

Saaa

Smaller Authorities'
Audit Appointments

SAAA
Annual Report
2023/2024

Issued 12 August 2024

Update from the Chair

Since my appointment as Chair in April 2023, I have been focusing on strengthening the capacity of SAAA, improving its governance and building relationships with external stakeholders. One aspect of improving governance is



transparency, and along with major enhancements to the information on our website about us, our work, and our policies, we have provided significant financial and other information in this, our first full annual report.

The new Board has refined the role of SAAA for the next few years and agreed that we need to be more proactive. That is reflected in our forward plan, which it set out below in this report. You will see our focus is on three key areas: developing the market, supporting practitioners, and improving the Limited Assurance regime.

I am delighted to be leading SAAA and encourage you to get in touch if you have any questions or comments.

David Bowles

Chair SAAA

August 2024

SAAA's Strategic Plan 2024-2027

Mission

To provide an effective and sustainable audit regime covering all opted-in Smaller Authorities.

Vision

- Correct completion and publication of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return enables communities to hold their local councils and other local bodies to account.
- Every Smaller Authority has access to a competent external auditor, and to the information and support they need to meet audit requirements.
 - SAAA is a well-run and effective organisation.

Key Themes and Tasks

Market Development	Supporting Practitioners	Improving Limited Assurance Review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the efficiency and value to audit firms of Limited Assurance Review • Broaden the audit firms base for the next procurement. • Create a robust process for contract design and procurement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for practitioners and suppliers to improve the quality and efficiency of Limited Assurance Review. • Review the application of technology to all parts of the Limited Assurance Review process – digitalisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Propose changes to regulations and legislation, making a case for change, working with government and other partners. • Working with JPAG, improve the Practitioners Guide and AGAR forms. • Support improvements to internal audit for Smaller Authorities.
Organisational Development		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve our organisational structure and resilience. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for the Board's future recruitment and develop their skills. • Strengthen our corporate governance and agree a suite of governance policies. 		

An Overview of SAAA's Finances

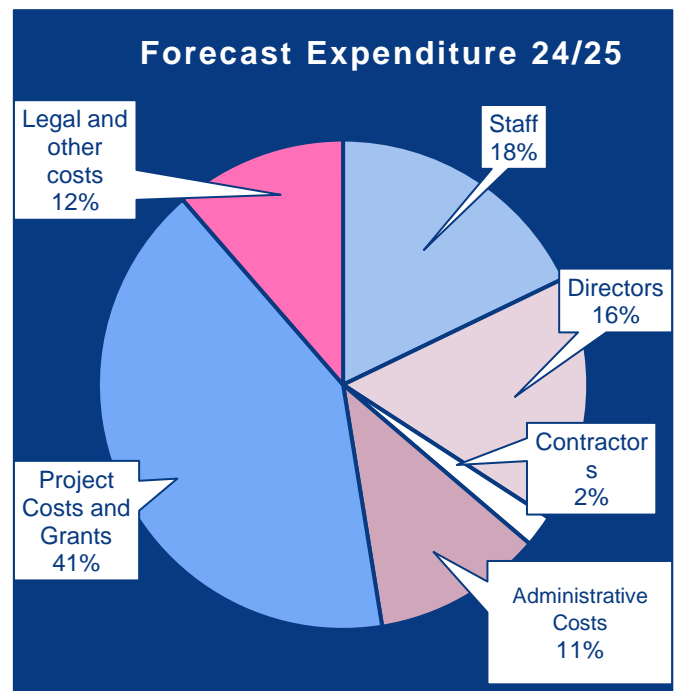
Summary of Income and Expenditure for 2023/2024

Income	
	(£)
Gross Income from fees	2,764,907
Net Income from fees	1,081,234
Interest and Dividends	209,980
Total Income	1,291,214
Expenditure	
	(£)
Staff	69,453
Directors	103,201
Contractors	87,091
Administrative Costs	54,958
Project Costs and grants	57,670
Legal and other costs	56,282
Total Expenditure	428,655
Surplus transferred to reserves	£862,559

SAAA's
Annual Accounts 2023/2024
are shown at
the end of this report.

Our budget for 24/25

Forecast Income	
	(£)
Gross Income from fees	2,643,773
Net Income from fees	1,037,078
Interest and Dividends	232,000
Total Income	1,269,078
Forecast Expenditure	
	(£)
Staff Costs	137,000
Directors	125,000
Contractors	16,000
Administrative Costs	86,000
Project Costs and Grants	316,000
Legal and other costs	87,200
Total Expenditure	767,200
Forecast surplus to transfer to reserves	£501,878



SAAA Reserves

We are a not-for-profit sector-led body. Our founding bodies are the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), the Association of Drainage Authorities (ADA) and the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC). Any surplus funds we produce must go back into supporting the sector represented by these bodies.

The joint procurement for external audit services for up to 10,000 Smaller Authorities has been successful in keeping audit fees down and achieving economies of scale so our reserves have grown. Over what will be a 10-year period there has only been a scale fee increase of 5%. The annual turnover of the sector is around £1bn and so reserves are modest in that context.

We have consulted with the sector bodies about redistribution of part of our reserves, having looked at the way in which Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) has redistributed its surpluses. The view from the sector was that for most Smaller Authorities the sum redistributed would be modest and they would rather support:

- investing in projects to streamline the audit process and support good governance
- considering using the reserves, when the next contract is let, to smooth out any potential large increase in fees (in some parts of the public sector audit fees have gone up by almost 100% in recent years). We expect that by that time the results of the 'reform' stage of the government's review of local audit will be known

We will continue to support the sector and, when the current turmoil in the audit market has ended and its impact can be assessed, will consult with them further on the effective use of SAAA's reserves, including redistribution.

At the end of 2023/2024, we expect our total reserves to be approximately £6.6m; this year's surplus is approximately £860k. This is a significant decrease on the surplus in the previous year (£1.25m) as during the second contract period the percentage of fees retained by audit firms has increased while SAAA's expenditure has also increased.

Smaller Authorities and the Limited Assurance Regime



In 2022/2023 there were **9,817** Smaller Authorities, comprising **8,406** local councils (including town, parish, community, and neighbourhood councils), **1,266** parish meetings in parishes where there is no parish council, **112** internal drainage boards and **33** other local government bodies, such as Charter Trustees, Port Authorities and Conservators that are not classified as local councils.

All Smaller Authorities have opted into SAAA's national scheme for the appointment of their external auditors. By 31 March 2024 98% of all Smaller Authorities had completed and submitted their Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR). However, this means that 196 Smaller Authorities did not submit an AGAR and as a result may have received a Public Interest Report. Details are shown on our [website](#).

Almost one in three Smaller Authorities will have received a qualified opinion certificate from their external auditor. This means that the auditor found matters within the AGAR and supporting papers that did not meet the requirements.

SAAA is working with the audit firms to understand the reasons for qualified opinions and will work with other sector bodies (NALC, ADA and SLCC) to ensure that sufficient information and training is available to address deficiencies where they are noted.

Further details of the results of auditors' work at Smaller Authorities are shown in the reports published on SAAA's website. [Annual Reports | Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments \(saaa.co.uk\)](#)

What is a Smaller Authority?

A Smaller Authority is, in summary, an authority who income or expenditure does not exceed £6.5M. This includes most parish & town councils, plus internal drainage boards and other bodies, for instance Charter Trustees.

The Auditors

In 2022 SAAA appointed four audit firms to conduct the Limited Assurance Reviews for the years 2022/2023 to 2026/2027. They are BDO, Forvis Mazars, Moore and PKF Littlejohn.

PKF Littlejohn conducts the Limited Assurance reviews for all Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities that are not parish councils or parish meetings. Otherwise, auditors are appointed on a county basis. The counties are grouped into 16 Lots and the allocation of Lots to audit firms is shown below.

Further details are available on our website.

No. of Lots			
PKF	BDO	Mazars	Moore
11	2	2	2

Activity in 2023/2024

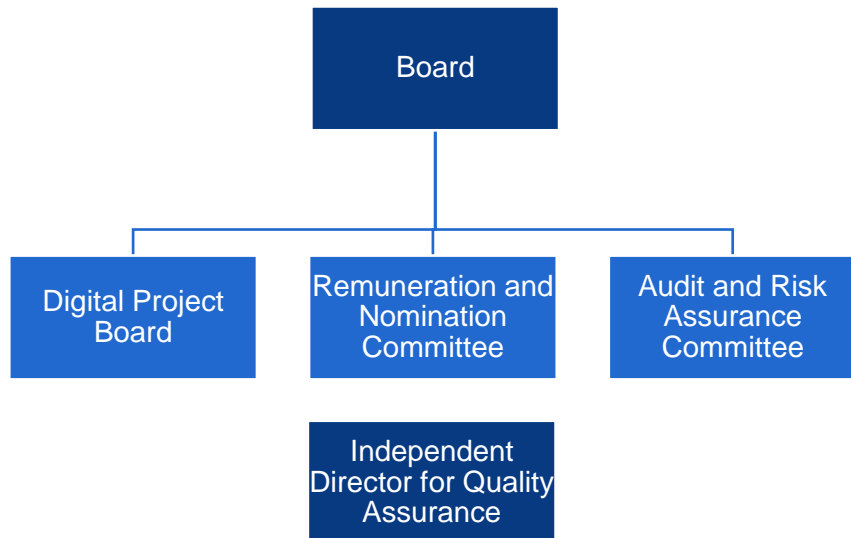
Governance

In April 2023 five new members joined the Board of SAAA and a new Chair was elected. This refreshed Board has set out its commitment to being more transparent in its operation and is looking forward to making SAAA a stronger player in the local audit market. SAAA is fortunate to have a range of experienced and skilled directors who join SAAA from a variety of backgrounds.

To shape the future work of SAAA, the Board held two strategic workshops and induction sessions in 2023/2024. These sessions have produced SAAA's first published Strategic Plan which is shown within this report and sets the direction of travel for the coming years.

In Sep 2023, Annie Child was appointed as SAAA's first Chief Executive. The Board noted their thanks and appreciation to Howard Midworth who had served since 2016 as SAAA's General Manager, setting a solid foundation. Annie joined SAAA having spent nearly 20 years in local government including five years as the Clerk to Salisbury City Council, a large town council. SAAA also appointed a Corporate Services Manager, Joanne MacCallum, to assist the Chief Executive to manage the financial and administrative affairs of SAAA and this has strengthened SAAA's ability to support both Smaller Authorities and their auditors.

During late 2023 and early 2024, SAAA has conducted an informal review of its governance arrangements, adopted a suite of governance documents, and published these on its website. The Board has also established an Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and a Remuneration and Nomination Committee to better manage its activity.



SAAA responds to DLUHC and NAO consultation to address the Local Audit Backlog in England



In February 2024 the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (now renamed the Ministry of Housing, Local Government and Communities) and NAO launched consultations on proposals to tackle the audit opinion backlog for Category 1 authorities (broadly, those with income or expenditure over £6.5m).

SAAA responded to both consultations and our responses can be seen [here](#) on our website. The key areas of concern are the impact of the £6.5m threshold on larger Smaller Authorities and of the lower £25,000 threshold on exempt Smaller Authorities. SAAA thinks that there should be a review of both financial thresholds.

SAAA is also developing in consultation and discussion with its stakeholders a series of proposals for changes to the Limited Assurance regime to ensure the regime remains relevant and appropriate. SAAA wishes to ensure that it promotes and supports the continued development of a sustainable and effective audit regime for Smaller Authorities.

Digital Project

SAAA wants to transform the way Smaller Authorities and their external auditors interact by providing a secure online portal for the submission of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) and supporting evidence – *Making AGAR Digital*.



We were delighted to receive over 150 responses to our consultation conducted in autumn 2023 on the digitalisation of the AGAR process.

Overall, the ambition to use technology to make the submission of the AGAR form easier was supported, but respondents rightly pointed out that the introduction of this would need careful consideration and implementation.

We are continuing to work on this project with the aim of making the AGAR submission process work better for both our audit firms and the Clerks, Responsible Financial Officers (RFOs) and other officers of Smaller Authorities.

JPAG and The Practitioners' Guide 2024

SAAA is pleased to support the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) in its yearly review of the Practitioners' Guide. This key document sets out the proper practices against which Smaller Authorities' governance and financial management is assessed.

SAAA has partly funded a new role, which will be managed by NALC, to oversee and administer the yearly review and production of the Practitioners' Guide and to review the Terms of Reference for JPAG. We believe that a purposeful and effective JPAG will benefit all practitioners and a refreshed Practitioners' Guide will be welcomed by the sector.



Quality Assurance

The Board is pleased with the current performance of all its suppliers, BDO, Forvis Mazar, Moore and PKF Littlejohn, noting that this year's quality assurance review has given all firms High or Medium quality ratings. SAAA plans to publish further details of this quality assurance reporting next year.



In the first half of 2024 the Chair, accompanied by the Chief Executive and Board Members, visited the four audit firms. These face-to-face meetings across the country were valuable to the Board, enabling SAAA to hear first-hand the challenges and rewards this type of work can provide.




About SAAA

SAAA was established in 2017 as the sector-led 'not for profit' company to assist smaller authorities to procure and appoint external auditors. It was formed by the national sector membership organisations: the National Association of Local Councils, the Society of Local Council Clerks, and the Association of Drainage Authorities.









How SAAA is funded?

Smaller authorities pay an audit fee, at a level set by SAAA every five years, to their external audit firm. These fees are passed to SAAA after deduction of the costs incurred by the audit firm. SAAA is a not-for-profit company so any surplus of income over expenditure cannot be distributed and must be used for the benefit of Smaller Authorities.

Contact Us

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	SAAA Ltd 77 Mansell Street London E1 8AN
	0204 583 3912

The Board

	<p>David Bowles <i>Independent Director</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair • Digitalisation Project Board 		<p>Andrew Davies <i>Independent Director</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit and Risk Assurance Committee • Independent Director for Quality Assurance
	<p>Martin McNeill <i>Independent Director</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit and Risk Assurance Committee 		<p>Christopher Pope <i>Independent Director</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Board
	<p>Liz Sandwith <i>Independent Director</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit and Risk Assurance Committee 		<p>Peter Bateson <i>Member Director Representing ADA</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remuneration and Nomination Committee
	<p>Michael King <i>Member Director Representing SLCC</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remuneration and Nomination Committee • Digitalisation Project Board 		<p>Charlotte Eisenhart <i>Member Director Representing NALC</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remuneration and Nomination Committee

SAAA Staff Team

<p>Annie Child Chief Executive</p>	<p>Joanne MacCallum Corporate Support Manager</p>
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SAAA Annual Accounts 2023/2024 are shown below

**Registered number:
09915776**

SMALLER AUTHORITIES AUDIT APPOINTMENTS LTD

DIRECTORS' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

SMALLER AUTHORITIES AUDIT APPOINTMENTS LTD

COMPANY INFORMATION

Directors	Peter Bateson David Bowles Andrew Davies Jonathan Owen (resigned 17 April 2024) Michael King Martin McNeill Christopher Pope Elizabeth Sandwith
Registered number	09915776
Registered office	77 Mansell Street England E1 8AN

CONTENTS

	Page
Directors' Report	1 - 2
Independent Auditors' Report	3 - 7
Statement of Income and Retained Earnings	8
Balance Sheet	9 - 10
Statement of Changes in Equity	11
Notes to the Financial Statements	12 - 17
The following pages do not form part of the statutory financial statements:	
Detailed Income and Expenditure Account and Summaries	18 - 21

SMALLER AUTHORITIES AUDIT APPOINTMENTS LTD

DIRECTORS' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

The directors present their report and the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Directors' responsibilities statement

The directors are responsible for preparing the Directors' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the directors have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland'. Under company law the directors must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Company and of the profit or loss of the Company for that period.

In preparing these financial statements, the directors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies for the Company's financial statements and then apply them consistently;
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Company will continue in business.

The directors are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the Company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Directors

The directors who served during the year were:

Peter Bateson
David Bowles
Andrew Davies
Jonathan Owen (resigned 17 April 2024)
Michael King
Martin McNeill
Christopher Pope
Elizabeth Sandwith

Disclosure of information to auditors

Each of the persons who are directors at the time when this Directors' Report is approved has confirmed that:

- so far as the director is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the Company's auditors are unaware, and
- the director has taken all the steps that ought to have been taken as a director in order to be aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Company's auditors are aware of that information.

**DIRECTORS' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

Auditors

The auditors, Milton Avis LLP, will be proposed for reappointment in accordance with section 485 of the Companies Act 2006.

Small companies note

In preparing this report, the directors have taken advantage of the small companies exemptions provided by section 415A of the Companies Act 2006.

This report was approved by the board and signed on its behalf.

.....
David Bowles
Director

Date:

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF SMALLER AUTHORITIES AUDIT APPOINTMENTS LTD

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments Ltd (the 'Company') for the year ended 31 March 2024, which comprise the Statement of Income and Retained Earnings, the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Changes in Equity and the related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the Company's affairs as at 31 March 2024 and of its surplus for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the Company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the United Kingdom, including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. 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

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

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 Company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the directors with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF SMALLER AUTHORITIES AUDIT APPOINTMENTS LTD (CONTINUED)

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report other than the financial statements and our Auditors' Report thereon. The directors are responsible for the other information contained within the Annual Report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read 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.

Opinion on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

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

- the information given in the Directors' Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Directors' Report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the Company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Directors' Report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of directors' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- the directors were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies regime and take advantage of the small companies' exemptions in preparing the Directors' Report and from the requirement to prepare a Strategic Report.

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF SMALLER AUTHORITIES AUDIT APPOINTMENTS LTD (CONTINUED)

Responsibilities of directors

As explained more fully in the Directors' Responsibilities Statement set out on page 1, the directors are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the directors determine 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 directors are responsible for assessing the Company'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 the directors either intend to liquidate the Company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF SMALLER AUTHORITIES AUDIT APPOINTMENTS LTD (CONTINUED)

Auditors' 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 Auditors' 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 economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

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. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

We gained an understanding of the legal and regulatory framework applicable to the Company and industry in which the company operates, and considered the risk of acts by the Company which were contrary to applicable laws and regulations, including fraud. These included but were not limited to compliance with Companies Act 2006, and FRS 102.

We considered compliance with this framework and performed audit procedures on these areas as considered necessary. Our procedures involved enquiries with management, review of the reporting to the directors with respect to compliance with laws and regulation, review of board meeting minutes and review of legal correspondence.

We focused on laws and regulations that could give rise to a material misstatement in the Company financial statements. Our tests included but were not limited to:

- . agreement of the financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation;
- . enquiries of management;
- . testing of journal postings made during the year to identify the potential management override of controls;
- . review of minutes of board meetings throughout the period; and
- . Obtaining an understanding of the control environment in monitoring compliance with laws and regulations.

Our audit procedures were designed to respond to risks of material misstatement in the financial statements, recognising that the risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error, as fraud may involve deliberate concealment by, for example forgery, misrepresentations or through collusion. There are inherent limitations in the audit procedures performed and the further removed non compliance with laws and regulations is from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, the less likely we are to become aware of it.

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

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the Company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an Auditors' Report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Company and the Company's members, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

SMALLER AUTHORITIES AUDIT APPOINTMENTS LTD

**INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF SMALLER AUTHORITIES AUDIT
APPOINTMENTS LTD (CONTINUED)**

Stephen Sampson (Senior Statutory Auditor)

for and on behalf of
Milton Avis LLP

Chartered Accountant

120 Baker Street
London
W1U 6TU
Date:

SMALLER AUTHORITIES AUDIT APPOINTMENTS LTD

STATEMENT OF INCOME AND RETAINED EARNINGS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

			<i>As restated</i>
	Note	2024	2023
		£	£
Turnover	4	2,974,887	2,441,612
Cost of sales		(1,683,673)	(831,225)
Gross Income		1,291,214	1,610,387
Administrative expenses		(428,655)	(354,999)
Operating Income		862,559	1,255,388
Surplus after tax		862,559	1,255,388
Retained earnings at the beginning of the year		879,631	1,369,243
Surplus for the year		862,559	1,255,388
Transfers out of accumulated fund		(860,000)	(1,745,000)
Retained earnings at the end of the year		882,190	879,631

The notes on pages 12 to 17 form part of these financial statements.

SMALLER AUTHORITIES AUDIT APPOINTMENTS LTD
REGISTERED NUMBER: 09915776

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 MARCH 2024

			2024	<i>As restated</i>
Note			£	2023
				£
Fixed assets				
Tangible assets	6		1,895	-
			<u>1,895</u>	<u>-</u>
Current assets				
Debtors: amounts falling due within one year	7	108,762	222,887	
Cash at bank and in hand	8	6,582,007	5,701,051	
		<u>6,690,769</u>	<u>5,923,938</u>	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	9	(60,474)	(154,307)	
Net current assets			<u>6,630,295</u>	5,769,631
Total assets less current liabilities			<u>6,632,190</u>	<u>5,769,631</u>
Net assets			<u><u>6,632,190</u></u>	<u><u>5,769,631</u></u>

BALANCE SHEET (CONTINUED)
AS AT 31 MARCH 2024

		2024	<i>As restated</i>
Note		£	2023
			£
Capital and reserves			
Market Development	10	1,430,000	<i>1,000,000</i>
Procurement Reserve	10	200,000	<i>200,000</i>
General Reserve	10	450,000	<i>450,000</i>
Redistribution Reserve	10	2,920,000	<i>2,490,000</i>
Discontinuance Reserve	10	250,000	<i>250,000</i>
Indemnity Fund	10	250,000	<i>250,000</i>
Projects Reserve	10	250,000	<i>250,000</i>
Accumulated Fund	10	882,190	<i>879,631</i>
		<u>6,632,190</u>	<i><u>5,769,631</u></i>

The Company's financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the board and were signed on its behalf on

David Bowles
 Director

The notes on pages 12 to 17 form part of these financial statements.

SMALLER AUTHORITIES AUDIT APPOINTMENTS LTD

**STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

	Market Development Reserves	Procurement Reserves	General Reserve	Redistribution Reserves	Discontinuance Fund	Indemnity Fund	Projects Reserves	Accumulated Fund	Total equity
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
At 1 April 2022		100,000	1,345,000	-	1,200,000	500,000	-	1,369,243	4,514,243
Comprehensive income for the year									
Surplus for the year					-	-	-	1,255,388	1,255,388
Transfers	1,000,000	100,000	(895,000)	2,490,000	(950,000)	(250,000)	250,000	(1,745,000)	-
At 1 April 2023	<u>1,000,000</u>	<u>200,000</u>	<u>450,000</u>	<u>2,490,000</u>	<u>250,000</u>	<u>250,000</u>	<u>250,000</u>	<u>879,631</u>	<u>5,769,631</u>
Comprehensive income for the year									
Surplus for the year								862,559	862,559
Transfers	430,000			430,000				(860,000)	
At 31 March 2024	<u>1,430,000</u>	<u>200,000</u>	<u>450,000</u>	<u>2,920,000</u>	<u>250,000</u>	<u>250,000</u>	<u>250,000</u>	<u>882,190</u>	<u>6,632,190</u>

The notes on pages 12 to 17 form part of these financial statements.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

1. General information

Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Limited is a private company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and Wales with a registered office of 77 Mansell Street, London, E1 8AN.

2. Accounting policies

2.1 Basis of preparation of financial statements

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention unless otherwise specified within these accounting policies and in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard 102, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland and the Companies Act 2006.

The preparation of financial statements in compliance with FRS 102 requires the use of certain critical accounting estimates. It also requires management to exercise judgment in applying the Company's accounting policies (see note 3).

The following principal accounting policies have been applied:

2.2 Revenue recognition

The Company sets the scale fees in respect of the audit of Local Councils. For administrative purposes, it requires Audit firms to invoice the opted-in bodies on its behalf and to act as its collecting agents in respect of those fees. The Company in turn invoices those Audit firms at the scale fee adjusted for its remuneration.

The accounting policy has been changed in order to reflect real and contractual arrangements between the Company and its suppliers of those services, resulting in a restatement of the prior year comparatives.

2.3 Pensions

Defined contribution pension plan

The Company operates a defined contribution plan for its employees. A defined contribution plan is a pension plan under which the Company pays fixed contributions into a separate entity. Once the contributions have been paid the Company has no further payment obligations.

The contributions are recognised as an expense in profit or loss when they fall due. Amounts not paid are shown in accruals as a liability in the Balance Sheet. The assets of the plan are held separately from the Company in independently administered funds.

2.4 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets under the cost model are stated at historical cost less accumulated depreciation and any accumulated impairment losses. Historical cost includes expenditure that is directly attributable to bringing the asset to the location and condition necessary for it to be capable of operating in the manner intended by management.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

2. Accounting policies (continued)

2.4 Tangible fixed assets (continued)

Depreciation is charged so as to allocate the cost of assets less their residual value over their estimated useful lives, using the straight-line method.

Depreciation is provided on the following basis:

Plant and machinery	- 3-year useful life
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The assets' residual values, useful lives and depreciation methods are reviewed, and adjusted prospectively if appropriate, or if there is an indication of a significant change since the last reporting date.

Gains and losses on disposals are determined by comparing the proceeds with the carrying amount and are recognised in profit or loss.

2.5 Debtors

Short-term debtors are measured at transaction price, less any impairment. Loans receivable are measured initially at fair value, net of transaction costs, and are measured subsequently at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less any impairment.

2.6 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash is represented by cash in hand and deposits with financial institutions repayable without penalty on notice of not more than 24 hours. Cash equivalents are highly liquid investments that mature in no more than three months from the date of acquisition and that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash with insignificant risk of change in value.

2.7 Creditors

Short-term creditors are measured at the transaction price. Other financial liabilities, including bank loans, are measured initially at fair value, net of transaction costs, and are measured subsequently at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

3. Judgments in applying accounting policies and key sources of estimation uncertainty

In application of the Company's accounting policies management are required to make judgments, estimations and assumptions about carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources.

The estimation and underlying assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. These assumptions are reviewed on a ongoing basis.

SMALLER AUTHORITIES AUDIT APPOINTMENTS LTD

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

4. Turnover

Analysis of turnover by country of destination:

	2024	<i>As restated</i> 2023
	£	£
United Kingdom	2,974,887	2,441,612
	<u>2,974,887</u>	<u>2,441,612</u>

All turnover arose within the United Kingdom.

5. Employees

The average monthly number of employees, including the directors, during the year was as follows:

	2024	2023
	No.	No.
Employees	<u>7</u>	<u>5</u>

6. Tangible fixed assets

	Plant and machinery £
Cost or valuation	
Additions	2,843
At 31 March 2024	<u>2,843</u>
Depreciation	
Charge for the year on owned assets	948
At 31 March 2024	<u>948</u>
Net book value	
At 31 March 2024	<u><u>1,895</u></u>

SMALLER AUTHORITIES AUDIT APPOINTMENTS LTD

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

7. Debtors

	<i>As restated</i>	
	2024	2023
	£	£
Trade debtors	106,820	221,577
Prepayments and accrued income	1,942	1,310
	<u>108,762</u>	<u>222,887</u>

8. Cash and cash equivalents

	<i>As restated</i>	
	2024	2023
	£	£
Cash at bank and in hand	6,582,007	5,701,051
	<u>6,582,007</u>	<u>5,701,051</u>

9. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	<i>As restated</i>	
	2024	2023
	£	£
Other taxation and social security	53,724	135,368
Accruals and deferred income	6,750	18,939
	<u>60,474</u>	<u>154,307</u>

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

10. Reserves

Indemnity Reserve

The original Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) required the Company to establish and maintain an 'Indemnity Fund' to cover any costs related to auditors' work that may not be recoverable from authorities, especially where an auditor has taken legal action, and to indemnify audit firms for legal costs relating to any judicial review.

Reserve is consistent with the original government requirements

General Reserve

The General Reserve has no specific purpose and is held to ensure funds are available for contingencies and provide financial strength to the balance sheet. The recommended guideline is between 3 and 12 months of net revenue expenditure.

Redistribution Reserve

The joint procurement, along with 100% participation of Smaller Authorities and low inflation has left the company in a strong position. The company has conducted consultation with representatives of Smaller Authorities on how this may be shared and redistributed to smaller authorities as part of the benefits of procurement at scale. The sector bodies support investing in projects which will streamline the audit process and support good governance. The bodies also support considering the use of reserves when the next contract is let to smooth out any potentially large increases in fees. Furthermore at this time, the results of the governments 'reform' stage of the review of local audit will be known and any impact on Smaller Authorities better understood. SAAA will continue to support the sector and will consult with them further on the effective use of SAAA's reserves, including this redistribution reserve.

Market Development Reserve

Given the current problems in the principal authority market and impact of higher than anticipated inflation in recent years, there could be capacity issues which may require changes to be made to contracting and pricing arrangements. The initial reserve established in 2022/2023 has been increased this year in order to accommodate any such changes.

Projects Reserve

Large strategic project costs are likely in future years such as the potential ongoing AGAR digitisation project, which could incur high costs if full digitisation is thought to be a desirable development, and other projects may require the appointment of project managers or IT specialists for a fixed term.

Procurement Reserve

This reflects the anticipated costs involved in undertaking the next 5 yearly audit contracts procurement due in 2026, which is likely to require structure with added complexity.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Reserves (cont.)

Discontinuance Reserve

In the event of winding up, dissolution or any significant amendment to the articles of association, the Company as a non-for-profit company is committed to distribute any surpluses and reserves to a party or parties nominated by the Secretary of State, potentially the opted-in smaller authorities.

This reserve was established to estimate the costs that might be incurred if the Company was to be discontinued; for instance, if the Redmond Review or similar authorities should all be administered by the same organisation.

11. Prior year adjustment

The Directors have reviewed the historic accounting policy for recognising revenue and have now changed it to more accurately reflect the contractual relationship between itself and its customers. The effect of the change in the accounting policy is to restate the revenue and gross income. Previously, these figures were disclosed in note 2 to the accounts and have no effect on the retained earnings for the year.

SMALLER AUTHORITIES AUDIT APPOINTMENTS LTD

DETAILED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

	Note	2024 £	2023 £
Turnover		2,974,887	2,441,612
Cost Of Sales		(1,683,673)	(831,225)
Gross Income		<u>1,291,214</u>	<u>1,610,387</u>
Less: overheads			
Administration expenses		(428,655)	(354,999)
Operating Income		<u>862,559</u>	<u>1,255,388</u>
Surplus for the year		<u>862,559</u>	<u>1,255,388</u>

SMALLER AUTHORITIES AUDIT APPOINTMENTS LTD

SCHEDULE TO THE DETAILED ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

	<i>As restated</i>	
	2024	2023
	£	£
Turnover		
Sales	2,764,907	2,388,738
Other income	209,980	52,874
	<u>2,974,887</u>	<u>2,441,612</u>

	<i>As restated</i>	
	2024	2023
	£	£
Cost of sales		
Audit costs	1,683,673	831,225
	<u>1,683,673</u>	<u>831,225</u>

	2024	2023
	£	£
Administration expenses		
Current Staff		
Staff salaries	63,537	-
Staff national insurance	4,118	-
Staff pension costs - defined contribution schemes	500	-
Staff training	549	-
Staff Travel	749	-
Directors		
Directors fees	78,235	94,943
Directors national insurance	16,987	-
Board fees	1,648	43,147
Board development	6,331	-
Contractors		
Subcontractor costs	87,091	136,610
Administrative Costs		
Rent - operating leases	18,177	13,374
Computer costs	7,551	6,739
QRP Program	14,673	-
Website management	4,126	-
Subscriptions	2,161	-
HR costs	6,197	-
Postage	4	-
Depreciation - plant and machinery	948	-
Telephone and fax	1,121	-

SAAA Annual Report 2023/2024

Project costs and grants

JPAG and AGAR	10,000	-
Payment to SLCC	-	50,000
Grant expenses	8,000	-
Project digitalisation	39,670	-

Legal and other costs

Legal and professional	39,878	107
Auditors' remuneration	1,499	6,607
Accountancy fees	8,405	-
Debtor management	2,446	-
Bank charges	163	76
Insurances	3,891	3,396
Total Expenditure	<u>428,655</u>	<u>354,999</u>