumptions such as inflation, demand growth, workforce costs, prescribing pressures and future funding settlements.	Financial sustainability – Level 1 There is a risk to the longer-term financial sustainability of the IJB. See 29 for information on the significant risks identified.

Financial sustainability (continued)

Identified risks in financial sustainability arrangements and recommendations for improvement

As a result of our work we have identified risks in the IJB’s financial sustainability arrangements. These identified risks have been outlined in the table below. We have assigned priority rankings to each of them to reflect the importance that we consider each poses to your organisation and, hence, our recommendation in terms of the urgency of required action; see Appendix F for further details.

	Financial Sustainability significant risks identified	Recommendation for improvement	IJB’s response and implementation timescale
1	Financial sustainability – Level 1 Despite achieving a favourable financial outturn in 2025/26, there remains a financial sustainability risk as the organisation continues to rely on reserve drawdowns to achieve financial balance and faces significant projected budget gaps in future years. The approved 2025/26 budget included a planned drawdown of £3.049 million from earmarked reserves, with total earmarked reserves being drawn down by £3.760 million during the year. This was offset with £7.471 million being added bringing the closing earmarked reserve to £18.542 million as at 31 March 2026. The Medium-Term Financial Outlook identifies remaining budget gaps of £8.567 million in 2027/28 and £12.373 million in 2028/29 after planned mitigation measures. Continued reliance on reserves and non-recurring funding to support financial balance may reduce financial resilience and limit the IJB's ability to respond to future financial pressures.	The IJB should continue to strengthen medium-term financial sustainability by developing and delivering recurring savings and transformation initiatives that reduce reliance on reserves to support financial balance. Progress against planned savings, reserve utilisation and future budget gap mitigation should continue to be regularly reported to the IJB Board and Audit & Performance Committee. Enhanced scenario modelling and quantified sensitivity analysis would support greater transparency over financial risks and strengthen long-term financial sustainability.	Management’s response The IJB recognises financial sustainability as its highest-rated strategic risk and continues to monitor this through established governance, risk management and financial reporting arrangements. Future-year financial gaps, reserve utilisation, savings delivery and emerging financial risks are routinely reported to the IJB and Audit & Performance Committee. Delivery of medium and longer-term financial sustainability will continue to be supported through a range of workstreams including service redesign and transformation programmes, improved use of digital technologies, workforce planning initiatives and the planned and appropriate use of reserves in line with the approved Reserves Policy. These arrangements are intended to support recurring savings, improve efficiency and ensure resources remain aligned to strategic priorities and assessed need. The current Medium-Term Financial Outlook (MTFO) covers the period 2024/25 to 2027/28 and is updated annually through the budget-setting process to reflect revised assumptions, funding positions, demographic pressures and emerging risks. Following approval of the Strategic Plan 2027-2032, scheduled for May 2027, the MTFO will undergo a full refresh to ensure continued alignment between strategic priorities, financial planning, service transformation activity. As part of this refresh, opportunities to further strengthen scenario planning and sensitivity analysis will be considered. Responsible officer Chief Financial Officer Implementation date May 2027

Financial sustainability (continued)

Follow up of previously-reported recommendations

In September 2025 we reported one recommendations to the IJB to address risks identified from our Wider Scope audit for financial sustainability. As part of our work in 2025/26, we followed up the progress made by the IJB against the recommendations made, and determined whether the risk remained during the year.

	Financial sustainability finding as previously reported	Management response and implementation timeframe	Work undertaken and judgements made in 2025/26	Conclusions reached
1	Financial sustainability – Level 2 The MTFO projects a cumulative budget gap of £9.00m in 2026/27, rising to £18.85m by 2027/28. The IJB has agreed a financial plan, which includes achieving savings through prescribing efficiencies, improved workforce management and service redesign. The challenges faced by the IJB put its longer-term financial sustainability at risk. Recommendation The IJB should continue to regularly review and update the MTFO and its financial plan. As part of this process, the IJB should ensure its partners understand the challenges it faces and their collective responsibility to ensure the IJB's finances are secure.	Management Response: The MTFO was fully refreshed in November 2024 and covers the period to 2027/28. This Outlook will be refreshed in line with the production of the IJB's next Strategic Plan effective from 1 April 2026. Implementation timescale: 1 April 2026	Progress against the recommendation The IJB has made progress in responding to the recommendation. Financial planning arrangements continue to be supported by a regularly updated MTFO, annual budget setting process, strategic risk management framework and ongoing Board scrutiny. Financial sustainability remains the highest-rated strategic risk and is subject to regular monitoring and reporting.	Conclusions Complete. The recommendation has been implemented. The IJB has refreshed and maintained its Medium-Term Financial Outlook, updated financial assumptions and continued to monitor financial sustainability through established governance arrangements. However, the risks that gave rise to the original recommendation remain relevant and have been incorporated into the Financial Sustainability Level 1 risk reported on the previous .

Commentary on Wider Scope

Vision, leadership and governance

Vision, Leadership and Governance is concerned with the effectiveness of scrutiny and governance arrangements, leadership and decision making, and transparent reporting of financial and performance information.



Vision, leadership and governance (continued)

Our overall assessment

Area assessed	Our findings	Our judgements	Significant risks identified
Clarity of plans to implement the vision	The IJB continues to demonstrate a clear and well-articulated vision of “Improving Lives with the People of West Dunbartonshire”, which is supported by a strategic outlook that aligns with national health and wellbeing outcomes and local priorities. A Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA) was completed in 2025 to provide a comprehensive assessment of service demand, workforce pressures and future care requirements. The assessment identifies key long-term challenges, including an ageing population, rising demand for community-based services, child poverty and mental health needs. These assessments provide an insight to support future planning and reinforce the continued relevance of the existing strategic priorities. The Board approved an extension to the current 2023-2026 strategic plan by one-year up to 2027 to allow additional engagement activity and incorporation of the findings from the SNA as part of the consideration of the next Strategic Plan covering 2027-2032. This demonstrates responsiveness and a commitment to ensuring that future strategic priorities are informed by updated evidence, stakeholder engagement and co-production activity with local communities, service users and other stakeholders being involved in the process. Community participation and engagement arrangements are well established and supported through the Participation and Engagement Strategy and Strategic Planning Group. These arrangements provide mechanisms for incorporating stakeholder and service user perspectives into strategic planning. While evidence demonstrates a clear commitment to engagement, there remains an opportunity to strengthen the demonstration of how feedback and engagement outcomes directly influence operational decision-making and measurable service improvements.	The IJB has established clear arrangements for implementing its vision and strategic objectives. The decision to extend the Strategic Plan reflects a measured and appropriate response to changing circumstances and supports the development of a more informed and sustainable future strategy. However, effective delivery of the vision will depend on the successful completion of the new Strategic Plan and ensuring that supporting workforce and service planning arrangements are fully aligned with future priorities.	Strategic Alignment – Level 2 The IJB is finalising its Strategic Plan and ensuring supporting plans are fully aligned and implemented. There is a risk that delays in finalising and embedding the new strategy could reduce clarity over its longer-term priorities, implementation arrangements and alignment between strategic, workforce and financial planning. See 36 for further information and our recommendations made to the IJB.

Vision, leadership and governance (continued)

Our overall assessment (continued)

Area assessed	Our findings	Our judgements	Significant risks identified
Strategy and priorities	The IJB's Strategic Plan 2023-2026 presents a clear and structured roadmap, built around four strategic outcomes aligned with national health and wellbeing goals. It is supported by the SNA, a Strategic Delivery Plan and the MTFO, ensuring priorities are evidence-based and linked to financial decision-making. Good progress has been made in strengthening the alignment between strategic planning. The former Integrated Workforce Plan has been reframed as the Workforce and Organisational Development Interim Plan 2025-2027, which was extended to align with the development of the next Strategic Plan 2027-2032. The interim plan reflects key findings from the SNA and focuses on workforce sustainability, recruitment and retention, succession planning, leadership development, workforce wellbeing and integrated working. Management has also progressed succession planning activity. It has identified key workforce risks associated with the potential loss of critical skills and leadership capacity. It now maintains a matrix detailing the talent pipeline and readiness to fill roles if they are made vacant. The development of the Strategic Plan 2027-2032 remains on track, supported by stakeholder engagement and ongoing workforce planning activity. However, the longer-term Workforce Plan, Leadership and Talent Framework and supporting succession planning arrangements remain under development and are dependent on completion of the new Strategic Plan. Given the significant workforce and demographic challenges identified in the SNA, successful delivery of these arrangements will be vital to ensure workforce capacity and delivery of the IJB's strategic vision.	The IJB has a coherent strategic framework. Strategic priorities remain relevant and appropriately targeted towards key population and service pressures. Good progress has been made in strengthening succession planning arrangements However, the full benefits of these arrangements will only be realised once the longer-term Workforce Plan and associated succession planning framework are finalised and implemented alongside the Strategic Plan 2027-2032. Continued focus will therefore be required to ensure workforce planning is fully integrated with strategic, financial and service planning arrangements.	Please refer to the risk identified on 32 regarding Strategic Alignment. See 36 for our recommendations made to the IJB.

Vision, leadership and governance (continued)

Our overall assessment (continued)

Area assessed	Our findings	Our judgements	Significant risks identified
Governance arrangements	The IJB has well established governance arrangements that provide effective oversight, accountability and assurance in support of strategic objectives and Best Value responsibilities. Governance arrangements are supported by clear decision-making structures, regular Board and Audit & Performance Committee scrutiny, strategic risk management, performance reporting and internal audit assurance. The Annual Governance Statement and Chief Internal Auditor's opinion both conclude that governance, risk management and internal control arrangements remain effective. Governance improvement actions are routinely monitored and reported, and evidence demonstrates that audit findings and self-assessment activity are used to strengthen governance and organisational performance. The Board has maintained oversight of key strategic developments, including extension of the current Strategic Plan, development of the Strategic Plan 2027-2032 and ongoing financial sustainability challenges. Governance arrangements supporting development of the new Strategic Plan have been strengthened through the establishment of a Strategic Planning Project Group which provides challenge, assurance and stakeholder oversight. Progress has also been made in reviewing partnership governance arrangements relating to hosted services. Legal advice has been obtained, a Lead Partnership Governance Group has been established, and a financial due diligence exercise has been completed across the six IJBs. Revised draft Integration Schemes have been prepared and will be refined following the 2026/27 shadow year before progressing through formal approval processes.	The IJB has effective governance arrangements that support transparency, accountability, partnership working and informed decision-making. Strong assurance and scrutiny mechanisms are in place, and good progress has been made in reviewing partnership governance arrangements.	No significant risks identified.

Vision, leadership and governance (continued)

Our overall assessment (continued)

Area assessed	Our findings	Our judgements	Significant risks identified
Financial and performance information	During 2025/26, the Board and Audit & Performance Committee received regular reports covering financial performance, budget monitoring, savings delivery, strategic risks and service performance. This enabled members to monitor delivery of strategic priorities, assess emerging risks and consider the sustainability of services. Performance reporting is structured around the Strategic Plan's four strategic outcomes and the National Health and Wellbeing Outcomes. The Board receives quarterly performance reports and an Annual Performance Report, which for 2025/26 included reporting against 49 performance indicators supported by local and national benchmarking information, trend analysis and narrative commentary. The Audit & Performance Committee receives regular performance, risk and assurance reports throughout the year, including updates on strategic risks, internal and external audit recommendations, governance improvement actions and service performance. Financial reporting includes regular revenue budget monitoring reports, updates on delivery of savings programmes, reserve levels and Medium-Term Financial Outlook assumptions. Financial information is routinely linked to strategic priorities, transformation programmes and strategic risks, supporting informed decision-making regarding service sustainability and resource allocation. The Annual Performance Report, Annual Governance Statement, Annual Accounts and Best Value reporting collectively provide a comprehensive overview of organisational performance, financial stewardship and progress towards strategic objectives. The integration of financial, workforce, performance and risk information provides members with a strong evidence base for scrutiny, challenge and decision-making.	The IJB has effective arrangements for reporting and scrutiny of financial and performance information. Reporting frameworks provide members with sufficient information to support challenge, accountability and decision-making, and there is clear evidence that performance information informs strategic planning and service improvement activity.	No significant risks identified.

Vision, leadership and governance (continued)

Identified risks in vision, leadership and governance arrangements and recommendations for improvement

As a result of our work we have identified risks in the IJB's vision, leadership and governance arrangements. These identified risks have been outlined in the table below. We have assigned priority rankings to each of them to reflect the importance that we consider each poses to your organisation and, hence, our recommendation in terms of the urgency of required action; see Appendix F for further details.

	vision, leadership and governance significant risks identified	Recommendation for improvement	IJB's response and implementation timescale
2	Workforce Planning and Strategic Plan Alignment – Level 2 The IJB has established interim workforce and succession planning arrangements and has made progress in aligning workforce priorities with strategic and financial planning. However, the longer-term Workforce Plan, Leadership and Talent Framework and associated succession planning arrangements are still being developed alongside the Strategic Plan 2027-2032. Whilst the IJB is finalising its Strategic Plan and ensuring supporting plans are fully aligned and implemented. There is a risk that delays in finalising and embedding the new strategy could reduce clarity over its longer-term priorities, implementation arrangements and alignment between strategic, workforce and financial planning.	The IJB should complete development of its longer-term Workforce Plan and Leadership and Talent Framework. Formal milestones should be established and monitored with oversight of those charged with governance. Future workforce planning should demonstrate a clear link between workforce priorities, succession planning arrangements, Strategic Needs Assessment findings and strategic service delivery objectives.	Management's response Interim workforce and succession planning arrangements are already in place through the Workforce and Organisational Development Interim Plan 2025–2027, providing a framework for progressing key workforce priorities while the longer-term Strategic Plan is developed. Work is underway to develop the Workforce and Organisational Development Plan 2027–2032 alongside the Strategic Plan 2027–2032, ensuring that future workforce priorities are directly informed by the Strategic Needs Assessment, anticipated service demand, demographic pressures, financial planning and emerging service delivery priorities. This will include the development of the Leadership and Talent Framework and strengthened succession planning arrangements, with a particular focus on leadership resilience, critical roles, workforce capacity, recruitment and retention, and future skills requirements. Formal milestones will be established to support delivery and provide appropriate governance oversight. Progress will be monitored through the relevant IJB governance arrangements, with alignment between workforce, financial and strategic planning clearly demonstrated within the final plan. The Workforce and Organisational Development Plan 2027–2032 is scheduled to be presented to the IJB for approval in March 2027, aligned with the development and approval of the Strategic Plan 2027–2032. Responsible officer Head of People and Change Implementation date March 2027 with ongoing implementation and monitoring thereafter

Commentary on Wider Scope

Use of resources to improve outcomes

Audited bodies need to make best use of their resources to meet stated outcomes and improvement objectives, through effective planning and working with strategic partners and communities. This includes demonstrating economy, efficiency, and effectiveness through the use of financial and other resources and reporting performance against outcomes.



Use of resources to improve outcomes (continued)

Our overall assessment

Area assessed	Our findings	Our judgements	Significant risks identified
Resources deployed to improve strategic outcomes	The IJB has established comprehensive arrangements to assess and respond to service user needs through strategic planning, performance management and stakeholder engagement. The Board aligns financial resources with strategic outcomes through its Strategic Plan and Delivery Plan. The Board considers financial performance reports tracking progress and spending trends each time it meets (six times a year). The Annual Performance Report and Best Value Statement demonstrate how resources support service delivery and improvement. An example of this good practice is the Learning Disability Service Review which has been informed by analysis of demographic pressures, future demand projections and care package costs. This has helped in supporting consideration of alternative models of support designed to promote independence whilst ensuring resources remain aligned to assessed need and statutory responsibilities. The Children and Families Transformation Programme ("What Would It Take?") represents a further example of resources being redirected towards preventative and early intervention care, with management reporting encouraging feedback at the early stage with both improved outcomes and improved financial performance.	The IJB demonstrates a strong understanding of service user needs and has appropriate mechanisms for incorporating population intelligence, performance evidence and stakeholder views into decision-making. Despite pressure on finances and service demand, the IJB are taking action and are deploying resources within their control.	Please refer to the risk identified on 32 regarding Strategic Alignment. See 36 for our recommendations made to the IJB.

Use of resources to improve outcomes (continued)

Our overall assessment (continued)

Area assessed	Our findings	Our judgements	Significant risks identified
Needs of service users being met	There are several arrangements in place to understand and respond to the needs of service users through strategic planning, engagement and performance monitoring. The Participation and Engagement Strategy 2024-2027 promotes co-production having been developed through consultation with service users, carers, community groups, third-sector organisations and partner agencies. The Board's decision to extend the current Strategic Plan to 2027 demonstrates a commitment to ensuring that future priorities are informed by engagement activity and findings from the Strategic Needs Assessment 2025. The strategy also includes actions to strengthen representation from seldom-heard groups, improve feedback mechanisms and increase community involvement in service planning and decision-making. The IJB continues to assess whether service user needs are being met through a performance management framework comprising 49 local and national indicators aligned to strategic priorities and National Health and Wellbeing Outcomes. Of the 49 performance indicators monitored by the IJB, performance in 2025/26 was mixed. While several measures show stable or improving trends, a number of strategically important indicators continue to perform below target, particularly in relation to delayed discharge, waiting times and unscheduled care. The IJB has strengthened performance scrutiny arrangements and introduced targeted recovery actions, with progress monitored through exception reporting and regular Board oversight. This provides assurance that underperformance is being actively managed	The IJB has a clear and effective approach to understanding and involving service users in service planning and evaluation, supported by comprehensive engagement arrangements and transparent performance reporting. Service user needs are considered in decision-making and resource allocation. Steps are being taken to actively address areas of underperformance in relation to the local and national indicators.	No significant risks identified.

Use of resources to improve outcomes (continued)

Our overall assessment (continued)

Area assessed	Our findings	Our judgements	Significant risks identified
Arrangements to deliver continuous improvements in priority services	The IJB has a strong focus on continuous improvement and has implemented a range of structured improvement and transformation programmes designed to address service pressures, improve outcomes and support long-term sustainability. Events in the year highlight that resources have been targeted towards priority areas where demand, performance pressures and sustainability risks are greatest. Significant examples during 2025/26 include the Care at Home Redesign Programme, which was informed by increasing demand from an ageing population, rising complexity of need, workforce pressures and service capacity challenges. The redesign has influenced investment decisions and associated savings proposals intended to support future sustainability whilst maintaining independence and community-based care. Further findings from our review of the IJB's arrangements to deliver continuous improvements in priority services are detailed in Best Value Section of this report (Section 7).	The IJB has effective arrangements for driving continuous improvement, with evidence of service redesign, targeted recovery plans and transformation activity focused on priority service areas. Improvement activity is supported by robust governance oversight, and there are emerging positive outcomes from major transformation programmes.	No significant risks identified.

07

Best Value

Commentary on Best Value

Best Value



Best Value

Best Value summary

Under the Code of Audit Practice, the audit of Best Value is fully integrated within our annual audit work. We are required to assess the seven Best Value themes at the IJB over the period of the audit appointment. We have used a risk-based approach that is proportionate to the size and type of the body, to assess whether the IJB has made proper arrangements for securing Best Value and is complying with its community planning duties. We have also followed up on any previously reported Best Value findings, and have assessed the pace and depth of improvement implemented by the IJB.

At the planning stage of the audit, we undertook work to understand the arrangements that the IJB has in place under each of the reporting criteria and we considered whether there were any risks to our audit in those arrangements. We have kept our understanding of arrangements under review and updated our risk assessment throughout the audit to reflect emerging issues that may suggest significant risks in arrangements exist. The following slides outline the work that we have undertaken for each of the seven Best Value themes and any improvements or risks in arrangements that have been identified as part of our assessment.

Overall summary by reporting criteria

From the satisfactory conclusion of our audit work, we have the following conclusions:

Reporting criteria	Commentary reference	Possible significant risks?	Significant risks identified?	Other recommendations made?	Overall conclusion
Best Value	44	No	No	No	Satisfactory

Best Value (continued)

Significant risks

We have not identified any significant risks in arrangements as part of our continuous planning procedures.

Overall commentary on the Best Value reporting criteria

The IJB has a statutory duty to have arrangements to secure Best Value. To achieve this, IJBs are expected to have effective processes for scrutinising performance, monitoring progress towards their strategic objectives and holding partners to account.

The Board of the IJB is the key decision-making body accountable for securing Best Value. Its membership includes six voting members from both partner bodies, being West Dunbartonshire Council and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde.

The Board is supported by the Audit and Performance Committee, Project Management Office and Senior Management Team. These arrangements are designed to ensure effective reporting on the outcomes of Best Value arrangements and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

The Board meets six times per year, with regular financial and performance reporting. The IJB publishes all papers and minutes on its website. Complaints from the public are also regularly reported to the Board and investigated. These arrangements demonstrate the IJB's openness and transparency.

The IJB has effective arrangements in place to support delivery of Best Value. Governance, performance, financial and risk management arrangements are well established and integrated, providing clear accountability and oversight. The IJB demonstrates an ability to work alongside its partner bodies, with reserve levels being closely monitored to ensure appropriate levels are maintained, while considering the financial risk across the partnership.

In terms of collaboration with other IJB's, a lead partnership governance group was established in early 2025 and a financial due diligence exercise was undertaken jointly by all six CFOs, with a report presented in June 2026. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and there is evidence of constructive challenge, transparency and scrutiny.

The IJB prepares a Best Value Statement which is reviewed and updated on an annual basis. Officers presented the latest report to the June 2026 Audit and Performance Committee. This statement considers the IJB position in relation to ten key Best Value prompts, prepared by Audit Scotland.

The questions cover:

- consideration of the responsible parties for securing Best Value;
- how delivery assurances are measured;
- whether there is sufficient partner buy-in on the longer-term vision of the IJB;
- how value for money is demonstrated in decision making;
- whether there is a culture of continuous improvement;
- whether identified improvements actions which have been prioritised are those that are likely to have the greatest impact.;
- whether improvement actions have been identified and prioritised in terms of those likely to have the greatest impact;
- steps are taken to ensure that quality of care and service provided is not compromised due to cost saving measures;
- whether performance information reported to the Board is of sufficient detail to enable value for money to be assessed; and
- how the IJB ensure that management of resources (e.g. finances and workforce) is effective and sustainable.

Best Value (continued)

Overall commentary on the Best Value reporting criteria (continued)

The IJB, through its Best Value Statement, can evidence that resources are being directed towards priority service areas and service redesign activity. The IJB continues to demonstrate a commitment to improvement through a range of transformation and redesign programmes, including:

- Care at Home and Learning Disability service redesign;
- Children's Services Improvement Programme;
- digital transformation including transition to Digital Telecare alarms;
- prescribing efficiency initiatives; and
- wider sustainability reviews.

The IJB's Strategic Needs Assessment 2025 is a strategic assessment of current and future population needs within West Dunbartonshire that has strengthened the IJBs forward planning. This assessment has allowed the IJB to assess the demographic, health and social challenges and feed this into planning future priorities.

The extension of the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan by an additional year to 2027. This provides a further opportunity to enhance stakeholder engagement and co-production with stakeholders including service users, communities, staff, providers and partner organisations. The extension was approved by the Board to allow additional engagement activity and incorporation of the findings from the Strategic Needs Assessment as part of the consideration of the next Strategic Plan covering 2027-2032.

The IJB's pace of improvement is generally good; however, progress is constrained by financial pressures, workforce challenges and increasing service demand. Continued delivery of transformation activity, such as those mentioned above, will be necessary to achieve intended long-term benefits and support sustainability.

The IJB demonstrates evidence of continues improvement in several areas. Its strategic

planning has been strengthened through the Strategic Needs Assessment and greater integration between performance, risk and financial reporting. Its financial performance improved during 2025/26, with a favourable outturn, strong savings delivery and an improved reserves position. The organisation has progressed several significant transformation and service redesign programmes.

- The IJB continued implementation of its Care at Home redesign programme during 2025/26, including the introduction of a redesigned staffing model and standardised rota arrangements. The programme is intended to improve service responsiveness, workforce utilisation and long-term sustainability.
- The IJB continued to deliver improvement activity across Children's Services, including initiatives to strengthen mental health and wellbeing support and expand early intervention services. The programme aims to improve outcomes for children, young people and families through preventative approaches, earlier support and improved access to community-based services.
- The IJB completed the transition from analogue to digital telecare during 2025/26, ahead of the national implementation deadline. The programme supported more than 1,600 residents and improved the resilience, reliability and long-term sustainability of telecare services, helping people to live independently within their communities.

Our wider scope work has not identified any significant weaknesses in the governance and accountability of the IJB or its use of resources.

The IJB has assessed its Best Value arrangements and identified areas for improvement which it is working to address. For example, it has identified an opportunity to further strengthen the integration of performance and financial reporting. Greater alignment between key performance indicators and financial information would provide the Board with a clearer understanding of how resource allocation contributes to service outcomes. This would support more informed decision-making, enhanced transparency and stronger evidence of value for money.



Appendices

- A: Internal control conclusions
- B: Draft management representation letter
- C: Draft audit report
- D: Confirmation of our independence
- E: Other communications
- F: Wider scope ratings

Appendix A: Internal control conclusions

Other deficiencies in internal control

A deficiency in internal control exists if:

- A control is designed, implemented, or operated in such a way that it is unable to prevent, detect, and/ or correct potential misstatements in the financial statements; or
- A control that is necessary to prevent, detect, and/ or correct misstatements in the financial statements on a timely basis is missing.

The purpose of our audit was to express an opinion on the financial statements. As part of our audit, we have considered the West Dunbartonshire Integration Joint Board's internal controls relevant to the preparation of the financial statements to design audit procedures to allow us to express an opinion on the financial statements, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the West Dunbartonshire Integration Joint Board's internal controls or to identify any significant deficiencies in their design or operation.

The matters reported in Appendix A are limited to those deficiencies and other control recommendations that we have identified during our normal audit procedures and which we consider to be of sufficient importance to merit being reported. If we had performed more extensive procedures on internal control, we might have identified more deficiencies to report or concluded that some of the reported deficiencies need not in fact have been reported. Our comments in Appendix A should not be regarded as a comprehensive record of all deficiencies that may exist or improvements that could be made.

This Appendix sets out the internal control observations that we have identified as at the date of this report. These control observations are not, in our view, significant control deficiencies but have been reported to management directly and are included in this report for your information. In our view, there is a need to address the deficiencies in internal control set out in this section to strengthen internal control or enhance business efficiency. Our recommendations should be actioned by management in the near future.

Appendix A: Internal control conclusions (continued)

Other deficiencies in internal control

Review of related party transactions

Description of deficiency

Three Board members' annual declarations of interest were submitted after the unaudited annual report and accounts were approved for issue. This included one which was omitted because the individual left during the year. This meant that officers were unable to review members' declarations and ensure any identified related party transactions were appropriately disclosed in the unaudited accounts. We also identified this deficiency during our 2024/25 audit and included a control recommendation in our 2024/25 Annual Audit Report.

We subsequently reviewed the declarations of interest against the IJB's transactions listings and did not identify any undisclosed related party transactions.

Potential effects

Officers may not be fully aware of Board member's interests leading to incorrect or incomplete disclosure of related party transactions in the annual accounts.

Recommendation

Officers should ensure annual declarations, for all members who have served in year, are received in suitable time for a full review to be carried out prior to issuing the unaudited accounts.

Management response

The Standards Commission for Scotland makes clear that the responsibility for registering and declaring interests lies with individual IJB members. While this responsibility remains with members, the Chief Financial Officer and Standards Officer will review existing processes and communication arrangements to support the timely submission and updating of register entries prior to the preparation of the 2026/27 unaudited accounts.

Responsible Officer: Standards officer

Implementation date: April 2027

Appendix B: Draft management representation letter

Forvis Mazars
100 Queen Street
Glasgow
G1 3DN

29th September 2026

Dear Tom,

West Dunbartonshire Integration Joint Board - Audit for Year Ended 31 March 2026

This representation letter is provided in connection with your audit of the financial statements of West Dunbartonshire Integration Joint Board (the IJB) for the year ended 31 March 2026 for the purpose of expressing an opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2025/26 (the Code), and applicable law.

I confirm that the following representations are made on the basis of enquiries of management and staff with relevant knowledge and experience (and, where appropriate, inspection of supporting documentation) sufficient to satisfy myself that I can properly make each of the following representations to you.

My responsibility for the financial statements and accounting information

I believe that I have fulfilled my responsibilities for the true and fair presentation and preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the Code, as amended by applicable law.

My responsibility to provide and disclose relevant information

I have provided you with:

- access to all information of which I am aware that is relevant to the preparation of the financial statements such as records, documentation and other material;
- additional information that you have requested from us for the purpose of the audit; and
- unrestricted access to individuals within the IJB you determined it was necessary to contact in order to obtain audit evidence.

I confirm as the Chief Financial Officer that I have taken all the necessary steps to make me aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that you, as auditors, are aware of this information.

As far as I am aware there is no relevant audit information of which you, as auditors, are unaware.

I confirm that there is no information provided to you as part of the audit that I consider legally privileged.

Appendix B: Draft management representation letter

Accounting records

I confirm that all transactions that have a material effect on the financial statements have been recorded in the accounting records and are reflected in the financial statements. All other records and related information, including minutes of all Board and committee meetings, have been made available to you.

Accounting policies

I confirm that I have reviewed the accounting policies applied during the year in accordance with International Accounting Standard 8 and consider these policies to faithfully represent the effects of transactions, other events or conditions on the IJB's financial position, financial performance and cash flows.

Accounting estimates, including those measured at fair value

I confirm that the methods, significant assumptions and the data used by the IJB in making the accounting estimates, including those measured at fair value, are appropriate to achieve recognition, measurement or disclosure that is in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework.

Contingencies

There are no material contingent losses including pending or potential litigation that should be accrued where:

- information presently available indicates that it is probable that an asset has been impaired or a liability had been incurred at the balance sheet date; and
- the amount of the loss can be reasonably estimated.

There are no material contingent losses that should be disclosed where, although either or both the conditions specified above are not met, there is a reasonable possibility that a loss, or a loss greater than that accrued, may have been incurred at the balance sheet date.

There are no contingent gains which should be disclosed.

All material matters, including unasserted claims, that may result in litigation against the IJB have been brought to your attention. All known actual or possible litigation and claims whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial statements have been disclosed to you and accounted for and disclosed in accordance with the Code, as amended by applicable law.

Appendix B: Draft management representation letter

Laws and regulations

I confirm that I have disclosed to you all those events of which I am aware which involve known or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations, together with the actual or contingent consequences which may arise therefrom.

The IJB has complied with all aspects of contractual agreements that would have a material effect on the accounts in the event of non-compliance.

Fraud and error

I acknowledge my responsibility as Chief Financial Officer for the design, implementation and maintenance of internal control to prevent and detect fraud and error and I believe I have appropriately fulfilled those responsibilities.

I have disclosed to you:

- all the results of my assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud;
- all knowledge of fraud or suspected fraud affecting the IJB involving:
 - management and those charged with governance;
 - employees who have significant roles in internal control; and
 - others where fraud could have a material effect on the financial statements.

I have disclosed to you all information in relation to any allegations of fraud, or suspected fraud, affecting the IJB's financial statements communicated by employees, former employees, analysts, regulators or others.

Related party transactions

I confirm that all related party relationships, transactions and balances, have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed in accordance with the requirements of the Code, as amended applicable law.

I have disclosed to you the identity of the IJB's related parties and all related party relationships and transactions of which I am aware.

Charges on assets

All the IJB's assets are free from any charges exercisable by third parties except as disclosed within the financial statements.

Appendix B: Draft management representation letter

Future commitments

The IJB has no plans, intentions or commitments that may materially affect the carrying value or classification of assets and liabilities or give rise to additional liabilities.

Subsequent events

I confirm all events subsequent to the date of the financial statements and for which the Code, as amended by applicable law, require adjustment or disclosure have been adjusted or disclosed.

Should further material events occur after the date of this letter which may necessitate revision of the figures included in the financial statements or inclusion of a note thereto, I will advise you accordingly.

Impacts of military conflict including the Middle East and Ukraine

I confirm that I have carried out an assessment of the potential impact of military conflict including the Middle East and Ukraine on the IJB, including the impact of mitigation measures and uncertainties, and that the disclosure in the management commentary and the Events after the Reporting period note 5 to the financial statements fairly reflects that assessment.

Tariffs

I confirm that I have carried out an assessment of the potential impact of changes in US trade policy in respect of tariffs, including the impact of reciprocal tariffs by other countries, including the impact of mitigation measures and uncertainties, and that the disclosure in the management commentary and the Events after the Reporting period note 5 to the financial statements fairly reflects that assessment.

Going concern

To the best of my knowledge there is nothing to indicate that the IJB will not continue as a going concern in the foreseeable future. The period to which I have paid particular attention in assessing the appropriateness of the going concern basis is not less than twelve months from the date of approval of the accounts.

Appendix B: Draft management representation letter

Annual Governance Statement

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

Management Commentary

The disclosures within the Management Commentary fairly reflect my understanding of the IJB's financial and operating performance over the period covered by the financial statements.

Remuneration Report

The disclosures within the Remuneration Report fairly reflect my understanding of the IJB's remuneration of officers over the period covered by the financial statements.

Unadjusted misstatements

I confirm that the effects of the uncorrected misstatements are immaterial, both individually and in aggregate, to the financial statements as a whole. A list of the uncorrected misstatements is attached to this letter as an Appendix.

Wider scope and best value arrangements

I confirm that I have disclosed to you all findings and correspondence from regulators for previous and ongoing inspections of which I am aware. In addition, I have disclosed to you any other information that would be considered relevant to your work on wider scope and best value arrangements.

Yours faithfully,

Chief Financial Officer: XXXX

Date: XXXX

Appendix B: Draft management representation letter

Appendix

Schedule of unadjusted misstatements

We identified the following disclosure misstatements during our audit that have not been corrected by management:

- **Provisions**

- The unaudited accounts included a provision of £546k (24/25: £487k) in the balance sheet for unrecovered charges for specific social care delegated services. We have recommended in prior year audits (2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25) that officers amend the short-term debtors balance to show it net of the bad debt provision. Officers decided not to make this adjustment on the basis that by presenting the balance as a provision, the IJB is recognising the uncertainty associated with it and improving visibility to readers of the accounts. The IJB's contribution from the Council is net of income received from levying charges and other income. If any debt is written off, the IJB accounts for the impact. However, ultimately if the IJB cannot cover its costs then the Council would have to account for any deficit in line with the Integration Scheme.
- We have accepted the IJB's accounting treatment because the amount disclosed is not material and an alternative accounting treatment would have no impact on total net assets recorded in the balance sheet.

Appendix C: Draft audit report

Independent auditor's report to the members of West Dunbartonshire Integration Joint Board and the Accounts Commission

Reporting on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion on the financial statements

We certify that we have audited the financial statements in the annual accounts of West Dunbartonshire Integration Joint Board ("the IJB") for the year ended 31 March 2026 under Part VII of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. The financial statements comprise the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, the Movement in Reserves Statement, the Balance Sheet and notes to the financial statements, including material accounting policy information. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and UK adopted international accounting standards, as interpreted and adapted by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2025/26 (the 2025/26 Code).

In our opinion the accompanying financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the IJB as at 31 March 2026 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with UK adopted international accounting standards, as interpreted and adapted by the 2025/26 Code; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, The Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014, and the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)), as required by the Code of Audit Practice approved by the Accounts Commission for Scotland. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We were appointed by the Accounts Commission on 18 May 2022. Our period of appointment is five years, covering 2022/23 to 2026/27. We are independent of the IJB in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. Non-audit services prohibited by the Ethical Standard were not provided to the IJB. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern basis of accounting

We have concluded that the use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Appendix C: Draft audit report

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the IJB'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.

These conclusions are not intended to, nor do they, provide assurance on the IJB's current or future financial sustainability. However, we report on the IJB's arrangements for financial sustainability in a separate Annual Audit Report available from the [Audit Scotland Website](#).

Risks of material misstatement

We report in our Annual Audit Report the most significant assessed risks of material misstatement that we identified and our judgements thereon.

Responsibilities of the Chief Financial Officer and the Audit and Performance Committee for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Responsibilities, the Chief Financial Officer is responsible for the preparation of financial statements, that give a true and fair view in accordance with the financial reporting framework, and for such internal control as the Chief 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 Chief Financial Officer is responsible for assessing each year the IJB'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 there is an intention to discontinue the IJB operations.

The Audit and Performance Committee is responsible for overseeing the financial reporting process.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our 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 our 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 decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Appendix C: Draft audit report

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

- using our understanding of the local government sector to identify that the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, The Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014, and the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 are significant in the context of the IJB;
- inquiring of the Chief Financial Officer and the Chief Officer as to other laws or regulations that may be expected to have a fundamental effect on the operations of the IJB;
- inquiring of the Chief Financial Officer and the Chief Officer concerning the IJB's policies and procedures regarding compliance with the applicable legal and regulatory framework;
- discussions among our audit team on the susceptibility of the financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur; and
- considering whether the audit team collectively has the appropriate competence and capabilities to identify or recognise non-compliance with laws and regulations.

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

Irregularities that result from fraud are inherently more difficult to detect than irregularities that result from error as fraud may involve collusion, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. The capability of the audit to detect fraud and other irregularities depends on factors such as the skilfulness of the perpetrator, the frequency and extent of manipulation, the degree of collusion involved, the relative size of individual amounts manipulated, and the seniority of those individuals involved.

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

Appendix C: Draft audit report

Reporting on other requirements

Opinion prescribed by the Accounts Commission on the audited parts of the Remuneration Report

We have audited the parts of the Remuneration Report described as audited. In our opinion, the audited parts of the Remuneration Report have been properly prepared in accordance with The Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014.

Other information

The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for the other information in the annual accounts. The other information comprises the Management Commentary, Annual Governance Statement, Statement of Responsibilities and the unaudited part of the Remuneration Report.

Our responsibility is to read all the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon except on the Management Commentary and Annual Governance Statement to the extent explicitly stated in the following opinions prescribed by the Accounts Commission.

Opinions prescribed by the Accounts Commission on the Management Commentary and Annual Governance Statement

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

- the information given in the Management Commentary for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and that report has been prepared in accordance with statutory guidance issued under the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003; and
- the information given in the Annual Governance Statement for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and that report has been prepared in accordance with the Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework (2016).

Appendix C: Draft audit report

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We are required by the Accounts Commission to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements and the audited part of the Remuneration Report are not in agreement with the accounting records; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

We have nothing to report in respect of these matters.

Conclusions on wider scope responsibilities

In addition to our responsibilities for the annual accounts, our conclusions on the wider scope responsibilities specified in the Code of Audit Practice, including those in respect of Best Value, are set out in our Annual Audit Report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the parties to whom it is addressed in accordance with Part VII of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 and for no other purpose. In accordance with paragraph 108 of the Code of Audit Practice, we do not undertake to have responsibilities to members or officers, in their individual capacities, or to third parties.

[signature]

Tom Reid, Director
For and on behalf of Forvis Mazars LLP

100 Queen Street
Glasgow – G1 3DN
XX September 2026

Appendix D: Confirmation of our independence

We communicate any matters which we believe may have a bearing on the independence or the objectivity of Forvis Mazars LLP and the audit team. As part of our ongoing risk assessment, we monitor our relationships with you to identify any new actual or perceived threats to our independence within the regulatory or professional requirements governing us as your auditors.

We remain available to the Audit and Performance Committee to discuss any matters relating to our independence, should such a discussion be required.

Confirmation of independence

We confirm that the firm, Forvis Mazars LLP, and all covered persons remain independent of West Dunbartonshire Integration Joint Board in accordance with the requirements of the FRC Ethical Standard.

Relationships disclosure

A review of relationships between the firm, covered persons, and West Dunbartonshire Integration Joint Board, including its directors, senior management, affiliates, and connected parties, has identified no matters that bear on our integrity, objectivity, or independence during the engagement period.

Appendix D: Confirmation of our independence

Fees for work as the IJB’s auditor

We reported our proposed fees for the delivery of our work under the Code of Audit Practice in our Annual Audit Plan presented to the Audit and Performance Committee in March 2026. Having completed our work for the 2025/26 financial year, we can confirm that our fees are as follows:

Area of work	2025/26 fees	2024/25 fees
Auditor remuneration	£38,560	£37,150
Pooled costs	£1,330	£930
Contribution to PABV costs	£7,180	£7,130
Sectoral cap adjustment	(£11,590)	(£11,200)
Total fees	£35,480	£34,000

Non-audit and additional services

The firm has not provided any non-audit or additional services to West Dunbartonshire Integration Joint Board or its affiliates during the relevant period, and no fees have been charged in respect of such services.

Use of component auditors

We have not made arrangements for any of our activities as auditor to be conducted by another firm that is not a Forvis Mazars’ member firm.

Use of experts

We have not used the work of external experts.

Appendix E: Other communications

Other communication	Response
 Compliance with Laws and Regulations	We have not identified any significant matters involving actual or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations. We will obtain written representations from management that all known instances of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations whose effects should be considered when preparing financial statements have been disclosed.
 External confirmations	We did not experience any issues with respect to obtaining external confirmations.
 Related parties	We did not identify any significant matters relating to the audit of related parties. We will obtain written representations from management confirming that: a. they have disclosed to us the identity of related parties and all the related party relationships and transactions of which they are aware; and b. they have appropriately accounted for and disclosed such relationships and transactions in accordance with the requirements of the applicable financial reporting framework.
 Going Concern	We have not identified any evidence to cause us to disagree with the Chief Financial Officer that West Dunbartonshire Integration Joint Board will be a going concern, and therefore we have not identified any evidence to cause us to consider that the use of the going concern assumption in preparation of the financial statements is not appropriate.

Appendix E: Other communications (continued)

Other communication	Response
 Subsequent events	We are required to obtain evidence about whether events occurring between the date of the financial statements and the date of the auditor's report that require adjustment of, or disclosure in, the financial statements are appropriately reflected in those financial statements in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework. We will obtain written representations from management that all events occurring subsequent to the date of the financial statements and for which the applicable financial reporting framework requires adjustment or disclosure have been adjusted or disclosed.
 Matters related to fraud	Our audit was designed to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement due to fraud. Please refer to the section titled '<i>Fraud considerations</i>' for our fraud considerations and conclusion. We will obtain written representations from management and, where appropriate, the Audit and Performance Committee, confirming that - they acknowledge their responsibility for the design, implementation and maintenance of internal control to prevent and detect fraud; - they have disclosed to the auditor the results of management's assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud; - they have disclosed to the auditor their knowledge of fraud or suspected fraud affecting the entity involving: - management; - employees who have significant roles in internal control; or - others where the fraud could have a material effect on the financial statements; and - they have disclosed to the auditor their knowledge of any allegations of fraud, or suspected fraud, affecting the entity's financial statements communicated by employees, former employees, analysts, regulators or others.

Appendix E: Other communications (continued)

Other communication	Response
 System of Quality Management	To address the requirements of ISQM (UK) 1, our firm’s System of Quality Management team completes, as part of an ongoing and iterative process, a number of key steps to assess and conclude on our firm’s System of Quality Management, including: • Ensuring there is an appropriate assignment of responsibilities under ISQM (UK) 1 and across Leadership • Establishing and reviewing quality objectives each year, ensuring ISQM (UK) 1 objectives align with our firm's strategies and priorities • Identifying, reviewing, and updating quality risks each quarter, taking into consideration a number of input sources (such as FRC / ICAEW review findings, internal monitoring findings, findings from our firm’s root cause analysis and remediation functions, etc.) • Identifying, designing, and implementing responses as part of the process to strengthen our firm's internal control environment and overall quality • Evaluating responses and remediating control gaps or deficiencies We perform an evaluation of our system of quality management on an annual basis. Our latest evaluation was performed as of 31 August 2025. Details of that assessment and our conclusion are set out in our 2024/2025 Transparency Report, which is available on our website here.

Appendix F: Wider scope ratings

We need to gather sufficient evidence to support our commentary on the the IJB’s arrangements and to identify and report on any risks. We will carry out more detailed work where we identify significant risks. Where significant risks are identified we will report these to the IJB and make recommendations for improvement. In addition to local risks, we consider challenges that are impacting the public sector as a whole.

We have assigned priority rankings to each of the risks identified to reflect the importance that we consider each poses to your organisation and, hence, our recommendation in terms of the urgency of required action. The table below describes the meaning behind each rating that we have awarded to each wider scope area based on the work we have performed.

Rating	Description
Level 1	The identified risk and/or significant deficiency is critical to the business processes or the achievement of business strategic objectives. There is potential for financial loss, damage to reputation or loss of information. The recommendation should be taken into consideration by management immediately.
Level 2	The identified risk and/or significant deficiency may impact on individual objectives or business processes. The audited body should implement the recommendation to strengthen internal controls or enhance business efficiency. The recommendations should be actioned in the near future.
Level 3	The identified risk and/or significant deficiency is an area for improvement or less significant. In our view, the audited body should action the recommendation, but management do not need to prioritise.

Contact

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