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10 November 2025

Dear Jackie

**Re: Ninfield Parish Council**
**Internal Audit for Financial Year Ended 31 March 2026 – Interim Audit report**

**Executive summary**
Following completion of our interim internal audit on 10 November 2025 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 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (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 which is available on request. The report concludes with an opinion as to whether each assertion has been met or not at this point in the year. **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.

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 Ninfield 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 Local Authority Services Ltd, who has over 35 years' experience in the financial sector with the last 15 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 and inherent risk assessment**

An engagement letter was previously issued to the council covering the 2025/26 internal audit assignment, which includes the scope and plan of works and fee structure. Copies of this document are available on request from anna@mulberrylas.co.uk

In summary, our work will address each of the internal control objectives as stated on the Annual Internal Audit Report of the AGAR.

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 kept properly during the year.*

**Audit findings**

The audit was conducted remotely with the Clerk, who also acts as the council's Responsible Financial Officer (RFO). The Clerk had prepared the information advised in advance of the visit, and overall, I have the impression that accounting records are neatly maintained and easily accessible. Other information was reviewed through discussion with the Clerk and a review of the council website www.ninfieldpc.co.uk

The council uses the Rialtas Business Solutions (RBS) accounting package for recording the council's finances. This is an industry specific accounting package. The accounting package is updated regularly and used to produce management information reports for review at council meetings.

The system requires the population of key data fields to enable the user to record a transaction. This is a clear and easy to follow system and a review of the cashbook shows that all data fields are being entered with sufficient narrative detail to accurately identify the source and purpose of each transaction.

I reviewed the nominal ledger entries for the period 1 April to 31 March to ensure items were posted to the correct heading and that there were no instances of netting off and the expenditure was correctly posted to the headings to which the line item related. This has confirmed that the accounting package is being properly used.

## B. FINANCE REGULATIONS, GOVERNANCE AND PAYMENTS

***Internal audit requirement***

*This authority complied with its Finance 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 External Auditor's Report for 2024/25 was not qualified and has been published on the council website along with the Notice of Conclusion of Audit and was reported to the council meeting held on 18 September 2025 (minute ref 250913).

I note the council received and considered the previous internal auditor report at the council meeting held on 23 May 2025 (minute ref 250526i).

*Confirm by sample testing that councillors sign statutory office forms*

I confirmed by sample testing that councillors sign "Acceptance of Office" forms together with a formal acceptance to receive information by electronic means in the form *"As per Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972, I consent to the receipt of all council meeting papers by electronic methods. I understand I may withdraw this consent at any time"*

The council website includes a link to Wealden District Council's website where the individual Register of Members' Interests forms are published.

*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 Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Panel (SAPPP) Practitioner's Guide (March 2025) contains updated guidance on the matter as below, including details of the new Governance Assertion to be included in the 2025/26 AGAR:

***Assertion 10 - Digital and data compliance***

*To warrant a positive response to this assertion, the authority needs to have taken the following actions:*

*1.47 Email management - Every authority must have a generic email account hosted on an authority owned domain, for example clerk@abcparishcouncil.gov.uk or clerk@abcparishcouncil.org.uk rather than abcparishclerk@gmail.com or abcparishclerk@outlook.com for example.*

*1.48 All smaller authorities (excluding parish meetings) must meet legal requirements for all existing websites regardless of what domain is being used.*

*1.49 All websites must meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.2 AA and the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 (where applicable).*

*1.50 All websites must include published documentation as specified in the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities (where applicable).*

*1.51 All smaller authorities, including parish meetings, must follow both the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2016 and the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018.*

*1.52 All smaller authorities, including parish meetings, must process personal data with care and in line with the principles of data protection.*

*1.53 The DPA 2018 supplements the GDPR and classifies an authority as both a Data Controller and a Data Processor.*

*1.54 All smaller authorities (excluding parish meetings) must also have an IT policy. This explains how everyone - clerks, members and other staff - should conduct authority business in a secure and legal way when using IT equipment and software. This relates to the use of authority-owned and personal equipment.*

The council has a published Privacy Notice and IT Policy on its website. **The council will need to adopt and publish an FOI Publication Scheme and Website Accessibility Statement by 31 March 2026 to meet the requirements of Governance Assertion 10.**

*Confirm that the council is compliant with the relevant transparency code*
As the council's income and expenditure exceeds £25,000, it is not a statutory requirement to follow the requirements of the Local Government Transparency Code, although it is recommended best practice to do so.

*Confirm that the council meets regularly throughout the year*
In addition to the council meeting regularly, there is a committee structure in place with terms of reference included in the Scheme of Delegation. A diary of future meeting dates is published on the council website along with historic agendas and minutes for council and committee meetings.

*Check that agendas for meetings are published giving 3 clear days' notice*
I was able to confirm that at least 3 clear days' notice is given on agendas. Whilst we have not tested every single committee and council meeting there was no evidence of non-compliance in giving three clear days' notice of the meeting.

I note that the non-confidential supporting documents are included with the agendas on the website in accordance with the requirements of the Information Commissioner's Office.

*Check the draft minutes of the last meeting(s) are on the council's website*
Minutes are uploaded to the council website, although further clarity on which are draft or final versions could be provided.

*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 in May 2025 (minute ref 250510a).

*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 in May 2025 (minute ref 250510a). The regulations contain provisions for the approval of spending, setting of budgets, reconciliation of the bank and reporting to council. I note the council also has an adopted Scheme of Delegation to support the Financial Regulations.

*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 6.15* *Individual purchases within an agreed budget for that type of expenditure may be authorised by:*

- *the clerk/RFO, under delegated authority, for any items below £1,000 excluding VAT.*
- *the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of the Council or Chair of the appropriate committee, for any items below £2,000 excluding VAT.*
- *a duly delegated committee of the council for all items of expenditure within their delegated budgets for items under £5,000 excluding VAT.*
- *in respect of grants, a duly authorised committee within any limits set by council and in accordance with any policy statement agreed by the council.*
- *the council for all items over £5,000*

*Such authorisation must be supported by a minute (in the case of council or committee decisions) or other auditable evidence trail.*

*FR 6.18* *In cases of serious risk to the delivery of council services or to public safety on council premises, the clerk may authorise expenditure of up to £2,000 excluding VAT on repair, replacement or other work that in their judgement is necessary, whether or not there is any budget for such expenditure. The Clerk shall report such action to the Chair 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.

I note that council agendas include a section covering financial reporting and includes councillors receiving monthly statements of accounts, bank reconciliations, lists of payments and updated to earmarked reserves. The supporting financial reports are published on the website along with the agendas and this provides councillors with sufficient financial information to make informed decisions.

*Confirm the council has adopted the General Power of Competence (GPC) and met the eligibility criteria at the time of adoption, or if GPC not adopted, confirm all section 137 expenditure meets the guidelines and does not exceed the annual per elector limit of £11.10 per elector*
The council has confirmed its eligibility and adopted the General Power of Competence (GPC) and the section 137 threshold does not apply.

*Check receipt of VAT refund matches last submitted VAT return*
The council submits its VAT return on a six-monthly basis. I reviewed the submission for the period ending 30 September 2025 which showed a refund amount due of £2,762.90 and was fully supported by the required details. I was able to confirm receipt of this amount to the council's bank account on 22 October 2025. The council is up to date with its VAT submissions.

*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's adopted Financial Regulations include a section covering Risk Management and state:

*FR 3.1* *The Council must ensure that it has a sound system of internal control, which delivers effective financial, operational and risk management.*

*FR 3.2* *The RFO shall prepare, for approval by the council, a risk management policy covering all activities of the council. This policy and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.*

*FR 3.3* *When considering any new activity, the RFO shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration by the council.*

*FR 3.4* *At least once a year, the council must review the effectiveness of its systems of internal control, before approving the Annual Governance Statement.*

The council has a risk assessment process in place, which was last reviewed and approved by council in May 2025 (minute ref 250510b). The Risk Assessment Register, which is published on the council website, includes a risk matrix to determine a risk assessment rating, and explains the council's approach to the management of assesses risks.

The register then considers potential risks within different areas of the council's operations, identifies specific risks within each area, determines the risk rating using the risk matrix, lists the existing controls in place, any additional controls required, a timeframe for action and who is responsible for each action.

This is a comprehensive approach and includes analysis of all risks typically associated with a council of this size with its range of services and facilities.

I note the council also has an adopted Internal Control Policy, which was reviewed and adopted by council in April 2025. This further underpins the council's approach to risk and demonstrates that the council takes its risk management responsibilities seriously.

I confirmed that the council has a valid insurance policy in place with Hiscox Insurance which covers the year under review. The policy includes Public Liability cover of £10 million, Employers Liability cover of £10 million and a Fraud & Dishonesty (Fidelity Guarantee) level of £400,000 which is sufficient for a council of this size, although the council is advised to keep this figure under review to ensure it covers the maximum balance held.

## 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 £64,000 for 2025/26. With a tax base of 695.3, this equates to a band D equivalent of £92.05 (compared to the average in England of £92.92).

The Clerk confirmed that the 2026/27 budget setting process is about to begin, with a first review taking place at the council meeting scheduled for 20 November. The council intends to confirm the budget and precept at the council meeting scheduled for 18 December.

The budget report dated 30 September 2025 shows income reported as 319% of budget, due to large unbudgeted CIL and s.106 receipts. Expenditure is reported at 37% of budget, suggesting that the budget has been accurately set and carefully monitored throughout the year. There is evidence within the minutes of meetings that councillors regularly receive budget reports for review, providing them with sufficient financial information to make informed decisions.

At the date of the interim audit, the council held circa £230,000 in earmarked reserves, spread across a range of clearly identifiable projects, including amounts received from Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which are identified separately. **I note that the Fingerposts EMR is reported with a negative balance, and this will need to be cleared from the general reserve before the end of the financial year.**

The Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Panel (SAPPP) Practitioner's guide provides updated guidance on the appropriate level of general reserves that councils should retain as below:

*5.33 The general reserve of an authority comprises its cash flow and contingency funds to cover unexpected inflation, unforeseen events and unusual circumstances.*

*5.34 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.*

*5.35 The reason for the wide range is to cater for the large variation in activity level between individual authorities. The smaller the authority, the closer the figure may be to 12 months expenditure, the larger the authority, the nearer to 3 months. In practice, any authority with income and expenditure in excess of £200,000 should plan towards 3 months equivalent general reserve.*

*5.36 In all of this it is important that each authority adopt, as a general reserve policy, the level appropriate to their size, situation, risks and plan their budget so as to ensure that the adopted level is maintained. Consideration of the minimum level of reserves requires not only consideration of level of income and expenditure but also the risks to that income.*

*5.37 Authorities with significant self-generated income (other than the precept or levy) should take into account situations that may lead to a loss in revenue as well as increased costs and adapt their general reserve accordingly.*

I note that the council has an adopted Reserves Policy, published on the council website, which includes a stated objective *'The council's current policy is to work towards a general reserve fund equal to at least 6 months of the current precept.'*

A review of the general reserve balance will be conducted as part of the final internal audit and the council is advised to follow the recommended guidance and its own policy in determining an appropriate level.

## 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**

Apart from the precept, the council has limited other sources of regular budgeted income.

From a review of the accounting records, income appears to be recorded with sufficient narrative detail to identify the source and allocated to the most appropriate nominal code.

FR 14.2 states *'The council will review all fees and charges for work done, services provided, or goods sold at least annually as part of the budget-setting process, following a report of the Clerk. The RFO shall be responsible for the collection of all amounts due to the council.'*

The Clerk confirmed that the fees are scheduled to be reviewed and approved by the council at the November meeting.

## 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 and the testing for this internal control objective does not apply.

## G. PAYROLL

***Internal audit requirement***

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

**Audit findings**

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

Payroll is processed is outsourced to a third party, who complete all the PAYE calculations and provide the information to the Clerk each month. I reviewed the payroll summary and payslips provided for the interim audit and the payroll deductions appear correct.

I was able to confirm that HMRC and pensions payments are up to date and that the council is correctly not claiming the employment allowance for national insurance contributions.

I note that the office allowance recorded on the payslip is separated within the accounting package to ensure that it is correctly reported in box 6 (other payments) on the AGAR rather than box 4 (staff costs).

There are no councillor allowances, although the Clerk is aware if paid to eligible (elected) members, these must be processed through payroll and assessed for tax and national insurance.

## H. ASSETS AND INVESTMENTS

***Internal audit requirement***

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

**Audit findings**

The Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Panel (SAPPP) Practitioner's guide provides updated guidance on assets and asset registers as below:

*5.58 The asset register should contain in its most simple form the date of acquisition, cost of acquisition, useful life estimate and location along with value held for investments; however, it is desirable for the register to contain other such supplementary information to enable the user to better understand the nature and scope of the use of the fixed asset. It is therefore recommended to show insurance value, replacement value, custodian, date last physically vouched.*

*5.59 Each authority may choose an appropriate minimum value for deciding between fixed assets and general consumables. The limit chosen will relate to expected useful life, whether the item would be included on an insurance claim and whether it is included in the risk assessment of the authority in any way. This minimum level is to be minuted and reviewed at least annually. The rationale and methodology should be recorded in the minutes.*

*5.60 One item or group of similar items shall be regarded for inclusion in the fixed asset register.*

*5.61 Assets should be first recorded in the asset register at their actual purchase cost.*

*5.62 Assets that are either under construction or have not been brought into use should be included on the asset register only once complete and they benefit the community.*

*5.63 Obsolete assets that are no longer in use or are awaiting disposal should be clearly recorded as such.*

*5.64 Where an authority receives an asset as a gift at zero cost, for example by community asset transfer, it should be included with a nominal one-pound (£1) value as a proxy for the zero cost.*

*5.65 Assets that do not have a functional purpose or any intrinsic resale value (for example, a village pond or war memorial) are often referred to as 'community assets'. Authorities should record community assets in the asset register in the same way as gifted assets.*

*5.66 The particular method of asset valuation is not specified in proper practices so authorities may use any reasonable approach to be applied consistently from year to year. The method of asset valuation adopted should be set out in a policy approved by the authority and recorded in the authority's minutes and in the asset register.*

*5.67 For authorities covered by this guide, the most appropriate and commonly used method of fixed asset valuation for first registration on the asset register is at acquisition cost. This means that the recorded value of the asset will not change from year to year, unless it is materially enhanced.*

*5.68 Commercial concepts of depreciation, impairment adjustments, and revaluation are not required nor appropriate for this method of asset valuation.*

*5.69 The total value of an authority's assets recorded on the asset register as at 31 March each year is reported at Line 9 on the authority's AGAR. Authorities should be able to track and explain fully any changes in the asset register from year to year.*

The council has a fixed asset register in place, maintained in an Excel format, which includes a description of each asset, its date of acquisition, the original cost or proxy cost, insurance value, replacement value, location, useful life, date last physically vouched and origin of purchase.

Assets are correctly listed at cost/proxy cost, or where gifted/donated, given a nominal £1 value for the purpose of the asset register. There have been no additions to date for the current financial year, and at the final internal audit I will confirm by checking the invoices that the correct values have been added for any newly acquired items.

The Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Panel (SAPPP) Practitioner's guide provides updated guidance on investments, and defines a long-term investment as below:

*2.23 Short-term investments, which mainly include deposit and savings accounts typically provided by banks, are those that display the following characteristics:*

*a. are denominated in pounds Sterling;*
*b. be realisable at full value on demand or have a maturity end date of not more than 12 months;*
*c. the whole of the original sum invested can, from the time that the investment is made, be accessed for use by the authority without any reduction; and*
*d. the authority has assessed the counterparty and is satisfied that the original sum invested is not subject to unreasonable risk.*

*2.26 A long-term investment arises where the authority invests money in anything other than a short-term investment.*

*1.11 Arrangements need to be in place to ensure that the authority's funds are managed properly and that any amounts surplus to requirements is invested appropriately, in accordance with an approved strategy which needs to have regard to the government's Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments. If total investments are to exceed the threshold specified in the statutory guidance at any time during a financial year, the authority needs to produce and approve an annual Investment Strategy in accordance with the guidance.*

The council has adopted an Annual Investment Strategy Policy to support its future decision making on placement of funds in accordance with the statutory guide. The Investment Strategy was most recently reviewed and adopted by the council at the meeting held in April 2026.

The council has no borrowing through the PWLB.

## I. BANK AND CASH

***Internal audit requirement***

*Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.*

**Audit findings**

Financial Regulation 3.6 states *'At least once a quarter, and at each financial year end, a member shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the RFO. The member shall sign and date the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of this. This activity, including any exceptions, shall be reported to and noted by the council.'*

Bank reconciliations are completed monthly. I reviewed the latest bank reconciliation for all accounts and was able to confirm the balances to the bank statements and found no errors.

I was able to confirm that the bank reconciliations have been verified in accordance with Financial Regulations, and evidence of this activity taking place is recorded within the minutes of meetings.

As the council's annual budget is below the €500,000 (£430,950 as of 3 July comparative date) threshold, it is protected by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS).

The council holds accounts with Lloyds, Unity Trust, Wave Community Bank and CCLA. At the date of the interim audit, the balances held with are within the £85,000 protection limit offered by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) for Lloyds, Unity Trust and Wave. The council is remined that the CCLA are not covered by the FSCS guarantee.

## 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), supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and, where appropriate, debtors and creditors were properly recorded.*

**Audit findings**

To be tested at the final internal audit.

## K. LIMITED ASSURANCE REVIEW

***Internal audit requirement***

*IF the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in the previous year, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt.*

**Audit findings**

The council did not certify itself exempt in 2024/25 due to exceeding the income and expenditure limits and this test does not apply.

## L: PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION

***Internal audit requirement***

*The authority publishes information on a free to access website/webpage, up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with relevant legislation*

**Audit findings**

The council is reminded that the following requirements apply.

For councils with a turnover over £25,000, it is recommended best practice to follow the Local Government Transparency Code 2015, but not a statutory requirement and therefore not subject to verification during the internal audit.

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.

Testing for publication to meet this requirement will be completed at the final internal audit.

## M: EXERCISE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS - INSPECTION OF ACCOUNTS

***Internal audit requirement***

*The authority, during the previous year, correctly provided for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.*

**Audit findings**

| Inspection – key dates | 2024/25 Actual |
|---|---|
| **Date AGAR signed by council** | 25 May 2025 |
| **Date inspection notice issued** | 23 May 2025 |
| **Inspection period begins** | 3 June 2025 |
| **Inspection period ends** | 14 July 2025 |
| **Correct length (30 working days)** | Yes |
| **Common period included (first 10 working days of July)** | Yes |

**Through discussion with the Clerk, there appears to be a typographical error on the AGAR form as it states that the AGAR was approved at a meeting on 25 May 2025 (a Sunday). This should be corrected to avoid any confusion over compliance with the requirements for the Exercise of Public Rights.**

## N: PUBLICATION REQUIREMENTS

***Internal audit requirement***

*The authority complied with the publication requirements for the prior year AGAR.*

Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, authorities must publish the following information on the authority website / webpage.

*Before 1 July 2025 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 2024/25, approved and signed, page 4*
- *Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2024/25, approved and signed, page 5*

*Not later than 30 September 2025 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 the Period of Public Rights and Section 1 (Annual Governance Statement) and Section 2 (Accounting Statement) were published on the council's website before 1 July 2025.

I was able to confirm that the Notice of Conclusion of Audit and External Auditor Report and Certificate were published on the council's website before 30 September 2025. The council has therefore met the publication requirements for 2024/25.

## O. TRUSTEESHIP

***Internal audit requirement***

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

**Audit findings**

The council has no trusts, and testing for this internal control objective is not applicable.

**Achievement of control assertions at final internal audit date**

Based on the tests conducted during the interim audit, our conclusions on the achievement of the internal control objectives to date are summarised in the table below.

| | 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 Finance 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 the 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), supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and, where appropriate, debtors and creditors were properly recorded. | To be tested at final internal audit | | |
| K | If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in the previous year, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. | | | ✓ |
| L | The authority publishes information on a free to access website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation. | To be tested at final internal audit | | |
| M | The authority, during the previous year correctly provided for the period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations. | ✓ | | |
| N | The authority complied with the publication requirements for prior year AGAR. | ✓ | | |
| O | Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee. | | | ✓ |

Should you have any queries please contact me directly on andy@mulberrylas.co.uk or 07428 647069

Yours sincerely

**Andy Beams**
**Director, Mulberry Local Authority Services Ltd**

**Interim Internal Audit - Points Carried Forward**

| Audit Point | Interim Audit Findings | Council comments |
|---|---|---|
| **B. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS, GOVERNANCE AND PAYMENTS** | The council will need to adopt and publish an FOI Publication Scheme and Website Accessibility Statement by 31 March 2026 to meet the requirements of Governance Assertion 10. | |
| **D. BUDGET, PRECPT AND RESERVES** | I note that the Fingerposts EMR is reported with a negative balance, and this will need to be cleared from the general reserve before the end of the financial year. | |
| **M. EXERCISE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS** | Through discussion with the Clerk, there appears to be a typographical error on the AGAR form as it states that the AGAR was approved at a meeting on 25 May 2025 (a Sunday). This should be corrected to avoid any confusion over compliance with the requirements for the Exercise of Public Rights. | |