



AUDITOR-GENERAL
SOUTH AFRICA

AUDITOR'S REPORT

Zululand District Municipality

2024-25

Date: 30 November 2025

Report of the auditor-general to the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Legislature and the council of the Zululand District Municipality

Report on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion

1. I have audited the financial statements of the Zululand District Municipality set out on pages xx to xx, which comprise the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2025, statement of financial performance, statement of changes in net assets, the cash flow statement and statement of comparison of budget and actual amounts for the year then ended, as well as notes to the financial statements including a summary of significant accounting policies.
2. In my opinion, the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Zululand District Municipality as at 30 June 2025 and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the South African Standards of Generally Recognised Accounting Practice (GRAP) and the requirements of the Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003 (MFMA) and the Division of Revenue Act 24 of 2024 (Dora).

Basis for opinion

3. I conducted my audit in accordance with the International Standards on Auditing (ISAs). My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the responsibilities of the auditor-general for the audit of the financial statements section of my report.
4. I am independent of the municipality in accordance with the International Ethics Standards Board for Accountants' *International Code of ethics for Professional Accountants (including International Independence Standards)* (IESBA code) as well as other ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit in South Africa. I have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements and the IESBA code.
5. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Emphasis of matters

6. I draw attention to the matters below. My opinion is not modified in respect of these matters.

Material impairments – consumer receivables from exchange transactions

7. As disclosed in note 4 to the financial statements, the municipality increased the allowance for impairment on consumer receivables from exchange transactions to R259,56 million (2023-24: R227,35 million) as the recoverability of these amounts were doubtful.

Restatement of corresponding figures

8. As disclosed in note 58 to the financial statements, the corresponding figures for 30 June 2024 were restated as a result of errors in the financial statements of the municipality at, and for the year ended, 30 June 2025.

Other matter

9. I draw attention to the matter below. My opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

Unaudited disclosure notes 51 and 52

10. In terms of section 125(2)(e) of the MFMA, the particulars of non-compliance with the MFMA should be disclosed in the financial statements. These disclosure requirements did not form part of the audit of the financial statements and, accordingly, I do not express an opinion on it.

Responsibilities of the accounting officer for the financial statements

11. The accounting officer is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with the SA Standards of GRAP and the requirements of the MFMA and the Dora; and for such internal control as the accounting officer determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.
12. In preparing the financial statements, the accounting officer is responsible for assessing the municipality's ability to continue as a going concern; disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern; and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the appropriate governance structure either intends to liquidate the municipality or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Responsibilities of the auditor-general for the audit of the financial statements

13. My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the ISAs will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.
14. A further description of my responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is included in the annexure to this auditor's report. This description, which is located at page xx, forms part of my auditor's report.

Report on the audit of the annual performance report

15. In accordance with the Public Audit Act 25 of 2004 (PAA) and the general notice issued in terms thereof, I must audit and report on the usefulness and reliability of the reported performance against predetermined objectives for the selected key performance area presented in the annual performance report. The accounting officer is responsible for the preparation of the annual performance report.
16. I selected the following key performance area presented in the annual performance report for the year ended 30 June 2025 for auditing. I selected a key performance area that measures the municipality's performance on its primary mandated functions and that are of significant national, community or public interest.

Key performance area	Page numbers	Purpose
Basic service delivery	x-x	Continuously managing all existing infrastructure capital assets to minimize total cost of ownership and operation and ensuring access to the municipal services that local communities are entitled to.

17. I evaluated the reported performance information for the selected key performance area against the criteria developed from the performance management and reporting framework, as defined in the general notice. When an annual performance report is prepared using these criteria, it provides useful and reliable information and insights to users on the municipality's planning and delivery on its mandate and objectives.

18. I performed procedures to test whether:

- the indicators used for planning and reporting on performance can be linked directly to the municipality's mandate and the achievement of its planned objectives
- all the indicators relevant for measuring the municipality's performance against its primary mandated and prioritised functions and planned objectives are included
- the indicators are well defined to ensure that they are easy to understand and can be applied consistently, as well as verifiable so that I can confirm the methods and processes to be used for measuring achievements
- the targets can be linked directly to the achievement of the indicators and are specific, time bound and measurable to ensure that it is easy to understand what should be delivered and by when, the required level of performance as well as how performance will be evaluated
- the indicators and targets reported on in the annual performance report are the same as those committed to in the approved initial or revised planning documents
- the reported performance information is presented in the annual performance report in the prescribed manner and is comparable and understandable
- there is adequate supporting evidence for the achievements reported and for the reasons provided for any measures taken to improve performance.

19. I performed the procedures for the purpose of reporting material findings only; and not to express an assurance opinion or conclusion.

20. I did not identify any material findings on the reported performance information for the selected key performance area.

Other matter

21. I draw attention to the matter below.

Achievement of planned targets

22. The annual performance report includes information on reported achievements against planned targets and provides explanations for over- or under achievements / measures taken to improve performance.

Report on compliance with legislation

23. In accordance with the PAA and the general notice issued in terms thereof, I must audit and report on compliance with applicable legislation relating to financial matters, financial management and other related matters. The accounting officer is responsible for the municipality's compliance with legislation.
24. I performed procedures to test compliance with selected requirements in key legislation in accordance with the findings engagement methodology of the Auditor-General of South Africa (AGSA). This engagement is not an assurance engagement. Accordingly, I do not express an assurance opinion or conclusion.
25. Through an established AGSA process, I selected requirements in key legislation for compliance testing that are relevant to the financial and performance management of the municipality, clear to allow consistent measurement and evaluation, while also sufficiently detailed and readily available to report in an understandable manner. The selected legislative requirements are included in the annexure to this auditor's report.
26. The material findings on compliance with the selected legislative requirements, presented per compliance theme, are as follows:

Annual financial statements

27. The financial statements submitted for auditing were not fully prepared in all material respects in accordance with the requirements of section 122(1) of the MFMA. Material misstatements of non-current assets, revenue, expenditure and disclosure items identified by the auditors in the submitted financial statement were subsequently corrected, resulting in the financial statements receiving an unqualified audit opinion.

Expenditure management

28. Reasonable steps were not taken to ensure that money owed by the municipality was always paid within 30 days as required by section 65(2)(e) of the MFMA.
29. Reasonable steps were not taken to prevent unauthorised expenditure amounting to R243,30 million, as disclosed in note 53.1 to the annual financial statements, in contravention of section 62(1)(d) of the MFMA. The majority of the unauthorised expenditure was caused by overspending on operational costs and depreciation and amortisation.
30. Reasonable steps were not taken to prevent irregular expenditure amounting to R152,95 million as disclosed in note 53.2 to the annual financial statements, as required by section 62(1)(d) of the MFMA. The majority of the irregular expenditure was caused by non-compliance with supply chain management regulations.
31. Reasonable steps were not taken to prevent fruitless and wasteful expenditure amounting to R52,09 million, as disclosed in note 53.3 to the annual financial

statements, in contravention of section 62(1)(d) of the MFMA. The majority of the disclosed fruitless and wasteful expenditure was caused by fines, penalties and settlements on litigations.

Governance and oversight

32. The audit committee did not submit an audit report on the review of the performance management system to the council, at least twice during a financial year, as required by regulation 14(4)(a)(iii) on Municipal Planning and Performance Management.

Procurement and contract management

33. Some of the contracts were awarded to providers whose tax matters had not been declared by the South African Revenue Service to be in order, in contravention of SCM Regulation 43.
34. The preference point system was not applied to some of the procurement of goods and services as required by section 2(1)(a) of the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act.
35. Some of the construction contracts were awarded to contractors that did not qualify for the contract in accordance with CIDB Regulations 17 and 25(7A). This non-compliance was identified in the procurement processes for the management, operation and maintenance of water and wastewater treatment works and associated bulk infrastructure.
36. The contract performance and monitoring measures were not in place to ensure effective contract management, as required by section 116(2)(c)(ii) of the MFMA.

Other information in the annual report
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37. The accounting officer is responsible for the other information included in the annual report. The other information does not include the financial statements, the auditor's report and the selected key performance area presented in the annual performance report that has been specifically reported on in this auditor's report.
38. My opinion on the financial statements, and my reports on the audit of the annual performance report and compliance with legislation do not cover the other information included in the annual report and I do not express an audit opinion or any form of assurance conclusion on it.
39. My responsibility is to read this other information and, in doing so, consider whether it is materially inconsistent with the financial statements and the selected key performance area presented in the annual performance report or my knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

40. I did not receive the other information prior to the date of this auditor's report. When I do receive and read this information, if I conclude that there is a material misstatement therein, I am required to communicate the matter to those charged with governance and request that the other information be corrected. If the other information is not corrected, I may have to retract this auditor's report and re-issue an amended report as appropriate. However, if it is corrected this will not be necessary.

Internal control deficiencies

41. I considered internal control relevant to my audit of the financial statements, annual performance report and compliance with applicable legislation; however, my objective was not to express any form of assurance on it.

42. The matters reported below are limited to the significant internal control deficiencies that resulted in the material findings on compliance with legislation included in this report.

43. The accounting officer together with senior management did not implement adequate review controls of the annual financial statements, procurement processes and expenditure management to proactively identify and correct errors to prevent non-compliances with legislation and unauthorised, irregular and fruitless and wasteful expenditure.

Auditor-General

Pietermaritzburg

30 November 2025



AUDITOR - GENERAL
SOUTH AFRICA

Auditing to build public confidence

Annexure to the auditor's report

The annexure includes the following:

- The auditor-general's responsibility for the audit
- The selected legislative requirements for compliance testing

Auditor general's responsibility for the audit

Professional judgement and professional scepticism

As part of an audit in accordance with the ISAs, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout my audit of the financial statements and the procedures performed on reported performance information for selected key performance area and on the municipality's compliance with selected requirements in key legislation.

Financial statements

In addition to my responsibility for the audit of the financial statements as described in this auditor's report, I also:

- identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error; design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks; and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations or the override of internal control.
- obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the municipality's internal control.
- evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made.
- conclude on the appropriateness of the use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements. I also conclude, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists relating to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the ability of the municipality to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements about the material uncertainty or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion on the financial statements. My conclusions are based on the information available to me at the

date of this auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the municipality to cease operating as a going concern.

- evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and determine whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.
- plan and perform the group audit to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding the financial information of the entities or business units within the group as a basis for forming an opinion on the consolidated financial statements. I am responsible for the direction, supervision and review of audit work performed for purposes of the group audit. I remain solely responsible for my audit opinion.

Communication with those charged with governance

I communicate with the accounting officer regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

I also provide the accounting officer with a statement that I have complied with relevant ethical requirements regarding independence and communicate with them all relationships and other matters that may reasonably be thought to bear on my independence and, where applicable, actions taken to eliminate threats or safeguards applied.

Compliance with legislation – selected legislative requirements

The selected legislative requirements are as follows:

Legislation	Sections or regulations
Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003	Sections: 1, 11(1), 13(2), 14(1), 14(2)(a), 14(2)(b), 15, 24(2)(c)(iv), 28(1), 29(1), 29(2)(b), 32(2), 32(2)(a), 32(2)(a)(i), 32(2)(a)(ii), 32(2)(b), 32(6)(a), 32(7), 33(1)(c)(ii), 53(1)(c)(ii), 53(1)(c)(iii)(bb), 54(1)(c), 62(1)(d), 63(2)(a), 63(2)(c), 64(2)(b), 64(2)(c), 64(2)(e), 64(2)(f), 64(2)(g), 65(2)(a), 65(2)(b), 65(2)(e), 72(1)(a)(ii), 112(1)(j), 116(2)(b), 116(2)(c)(ii), 117, 122(1), 122(2), 126(1)(a), 126(1)(b), 127(2), 127(5)(a)(i), 127(5)(a)(ii), 129(1), 129(3), 133(1)(a), 133(1)(c)(i), 133(1)(c)(ii), 165(1), 165(2)(a), 165(2)(b)(ii), 165(2)(b)(iv), 165(2)(b)(v), 165(2)(b)(vii), 166(2)(b), 166(2)(a)(iv), 166(5), 170, 171(4)(a), 171(4)(b)
MFMA: Municipal budget and reporting regulations, 2009	Regulations: 71(1)(a), 71(1)(a)(b), 71(2)(a), 71(2)(b), 71(2)(d), 72(a), 72(b), 72(c)
MFMA: Municipal Investment Regulations, 2005	Regulations: 3(1)(a), 3(3), 6, 7, 12(2), 12(3)
MFMA: Municipal Regulations on financial Misconduct Procedures and Criminal Proceedings, 2014	Regulations: 5(4), 6(8)(a), 6(8)(b), 10(1)
MFMA: Municipal Supply Chain Management Regulations, 2017	Regulations: 5, 12(1)(c), 12(3), 13(b), 13(c), 16(a), 17(1)(a), 17(1)(b), 17(1)(c), 19(a), 21(b), 22(1)(b)(i), 22(2), 27(2)(a), 27(2)(e), 28(1)(a)(i), 29(1)(a), 29(1)(b), 29(5)(a)(ii), 29(5)(b)(i), 32, 36(1), 36(1)(a), 38(1)(c), 38(1)(d)(ii), 38(1)(e), 38(1)(g)(i), 38(1)(g)(ii), 38(1)(g)(iii), 43, 44, 46(2)(e), 46(2)(f)
Construction Industry Development Board Act 38 of 2000	Section: 18(1)
Construction Industry Development Board Regulations, 2004	Regulations: 17, 25(7A)
Division of Revenue Act	Sections: 11(6)(b), 12(5), 16(1); 16(3)
Municipal Property Rates Act 6 of 2004	Section: 3(1)
Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000	Sections: 25(1), 26(a), 26(c), 26(h), 26(i), 29(1)(b)(ii), 34(a), 34(b), 38(a), 41(1)(a), 41(1)(b), 41(1)(c)(ii), 42, 43(2), 45(a), 54A(1)(a), 56(1)(a), 57(2)(a), 57(4B), 57(6)(a), 57A, 66(1)(a), 66(1)(b), 67(1)(d), 74(1), 96(b)
MSA: Disciplinary Regulations for Senior Managers, 2011	Regulations: 5(2), 5(3), 5(6), 8(4)

Legislation	Sections or regulations
MSA: Municipal Planning and Performance Management Regulations, 2001	Regulations: 2(1)(e), 2(3)(a), 3(3), 3(4)(b), 7(1), 8, 9(1)(a), 10(a), 12(1), 14(1)(b)(iii), 14(1)(c)(ii), 14(4)(a)(i), 14(4)(a)(iii), 15(1)(a)(i), 15(1)(a)(ii)
MSA: Municipal Performance Regulations for Municipal Managers and Managers Directly Accountable to Municipal Managers, 2006	Regulations: 2(3)(a), 4(4)(b), 8(1), 8(2), 8(3), 26(5), 27(4)(a)(i)
MSA: Regulations on Appointment and Conditions of Employment of Senior Managers, 2014	Regulations: 17(2), 36(1)(a)
MSA: Municipal Staff Regulations	Regulations: 7(1), 19, 31, 35(1)
MSA: Municipal Systems Regulations, 2001	Regulation: 43
Prevention and Combating of Corrupt Activities Act 12 of 2004	Section: 34(1)
Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act 5 of 2000	Sections: 2(1)(a), 2(1)(f)
Preferential Procurement Regulations, 2017	Regulations: 4(1), 4(2), 5(1), 5(3), 5(6), 5(7), 6(1), 6(2), 6(3), 6(6), 6(8), 7(1), 7(2), 7(3), 7(6), 7(8), 8(2), 8(5), 9(1), 10(1), 10(2), 11(1), 11(2)
Preferential Procurement Regulations, 2022	Regulations: 4(1), 4(2), 4(3), 4(4), 5(1), 5(2), 5(3), 5(4)