Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities in England

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2017/18 Part 3

To be completed by:

- **all smaller authorities* where either the higher of gross income or gross expenditure exceeded £25,000 but did not exceed £6.5 million; and**
- **any other smaller authorities that either:**
  - **are unable to certify themselves as exempt; or**
  - **have requested a limited assurance review.**

Guidance notes on completing Part 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2017/18

1. Every smaller authority in England that either received gross income or incurred gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 **must** complete Part 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return at the end of each financial year in accordance with Proper Practices.
2. **The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is made up of three parts, pages 3 to 6:**
   - The **annual internal audit report** is completed by the authority's internal auditor.
   - **Sections 1 and 2** are to be completed and approved by the authority.
   - **Section 3** is completed by the external auditor and will be returned to the authority.
3. The authority **must** approve Section 1, Annual Governance Statement, before approving Section 2, Accounting Statements, and both **must** be approved **before 2 July 2018.**
4. An authority with either gross income or gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 or an authority with neither income nor expenditure exceeding £25,000, but which is unable to certify itself as exempt, or requesting a limited assurance review, **must** send to the external auditor:
   - the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Sections 1, 2 and 3, together with
   - a bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2018
   - an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements
   - your notification of the commencement date of the period for the exercise of public rights
   - Annual Internal Audit Report 2017/18

Unless requested, do not send any original records to your external auditor. Your external auditor will ask for any additional documents needed.

Once the external auditor has completed and is able to give an opinion on the limited assurance review, the Annual Governance and Accountability Return including **Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate** will be returned to the authority.

Publication Requirements

Smaller authorities with either income or expenditure exceeding £25,000 **must** publish on a public website, under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, the Annual Governance and Accountability Return:

- **Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2017/18**, page 4
- **Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2017/18**, page 5
- **Section 3 – The External Auditor Report and Certificate 2017/18**, page 6
- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and other information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

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.

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return constitutes the annual return referred to in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. Throughout, the words 'external auditor' have the same meaning as the words 'local auditor' in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

**for a complete list of bodies that may be smaller authorities refer to schedule 2 to Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.*

Guidance notes on completing Part 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2017/18

- The authority **must** comply with *Proper Practices* in completing Sections 1 and 2 of this Annual Governance and Accountability Return. *Proper Practices* are found in the *Practitioners' Guide** which is updated from time to time and contains everything needed to prepare successfully for the financial year-end and the subsequent work by the external auditor.
- Make sure that the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is complete (i.e. no empty highlighted boxes), and is properly signed and dated. Avoid making amendments to the completed Annual Governance and Accountability Return. Any amendments must be approved by the authority, properly initialled and accompanied by an explanation. If the Annual Governance and Accountability Return contains unapproved or unexplained amendments, it may be returned and additional costs will be incurred.
- The authority **should** receive and note the annual internal audit report prior to approving the annual governance statement and before approving the accounts.
- Use the checklist provided below to review the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for completeness before sending it to the external auditor.
- Do not send the external auditor any information not specifically requested. However, you **must** inform your external auditor about any change of Clerk, Responsible Finance Officer or Chairman, and provide relevant email addresses and telephone numbers.
- Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation to be sent to your external auditor with the Annual Governance and Accountability Return covers all the bank accounts. If the authority holds any short-term investments, note their value on the bank reconciliation. The external auditor must be able to agree the bank reconciliation to Box 8 on the accounting statements **(Section 2, page 5)**. An explanation **must** be provided of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8. More help on bank reconciliation is available in the *Practitioners' Guide**.
- Explain fully significant variances in the accounting statements on **page 5**. Do not just send a copy of the detailed accounting records instead of this explanation. The external auditor wants to know that you understand the reasons for all variances. Include complete numerical and narrative analysis to support the explanation.
- If the external auditor has to review unsolicited information, or receives an incomplete bank reconciliation, or variances are not fully explained, additional costs will be incurred.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and that the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2017) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2018).
- Please enter the authority's name **only** in Section 3 on Page 6. **Do not complete the remainder of that section**, which is reserved for the external auditor.
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), on behalf of the authority, **must** set the commencement date for the exercise of public rights. From the commencement date for a single period of 30 consecutive working days, the accounts and accounting records can be inspected. Whatever period the RFO sets it **must** include a common inspection period – during which the accounts and accounting records of all smaller authorities must be available for public inspection – of the first ten working days of July.
- The authority **must** publish the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, including the period for the exercise of public rights and the name and address of the external auditor.

Completion checklist – 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements		Yes	No
All sections	Have all highlighted boxes have been completed?		
	Has all additional information requested, including **the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights**, been provided for the external auditor?		
Internal Audit Report	Have all highlighted boxes have been completed by the internal auditor and explanations provided?		
Section 1	For any statement to which the response is 'no', is an explanation provided?		
Section 2	Has the authority's approval of the accounting statements been confirmed by the signature of the Chairman of the approval meeting?		
	Has an explanation of significant variations from last year to this year been provided?		
	The bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2018 is agreed to Box 8?		
	Has an explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 been provided?		
Sections 1 and 2	Trust funds – have all disclosures been made if the authority is a sole managing trustee? **NB:** do not send trust accounting statements unless requested or instructed.		

*More guidance on completing this annual return is available in ***Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices***, which can be downloaded from **www.nalc.gov.uk** or from **www.slcc.co.uk** or from **www.ada.org.uk**

Annual Internal Audit Report 2017/18

North Mymms Parish Council

This authority's internal auditor, acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with relevant procedures and controls to be in operation **during** the financial year ended 31 March 2018.

The internal audit for 2017/18 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Agreed? Please choose one of the following		
	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 assessed 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 and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.	✓		
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. (For local councils only)	Yes	No	Not applicable
Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.			✓

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken: 10/5/2017 - 22/5/2018

Name of person who carried out the internal audit: Kevin Rose - IAC Audit & Consultancy Ltd

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit:

Date: 18/06/2018

*If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

**Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned, or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2017/18

We acknowledge as the members of:

NORTH MYMMS PARISH COUNCIL

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2018, that:

	Agreed			Yes' means that this authority
	Yes	No*		
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓			*prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.*
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓			*made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.*
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.	✓			*has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.*
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.	✓			*during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.*
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.	✓			*considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.*
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓			*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.*
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓			*responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.*
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.	✓			*disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.*
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A	*has met all of its responsibilities where it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.*
			✓	

*Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response. Describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified.

This Annual Governance Statement is approved by this authority and recorded as minute reference:

Item 40 Council 27/6/18.

dated 27/06/18.

Signed by the Chairman and Clerk of the meeting where approval is given:

Chairman L Saffer.

Clerk S.L.C.

Other information required by the Transparency Codes (not part of Annual Governance Statement)
Authority web address

WWW.NORTHMYMMS.ORG

Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate 2017/18

In respect of **North Mymms Parish Council HT0076**

1 Respective responsibilities of the body and the auditor

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2018; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

Our responsibility is to review Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with guidance issued by the National Audit Office (NAO) on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General (see note below). Our work **does not** constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would do.

2 External auditor report 2017/18

Except for the matters reported below, on the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

We have not yet completed our review work on the AGAR and supporting documentation. A final report detailing any qualifications and 'other' matters will be provided with the certificate of completion, following finalisation of the review.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

We have not yet completed our review work on the AGAR and supporting documentation. A final report detailing any qualifications and 'other' matters will be provided with the certificate of completion, following finalisation of the review.

3 External auditor certificate 2017/18

We do not certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2018

We do not certify completion because:

We must complete our review work before certifying the completion of our review and the discharging of our responsibilities.

External Auditor Name: **PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP**

External Auditor Signature: PKF Littlejohn LLP Date: 28/09/2018

* Note: the NAO issued guidance applicable to external auditors' work on limited assurance reviews for 2017/18 in Auditor Guidance Note AGN/02. The AGN is available from the NAO website (www.nao.org.uk)

PKF Littlejohn LLP

PKF

Accountants &
business advisers

Final External Auditor Report and Certificate 2017/18 in respect of North Mymms Parish Council HT0076

Respective responsibilities of the body and the auditor

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with Proper Practices which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2018; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

Our responsibility is to review Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with guidance issued by the National Audit Office (NAO) on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General (see note below). Our work does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and does not provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would do.

External auditor report 2017/18

On 28 September 2018 we issued a report detailing the results of our limited assurance review of Sections 1 and 2 of this authority's Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31 March 2018. We explained that we were unable to certify completion of the review at that time. We are now in a position to certify completion of the review.

The external auditor report given in Section 3 of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return requires amendments as follows:

On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

None

External auditor certificate 2017/18

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2018.

PKF Littlejohn LLP

PKF Littlejohn LLP
30/09/2018

Tel: +44 (0)20 7516 2200 • Fax: +44 (0)20 7516 2400 • DX 42660 Isle of Dogs • www.pkf-littlejohn.com
PKF Littlejohn LLP • 1 Westferry Circus • Canary Wharf • London E14 4HD

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