

ARMAGH OBSERVATORY AND PLANETARIUM

THE CERTIFICATE AND REPORT OF THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL TO THE NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

Opinion on financial statements

I certify that I have audited the financial statements of the Armagh Observatory and Planetarium for the year ended 31 March 2024 under the Armagh Observatory and Planetarium (Northern Ireland) Order 1995. The financial statements comprise: the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement; and the related notes including 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 (FRS) 102, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

I have also audited the information in the Trustees' Annual Report that is described in that report as having been audited.

In my opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of Armagh Observatory and Planetarium's affairs as at 31 March 2024 and of its total incoming resources and expenditure of resources for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102); and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the Armagh Observatory and Planetarium (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 and Department for Communities directions issued thereunder.

Opinion on regularity

In my opinion, in all material respects the expenditure and income recorded in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by the Assembly and the financial transactions recorded in the financial statements conform to the authorities which govern them.

Basis for opinions

I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISAs) (UK), applicable law and Practice Note 10 'Audit of Financial Statements and Regularity of Public Sector Bodies in the United Kingdom'. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of my certificate.

My staff and I are independent of Armagh Observatory and Planetarium in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

I believe that the audit evidence obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinions.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that Armagh Observatory and Planetarium's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work I have performed, I have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Armagh Observatory and Planetarium'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.

The going concern basis of accounting for Armagh Observatory and Planetarium is adopted in consideration of the requirements set out in the Government Financial Reporting Manual, which require entities to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements where it anticipated that the services which they provide will continue into the future.

My responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Trustees and the Accounting Officer with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this certificate.

Other Information

The other information comprises the information included in the Trustees' annual report other than the financial statements, the parts of the Trustees' Report described in that report as having been audited, and my audit certificate and report. The Trustees and the Accounting Officer are responsible for the other information included in the annual report. My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in my certificate, I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

My responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or my knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If I identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, I am required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact.

I have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters

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

- the parts of the Trustees' Report have been properly prepared in accordance with Department for Communities directions made under the Armagh Observatory and Planetarium (Northern Ireland) Order 1995; and
- the information given in the Trustees' Annual Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.

Matters on which I report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the Armagh Observatory and Planetarium and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified material misstatements in the Trustees' Annual Report.

I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters which I report to you if, in my opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements and the parts of the Trustees' Report to be audited are not in agreement with the accounting records; or
- certain disclosures of remuneration specified by the Government Financial Report Manual are not made; or
- I have not received all of the information and explanations I require for my audit; or
- the Governance Statement does not reflect compliance with the Department of Finance's guidance.

Responsibilities of the Board of Governors and Accounting Officer for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of the Governors and Accounting Officer Responsibilities, the Governors and the Accounting Officer are responsible for:

- the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view;
- ensuring such internal controls are in place as deemed necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements to be free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error;
- ensuring the Trustees' Annual Report, which includes the Remuneration and Staff Report, is prepared in accordance with the Government Financial Reporting Manual;
- assessing the Armagh Observatory and Planetarium'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 Trustees and Accounting Officer anticipates that the services provided by Armagh Observatory and Planetarium will not continue to be provided in the future.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

My responsibility is to examine, certify and report on the financial statements in accordance with the Armagh Observatory and Planetarium (Northern Ireland) Order 1995.

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 a certificate that includes my 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.

I design procedures in line with my responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of non-compliance with laws and regulation, including fraud.

My procedures included:

- obtaining an understanding of the legal and regulatory framework applicable to the Armagh Observatory and Planetarium through discussion with management and application of extensive public sector accountability knowledge. The key laws and regulations I considered included the Armagh Observatory and Planetarium (Northern Ireland) Order 1995;
- making enquires of management and those charged with governance on Armagh Observatory and Planetarium's compliance with laws and regulations;
- making enquiries of internal audit, management and those charged with governance as to susceptibility to irregularity and fraud, their assessment of the risk of material misstatement due to fraud and irregularity, and their knowledge of actual, suspected and alleged fraud and irregularity;
- completing risk assessment procedures to assess the susceptibility of Armagh Observatory and Planetarium's financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur. This included, but was not limited to, an engagement director led engagement team discussion on fraud to identify particular areas, transaction streams and business practices that may be susceptible to material misstatement due to fraud. As part of this discussion, I identified potential for fraud in the following areas: revenue recognition and posting of unusual journals;

- engagement director oversight to ensure the engagement team collectively had the appropriate competence, capabilities and skills to identify or recognise non-compliance with the applicable legal and regulatory framework throughout the audit;
- documenting and evaluating the design and implementation of internal controls in place to mitigate risk of material misstatement due to fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations;
- designing audit procedures to address specific laws and regulations which the engagement team considered to have a direct material effect on the financial statements in terms of misstatement and irregularity, including fraud. These audit procedures included, but were not limited to, reading board and committee minutes, and agreeing financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation and approvals as appropriate; and
- addressing the risk of fraud as a result of management override of controls by:
 - performing analytical procedures to identify unusual or unexpected relationships or movements;
 - testing journal entries to identify potential anomalies, and inappropriate or unauthorised adjustments;
 - assessing whether judgements and other assumptions made in determining accounting estimates were indicative of potential bias; and
 - investigating significant or unusual transactions made outside of the normal course of business.

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

In addition, I am required to obtain evidence sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the expenditure and income recorded in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by the Assembly and the financial transactions recorded in the financial statements conform to the authorities which govern them.

Report

I have no observations to make on these financial statements.



Dorinnia Carville
Comptroller and Auditor General
Northern Ireland Audit Office
106 University Street
BELFAST
BT7 1EU

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