

Ulster Community Investment Trust Limited

Independent auditors' report to the members of Ulster Community Investment Trust Limited

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Ulster Community Investment Trust Limited (“the trust”), which comprise the Consolidated statement of financial activities, the Consolidated and the Company balance sheet, the Consolidated Statement of cash flows, the Consolidated and Company statement of changes in equity for the year ended 31 December 2023, and the related notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

The financial reporting framework that has been applied in the preparation of the financial statements is applicable law and accounting standards issued by the Financial Reporting Council including FRS 102 “The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland” (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, Ulster Community Investment Trust Limited financial statements:

- give a true and fair view in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice of the state of the group’s and the trust’s affairs as at 31 December 2023 and of the group’s incoming resources and application of resources and cash flows for the year then ended; and
- have been properly 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 ‘Responsibilities of the auditor for the audit of the financial statements’ section of our report. We are independent of the trust in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the United Kingdom, including the FRC’s Ethical Standard and the ethical pronouncements established by Chartered Accountants Ireland, applied as determined to be appropriate in the circumstances for the entity. 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 trustees’ use of 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 trust’s ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

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

Other information

Other information comprises information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor’s report thereon, including the Trustees’ Report. The trustees are responsible for the other information. 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.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, 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 audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies in the financial statements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. 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.

Opinions 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 Trustees’ Report, which includes the Directors’ Report and the Strategic Report prepared for the purposes of company law, for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Strategic Report and Directors’ Report, included within the Trustees’ Report, has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Ulster Community Investment Trust Limited

Independent auditors' report to the members of Ulster Community Investment Trust Limited (continued)

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the trust and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified any material misstatements in the Strategic Report and the Directors' Report included within the Trustees' Report.

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

- adequate and proper 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 trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 require us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- The information given in the Trustees' report is inconsistent in any material respect with the financial statements; or
- Sufficient accounting records have not been kept; or
- The financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records; or
- We have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of management and those charged with governance for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Trustees' responsibilities statement, management is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements which give a true and fair view in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice, including FRS 102, and for such internal control as trustees determine necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the trust'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 management either intends to liquidate the trust or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the group's and the trust's financial reporting process.

Responsibilities of the auditor for the audit of the financial statements

The objectives of an auditor 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 their 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.

A further description of an auditor's 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 auditor's report.

Explanation as to what extent the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud

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. Owing to the inherent limitations of an audit, there is an unavoidable risk that material misstatement in the financial statements may not be detected, even though the audit is properly planned and performed in accordance with the ISAs (UK). The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below.

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Independent auditors' report to the members of Ulster Community Investment Trust Limited (continued)

Explanation as to what extent the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud (continued)

Based on our understanding of the Company and industry, we identified that the principal risks of non-compliance with laws and regulations related to compliance with Employment Law, Environmental Regulations and Health and Safety laws, and we considered the extent to which non-compliance might have a material effect on the financial statements. We also considered those laws and regulations that have a direct impact on the preparation of the financial statements such as the Companies Act 2006 and UK tax legislation. We evaluated management's incentives and opportunities for fraudulent manipulation of the financial statements (including the risk of override of controls), and determined that the principal risks were related to posting inappropriate journal entries to manipulate financial performance and management bias through judgements and assumptions in significant accounting estimates, in particular in relation to significant one-off or unusual transactions. We apply professional scepticism through the audit to consider potential deliberate omission or concealment of significant transactions, or incomplete/inaccurate disclosures in the financial statement.

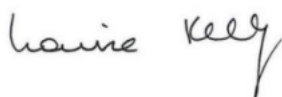
In response to these principal risks, our audit procedures included but were not limited to:

- enquiries of management on the policies and procedures in place regarding compliance with laws and regulations, including consideration of known or suspected instances of non-compliance and whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud;
- inspection of the company's regulatory and legal correspondence and review of minutes of director's meetings during the year to corroborate inquiries made;
- gaining an understanding of the internal controls established to mitigate risk related to fraud;
- discussion amongst the engagement team in relation to the identified laws and regulations and regarding the risk of fraud, and remaining alert to any indications of non-compliance or opportunities for fraudulent manipulation of financial statements throughout the audit;
- identifying and testing journal entries to address the risk of inappropriate journals and management override of controls;
- designing audit procedures to incorporate unpredictability around the nature, timing or extent of our testing;
- challenging assumptions and judgements made by management in their significant accounting estimates including provisions for loan due from community development organisations; and
- review of the financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation and inquiries of management.

The primary responsibility for the prevention and detection of irregularities including fraud rests with those charged with governance and management. As with any audit, there remains a risk of non-detection or irregularities, as these may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations or override of internal controls.

The purpose of our audit work and to whom we owe our responsibilities

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 auditor's 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.



Louise Kelly (Senior Statutory Auditor)
For and on behalf of
Grant Thornton (NI) LLP
Chartered Accountants & Statutory Auditors
Belfast
24/06/2024