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Our Ref: MARK/NEW001

Ms J Tyrrell
Newdigate Parish Council
Newdigate Village Hall
Kingsland
Newdigate
Surrey
RH5 5DB

11 April 2023

Dear Jackie

Re: Newdigate Parish Council
Internal Audit Year Ended 31 March 2023 – Year-End Audit report

Executive summary

Following completion of our year-end internal audit on 11 April 2023 we enclose our report for your kind attention and presentation to the council. The audit was conducted in accordance with current practices and guidelines and testing was risk based. Whilst we have not tested all transactions, our samples have where appropriate covered the entire year to date.

Our report is presented in the same order as the assertions on the internal auditor report within the published AGAR. The start of each section details the nature of the assertion to be verified. Testing requirements follow those detailed in the audit plan previously sent to the council, a copy of this is available on request. The report concludes with an opinion as to whether each assertion has been met or not. Where appropriate **recommendations for action are shown in bold text and are summarised in the table at the end of the report.**

Our sample testing did not uncover any errors or misstatements that require reporting to the external auditor at this time, nor did we identify any significant weaknesses in the internal controls such that public money would be put at risk. I did identify some errors relating to governance, but these do not prevent the council from declaring itself exempt from a limited assurance review and should be used as internal learning tools.

It is clear the council takes governance, policies and procedures seriously and I am pleased to report that overall, the systems and procedures you have in place are fit for purpose and whilst my report may contain recommendations to change these are not indicative of any significant failings, but rather are pointers to improving upon an already well-ordered system.

It is therefore our opinion that the systems and internal procedures at Newdigate Parish Council are well established and followed.

Regulation

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require smaller authorities, each financial year, to conduct a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control and prepare an annual governance statement in accordance with proper practices in relation to accounts. In addition to this, a smaller authority is required by Regulation 5(1) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 to “undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, control and governance processes, taking into account public sector internal auditing standards or guidance.”

Internal auditing is an independent, objective assurance activity designed to improve an organisation’s operations. It helps an organisation accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness

of risk management, control and governance processes. The purpose of internal audit is to review and report to the authority on whether its systems of financial and other internal controls over its activities and operating procedures are effective.

Internal audit's function is to test and report to the authority on whether its specific system of internal control is adequate and working satisfactorily. The internal audit reports should therefore be made available to all Members to support and inform them when they considering the authority's approval of the annual governance statement.

Independence and competence

Your audit was conducted by Andy Beams of Mulberry & Co, who has over 30 years' experience in the financial sector with the last 13 years specialising in local government.

Your auditor is independent from the management of the financial controls and procedures of the council and has no conflicts of interest with the audit client, nor do they provide any management or financial assistance to the client.

Engagement Letter

An engagement letter was previously issued to the council covering the 2022/23 internal audit assignment. Copies of this document are available on request.

Planning and inherent risk assessment

The scope and plan of works including fee structure was issued to the council under separate cover. Copies of this document are available on request. In summary, our work will address each of the internal control objectives as stated on the Annual Internal Audit Report of the AGAR. As part of the inherent risk assessment, we have concluded that:

- There have been no reported instances of breaches of regulations in the past
- The client uses an industry approved financial reporting package
- The client regularly carries out reconciliations and documents these
- There is regular reporting to council
- The management team are experienced and informed
- Records are neatly maintained and referenced
- The client is aware of current regulations and practices
- There has been no instance of high staff turnover

It is our opinion that the inherent risk of error or misstatement is low, and the controls of the council can be relied upon and as such substantive testing of individual transactions is not required. Testing to be carried out will be "walk through testing" on sample data to encompass the period of the council year under review.

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A. BOOKS OF ACCOUNT

Internal audit requirement

Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.

Audit findings

The year-end audit was conducted remotely. The Clerk, who also acts as the council's Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), had prepared the requested documents, and forwarded to me for review, in advance of a scheduled telephone conversation.

The council continues to use Excel spreadsheets for recording the day-to-day financial transactions of the council. This is a suitable method for a small council with relatively few transactions per year. The spreadsheets are updated regularly to record transactions and produce management information reports for review at council meetings.

I reviewed the spreadsheet during the internal audit and was able to trace the transaction totals to match the figures included on the AGAR.

B. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS, GOVERNANCE AND PAYMENTS

Internal audit requirement

This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved, and VAT was appropriately accounted for.

Audit findings

Check the publication and minuting of the prior year audited AGAR and notice of conclusion of audit.

The council approved the Annual Governance and Accounting statements at the meeting held on 13 June 2022, and this is recorded in the minutes of the meeting. The council declared itself exempt from a limited assurance review in 2021/22 and therefore did not receive any notification from the External Auditor.

Confirm by sample testing that councillors sign statutory office forms.

I confirmed by sample testing that councillors sign "Acceptance of Office" forms. The council website provides a link to Mole Valley District Council's website where details of councillors Register of Members' Interests are published.

The council is reminded that after the May 2023 election, all councillors (whether previously councillors or not) are required to complete a new Register of Members Interest Form within 28 days of taking their seats.

Confirm that the council is compliant with the relevant transparency code.

As the council's income and expenditure is below £25,000, it is a statutory requirement to follow the requirements of the Transparency Code for smaller authorities. Comments on adherence to this requirement is contained with section L of this report.

Confirm that the council is compliant with GDPR.

The council is fully aware of GDPR and has undergone training. It was noted the council has established common email addresses for all councillors. This is recommended because it gives a natural segregation between work and personal lives, making it clear beyond doubt in what capacity a councillor is acting. In addition to this it gives control to the council, adds a degree of professionalism and in the event of a FOI request limits access to personal computers.

The council has a Privacy Notice on the home page of its website, although **I was unable to trace a Website Accessibility Policy and I recommend the council speaks to its website provider to ensure it is meeting the requirements of the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.**

Confirm that the council meets regularly throughout the year.

In addition to full council, the council has committees for Planning and Finance and meeting dates are published on the council website.

Check that agendas for meetings are published giving 3 clear days' notice.

I checked a sample of agendas to confirm whether the council was giving the statutory 3 clear days' notice for meetings. While most of the agendas did comply with the requirements, **I note that for the April 2023 meeting scheduled for Tuesday 11 April, the agenda is dated Wednesday 5 April. Even allowing for the inclusion of Saturday as a working day (which is not recommended best practice) this provides only two clear days' notice due to the Easter Bank holidays on Friday 7 April and Monday 10 April.**

I remind council it is required to also post any supporting documentation with the agendas as outlined by the Information Commissioner's Office (page 3 of this link) ico.org.uk/minutesandagendas.pdf

I also discussed with the Clerk the Annual Council Meeting for 2023, which had been scheduled for Tuesday 9 May. The Local Government Act 1972, schedule 12 paragraph 8 provides guidance on a suitable date for the Annual Council Meeting. Ordinarily, it can be on any date in May, but in an election year, it must take place within 14 days of the date councillors take office.

As the election is on 4 May, and due to the additional bank holiday for the King's Coronation on 8 May, councillors will take their seats on 9 May. With the statutory requirement to give three clear working days' notice (which can not be given until 9 May), the earliest possible date for the Annual Council Meeting in 2023 is Monday 15 May.

Check the draft minutes of the last meeting(s) are on the council's website.

Draft minutes are uploaded to the council website.

Confirm that the Parish Council's Standing Orders have been reviewed within the last 12 months.

The Standing Orders are based on the current NALC model and were most recently reviewed and adopted by council at the meeting held on 10 October 2022 (minute ref 7.2).

Confirm that the Parish Council has adopted and recently reviewed Financial Regulations.

Financial Regulations are based on the current NALC model and were last reviewed and adopted by council at the meeting held on 10 October 2022 (minute ref 7.2). The regulations contain provisions for the approval of spending, setting of budgets, reconciliation of the bank and reporting to council.

Check that the council's Financial Regulations are being routinely followed.

The council has thresholds in place at which authorisations to spend must be obtained as below:

FR 4.1. Expenditure on revenue items may be authorised up to the amounts included for that class of expenditure in the approved budget. This authority is to be determined by:

- the council for all items over £5,000;*
- a duly delegated committee of the council for items over £500; or*
- the Clerk, in conjunction with Chairman of Council or Chairman of the appropriate committee, for any items below £500.*

Such authority is to be evidenced by a minute or by an authorisation slip duly signed by the Clerk, and where necessary also by the appropriate Chairman.

Contracts may not be disaggregated to avoid controls imposed by these regulations.

FR 4.5. In cases of extreme risk to the delivery of council services, the clerk may authorise revenue expenditure on behalf of the council which in the clerk's judgement it is necessary to carry out. Such expenditure includes repair, replacement or other work, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £500. The Clerk shall report such action to the chairman as soon as possible and to the council as soon as practicable thereafter.

Based on the level of financial activity of the council, these authorisation thresholds appear appropriate.

There is evidence within minutes of meeting of invoices being approved in accordance with the thresholds contained within Financial Regulations.

Confirm all section 137 expenditure meets the guidelines and does not exceed the annual per elector limit of £8.82 per elector.

The council has section 137 expenditure within the permitted threshold.

Check receipt of VAT refund matches last submitted VAT return.

The council submits its VAT return on an annual basis. I reviewed the accounting records for the period ending 31 March 2023 which showed a refund amount due of £534.71.

Confirm that checks of the accounts are made by a councillor.

The system noted above details internal review takes place and I am under no doubt that council properly approves expenditure.

C. RISK MANAGEMENT AND INSURANCE

Internal audit requirement

This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.

Audit findings

The council has a basic risk assessment process in place which is sufficient for a council of this size. This outlines the identified risks and the actions in place to mitigate the risks. This was most recently reviewed and adopted by council at its meeting held in January 2023.

I confirmed that the council has a valid insurance policy in place with Zurich which expires on 31 May 2023. The policy includes Public Liability and Employers Liability cover of £10 million each and a Fidelity Guarantee of £50,000 which is sufficient for a council of this size.

We discussed assertion 8 on the Annual Governance Statement and whether this had any impact on the council.

“We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.”

The Clerk confirmed that they were not aware of any event having a financial impact that was not included in the accounting statements.

D. BUDGET, PRECEPT AND RESERVES

Internal audit requirement

The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.

Audit findings

The council set a precept of £16,876 for 2022/23. With a tax base of 917.0, this equates to a band D equivalent of £18.40 (compared to the average in England of £74.81).

I was able to confirm that the 2023/24 budget and precept were approved by council at the meeting held on 9 January 2023 (minute ref 8.5) following a recommendation from the Finance Committee.

There is evidence of regular review of financial information at council meetings, and further scrutiny at Finance Committee meetings, and I am confident that councillors are provided with sufficient information to make informed financial decisions.

The council holds £9,750 in earmarked reserves (EMR), spread across a range of clearly identifiable projects. I checked the purpose of these EMRs with the Clerk and am satisfied they are all for legitimate future planned projects of the council. This leaves a balance of £10,002 as the general reserve at the year-end.

The Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) Practitioner’s guide states ‘the generally accepted recommendation with regard to the appropriate minimum level of a smaller authority’s general reserve is that this should be maintained at between three and twelve months of net revenue expenditure’ (para 5.33). The general reserve balance is within the recommended range.

E. INCOME

Internal audit requirement

Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.

Audit findings

The precept amount was independently verified and confirmed correct as the figure included within box 2 on the AGAR.

The council has limited sources of other income, with receipts received for allotment rental and bank interest during the year. These amounts are clearly identifiable in the councils accounting records.

F. PETTY CASH

Internal audit requirement

Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved, and VAT appropriately accounted for.

Audit findings

The council has no petty cash.

G. PAYROLL

Internal audit requirement

Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.

Audit findings

The Clerk is the only employee and has a signed contract of employment, based on the NALC template.

The council uses a third party for processing payroll, who calculates the PAYE and pension deductions. I reviewed the payslips for February and March 2023 and the payroll deductions appear correct. The salary payments are authorised and paid by the council in the same way as other payments.

I reviewed the total figure being included within box 4 (staff costs) on the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) and confirmed that this includes only salary payments, HMRC payments and pension contributions.

There are no councillor allowances.

H. ASSETS AND INVESTMENTS

Internal audit requirement

Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.

Audit findings

The council has a basic fixed asset register in place which includes the name of each asset, its value and its date of acquisition. Council is reminded that assets must be listed at original cost/proxy cost, or where gifted/donated, given a nominal £1 value for the purpose of the asset register, and should not be appreciated or depreciated during their lifetime.

I confirmed the asset register total matches that included in box 9 (total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets) on the AGAR and was able to trace the changes to the previous year's total against the asset register.

The council has no borrowing nor long-term investments.

I. BANK AND CASH

Internal audit requirement

Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.

Audit findings

Financial regulation 2.2 states 'On a regular basis, at least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, a member other than the Chairman, or a cheque signatory, shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the RFO. The member shall sign the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of verification. This activity shall on conclusion be reported, including any exceptions, to and noted by the council.'

I noted that the reconciliation and bank statement have been signed in accordance with Financial Regulation 2.2.

Balances held are within the £85,000 protection limit offered by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS).

J. YEAR END ACCOUNTS

Internal audit requirement

Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.

Audit findings

The council, at its meeting to sign off the year-end accounts, must discuss Section 1 of the AGAR (Annual Governance Statement) and record this activity in the minutes of the meeting. **COUNCIL IS REMINDED THAT THIS MUST BE A SEPARATE AGENDA ITEM PRIOR TO THE SIGNING OF SECTION 2 OF THE AGAR (ANNUAL ACCOUNTS).**

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement

Based on the internal audit finding I recommend using the table below as the basis for that discussion.

	Annual Governance Statement	'Yes', means that this authority	Suggested response based on evidence
1	We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	<i>prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i>	YES – accounts follow latest Accounts and Audit Regulations and practitioners guide recommendations.
2	We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	<i>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</i>	YES – there is regular reporting of financial transactions and accounting summaries, offering the opportunity for scrutiny.
3	We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	<i>has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.</i>	YES – the Clerk advises the council in respect of its legal powers.
4	We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	<i>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.</i>	NO – the requirements and timescales for 2021/22 year-end were not followed.

5	We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	<i>considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.</i>	YES – the council has a risk management scheme and appropriate external insurance.
6	We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	<i>arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.</i>	YES – the council has appointed an independent and competent internal auditor.
7	We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	<i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i>	YES – matters raised in internal and external audit reports have been addressed.
8	We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and. Where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	<i>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.</i>	YES – no matters were raised during the internal audit visits.
9	Trust funds including charitable – In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/asset(s), including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	<i>has met all its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.</i>	N/A – the council has no trusts

Section 2 – Accounting Statements

AGAR box number		2021/22	2022/23	Internal Auditor notes
1	Balances brought forward	14,333	18,772	Agrees to 2021/22 carry forward (box 7)
2	Precept or rates and levies	16,876	17,646	Figure confirmed to central records
3	Total other receipts	908	3,315	Agrees to underlying records
4	Staff costs	9,018	8,762	Agrees to underlying records
5	Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	Verified against PWLB records
6	All other payments	4,327	11,219	Agrees to underlying records
7	Balances carried forward	18,772	19,752	Casts correctly and agrees to balance sheet
8	Total value of cash and short-term investments	18,772	19,752	Agrees to bank reconciliation
9	Total fixed assets plus long-term investments and assets	2,552	4,755	Matches asset register
10	Total borrowings	0	0	Verified against PWLB records
11a	Disclosure note re Trust Funds (including charitable)	N/A	NO	No – the council is not a sole trustee
11b	Disclosure note re Trust Funds (including charitable)		N/A	N/A – the council is not a sole trustee

Audit findings

The year-end accounts have been correctly prepared on a receipts and payments basis with no requirement for the box 7 and 8 reconciliation.

I was able to confirm the figures for the Certificate of Exemption as:

Total gross annual income	£20,961
Total gross annual expenditure	£4,755

The AGAR correctly casts and cross casts and last year's comparatives match the figures submitted for 2021/22.

The variance analysis has not been provided and as the council is declaring itself exempt from a limited assurance review for this year, it is not required to be submitted to the External Auditor.

K. LIMITED ASSURANCE REVIEW**Internal audit requirement**

IF the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2021/22, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2021/22 AGAR tick "not covered")

Audit findings

The council met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt for 2021/22.

L: PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION**Internal audit requirement**

The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation

Audit findings

This internal control objective has changed since last year. Where previously it related to the relevant Transparency Codes, a council with annual turnover exceeding £25,000 was recommended to follow the Local Government Transparency Code 2015, but it was not a statutory requirement.

As the council has an annual turnover not exceeding £25,000, it is still required to publish the required information in accordance with the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities.

A review of the council website shows the following:

Expenditure over £100 – expenditure items are included within the minutes of meetings. **Publishing these as a separate list would make it easier to find the information, but the requirement has been met.**

End of year accounts – there is a 'Finance Documents' tab on the website showing this information published for previous years.

Annual Governance Statement – this has also been published for previous years on the 'Finance Documents' tab.

Internal Audit Report – the internal audit reports for previous years are on the 'Finance Documents' tab.

Councillor responsibilities – details of councillors are published on the 'Parish Councillors' tab on the website.

Details of public land and buildings – **I was unable to locate the asset register on the council website and recommend this is added under 'Finance Documents'.**

Minutes, agendas and meeting papers of formal meetings – these are published on the meetings tab, with links to agendas and minutes for council and committee meetings available.

All councils are required to follow The Accounts and Audit Regulations which include the following requirements:

13(1) An authority must publish (which must include publication on that authority's website)

- (a) the Statement of Accounts together with any certificate or opinion entered by the local auditor in accordance with section 20(2) of the Act; and
- (b) the Annual Governance Statement approved in accordance with regulation 6(3)

13(2) Where documents are published under paragraph (1), the authority must

- (a) keep copies of those documents for purchase by any person on payment of a reasonable sum; and
- (b) ensure that those documents remain available for public access for a period of not less than five years beginning with the date on which those documents were first published in accordance with that paragraph.

I was able to confirm that pages 4 (Annual Governance Statement), 5 (Accounting Statements) and 6 (External Auditor's Report and Certificate) of the AGAR for previous years are available for review on the council website.

M: EXERCISE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS - INSPECTION OF ACCOUNTS

Internal audit requirement

The authority has demonstrated that during summer 2022 it correctly provided for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

Audit findings

Inspection – key dates	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Proposed
Date AGAR signed by council	13 June 2022	12 June 2023
Date inspection notice issued	13 June 2022	13 June 2023
Inspection period begins	13 June 2022	14 June 2023
Inspection period ends	22 July 2022	25 July 2023
Correct length (30 working days)	Yes	Yes
Common period included (first 10 working days of July)	Yes	Yes

The requirements of this control objective were **NOT** met for 2021/22 as the council failed to follow the correct guidelines for the dates. **There must be at least a one-day gap between the date the AGAR is signed by the council and the date the inspection notice is issued and at least a one-day gap between the date the inspection notice is issued and the date the inspection period begins.**

Therefore, the council must answer 'no' to assertion 4 on the Annual Governance Statement.

I was able to confirm that the proposed dates for 2022/23, as amended above following our discussion, meet the statutory requirements.

N: PUBLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Internal audit requirement

The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2021/22. Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, authorities must publish the following information ON the authority website / webpage.

Before 1 July 2022 authorities must publish:

- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounting statements are as yet unaudited
- Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2021/22, approved and signed, page 4
- Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2021/22, approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2022 authorities must publish:

- *Notice of conclusion of audit*
- *Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate*
- *Sections 1 and 2 of AGAR including any amendments as a result of the limited assurance review.*

It is recommended as best practice, to avoid any potential confusion by local electors and interested parties, that you also publish the Annual Internal Audit Report, page 3.

Audit findings

I was able to confirm that the Notice of Public Rights is published on the council website. The council correctly exempted itself from a limited assurance review in 2021/22 and therefore did not receive an External Auditor Report and Certificate. The publication requirements for 2021/22 have been met.

O. TRUSTEESHIP

Internal audit requirement

Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.

Audit findings

The council has no trusts.

Achievement of control assertions at year-end audit date

Based on the tests conducted during the year-end audit, our conclusions on the achievement of the internal control objectives are summarised in the table below and are reflected in the completion of the Annual Internal Audit Report within the AGAR.

	INTERNAL CONTROL OBJECTIVE	YES	NO	NOT COVERED
A	Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year	√		
B	This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved, and VAT was appropriately accounted for	√		
C	This authority assesses the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these	√		
D	The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	√		
E	Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for	√		
F	Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved, and VAT appropriately accounted for			√
G	Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	√		
H	Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	√		
I	Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	√		
J	Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	√		
K	If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2021/22, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. <i>(If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2020/21 AGAR tick "not covered")</i>	√		
L	The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation	√		
M	The authority, during the previous year (2021-22) correctly provided for the period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations <i>(evidenced by the notice published on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set)</i> .		√	
N	The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2021/22 AGAR.	√		
O	Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.			√

Should you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Andy Beams
For Mulberry & Co

Year-End Audit - Points Carried Forward

Audit Point	Audit Findings	Council comments
FINANCIAL REGULATIONS, GOVERNANCE AND PAYMENTS	I was unable to trace a Website Accessibility Policy and I recommend the council speaks to its website provider to ensure it is meeting the requirements of the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.	
FINANCIAL REGULATIONS, GOVERNANCE AND PAYMENTS	I note that for the April 2023 meeting scheduled for Tuesday 11 April, the agenda is dated Wednesday 5 April. Even allowing for the inclusion of Saturday as a working day (which is not recommended best practice) this provides only two clear days' notice due to the Easter Bank holidays on Friday 7 April and Monday 10 April.	
FINANCIAL REGULATIONS, GOVERNANCE AND PAYMENTS	I remind council it is required to also post any supporting documentation with the agendas as outlined by the Information Commissioner's Office (page 3 of this link) ico.org.uk/minutesandagendas.pdf	
PUBLICATION INFORMATION	I was unable to locate the asset register on the council website and recommend this is added under 'Finance Documents'.	
EXERCISE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS	There must be at least a one-day gap between the date the AGAR is signed by the council and the date the inspection notice is issued and at least a one-day gap between the date the inspection notice is issued and the date the inspection period begins.	