
Audit Opinion for the Annual Performance Report 2017-18

This document sets out the wording of the audit opinion that we expect all auditors to provide on the Annual Performance report of water companies for 2017-18.

We have reviewed the wording of the audit opinion for 2017-18 to take into account ICAEW Technical Release '[TECH 02/16AAF Reporting to regulators on regulatory accounts](#)' and the move from ISAs (UK and Ireland) to ISAs (UK) and in particular the content of International Standard on Auditing (UK) 800 (Revised) Special Considerations—Audits of Financial Statements Prepared in Accordance with Special Purpose Frameworks issued in October 2016. We also engaged with representatives from all the relevant audit firms and have taken account of their comments.

Under the Company Monitoring Framework companies' boards are accountable for the quality and transparency of the information they provide on their performance. They need to adopt a proportionate and transparent approach to the data assurance they carry out to allow customers and stakeholders to have trust and confidence in the information they publish.

The audit opinion provided on the Annual Performance Report is only part of a companies' overall approach to assurance. Further work performed by auditors may involve lowering the materiality threshold of the audit in certain areas or undertaking agreed upon procedures over particular tables. **As a minimum the audit opinion should cover the pro forma tables in section one and section two of the annual performance report** and should be consistent with this required wording where appropriate.

The opinion wording contains several sets of square brackets to allow for companies to extend the coverage of the audit report and also to allow flexibility in the naming and structure of other documents (e.g. accounting methodology statements or other documents that detail how costs are allocated as required under RAG 3.10, appendix 2) to which the opinion must refer.

Whilst the opinion wording no longer contains the long-form sections on the risks of material misstatement, application of materiality and the scope of the audit, we are happy for these to be included if appropriate.

Proposed form of independent auditors' report on the Annual Performance Report

Independent Auditor's report to the Water Services Regulation Authority (the WSRA) and the Directors of [Company]

Opinion

We have audited the [sections of/tables within [company's]] Annual Performance Report for the year ended [date] ("the Regulatory Accounting Statements") which comprise:

- the regulatory financial reporting tables comprising the income statement (table 1A), the statement of comprehensive income (table 1B), the statement of financial position (table 1C), the statement of cash flows (table 1D) and the net debt analysis (table 1E) and the related notes; and
- the regulatory price review and other segmental reporting tables comprising the segmental income statement (table 2A), the totex analysis for wholesale water and wastewater (table 2B), the operating cost analysis for retail (table 2C), the historical cost analysis of fixed assets for wholesale and retail (table 2D), the analysis of capital contributions and land sales for wholesale (table 2E), the household water revenues by customer type (table 2F), the non-household water revenues by customer type (table 2G), the non-household wastewater revenues by customer type (table 2H), the revenue analysis & wholesale control reconciliation (table 2I), the infrastructure network reinforcement costs (table 2J) and the related notes.
- [List any additional tables covered by the audit opinion].

We have not audited the [Outcome performance table (tables 3A to 3S)] and the [additional regulatory information in tables 4A to 4W].

In our opinion, [company]'s Regulatory Accounting Statements within the Annual Performance Report:

have been properly prepared in accordance with Condition F, the Regulatory Accounting Guidelines issued by the WSRA (RAG 1.08, RAG 2.07, RAG 3.10, RAG 4.07 and RAG 5.07) and the accounting policies (including the company's published [accounting methodology statement(s), as defined in RAG 3.10, appendix 2]), set out on page [XX]

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (“ISAs (UK)”), including ISA (UK) 800, and applicable law, except as stated in the section on Auditors’ responsibilities for the audit of the Regulatory accounting statements within the Annual Performance Report below, and having regard to the guidance contained in ICAEW Technical Release Tech 02/16 AAF ‘Reporting to Regulators on Regulatory Accounts’ issued by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales.

Our responsibilities under ISAs (UK) are further described in the Auditors’ responsibilities for the audit of the Regulatory accounting statements within the Annual Performance Report section of our report. We have fulfilled our ethical responsibilities under, and are independent of the company in accordance with, UK ethical requirements under the FRC Ethical Standard. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Emphasis of matter – special purpose basis of preparation

We draw attention to the fact that the Regulatory accounting statements within the Annual Performance Report have been prepared in accordance with Condition F, the Regulatory Accounting Guidelines, the accounting policies (including the company’s published [accounting methodology statement(s), as defined in RAG 3.10, appendix 2]) set out in the statement of accounting policies and under the historical cost convention. The nature, form and content of the Regulatory Accounting statements are determined by the WSRA. It is not appropriate for us to assess whether the nature of the information being reported upon is suitable or appropriate for the WSRA’s purposes. Accordingly we make no such assessment.

The Annual Performance Report is separate from the statutory financial statements of the Company and has not been prepared under the basis of [United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (“UK GAAP”) / International Financial Reporting Standards as adopted by the European Union (“IFRSs”)]. Financial information other than that prepared on the basis of [UK GAAP/IFRSs] does not necessarily represent a true and fair view of the financial performance or financial position of a company as shown in statutory financial statements prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2006.

The Regulatory Accounting Statements on pages [xx] to [xx] have been drawn up in accordance with Regulatory Accounting Guidelines with a number of departures from [UK GAAP/IFRSs]. A summary of the effect of these departures from Generally

Accepted Accounting Practice in the Company's statutory financial statements is included in the tables within section 1.

The Regulatory Accounting Statements are prepared in accordance with a special purpose framework for the specific purpose as described in the Responsibilities for the Annual Performance Statement and the audit section below. As a result, the Regulatory Accounting Statements may not be suitable for another purpose.

Our opinion is not modified in this respect.

Conclusions relating to going concern

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which ISAs (UK) require us to report to you when:

- the directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the Regulatory Accounting Statements is not appropriate; or
- the directors have not disclosed in the Regulatory Accounting Statements any identified material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about the company's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the Regulatory Accounting Statements are authorised for issue.

However, because not all future events or conditions can be predicted, this statement is not a guarantee as to the company's ability to continue as a going concern.

Reporting on other information

The other information comprises all of the information in the Annual Performance Report other than the Regulatory Accounting Statements within the Annual Performance Report and our auditors' report thereon. The directors are responsible for the other information. Our opinion on the Regulatory Accounting Statements does not cover the other information and, accordingly, we do not express an audit opinion or any form of assurance thereon.

In connection with our audit of the Regulatory Accounting Statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the Regulatory Accounting Statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify an apparent material inconsistency or material

misstatement, we are required to perform procedures to conclude whether there is a material misstatement of the Regulatory Accounting Statements within the Annual Performance Report or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement or inconsistency of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report based on these responsibilities.

Responsibilities of the Directors for the Annual Performance Report

As explained more fully in the Statement of Directors' Responsibilities [set out [on page ...]], the directors are responsible for the preparation of the Annual Performance Report in accordance with Condition F, the Regulatory Accounting Guidelines issued by the WSRA and the Company's accounting policies (including the Company's published [accounting methodology statement(s), as defined in RAG 3.10, appendix 2]).

The directors are also responsible for such internal control as they determine is necessary to enable the preparation of the Annual Performance Report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the Annual Performance Report, 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.

Auditors' responsibilities for the Audit of the Regulatory accounting statements within the Annual Performance Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the Regulatory accounting statements within the Annual Performance Report 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 this Annual Performance Report.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (UK), we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the company's Annual Performance Report, 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 our 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 company's internal control.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our report. However, future events or conditions may cause the company to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during the audit.
- Assess the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the directors.

We have not assessed whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the circumstances of the Company where these are laid down by Condition F. Where Condition F does not give specific guidance on the accounting policies to be followed, our audit includes an assessment of whether the accounting policies adopted in respect of the transactions and balances required to be included in the Annual Performance Report are consistent with those used in the preparation of the statutory financial statements of the company.

The Company has presented the allocation of operating costs and assets in accordance with the accounting policy for price control segments set out in note [x] and its [accounting methodology statement(s)] published on the Company's website on [date]. We are not required to assess whether the methods of cost allocation set out in the Methodology Statement are appropriate to the circumstances of the

Company or whether they meet the requirements of the WSRA, which would have been required if we were to express an audit opinion under International Standards on Auditing (UK).

Opinion on other matters prescribed by Condition F

Under the terms of our contract we have assumed responsibility to provide those additional opinions required by Condition F in relation to the accounting records. In our opinion:

- proper accounting records have been kept by the appointee as required by paragraph 3 of Condition F; and
- the Regulatory Accounting Statements are in agreement with the accounting records and returns retained for the purpose of preparing the Annual Performance Report.

Use of this report

This report is made, on terms that have been agreed, solely to the Company and the WSRA in order to meet the requirements of Condition F of the Instrument of Appointment granted by the Secretary of State for the Environment to the Company as a water and sewage undertaker under the Water Industry Act 1991 (“Condition F”). Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Company and the WSRA those matters that we have agreed to state to them in our report, in order (a) to assist the Company to meet its obligation under Condition F to procure such a report and (b) to facilitate the carrying out by the WSRA of its regulatory functions, 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 WSRA, for our audit work, for this report or for the opinions we have formed.

Our opinion on the Regulatory Accounting Statements within the Annual Performance Report is separate from our opinion on the statutory financial statements of the Company for the year ended 31 March [20XX] on which we reported on [X XX 20XX], which are prepared for a different purpose. Our audit report in relation to the statutory financial statements of the Company (our “Statutory audit”) was made solely to the Company’s members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our Statutory audit work was undertaken so that we might state to the Company’s members those matters we are required to state to them in a statutory audit report and for no other purpose. In these circumstances, to the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility for any other purpose or to any other person to whom our Statutory

audit report is shown or into whose hands it may come save where expressly agreed by our prior consent in writing.

[Auditor]

[Date]

