

SUDBURY TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING OF SUDBURY TOWN COUNCIL
HELD IN THE TOWN HALL ON TUESDAY 14TH OCTOBER 2025 AT 7.00PM

Present: Mr A Welsh – Mayor of Sudbury, in the CHAIR
Mr P Beer Mr A Osborne
Mr N Bennett Mrs J Osborne
Mr J Collier Miss A Owen
Mr S Hall Mr T Regester
Mr J Jeagar Mr A Stohr
Ms E Murphy Mr N Younger

In attendance: Mr C Griffin – Town Clerk
Mrs D Deeks – Administration Manager and RFO
Ms L Smith – Babergh District Councillor

1. APOLOGIES AND APPROVAL OF ABSENCES

RESOLVED

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs M Barrett, Ms J Carter, Mr K Graham and County Councillor Mr P Faircloth-Mutton.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillors Mr P Beer, Mr A Osborne, Miss A Owen and Mr T Regester declared that they were also Babergh District Councillors. All these members declared that, as district councillors, they had an interest in item 8.

Councillor Mr P Beer declared that he was also a Suffolk County Councillor.

Councillor Mr N Younger declared that he had a family connection to the company concerned with item 15 and he would not be voting on that item.

Councillor Mr J Collier declared that the location for item 8 was his current workplace and he would not be voting on that item.

3. DECLARATIONS OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY

No declarations of gifts or hospitality were made.

4. REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

No requests for dispensations had been received.



5. MINUTES**RESOLVED**

That, with the addition of the words ‘and the bus company’ at the end of the resolution under item 8 on page 732, to confirm that the minutes of the council meeting held on 9th September 2025 are an accurate record.

6. REPORTS

- a. Public Forum – A member of the public asked if the local bus company was up for sale and might be been bought up by a larger bus company and whether this would have an adverse impact on services. Members confirmed that the Planning, Development and Highways Committee had discussed the recent changes in local bus services and were seeking a meeting with the bus company to investigate further improvements.
- b. Policing Report – Some members had already had the opportunity to welcomed Insp Matt Paisley back to Sudbury as the locality inspector, although no police officers were available to attend this meeting due to operational commitments.
- c. Mayor’s Announcement – The Mayor reminded members that he was hosting a charity dinner at the Ballingdon Valley Indian Cuisine on Wednesday 22nd October to raise money for his chosen charities. He encouraged as many people as possible to attend.
- d. County Councillors’ Reports – Councillors Ms J Carter and Mr P Faircloth-Mutton had sent in their reports, which had been circulated before the meeting, and are included at pages 826 to 828. The following points were discussed.
 - Poor bus service from Great Cornard to the Health Centre.
 - Station Road needs to be re-surfaced which is the responsibility of Suffolk Highways.
 - Station Approach also needs re-surfacing, but is not owned by Suffolk Highways, but thought to be the responsibility of Babergh District Council.

RESOLVED

That County Councillors Ms J Carter and Mr P Faircloth-Mutton be thanked for their reports

- e. District Councillor’s Report – Councillor T Regester had sent in his report, which had been circulated with the agenda, and is included in pages 829 to 831. The following points were discussed.
 - Why had the parking and footfall figures for the first six months of increased parking charges not been circulated? The six-month data was considered to be inconclusive. A full report covering the first year would be discussed on 16 February 2026 at the scrutiny committee and the Town Council had been invited. The Town Clerk confirmed that he had been aware of the 6 month review but the Town Council had not changed its policy on charging for parking in the car parks so he had not attended. However, Cllr A Owen had been at the meeting in her capacity as a Babergh District Councillor.
 - Why was it taking so long for void houses to be filled? One reason was that more alternation work was being done between tenants to get the properties to a higher standard.
 - Everyone was reminded that questions could be put by members of the public at Suffolk County Council and Babergh District Council meetings.

RESOLVED

That District Councillor Mr T Regester be thanked for his report.

7. TO CONSIDER THE EXTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT FOR FY2024/2025 (ATTACHED) AND TO DECIDE ON ANY ACTIONS REQUIRED

The Chair of the Finance Committee confirmed that the external auditors (PKF Little John) had returned an audit opinion of full compliance with proper practises and there were no other matters of concern. He thanked the officers for their work throughout the year that had resulted in such a good report.

RESOLVED

To note that the external auditor's report shown at page 832 had been considered and that no actions were required.

8. TO AGREE A RESPONSE TO THE BABERGH CIL BID FOR £107,761.16 FOR THE SUDBURY CHILTON WASTE DEPOT TRANSFORMATION PROJECT

Members discussed the consultation letter from Babergh District Council, who had bid for Community Infrastructure funding for the Chilton Waste Depot.

RESOLVED

To support the Babergh District Council CIL application for £107,761.16 for the Sudbury Chilton waste depot transformation project.

9. TO DISCUSS AN INVITATION FOR THE COUNCILLORS TO VISIT SUDBURY SILK MILLS

The Town Clerk explained that the Managing Director of Sudbury Silk Mills had written to the Mayor to thank him for attending the visit of HRH The Princess of Wales and to invite the town councillors to have a wider tour of the silk mill on Cornard Road.

RESOLVED

To thank Sudbury Silk Mills for their kind invitation and to accept on behalf of the members.

To ask the Town Clerk to arrange a suitable visit date when the greatest number of councillors were available.

10. TO APPOINT MR GUY HUME AS A REPRESENTATIVE TRUSTEE TO SUDBURY MUNICIPAL CHARITIES.

The Town Clerk explained that for many years there had been an accepted agreement that the Trustees of the Sudbury Municipal Charities, and therefore, the Sudbury Common Lands Charity, would provide nominations for the appointment of Representative Trustees. A letter dated 11 September 2025 had been received from the Clerk of the Sudbury Municipal Charities stating that it was the wish of the Trustees that Mr Hume be appointed as a Representative Trustee of the Sudbury Municipal Charities, and therefore of the Sudbury Common Lands Charity, from November 2025.

RESOLVED

To appoint Mr Guy Hume as a representative trustee of Sudbury Municipal Charities, and therefore of the Sudbury Common Lands Charity, from November 2025.



11. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEES

Planning, Development and Highways Committee on 22nd September and 6th October 2025 - The Chair recommended noting the minutes.

It was RESOLVED to note the minutes.

Finance Committee on 7th October 2025 – The Chair recommended noting the minutes.

It was RESOLVED to note the minutes.

Leisure and Environment Committee on 29th September 2025 – The Chair recommended noting the minutes.

It was RESOLVED to note the minutes.

Human Resources Committee on 11th September 2025 – The Deputy Chair referred members to the notes from the meeting that had been circulated by the Chair but did not discuss the details.

It was RESOLVED to note the update.

12. TO ADOPT THE REVISIONS TO THE PRESS AND MEDIA POLICY RECOMMENDED BY THE HR COMMITTEE

The Deputy Chair of the HR Committee said that she disagreed with the wording of the recommendation that had been approved in the minutes of the meeting of the HR Committee on 17th June 2025. As 3 out of the 5 members of the HR Committee were not present, it was not possible to clarify her point, but the Town Clerk expressed his concern that she appeared to be asking for the revised section of the Press and Media Policy to be changed to have to opposite meaning to that intended and approved by the HR Committee.

RESOLVED

That the HR Committee confirm the wording and meaning of the revised section of the Press and Media Policy.

13. TO AUTHORISE THE EXPENDITURE OF UP TO £7,000 EXCLUDING VAT ON REPAIRS TO THE WALL AROUND ST GREGORY'S CHURCH

The Mayor explained that an estimate had been received for the repair work required on the flint wall around St Gregory's Churchyard.

RESOLVED

That, under the power of the Local Government Act 1972, s.111, expenditure of up to £7,000 excluding VAT be authorised for repairs to the flint wall around St Gregory's Churchyard.

14. TO APPROVE THE RECOMMENDATION FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE FOR A GRANT OF £8,000 TO THE CAB - SUDBURY & SOUTH CITIZENS ADVICE**RESOLVED**

That, using the general power of competence under the Localism Act 2011, ss.1-8, a grant of £8,000 to CAB – Sudbury & South Citizens Advice be approved.

15. TO NOTE THE PROGRESS OF THE BOILER REPLACEMENT AND FUTURE WORK ON THE PIPES AND RADIATORS

The Town Clerk briefed that the old boiler had been removed and new twin 90 kW boilers had been installed. The contractor had worked very well, and the system was close to commissioning. The Council had paid £55,000 of the £60,000 contract fee and the remaining £5,000 would be held back until the final elements had been completed.

As anticipated, some other associated parts of the heating and gas system had not worked when tested. The requirement for further work included;

- New radiator valves.
- Unblock and re-instate blow heaters.
- Reconnect blow heater.
- Decommission leaking gas pipe to back kitchen.
- Drain system
- Re-fill and re-test system.

This additional work had been quoted at £5,750 excluding VAT, which was significantly less than the £15,000 previously proposed just to have a survey of the heating system. The Town Clerk reminded members that they had already approved spending up to £90,000 for the work on the heating system, so, if there were no serious objections, he would progress with this additional work.

RESOLVED

To note that the Town Clerk will continue with the proposed additional work to complete the restoration of the heating system.

The Mayor moved item 17 forward in the agenda as this could be considered with the public present.

17. TO CONSIDER THE ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS FOR THE REPAIRS TO THE CHAPEL WINDOWS IN THE NEWTON ROAD CEMETERY

The Town Clerk explained that, as requested at the previous meeting, he had sought an alternative quote from a contractor for the replacement of the chapel windows with clear toughened glass as an alternative to the original diamond leaded panes. This allowed members to decide which option offered the best value for money.

The two options were;

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| • Original diamond leaded with protective screens | £25,000 and £17,000 |
| • Clear toughened glass with applique diagonal stripes | £17,000 |

The likely saving with the toughened glass option would be over £20,000, but there would be no physical protection for the windows. If vandals really wanted to break the new windows, they probably could, although 6mm toughened glass would be resistant to most stones thrown by hand.

RESOLVED

That 6mm toughened glass with applique diagonal stripes offered the best value for money and that this should be included in the requirement for the chapel restoration work.

That competitive quotes for the chapel restoration be sought in accordance with finance regulations.



RESOLVED

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC (WHICH TERM INCLUDES THE PRESS)

That pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s.1(2), the public be excluded from the meeting for the business specified in items 16 and 18 as the publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted as it would be necessary to discuss the confidential legal, contractual and HR matters.

16. TO AUTHORISE THE EXPENDITURE OF UP TO £5,000 EXCLUDING VAT ON LEGAL AND PROFESSIONAL CHARGES

The Town Clerk explained that the situation had changed recently, and the cost of legal and professional charges would be likely to be much higher than expected.

RESOLVED

To amend the resolution to increase the expenditure from £5,000 to £40,000.

That, under the power of the Local Government Act 1972, s.111, expenditure of up to £30,000 excluding VAT be authorised for legal and professional charges in connection with property management. Any overspend to the budget would be charged to the general reserve.

That, under the power of the Local Government Act 1972, s.111, expenditure of up to an additional £10,000 excluding VAT be authorised for legal and professional charges for HR investigations. Any overspend to the budget would be charged to the general reserve.

See CONFIDENTIAL Annex A, minute page 833.

RESOLVED

To extend the meeting for up to 10 minutes so that it could continue until 9:10pm

18. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL LEGAL AND HR MATTERS

See CONFIDENTIAL Annex A, minute pages 834 to 835.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 9:06pm.

Chairman 

**Report for September 2025 to Sudbury Town Council - From
Jessie Carter (SCC Councillor)**

Date: 09/10/2025

Email: jessie.carter@suffolk.gov.uk

Phone: 07955 434411

One Suffolk Business Case Approved at Council Meeting

On Tuesday 16 September, Suffolk County Council held an Extraordinary (additional) meeting to debate the business case produced by the council that one unitary council would be best for Suffolk after the two-tier system (county and district/borough councils) is abolished. Unitary councils run all services for a local area, and the government is planning for all remaining two-tier areas in the country to change to this model. Suffolk is part of the devolution priority programme, which means it will be one of the first counties to do so. The reorganization will also see the creation of a mayoral authority and mayor for Norfolk and Suffolk. The business case for One Suffolk was endorsed by the Conservative majority in the council meeting and was immediately afterwards tabled at a Cabinet meeting where the council's Cabinet voted to formally approve it. It will now be submitted to government by the end of September. An alternative proposal for three unitary councils for Suffolk has been developed by the district and borough councils and will also be submitted to government, who have said they will make a decision on the reorganization by March 2025 – this may be delayed though, as other parts have the process have been so far.

The One Suffolk business case can be found here: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/asset-library/one-suffolk-business-case.pdf>

The Three Councils for Suffolk business case can be found here:
<https://threecouncilsforsuffolk.org/wp-content/uploads/Three-Councils-For-Suffolk-Case-for-Change.pdf>

Local Nature Recovery Strategy Approved

On 9 September, the council's Cabinet voted to approve the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, which was produced following a public consultation on the draft strategy between April and June this year. The strategy sets out priority species and habitats for nature conservation in the county, and gives advice on how different habitats can be improved by landowners to protect and encourage nature. Most of the area mapped out for Suffolk's nature priorities is private farmland, and the strategy does not make improvement mandatory, but the officers who have produced the strategy will now work with landowners to support them and work to find investment for measures in the strategy. Landowners can use areas mapped in the strategy to produce 'units' of biodiversity for purchase by developers, as they will be required to meet the government's new Biodiversity Net Gain requirements which state that all development should be increasing biodiversity by a minimum of 10%. The units of biodiversity do not need to be onsite or near the development. The new strategy should also help Suffolk County Council to improve the land it owns in the county, and local planning authorities will have to take account of the strategy when development is considered. In the future, mayoral authorities like the one currently planned for Norfolk and Suffolk will be in charge of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for their area. The strategy will now be shared with neighbouring authorities, Natural England and local partners like district and borough councils and the Broads Authority for their feedback.

Financial Forecast at Quarter 1 of 2025-26 Financial Year

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "JW".

Cabinet on 9 September also considered the most recent financial reporting from the council, which aimed to give a better forecast of how the council's spending might look for 2025-26. The council is predicting that it will overspend by £13.3m by the end of the year, which it will balance by taking £13.3m from its Risk Reserve. This is extremely worrying, as is the prediction that the council's Designated Schools Grant debt will rise over the year by £63.3m to a total of £161.2m deficit. Currently the government has agreed councils can hold this debt until March 2028, but a long term plan needs to be made as many councils are now carrying a level of debt related to SEND costs which would bankrupt them if it was called in by the government. Other cost pressures for the council include placements for children in care, care purchasing and mental health services in adult social care. The council has also received £1.2m less than expected from dividends from Suffolk Group Holdings (companies owned by the council like Concertus and Vertas) and had to pay nearly a million more than budgeted for its annual staff pay award.

Solar Together Scheme for 2025

The Solar Together Suffolk scheme, which has so far installed 32,000 solar panels at 2,651 Suffolk households, is now open for registration for 2025. Registering is free and there is no obligation to go ahead with the installation. The scheme also includes battery storage and EV charge points, and customer who have already invested in solar panels can get quotes for these too. The scheme requires householders to register online, and pre-approved solar PV suppliers then take part in a 'reverse auction' to bid for the work. After this, registered households will be emailed a personal recommendation which they can choose to accept or not. Telephone and email helpdesks are available to support residents in making an informed decision. The scheme is run by Suffolk's councils in partnership with iChoosr, who have been working with UK councils on the Solar Together scheme since 2015. For more information and to register, visit <https://solartogether.co.uk/suffolk/home>

Apply Now for a School Place for September 2026

Parents and carers can now apply for a place in the normal year of entry at a primary, infant or junior school and a secondary school for September 2026. The deadline for applications to secure a place at a secondary school is **Friday 31 October 2025** and for primary school places, including infant and junior schools, the deadline is **Thursday 15 January 2026**. All applications received by the relevant closing date are processed at the same time using the schools' oversubscription criteria to prioritise applications if necessary. Applications received late are processed after all of the applications received on time. Last year, 94% of applicants received offers for their first preference school, and 98.4% of applicants received an offer for one of their top three preferred schools. The council is keen that parents take into account how their child will travel to school when applying, as the nearest school for school transport purposes may not be the catchment area school. They can check this by entering their postcode here: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/schools/school-places/school-catchment-areas/nearest-school-checker>

Parents and carers can apply online for a school place here:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/schools/school-places>

**Report for October 2025 to Sudbury Town Council - From Suffolk
County Councillor Philip Faircloth-Mutton**



Renovation of pathway adjacent to 54-66 on Second Avenue, Springlands

Following the reporting of the unsafe state of the abovementioned, I'm pleased to report that the County Council Highways Team have undertaken remedial action to make this safe for residents once again.

Local Wildlife Recovery Strategy Approved

I was proud to recommend the above to Cabinet in September, which was approved in full. This is excellent news given the input from local Sudbury stakeholders in shaping means in which endangered species of flora, fauna, insects and birds can be supported in a successful manner.

Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution in Suffolk Update

Suffolk County Council, at two extraordinary meetings, voted to approve:

- 1) the submission of the One Suffolk business case to the government, which would see the establishment of one unitary council for Suffolk.
- 2) creation of a county combined mayoral authority for Norfolk and Suffolk.

I am unable to attend this evening's meeting but look forward to seeing you all in November. As always, please do not hesitate to contact me in the interim, if you require any assistance on County related matters.

Kind regards,

Philip

Philip Faircloth-Mutton
Suffolk County Councillor - Sudbury East & Waldingfield Division
Mob : 07494 758000
E-mail : philip.faircloth-mutton@suffolk.gov.uk

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "P. Faircloth-Mutton".

**Babergh District Council report for Sudbury Town Council Full
Council meeting on Tuesday 14th October 2025
From Councillor Tim Regester**

Three councils for Suffolk business case submitted to the government

Plans to transform local services were agreed this week by Suffolk's district and borough councils and have been submitted to the Government.

The Case for Change plans to revolutionise Suffolk council services published Plans to revolutionise council services in Suffolk – delivering real improvements for local communities, saving at least £34m a year, and reinvesting £20m of that money annually into council services – have been published.

<https://www.babergh.gov.uk/w/three-councils-for-suffolk-business-case-submitted-to-the-government>

Grant returns to tackle winter loneliness

A grant aimed at tackling social isolation during the colder months has returned for a third consecutive year thanks to continued funding from Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils.

<https://www.babergh.gov.uk/w/grant-returns-to-tackle-winter-loneliness> Note the deadline for grant applications is the 19th October 2025

Asylum Seekers and Refugees

There has been a great deal of media coverage about housing asylum seekers in hotels and other types of accommodation. Asylum seekers are held initially in centres for days or weeks and are then 'dispersed' to longer term accommodation while their claim is processed. This is the situation in Babergh:

There are no initial holding centres in Babergh

There are currently no asylum seekers housed in hotels in Babergh.

Serco run the Home Office contract to find 'dispersal' accommodation in the East of England. This means Serco makes the decision about where to house asylum seekers. The company seeks to find accommodation in the private sector for this purpose. Serco do not use social housing – (council and housing association properties).

Serco consults the county and district councils, police and health service when looking at properties to accommodate asylum seekers. Babergh officers inform the district councillor for the

area and feedback to Serco any concerns raised by council departments, for example about community tensions, anti-social behaviour, lack of public transport and other services.

Ultimately the decision where to place asylum seekers will be made by Serco and the Home Office. Babergh meet with Serco regularly to monitor placements.

Babergh has no duty to house homeless asylum seekers. The situation is different for Refugees. A refugee is a successful asylum seeker and the Home Office is satisfied their case is genuine. A refugee is entitled to homelessness assistance.

There is no help available for 'irregular migrants', These are people who, for various reasons, have no right to stay in the UK. They are not entitled to benefits or homelessness assistance. This is called 'no recourse to public funds'.

I must stress that the number of asylum seekers housed by the government in Babergh and Mid Suffolk is extremely small compared to other areas of the country. Rural areas are often not the best place to house asylum seekers.

Babergh District Council partners with EEZYBIKE to launch new e-bikes in Lavenham

Residents and visitors in Lavenham can now hire EEZYBIKEs that are stored in an EEZYPOD in the Cock Inn car park, off Church Street. This follows the success of the first EEZYPOD in Kingfisher Car Park in Sudbury which has exceeded use figures for previous installations.

Pre-school places, playgrounds and village facilities receive funding boost

Pre-school places, playgrounds and village facilities receive funding boost Pre-school provision, playgrounds, footpaths to connect villages and village hall improvements are amongst the successful bids to receive Community Infrastructure Levy funding, following agreement by cabinet members at Babergh District Council.

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils restate objections to pylon project as application submitted

Both Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have objected to the "considerable and potentially devastating impacts" of National Grid's Norwich to Tilbury project, with pylons proposed to cut through communities and countryside, including some of the districts' most sensitive landscapes.

Communities brave the elements to show support for elite cyclists

Organisers of the Lloyds Tour of Britain thanked communities for braving the elements and turning out in force to support the race through town and villages across our districts. There was an inaccuracy in an early map showing the route traversing Girling Street when in fact it just skirted Sudbury using Northern Road, Apologies to any fans who missed out on seeing the race (in driving rain).

32,000 solar panels and counting for Solar Together Suffolk project

The successful Solar Together Suffolk scheme is now open for registration for 2025.
<https://solartogether.co.uk/suffolk/home>

Unparalleled parking in Babergh and Mid Suffolk

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have earned 19 Park Mark and Park Access awards for their work improving safety and accessibility in their car parks.

Parking and Footfall figures after six months revealed

Six month figures for Parking in Babergh Car Parks and footfall figures offer more questions than answers and no real conclusion can be drawn at this stage.

With interim figures provided to Baberghs Overview and Scrutiny Committee there was an expected decrease in numbers parking in Short Term parking and an increase in Long Term parking in Hadleigh but not in Sudbury. There was also an increase in footfall in Sudbury Town Centre but those visiting spent less time overall there. This means the results are clearly inconclusive. We have no figures for increased parking on residential streets nor any figures to point to more residents walking and cycling into town, though anecdotal evidence suggests that both may have risen this year.

Full complete figures will be published in February after 12 months.

More students given opportunity to debate climate issues at COP-style event

Almost 100 year 8 and 9 students from schools across Babergh and Mid Suffolk will take part in a COP-style event next month.

VCFSE funding summits

The Babergh and Mid Suffolk grants and funding team will be hosting a free funding summit on Wednesday 19 November at Chamberlin Hall, Bildeston, from 9am to 2.30pm. The event will help community organisations access the funding they need and is being delivered in partnership with Suffolk Community Foundation, Community Action Suffolk, Suffolk County Council and the National Lottery Community Fund. Book online: [Conference Booking Form](#) : AideCRM

Local Listed Building Consent Order - Windows.

This is about to go live. Allows Secondary glazing on Listed buildings and installation of double glazing, or energy saving glass, to windows which have previously been consented and introduced after listing - or which are already installed within a consented modern or post-listing extension

This is unique for Babergh and Mid Suffolk. Hopefully soon to be followed by a similar order for Photo Voltaic Solars panels.

Both have backing of Historic England and are being championed in Parliament by Sian Berry MP.

Section 3 – External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2024/25

In respect of

SUDBURY TOWN COUNCIL – SF0365

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02) as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/>

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 2025; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor's limited assurance opinion 2024/25

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

3 External auditor certificate 2024/25

We 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 2025.

External Auditor Name

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP

External Auditor Signature

PKF Littlejohn LLP

Date

09/09/2025

