

Report of the auditor-general to the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Legislature and the council on the Richmond Municipality

Report on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion

1. I have audited the financial statements of the Richmond Municipality set out on pages ... to ..., 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 the 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 Richmond Municipality as at 30 June 2021 and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the South African Standards of Generally Recognised Accounting Practice (SA Standard of 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 of South Africa, 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 auditor's 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 matter

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

Material impairments – receivables from exchange and non-exchange transactions

7. As disclosed in notes 4 and 5 to the financial statements, receivables from exchange and non-exchange transactions for assessment rates was impaired by a total of R2,80 million (2019-20: R2,25 million) and R18,84 million (2019-20: R16,21 million) respectively, as a result of the annual review of the recoverability of the debt.

Other matter

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

Unaudited disclosure notes

9. 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.

Responsibilities of the accounting officer for the financial statements

10. 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 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.
11. 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

12. 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.
13. 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

14. In accordance with the Public Audit Act, 2004(Act No. 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 key

performance area presented in the annual performance report. I performed procedures to identify material findings but not to gather evidence to express assurance.

15. 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 also do not extend to any disclosures or assertions relating to 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.
16. 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 key performance area – basic service delivery and infrastructure development presented on pages xx - xx of the municipality's annual performance report for the year ended 30 June 2021.
17. 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.
18. The material finding on the usefulness and reliability of the performance information of the selected key performance area is as follows:

Key performance area – basic service delivery and infrastructure delivery development

Various indicators

19. I was unable to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence for the achievements below that were reported in the annual performance report for the listed indicators. This was due to the lack of accurate and complete records. I was unable to confirm the reported achievements by alternative means. Consequently, I was unable to determine whether any further adjustments were required to these reported achievements.

Indicator	Reported Achievement
Collection of planned refuse removal	48 Weekly Schedules
Collection of refuse removal using Skippers	48 Weekly Schedules

Other matters

20. I draw attention to the matters below.

Achievement of planned targets

21. Refer to the annual performance report on pages x to x for information on the achievement of planned targets for the year. This information should be considered in the context of the material finding on the usefulness and reliability of the reported performance information in paragraph 19 of this report.

Adjustment of material misstatements

22. I identified material misstatements in the annual performance report submitted for auditing. These material misstatements were in the reported performance information of the basic service delivery and infrastructure development key performance area. As management subsequently corrected only some of the misstatements, I raised a material finding on the usefulness and reliability of the reported performance information. Those that were not corrected are reported above.

Report on the audit of compliance with legislation

Introduction and scope

23. 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.
24. The material findings on compliance with specific matters in key legislation are as follows:

Annual financial statements

25. 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 of expenditure and disclosure items identified by the auditors in the submitted financial statements were subsequently corrected, resulting in the financial statements receiving an unqualified audit opinion.

Procurement and contract management

26. Some of the bid documentation for procurement of commodities designated for local content and production, did not stipulate the minimum threshold for local production and content as required by the 2017 preferential procurement regulation 8(2).
27. 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).
28. 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. Similar non-compliance was also reported in the prior year.

Expenditure management

29. Reasonable steps were not taken to prevent unauthorised expenditure amounting to R6,73 million, as disclosed in note 42 to the annual financial statements, in contravention of section 62(1)(d) of the MFMA.
30. Reasonable steps were not taken to prevent fruitless and wasteful expenditure amounting to R0,46 million, as disclosed in note 43 to the annual financial statements, in contravention of section 62(1)(d) of the MFMA.
31. Reasonable steps were not taken to prevent irregular expenditure amounting to R22,58 million as disclosed in note 44 to the annual financial statements, as required by section 62(1)(d) of the MFMA.

Other information

32. 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 the selected key performance area presented in the annual performance report that have been specifically reported in this auditor's report.
33. 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 it.
34. In connection with my audit, my 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 key performance area presented in the annual performance report, or my knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.
35. 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

36. 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 the findings on the annual performance report and the findings on compliance with legislation included in this report
37. Senior management did not implement adequate controls to ensure credible and reliable performance reporting as well as compliance with applicable laws and regulations relating to

the annual financial statements, procurement and contract management and expenditure management.

Other reports

38. I draw attention to the following engagements conducted that have, or could have, an impact on the matters reported in the municipality's financial statements, reported performance information, compliance with applicable legislation and other related matters. These reports did not form part of my opinion on the financial statements or my findings on the reported performance information or compliance with legislation.

39. The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs conducted an investigation on the INEP grant spending for the 2017-18 financial period on behalf of the municipality. The investigation was completed after year-end. At the date of this report, the municipality was still in the process of implementing the recommendations of the report.

Auditor-General

Pietermaritzburg

1 December 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 the selected key performance area 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 Richmond 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 office 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 have a bearing on my independence and, where applicable, actions taken to eliminate threats or safeguards applied.