

Smaller authority name: NORFOLK RIVERS IDB

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS AND PUBLICATION
OF UNAUDITED ANNUAL GOVERNANCE &
ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN**

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2018

**Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 Sections 26 and 27
The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/234)**

NOTICE	NOTES
<p>1. Date of announcement <u>1 JUNE 2018</u> (a)</p> <p>2. Each year the smaller authority's Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) needs to be reviewed by an external auditor appointed by Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Ltd. The unaudited AGAR has been published with this notice. As it has yet to be reviewed by the appointed auditor, it is subject to change as a result of that review.</p> <p>Any person interested has the right to inspect and make copies of the accounting records for the financial year to which the audit relates and all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers, receipts and other documents relating to those records must be made available for inspection by any person interested. For the year ended 31 March 2018, these documents will be available on reasonable notice by application to:</p> <p>(b) <u>S. JEFFREY TEL: 01553 819600</u> <u>KETTLEWELL HOUSE, AUSTIN FIELDS INDUSTRIAL ESTATE</u> <u>KING'S LYNN PE30 1PA</u></p> <p>commencing on (c) <u>Monday 4 June 2018</u></p> <p>and ending on (d) <u>Friday 13 July 2018</u></p> <p>3. Local government electors and their representatives also have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The opportunity to question the appointed auditor about the accounting records; and• The right to make an objection which concerns a matter in respect of which the appointed auditor could either make a public interest report or apply to the court for a declaration that an item of account is unlawful. Written notice of an objection must first be given to the auditor and a copy sent to the smaller authority. <p>The appointed auditor can be contacted at the address in paragraph 4 below for this purpose between the above dates only.</p> <p>4. The smaller authority's AGAR is subject to review by the appointed auditor under the provisions of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and the NAO's Code of Audit Practice 2015. The appointed auditor is:</p> <p>PKF Littlejohn LLP (Ref: SBA Team) 1 Westferry Circus Canary Wharf London E14 4HD (sba@pkf-littlejohn.com)</p> <p>5. This announcement is made by (e) <u>P J CAMMILE</u> <u>CHIEF EXECUTIVE</u></p>	<p>(a) Insert date of placing of the notice which must be not less than 1 day before the date in (c) below</p> <p>(b) Insert name, position and address/telephone number/ email address, as appropriate, of the Clerk or other person to which any person may apply to inspect the accounts</p> <p>(c) Insert date, which must be at least 1 day after the date of announcement in (a) above and at least 30 working days before the date appointed in (d) below</p> <p>(d) The inspection period between (c) and (d) must be 30 working days inclusive and must include the first 10 working days of July.</p> <p>(e) Insert name and position of person placing the notice – this person must be the responsible financial officer for the smaller authority</p>

LOCAL AUTHORITY ACCOUNTS: A SUMMARY OF YOUR RIGHTS

Please note that this summary applies to all relevant smaller authorities, including local councils, internal drainage boards and 'other' smaller authorities.

The basic position

The [Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014](#) (the Act) governs the work of auditors appointed to smaller authorities. This summary explains the provisions contained in Sections 26 and 27 of the Act. The Act and the [Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015](#) also cover the duties, responsibilities and rights of smaller authorities, other organisations and the public concerning the accounts being audited.

As a local elector, or an interested person, you have certain legal rights in respect of the accounting records of smaller authorities. As an interested person you can inspect accounting records and related documents. If you are a local government elector for the area to which the accounts relate you can also ask questions about the accounts and object to them. You do not have to pay directly for exercising your rights. However, any resulting costs incurred by the smaller authority form part of its running costs. Therefore, indirectly, local residents pay for the cost of you exercising your rights through their council tax.

The right to inspect the accounting records

Any interested person can inspect the accounting records, which includes but is not limited to local electors. You can inspect the accounting records for the financial year to which the audit relates and all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers, receipts and other documents relating to those records. You can copy all, or part, of these records or documents. Your inspection must be about the accounts, or relate to an item in the accounts. You cannot, for example, inspect or copy documents unrelated to the accounts, or that include personal information (Section 26 (6) – (10) of the Act explains what is meant by personal information). You cannot inspect information which is protected by commercial confidentiality. This is information which would prejudice commercial confidentiality if it was released to the public and there is not, set against this, a very strong reason in the public interest why it should nevertheless be disclosed.

When smaller authorities have finished preparing accounts for the financial year and approved them, they must publish them (including on a website). There must be a 30 working day period, called the 'period for the exercise of public rights', during which you can exercise your statutory right to inspect the accounting records. Smaller authorities must tell the public, including advertising this on their website, that the accounting records and related documents are available to inspect. By arrangement you will then have 30 working days to inspect and make copies of the accounting records. You may have to pay a copying charge. The 30 working day period must include a common period of inspection during which all smaller authorities' accounting records are available to inspect. This will be 2-13 July 2018 for 2017/18 accounts. The advertisement must set out the dates of the period for the exercise of public rights, how you can communicate to the smaller authority that you wish to inspect the accounting records and related documents, the name and address of the auditor, and the relevant legislation that governs the inspection of accounts and objections.

The right to ask the auditor questions about the accounting records

You should first ask your smaller authority about the accounting records, since they hold all the details. If you are a local elector, your right to ask questions of the external auditor is enshrined in law. However, while the auditor will answer your questions where possible, they are not always obliged to do so. For example, the question might be better answered by another organisation, require investigation beyond the auditor's remit, or involve disproportionate cost (which is borne by the local taxpayer). Give your smaller authority the opportunity first to explain anything in the accounting records that you are unsure about. If you are not satisfied with their explanation, you can question the external auditor about the accounting records.

The law limits the time available for you formally to ask questions. This must be done in the period for the exercise of public rights, so let the external auditor know your concern as soon as possible. The

advertisement or notice that tells you the accounting records are available to inspect will also give the period for the exercise of public rights during which you may ask the auditor questions, which here means formally asking questions under the Act. You can ask someone to represent you when asking the external auditor questions.

Before you ask the external auditor any questions, inspect the accounting records fully, so you know what they contain. Please remember that you cannot formally ask questions, under the Act, after the end of the period for the exercise of public rights. You may ask your smaller authority other questions about their accounts for any year, at any time. But these are not questions under the Act.

You can ask the external auditor questions about an item in the accounting records for the financial year being audited. However, your right to ask the external auditor questions is limited. The external auditor can only answer 'what' questions, not 'why' questions. The external auditor cannot answer questions about policies, finances, procedures or anything else unless it is directly relevant to an item in the accounting records. Remember that your questions must always be about facts, not opinions. To avoid misunderstanding, we recommend that you always put your questions in writing.

The right to make objections at audit

You have inspected the accounting records and asked your questions of the smaller authority. Now you may wish to object to the accounts on the basis that an item in them is in your view unlawful or there are matters of wider concern arising from the smaller authority's finances. A local government elector can ask the external auditor to apply to the High Court for a declaration that an item of account is unlawful, or to issue a report on matters which are in the public interest. You must tell the external auditor which specific item in the accounts you object to and why you think the item is unlawful, or why you think that a public interest report should be made about it. You must provide the external auditor with the evidence you have to support your objection. Disagreeing with income or spending does not make it unlawful. To object to the accounts you must write to the external auditor stating you want to make an objection, including the information and evidence below and you must send a copy to the smaller authority. The notice must include:

- confirmation that you are an elector in the smaller authority's area;
- why you are objecting to the accounts and the facts on which you rely;
- details of any item in the accounts that you think is unlawful; and
- details of any matter about which you think the external auditor should make a public interest report.

Other than it must be in writing, there is no set format for objecting. You can only ask the external auditor to act within the powers available under the [Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014](#).

A final word

You may not use this 'right to object' to make a personal complaint or claim against your smaller authority. You should take such complaints to your local Citizens' Advice Bureau, local Law Centre or to your solicitor. Smaller authorities, and so local taxpayers, meet the costs of dealing with questions and objections. In deciding whether to take your objection forward, one of a series of factors the auditor must take into account is the cost that will be involved, they will only continue with the objection if it is in the public interest to do so. They may also decide not to consider an objection if they think that it is frivolous or vexatious, or if it repeats an objection already considered. If you appeal to the courts against an auditor's decision not to apply to the courts for a declaration that an item of account is unlawful, you will have to pay for the action yourself.

For more detailed guidance on public rights and the special powers of auditors, copies of the publication [Local authority accounts: A guide to your rights](#) are available from the NAO website.

If you wish to contact your authority's appointed external auditor please write to the address in paragraph 4 of the *Notice of Public Rights and Publication of Unaudited Annual Governance & Accountability Return*.

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

NORFOLK RIVERS INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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

29/3/18 - 27/4/18

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

Kathy Woodward

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

K Woodward

Date

30/4/18

*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:

NORFOLK RIVERS INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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.	✓		<i>prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i>
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>
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>
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>
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>
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>
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓		<i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i>
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>
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
			✓

*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:

33/18/01

dated

24/05/18

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

Chairman

Clerk

[Signature]
P. Cennamo

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

<https://www.wlma.org.uk/norfolk-idb/home>

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2017/18 for

NORFOLK RIVERS INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2017 £	31 March 2018 £	
1. Balances brought forward	1,149,350	1,062,076	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	366,114	373,454	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	675,385	621,079	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	376,261	464,381	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include salaries and wages, PAYE and NI (employees and employers), pension contributions and employment expenses.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	752,513	588,761	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cash-book less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	1,062,076	1,003,467	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	1,043,703	940,663	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	69,930	63,348	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	0	0	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).
11. (For Local Councils Only) Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	Yes	No	The Council acts as sole trustee for and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
			N.B. The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2018 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return present fairly the financial position of this authority and its income and expenditure, or properly present receipts and payments, as the case may be.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer

Planned 5 JUL 2017

Date 08 05 18

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

24/05/18

and recorded as minute reference:

35 | 18 | 01

Signed by Chairman of the meeting where approval of the Accounting Statements is given

W. C. C. C. C.

Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate 2017/18

In respect of **NORFOLK RIVERS INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**

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, in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 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.
(*delete as appropriate).

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

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

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

3 External auditor certificate 2017/18

We certify/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:

External Auditor Name

ENTER NAME OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR

External Auditor Signature

SIGNATURE PROVIDED

Date

COMPANY

*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)



Water Management Alliance

INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

2017/18

April 2018

Contents:

1. Executive Summary
2. Overall Conclusion
3. Acknowledgements
4. Detailed Observations, Recommendations and Agreed Actions
- APP 1 Agreed Terms of Reference

1. Executive Summary

The audit of the Water Management Alliance and the constituent Internal Drainage Boards was carried out by Kathy Woodward for the year 2017-18. This Executive Summary sets out our overall conclusion on the system reviewed, and summarises the key recommendations arising. A copy of the Terms of Reference for this audit is attached as **Appendix 1**.

Regulation 5 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 requires that '*A relevant authority must 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*'. The completion of this internal audit fulfils that role.

It should be noted that any system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level, and therefore Internal Audit cannot provide absolute assurance against loss. As well as being effective, controls need to be proportionate to the risk involved and not overburden the organisation with excessive costs.

The Water Management Alliance provides administration and management services to the five constituent Internal Drainage Boards, namely Broads, King's Lynn, East Suffolk, Norfolk Rivers and South Holland. During the financial year 2016-17 the Alliance entered into a contract to provide administration and management services to the Pevensey and Cuckmere Water Level Management Board for a period of two years.

New guidance was issued on 30th March 2018 by the Joint Practitioners' Advisory Group (JPAG), '*Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – A Practitioners Guide to Proper Practices to be applied in the preparation of statutory annual accounts and governance statements, March 2018*'. Although the new guide does not become mandatory until the 2018/19 financial reports are prepared, the Water Management Alliance has decided on early adoption on a voluntary basis. With this in mind the auditor has considered the effect the new guidance would have on the required internal audit and has concluded that essentially the work remains the same. Therefore the audit has been undertaken in line with previous years, based on the 2007 guidance. Audit work has included review of the procedures and systems of control in place at the Water Management Alliance and considered if they were effective and being applied as intended. Sample testing was carried out on elements as considered necessary by the auditor in order to substantiate the application of the control.

As part of the audit a follow-up was carried out on the recommendations raised in last year's report. Most of the recommendations made have been implemented. There is one recommendation still outstanding in relation to the finance system's lack of control around issuing of unique reference numbers with only a minor risk arising as a consequence.

2. Overall Conclusion

In conclusion, the procedures used at the Water Management Alliance are simple but effective, and appear to be carried out diligently by all staff concerned. Controls are

working as expected. There has been significant improvement in the controls since last year which has been noted. However, there are some aspects that can be improved and details of recommendations can be found in Section 4 together with the actions agreed with the Chief Executive.

The overall level of assurance attributed to the system is:

Substantial Assurance	A sound system of internal control, but there are a few weaknesses that could put achievement of system objectives at risk.
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The observations and recommendations are detailed in Section 4. Each recommendation is allocated a priority as defined below:

High	Major risk requiring action by the time the final report is issued.
Medium	Medium risk requiring action within six months of the issue of the draft report.
Low	Matters of limited risk. Action should be taken as resources permit.

3. Acknowledgements

We would like to express our thanks for their assistance and co-operation to:

Mary Creasy, Personal Assistant (CEO)

Sallyanne Jeffrey, Finance Officer

Trish Walker, Finance Assistant

Graham Tinkler, Rating Officer/Site Warden

Observations and their effects/ Recommendations	Priority	Agreed Action/ Responsible Officer/ Target Date
<p>1. Bank Reconciliation</p> <p>Observation</p> <p>Bank reconciliations are carried out weekly, as per Financial Regulations. Evidence is presented to the Chief Executive each month in the form of a cash flow statement.</p> <p>There were a number of occasions where the dates on the cashbook reconciliation did not tie back to the bank statements being reconciled. The information contained within the report was correct.</p> <p>There were some occasions where there was no reconciliation contained within the folder. This was the result of a printing failure. The Sage 200 system only allows the printing process to be undertaken once and if the printer fails the results cannot be reproduced and are effectively 'lost'.</p> <p>Consequence</p> <p>Monthly reconciliations are carried out correctly but this is not always evidenced.</p> <p>The method of carrying out the bank reconciliation is thorough but the supporting reports from Sage are not always printed due to printer failure.</p> <p>Recommendation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree to save reconciliation reports to a pdf, so if a printer failure occurs the reports can be retrieved. This could aid with moving towards paperless reconciliations, reducing printing costs and storage space. 	Low	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>A pdf copy of the reconciliations will be saved to an electronic folder.</p> <p>Finance Officer</p>

Observations and their effects/ Recommendations	Priority	Agreed Action/ Responsible Officer/ Target Date
<p>2. Financial Regulations</p> <p>Observation</p> <p>Weaknesses in the finance system were also observed around the allocation of reference numbers for invoices. There is no 'unique' identifier parameter meaning that many different invoices can be allocated the same reference number and also the second reference where the invoice number received from the supplier would be populated is also not unique. The means that there is no system control over paying duplicate invoices.</p> <p>Consequence</p> <p>1) Duplicate invoices could be processed as there is no system control in place to prevent this happening. Each transaction cannot be identified individually by its reference (transaction) number causing confusion.</p> <p>Recommendation</p> <p>1) Finance Officer to speak to finance system advisors about 'unique' reference numbers and if this can be incorporated into the system upgrade.</p>	<p>1) Low</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>Speak again to Finance System Advisors about a possible upgrade/change in accounting software.</p> <p>Finance Officer / Chief Executive</p>

Internal Audit Services

Borough Council of
**King's Lynn &
West Norfolk**



WATER MANAGEMENT ALLIANCE

INTERNAL AUDIT TERMS OF REFERENCE 2017-18

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This document sets out the strategy and plan for the audit of the Water Management Alliance for the year 2017-18.

1.2 Section 6 of The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 states that '*The relevant body must conduct a review at least once in a year of the effectiveness of its system of internal control*'.

1.3 Internal Audit is defined as '*an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and 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.*'

Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, April 2017

1.4 The Internal Auditor will work in accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) adopted by CIPFA from April 2017 and thus will be able to provide the review required by the Regulations.

1.5 The authority of the Internal Auditor is established in the Financial Regulations.

1.6 The audit work will concentrate on records and systems used by the Water Management Alliance, who provide the financial and administrative functions for:

- Broads (2006) IDB
- East Suffolk IDB
- King's Lynn IDB
- Norfolk Rivers IDB
- South Holland IDB.
- Pevensey & Cuckmere Water Level Management Board

As such, this work will enable the auditor to complete the Annual Governance and Accountability Returns for all six Boards.

2. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF THE AUDIT

2.1 The work of the Internal Auditor will be guided by 'Governance and Accountability in Internal Drainage Boards in England – A Practitioners Guide (Rev March 2018)'.

2.2 In order to be able to complete section 4 of the Electronic Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2018 the auditor will consider the following:

- A. The Accounting Records
To ensure that the accounting system is accurate, complete and timely, and that data input is being verified appropriately.
- B. Financial Regulations and Standing Orders
To ensure that they are current and are being adhered to.
- C. Risk Management processes
To ensure that management review the Risk Register on a regular basis and that risk is being identified and actively managed in a proportionate manner.

D. Budgetary Controls

To ensure that the budgets are prepared on a realistic basis and are monitored throughout the year and any variations are investigated, with corrective action being taken if necessary.

E. Income Controls

To ensure that processes are in place and functioning correctly to collect, record and bank income in full and on time.

F. Petty Cash Procedures

To ensure petty cash provisions are reasonable, used in accordance with Financial Regulations and adequate records are kept of payments made.

G. Payroll Controls

To ensure that remuneration to employees and Board Members is calculated correctly and in accordance with the levels agreed by the Board, and that all HMRC requirements are complied with.

H. Asset Management

To ensure that there are satisfactory processes in place to maintain the register and check for accuracy.

I. Bank Reconciliation

To ensure that periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly completed and verified.

J. Year-end Procedures

To ensure that the appropriate accounting basis have been used to prepare the year-end accounting statements and that figures contained in the statements can be verified by reference to working papers and accounting records.

2.3 Any recommendations and issues arising from the previous audit will also be followed up to establish if they have been implemented or if there is a satisfactory explanation for non-implementation.

2.4 Contained within the scope of work described above it is implied that the auditor will have due regard for Value for Money considerations and the potential for fraud.

3. TASKS

3.1.1 The project tasks are to:

- Establish if the procedures recorded as part of the audit for 2017-18 remain the same and document any changes that may have taken place.
- Perform tests to establish that systems are operating in accordance with the procedures and that good practice is being complied with.

- Assess strengths and weaknesses of the systems operated and the levels of financial and management risk.
- Discuss the results with the Chief Executive and make recommendations as appropriate, which will be communicated to the Boards by means of a report.
- Complete Section 4 of the Electronic Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2017-18.

4. WORK PLAN

4.1 The audit will be undertaken by
Miss Kathy Woodward,
Shared Internal Audit Manager, Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk.

4.2 The audit has been allocated 5 days, which will be utilised as follows:

Task	Time
Confirm existing procedures and record any changes. Undertake a follow-up of actions agreed from the audit report for the year 2016-17.	0.5
Testing – to establish that processes are being applied as intended.	3.5
Conclusions and discussion	0.5
Completing the Return and reporting if required.	0.5

5.0 AGREEMENT

	Signature	Date
Phil Camamile Chief Executive, Water Management Alliance
Kathy Woodward Shared Internal Audit Manager Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk