

Report of the auditor-general to Eastern Cape Provincial Legislature and the council on Blue Crane Route Local Municipality

Report on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion

1. I have audited the financial statements of the Blue Crane Route Local Municipality set out on pages xx to xx, which comprise the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2021, the statement of financial performance, statement of changes in net assets, 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 Blue Crane Route Local Municipality as at 30 June 2021, and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with South African Standards of Generally Recognised Accounting Practice (GRAP) and the requirements of the Municipal Finance Management Act of South Africa, 2003 (Act No. 56 of 2003) (MFMA) and the Division of Revenue Act, 2020 (Act no. 4 of 2020) (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 auditor-general's responsibilities 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 losses

7. As disclosed in note 27 to the financial statements, material electricity losses of R16,4 million (2019/20 R12,6 million) was incurred, which represents 25% (2019/20: 20%) of total electricity purchased.

Debt impairment

8. As disclosed in note 33 to the financial statements, impairment of R25,3 million (2019/20: R23,3 million) was incurred as a result of a write-off of irrecoverable trade debtors.

Restatement of corresponding figures

9. As disclosed in note 45 to the financial statements, the corresponding figures for 30 June 2020 have been restated as a result of errors in the financial statements of the municipality identified at, and for the year ended 30 June 2021.

Material uncertainty relating to going concern

10. I draw attention to note 47 to the financial statements, which indicates the high level of water and electricity losses, debt and credit payment ratio's not in the norm and the potential risk that contingent liabilities as disclosed in this set of financial statements may materialise into actual commitments to pay. As stated in note 47, these events or conditions, along with the other matters as set forth in note 47, indicate that a material uncertainty exists that may cast significant doubt on the municipality's ability to continue as a going concern.

Other matters

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

Unaudited disclosure notes (MFMA125)

12. In terms of section 125(2)(e) of the MFMA, the municipality is required to disclose particulars of non-compliance with the MFMA in the financial statements. This disclosure requirement did not form part of the audit of the financial statements and, accordingly, I do not express an opinion on it.

Unaudited supplementary schedules

13. The supplementary information set out on pages xx to xx does not form part of the financial statements and is presented as additional information. I have not audited these schedules and, accordingly, I do not express an opinion on them.

Responsibilities of the accounting officer for the financial statements

14. The accounting officer is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with the GRAP and the requirements of the MFMA and 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.
15. 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.

Auditor-general's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

16. 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.
17. A further description of my responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is included in the annexure to this auditor's report.

Report on the audit of the annual performance report

Introduction and scope

18. In accordance with the Public Audit Act 25 of 2004 (PAA) and the general notice issued in terms thereof, I have a responsibility to report on the usefulness and reliability of the reported performance information against predetermined objectives for the selected development priority presented in the annual performance report. I performed procedures to identify material findings but not to gather evidence to express assurance.
19. My procedures address the usefulness and reliability of the reported performance information, which must be based on the municipality's approved performance planning documents. I have not evaluated the completeness and appropriateness of the performance indicators included in the planning documents. My procedures do not examine whether the actions taken by the municipality enabled service delivery. My procedures do not extend to any disclosures or assertions relating to the extent of achievements in the current year or planned performance strategies and information in respect of future periods that may be included as part of the reported performance information. Accordingly, my findings do not extend to these matters.
20. I evaluated the usefulness and reliability of the reported performance information in accordance with the criteria developed from the performance management and reporting framework, as defined in the general notice, for the following selected development priority presented in the municipality's annual performance report for the year ended 30 June 2021.

Programmes priority	Pages in the annual performance report
KPA 2 – Service Delivery and Infrastructure Development	x – x

21. I performed procedures to determine whether the reported performance information was properly presented and whether performance was consistent with the approved performance planning documents. I performed further procedures to determine whether the indicators and related targets were measurable and relevant, and assessed the reliability of the reported performance information to determine whether it was valid, accurate and complete.

22. I did not identify any material findings on the usefulness and reliability of the reported performance information for this development priority:

- KPA 2: Service Delivery and Infrastructure Development

Other matters

23. I draw attention to the matters below.

Achievement of planned targets

24. Refer to the annual performance report on page x to x for information on the achievement of planned targets for the year.

Adjustment of material misstatements

25. I identified a material misstatement in the annual performance report submitted for auditing. This material misstatement was on the reported performance information of KPA 2: Service Delivery and Infrastructure Development. As management subsequently corrected the misstatement, I did not raise any material findings on the usefulness and reliability of the reported performance information.

Report on the audit of compliance with legislation

Introduction and scope

26. In accordance with the PAA and the general notice issued in terms thereof, I have a responsibility to report material findings on the municipality's compliance with specific matters in key legislation. I performed procedures to identify findings but not to gather evidence to express assurance.

27. The material findings on compliance with specific matters in key legislation are as follows:

Annual Financial Statement, Annual Performance Report and Annual Report

28. The financial statements submitted for auditing were not prepared in all material respects in accordance with the requirements of section 122(1) of the MFMA. Material misstatements on non-current assets and segment reporting identified by the auditors in the submitted financial statement were subsequently corrected and the supporting records were provided subsequently, resulting in the financial statements receiving an unqualified audit opinion.

Expenditure Management

29. Reasonable steps were not taken to prevent irregular expenditure amounting to R8,2 million as disclosed in note 51 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 regulation 36(1)(a).

Asset management

30. An adequate management and accounting system which accounts for assets was not in place, as required by section 63(2)(a) of the MFMA.
31. An effective system of internal control for assets (including an asset register) was not in place, as required by section 63(2)(c) of the MFMA.

Procurement and Contract Management

32. Some of the goods and services of a transaction value above R200 000 were procured without inviting competitive bids, as required by SCM Regulation 19(a). Deviations were approved by the accounting officer even though it was not impractical to invite competitive bids, in contravention of SCM Regulation 36(1). Similar non-compliance was also reported in the prior year.
33. Sufficient appropriate audit evidence could not be obtained that contracts were extended or modified with the approval of a properly delegated official as required by SCM Regulation 5. Similar limitation was also reported in the prior year. This limitation was identified in the procurement processes for the Pearston Waste Water Treatment Works and Pearston Water Treatment Works.
34. 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. Similar non-compliance was also reported in the prior year.

Other information

35. The accounting officer is responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report. The other information does not include the financial statements, the auditor's report and those selected development priority presented in the annual performance report that have been specifically reported in the auditor's report.
36. My opinion on the financial statements and findings on the reported performance information and compliance with legislation do not cover the other information and I do not express an audit opinion or any form of assurance conclusion on thereon.
37. In connection with our audit, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements and the selected development priority presented in the annual performance report, or our knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.
38. I did not receive 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

39. I considered internal control relevant to my audit of the financial statements, reported performance information and compliance with applicable legislation; however, my objective was not to express any form of assurance on it. The matters reported below are limited to the significant internal control deficiencies that resulted in unqualified with findings opinion, the findings on the statement of the financial position and annual performance report and the findings on compliance with legislation included in this report.
40. Management did not effectively review and monitor compliance with laws and regulation relating to financial reporting, performance management and supply chain processes.

Auditor-General

Auditor-General

East London

30 November 2021



AUDITOR - GENERAL
SOUTH AFRICA

Auditing to build public confidence

Annexure – Auditor-general's responsibility for the audit

1. 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 development priority and on the municipality's compliance with respect to the selected subject matters.

Financial statements

2. 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 by the accounting officer
 - conclude on the appropriateness of the accounting officer's 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 Blue Crane Route Local 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 a 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

Communication with those charged with governance

3. 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.
4. I also provide the accounting officer with a statement that I have complied with relevant ethical requirements regarding independence, and to 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.