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Our Ref: MARK/NOR002

Mrs P Whitehead  
North Horsham Parish Council  
Roffey Millennium Hall  
Crawley Road  
Horsham  
West Sussex  
RH12 4DT

30<sup>th</sup> September 2020

Dear Pauline

**Re: North Horsham Parish Council**  
**Internal Audit Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020**

### Executive Summary

Following completion of our interim internal audit on the 29<sup>th</sup> September 2020 we enclose our report for your kind attention and presentation to the Council. The audit was conducted remotely in accordance with current practices and guidelines and testing was risk based. The clerk was provided a list of items in the plan to send to us and from this we selected further items to sample. Whilst we have not tested all transactions, our samples have where appropriate covered the entire year to date. Where appropriate **recommendations for future action are shown in bold text and summarised in the tables at the end of the report.**

At the interim visit we reviewed and performed tests on the following areas:

- Review of the accounting system & financial reporting package
- Review of the Financial Regulations & Standing Orders
- Review of the Risk Assessments & Insurance
- Review of the Budgeting Process
- Review of Salaries
- Review of fixed asset register
- Review of annual charges

Our sample testing did not uncover any errors or misstatements that require reporting to the external auditor, 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 very seriously and I am pleased to report that overall the systems and procedures you have in place are fit for purpose.

Whilst my report contains 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 <sup>North Horsham</sup> ~~Shere~~ Parish are well established, and followed.

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## **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 & Competence**

Your audit was conducted by Mark Mulberry of Mulberry & Co. We confirm we are independent from the management of the financial controls and procedures of the council and neither the internal auditor or the firm have any conflicts of interest with the audit client, nor do they provide any management or financial assistance to the client.

Your auditor is a qualified practicing accountant with over 20 years’ experience as a registered statutory auditor.

## **Engagement Letter**

An engagement letter was issued on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020 covering the 2020/21 internal audit assignment. Copies of this document are available on request.

## **Planning & Inherent Risk Assessment**

The scope and plan of works including fee structure was issued to the council on the 1st September 2020 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.

- There have been no 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
- The client has an audit committee with detailed terms of reference and work programme

It is my 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 (INTERIM AUDIT)*****Internal audit requirement***

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

The Council continues to use RBS as a day to day accounting package, this is a tried and tested industry specific package and I make no recommendation to change. The system is used regularly to report on and record the financial transactions of that of the Council. There are five users on the booking system and two for the accounting system.

Every month, a month end hard close down is performed and various reports are printed and filed in hard copy, these include but are not limited to; Income and expenditure against budget, cashbooks, bank reconciliations and other reports as fit. This is a clear and easy to follow system and a review of the cashbook shows that all data fields are being entered.

I tested the opening balances as at 1/4/20 by reviewing the balance brought forward on the receipts page on the RBS accounting package for cashbook one and confirmed it could be agreed back to the investment reconciliation for the audited accounts for 2019/20; both documents showed £201,784.74. There were no errors.

I reviewed the nominal ledger for the period and can confirm there is no evidence of netting off in the period April to September 2020.

The Council is VAT registered and the last VAT return was for the quarter ended 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020, which showed a refund position of £2,436.28. This was submitted to HMRC in July 2020 and the refund received on the 10/07/20. This also indicates that the council is up to date with its postings on the financial package.

Overall, I have the impression that the accounting systems are well ordered and routinely maintained and as such I make no recommendation to change.

I am of the opinion that the control assertion of "Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year" has been met.

**B. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS, GOVERNANCE & PAYMENTS (INTERIM & FINAL AUDIT)*****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.*

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

External auditors report & notice of conclusion of audit for 2019/20 have at the time of the internal audit not been provided by 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 and the web site shows the Register of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (with signatures redacted).

*Confirm that the Council is compliant with the relevant transparency code.*

The Council is required by law to follow the 2015 Transparency Code, insofar as gross annual income has breached £250,000. A review of the web site has shown that the council is following the code in a clear easy to read format which is to be applauded.

*Confirm that the Council is compliant with the GDPR.*

As council is aware of GDPR and has a clearly defined and accessible privacy notice on its website. It was noted the Council has a “.gov” email, but not for councillors. **It is recommended that Councillors have a council email address such as [cllr.name@northhorsham](mailto:cllr.name@northhorsham).....** 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.

*Confirm that the Council meets regularly throughout the year*

The council has the following committees:

- Full Council - meets approximately every two months
- Planning, Environment and Transport – meets monthly
- Property - meets approximately every two months
- Finance and Administration - meets quarterly
- Personnel - meets quarterly

There are also a number of working parties and groups which meets as and when necessary to cover specific tasks each committee has spending powers.

The Council confirmed in its 19<sup>th</sup> March meeting that decision making powers be delegated as follows it was RESOLVED to agree a scheme of delegation whereby urgent decisions would be facilitated by agreement of the Chairman of the Council, Vice Chairman of the Council, Chairman of the Finance and Administration Committee and the Clerk. Should one of those people be unavailable for any reason, substitutions could be made with the Chairman of the Planning, Environment and Transport Committee or the Chairman of the Property Committee and the Deputy Clerk. Any decision made would be communicated to the Council and ratified as soon as possible after the decision had been made. If possible, the views of the Council would be sought prior to the decision, but this may not be practical.

Following a recommendation by the Clerk, it was RESOLVED that in order for payments to be made in a timely manner, the list of payments would be sent to at least two Councillors who are authorised to verify payments for e-mail agreement. Those asked to sign off the payments would be able to request to see a copy of any invoice they chose. Large or unusual payments would be highlighted. All payment lists that were authorised in this way would be signed and authorised retrospectively as soon as possible.

The clerk advised us of the following. Roffey Millennium Hall closed in March 2020 and staff worked at home until July 2020 only visiting the office to collect post, telephone messages and files. They have some staff who are in the clinically vulnerable group who had to take additional precautions. From July, whilst staff came into the building to work, they have only done so on a part time basis as the caretakers were furloughed. Staff were and are still working part of their hours at home. In October 2020 the office opened every morning, but not for the public. Councillors then came in to sign the payments. During lockdown, I would take a photograph of the list of payments prepared for the bank and send them to Councillors for authorisation with some explanation of what the payments were for. Councillors could ask for a copy of any invoice they wished to see.

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

A review of the web site agendas shows that at least 3 clear days’ notice is given. Whilst we have not tested every single committee and council meeting there was no evidence of non-compliance.

*Check the draft minutes of the last meeting(s) are on the council’s website*

Unsigned minutes are uploaded to the council website and these agree to the signed versions as supplied by the clerk.

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

The standing orders are based on the NALC model and are dated 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2020 [Minute ref FC/492/20].

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

Financial regulations are based on the NALC model and are dated 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2020 [Minute ref FC/492/20]. The regulations being based on the NALC model 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.**

Financial regulation 2.2 deals with bank reconciliations. *"On a regular basis, at least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, a member other than 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."*

The council is performing a monthly bank reconciliation for all accounts and evidence has been obtained for June, July & August 2020 for this. I am able to confirm that the face of the reconciliation and back statement are signed and minuted as such in accordance with regulations.

Financial regulation 4 deals with budgetary control and authority to spend. The council has thresholds in place at which authorisations to spend must be obtained.

- Full council – over £5,000
- Finance and Administration committee – between £2,000 and £5,000
- Other committees – up to £2,000

The RFO has delegated authority to spend up to £10,000 in the event of an emergency situation, and any such spend is then reported to council at the next meeting.

Financial Regulation 5 deals with authorisation of payments. The minutes show authorisation of payments lists in accordance with regulations. Random sampling of payments shows invoices being checked and initialled, with payments easily reconcilable to the payments list.

Financial regulation 6 deals with making payments. The council makes payments predominately via online banking, but also by cheque, direct debit and debit card. There are seven councillors authorised as signatories, with the Clerk and Deputy Clerk also able to sign if required. Cheques must be signed by two signatories. Council approves direct debit payments on an annual basis, and this activity is recorded in the council minutes.

I was able to test the following items with assistance from the Clerk and prove the items to copies of the invoices, payments sheets and minutes

Date	Payee Name	Reference	Amount	Invoice authorised	Payment agreed	Minuted
03/04/2020	Grasstex Ltd	030420201	£1,525.68	Agrees to invoice & properly authorised	Agrees to payments sheet	(PR/086/19) & (FC/344/19)
14/04/2020	British Gas	DD	£1,327.12	Agrees to invoice &	DD	Annual DD

	Business			properly authorised		
27/05/2020	N. Simmonds	327052020	£1375.00	Agrees to invoice & properly authorised	Agrees to payments sheet	Preferred supplier
07/05/2020	Leadbeater locks	070520-01	£53.14	Agrees to invoice & properly authorised	Agrees to payments sheet	Urgent Clerk purchase
27/05/2020	Came & Co	127052020	£9,109.25	Agrees to invoice & properly authorised	Agrees to payments sheet	FA/223/18
11/06/2020	D. Lees	111062020	£38.70	Agrees to invoice & properly authorised	Agrees to payments sheet	Staff expenses authorised by line manager
20/07/2020	T C Maintenance	0520072020	£895.00	Agrees to invoice & properly authorised	Agrees to payments sheet	Preferred supplier
10/07/2020	Incor Group Management Ltd	310072020	£273.00	Agrees to invoice & properly authorised	Agrees to payments sheet	Preferred supplier

*Confirm all section 137 expenditure meets the guidelines & does not exceed the annual per elector limit of £8.32 per elector.*

The council has the General Power of Competence (GPC) and therefore has no section 137 expenditure.

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

Internal Control Working Group has been established to complete regular checks of accounts, including review of the sales and purchase ledgers, bank reconciliations and reserves. In addition to this, finance & administration committee receives regular reports of the key financial areas and these reports are available on the council website. Again, this is to be applauded.

I am of the opinion the council is following its own regulations and that any changes to financial regulations are to be considered minor and no indicative of errors in the system. I am therefore of the opinion that the control assertion "This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for", has been met.

### **C. RISK MANAGEMENT & INSURANCE (INTERIM AUDIT)**

#### **Internal audit requirement**

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

The Council has a risk strategy in place and monitors and reviews risk on an ongoing basis in accordance with best practice regulations. The council is aware of and has policies in place to mitigate financial risk. The last risk review was carried out in July 2020. There are some medium risks and high risks – associated with Covid 19. I remind council it now has to display an NHS QR code on its public buildings. <https://www.gov.uk/create-coronavirus-qr-poster>

The Council is insured with AXA on a standard local authority deal. I confirmed the policy was in date at the time of my audit. Money and asset cover appear adequate, with a fidelity guarantee set at £500,000

I am of the opinion that the control objective of "This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.", has been met

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#### **D. BUDGET, PRECEPT & RESERVES (INTERIM & FINAL AUDIT)**

##### ***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.*

The clerk has confirmed that the budget setting process is underway and is being conducted in accordance with best practice regulations.

I have confirmed that in accordance with regulations regular reporting of budget against expenditure is carried out. In addition to this there is clear evidence in the minutes of the finance committee discussing reserves and future cashburn.

The council currently has £204k of earmarked reserves and is planning on a small surplus budget for the council year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

I am of the opinion that the control objective of "The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.", has been met.

#### **E. INCOME (INTERIM & FINAL AUDIT)**

##### ***Internal audit requirement***

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

Other than the precept, the council also receives income through room hire, grants and allotment fees.

Any cash payments received by the council are receipted and placed in an envelope. Where another staff member is available, this is double checked at the time. Cash received is kept in a locked drawer and banked weekly, or sooner if the amount is significant.

The precept was received in April 2020 and the nominal ledger shows regular monthly sale ledger updates.

I am of the opinion that the control objective of "Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.", has been met.

#### **F. PETTY CASH (INTERIM AUDIT)**

##### ***Internal audit requirement***

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

The council has a float of £150 and is balanced, at least quarterly, it is clear this is used for small sundries and is not significant or material.

I am of the opinion that the control objective of "Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.", has been met.

#### **G. PAYROLL (INTERIM & FINAL AUDIT)**

##### ***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.*

The council uses an external firm who complete salary calculations and make BACS payments on behalf of the council. On a monthly basis, the council provides overtime details to the external firm, and then upon receipt of the external company's report, confirms its accuracy.

The council has a Members Allowances scheme for elected members, some of whom have chosen to opt out. Allowances are correctly paid through payroll on a quarterly basis. Any expenses for staff or councillors are paid upon receipt of a completed and authorised expenses form.

The council has fulfilled its obligations in respect of auto-enrolment and uses LGPS.

Monthly and year-end PAYE and NI deductions and returns have been submitted online, on time to HMRC. There were no errors recorded or late payments to HMRC during the financial year under review. The PAYE and NI liability are paid on time.

I tested the tax deduction for an employee – there were no errors.

All Council employees are paid through the payroll for all Council work undertaken. No employees are paid separately for any other Council work undertaken.

I am of the opinion that salaries are correctly stated on the AGAR and that the control object of "Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.", has been met.

## **H. ASSETS AND INVESTMENTS (INTERIM & FINAL AUDIT)**

### ***Internal audit requirement***

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

The Council records fixed assets on an excel based fixed asset register, with all assets correctly recorded at cost or proxy cost. This system is sufficient for a council of this size and I make no recommendation for change.

All additions have been identified separately and have been added to the register correctly at cost.

The Council does not hold any long term investments i.e. over 1 year. Any addition to the asset register is normally with a cost value greater than £1,000.

I am of the opinion that the control objective of "Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.", has been met.

## **I. BANK & CASH (INTERIM & FINAL AUDIT)**

### ***Internal audit requirement***

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

At the interim audit date the clerk provided us with reconciliations for June, July & August for all three bank accounts. I reviewed these and found no evidence of reconciling errors or aged payments nor lodgements.

I am of the opinion that bank and cash balances are properly shown on the AGAR and that the control objective of "Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.", has been met.



**J. YEAR END ACCOUNTS (FINAL AUDIT)****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.

The council, at its meeting to sign off the year-end accounts, must discuss the Annual Governance Statement and record this activity in the minutes of the meeting. Based on the internal audit finding, I recommend using the table below as the basis for that discussion. THIS MUST BE A SEPARATE AGENDA ITEM TO THE SIGNING OF THE ANNUAL ACCOUNTS.

**Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement**

	<b>Annual Governance Statement</b>	<i>'Yes' means that this authority</i>	<b>Suggested response based on evidence</b>
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>	<b>YES</b> – income & expenditure 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>	<b>YES</b> – 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>	<b>YES</b> – the Clerk is experienced and 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>	<b>YES</b> – the requirements and timescales for 2019/20 year-end were 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>	<b>YES</b> – 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>	<b>YES</b> – the council has appointed an independent and competent internal auditor has completed two audits during the year.
7	We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external	<i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i>	<b>YES</b> – where matters are raised, action taken by council

	audit.		is recorded in the minutes.
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>	<b>YES</b> – 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 of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.</i>	<b>Yes</b> – the council has met its responsibilities

## Section 2 – Accounting Statements

Agar Box Number		2018/19	2019/20	Auditor Notes
1	Balances brought forward	322,960	392,161	Agrees to 2018/19 signed AGAR
2	Precept or Rates and Levies	319,943	327,769	No significant variance – agrees to Income & expenditure account and precept remittances.
3	Total other receipts	221,252	228,373	No significant variance
4	Staff costs	285,845	298,747	No significant variance
5	Loan interest/capital repayments	13,188	12,695	No significant variance – agrees to PWLB statements
6	All other Payments	172,961	197,269	No significant variance
7	Balances carried forward	392,161	439,592	Casting agrees & not greater than twice box 2. Agrees to balance sheet. General reserve £230,057 Earmarked £209,535
8	Total value of cash and short term investments	406,637	457,018	No significant variance – agrees to reconciliation
9	Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	1,372,852	1,378,730	No significant variance – agrees to register
10	Total borrowings	62,500	52,884	No significant variance – agrees to PWLB statement

The year-end accounts have been correctly prepared on the income & expenditure basis with the box 7 & 8 reconciliation properly completed.

The AGAR correctly casts and cross casts and the comparatives have been correctly copied over from the 2018-19 AGAR.

The variance analysis is required because there are variances greater than 15% and £200. This has been prepared on a summary table basis.

I am of the opinion the control objective of "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.", has been met.

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**K. LIMITED ASSURANCE REVIEW (FINAL AUDIT)****Internal audit requirement**

*If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2018/19, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2018/19 AGAR tick "not covered")*

Not applicable

**L: EXERCISE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS - INSPECTION OF ACCOUNTS (FINAL AUDIT)****Internal audit requirement**

*The authority has demonstrated that during summer 2020 it correctly provided for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.*

Due to the Covid 19 outbreak, the statutory deadlines have been changed as follows:

The publication date for final, audited, accounts was moved from the 30 September to 30 November 2020 for all local authority bodies. To give local authorities more flexibility, the requirement for the public inspection period to include the first 10 working days of July was removed. Instead, local authorities must commence the public inspection period on or before the first working day of September 2020.

This means that draft accounts must be approved by 31 August 2020 at the latest. However, they may be approved earlier, and we would encourage councils to do so wherever possible, to help manage overall pressure on audit firms towards the end of the year.

Authorities must publish the dates of their public inspection period, and given the removal of the common inspection period and extension of the overall deadlines for this year, it is recommended that all authorities provide public notice on their websites when the public inspection period would usually commence, explaining why they are departing from normal practice for 2019/20 accounts.

The regulations implementing these measures were laid on 7 April and are due to come into force on 30 April 2020.

I confirmed with the RFO that arrangements are in place at this Council to ensure proper exercise of public rights. Relevant dates are set out in the table below.

<b>Inspection - Key date</b>	<b>2018/19 Actual</b>	<b>2019-20</b>
<b>Accounts approved at full council</b>	April 2018 Full Council	2 <sup>nd</sup> July 2020
<b>Date Inspection Notice Issued and how published</b>	1 June	21 <sup>st</sup> August 2020
<b>Inspection period begins</b>	4 June	27 <sup>th</sup> August
<b>Inspection period ends</b>	13 July	12 <sup>th</sup> October
<b>Correct length</b>	Yes	yes
<b>Common period included?</b>	Yes	yes
<b>Summary of rights document on website?</b>	<b>Attached to inspection announcement</b>	<b>Attached to inspection announcement</b>

SI 2020/404 The Accounts and Audit (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020. This SI amends the deadline by which the Annual Governance Statement and Statement of Accounts of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) together with any certificate or opinion issued by the local auditor must be

published from 30 September 2020 to 30 November 2020. Previously there was a requirement for all smaller authorities to have a common period for the exercise of public rights, being the first 10 working days of July.

Under the new regulations there is no requirement for a common period for the exercise of public rights. Smaller authorities are still required to set a period for this purpose, but the only requirement is that the 30 working day period for the exercise of public rights should start on or before the first working day of September, i.e. on or before 1 September 2020. This SI was issued on 7 April and is effective from 30 April 2020.

I am of the opinion the control objective of “The authority has demonstrated that during summer 2020 it correctly provided for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.”, has been met.

### **M. TRUSTEESHIP (INTERIM AUDIT)**

#### ***Internal audit requirement***

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

The council has no trusts.

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

Kind regards

Yours sincerely



**Mark Mulberry**

**Interim Audit - Points Forward**

<b>Audit Point</b>	<b>Audit Findings</b>	<b>Council comments</b>
Governance	Consider .gov emails for councilors.	