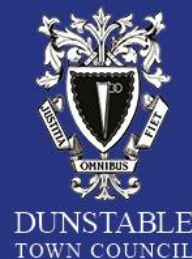


Dunstable Town Council
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Paul Hodson, Town Clerk and Chief Executive

Date: 24 November 2023

Dear Councillor,

You are hereby summoned to attend a Meeting of **Dunstable Town Council** which will be held on **Monday 4 December 2023** at **Grove House in the Council Chamber commencing at 7.00 pm**. The meeting will be streamed live, and the recording then made available. To view the meeting live or afterwards use this link: [livestream](#). Members of the public and press are also welcome to attend in person. Members of the public may ask a question during the public session, either in person or online via MS Teams. If you would like to ask a question, please contact the Council via democratic@dunstable.gov.uk or 01582 513000 by 4pm on Friday 1 December 2023.

Please scan the below QR code to find the full agenda online.



This meeting will be filmed by the Council and broadcast live and will be capable of repeated viewing. If you are seated in the Council Chamber, it is likely that the cameras will capture your image. By your presence you are deemed to consent to be filmed, and to the use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting or training purposes.

If you address the committee in person or via Teams, your contribution will be recorded and broadcast, unless this is during a private session, as permitted by the Access to Information provisions.

Members are reminded when making decisions that the Public Sector Equality Duty 2010 requires Members to have due regard to the need to: Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act, advance equality of opportunity between people who share a characteristic and those who don't, and to foster good relations between people who share a characteristic and those who don't.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence.
2. To agree as a correct record the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 2 October 2023 (Minutes enclosed - page 4)
3. Specific Declarations of Interest
4. Chairman's Remarks including Civic Events and Mayoral Activities - attached is a summary of events the Mayor and Deputy Mayor attended from October to November 2023 (page 7)
5. Public Question Time
6. To receive reports of the following Committees:

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Page</u>
Community Services	30 October 2023	8
Grounds and Environmental Services	6 November 2023	12
Finance and General Purposes	13 November 2023	16

7. Action Tracker (page 21)
8. Dial A Ride Representative – to nominate a new representative following the resignation of Councillor John Gurney from the role.
9. Councillor Nicholas Kotarski – Motion
“To rename the Downside Community Recreation Park to Manshead Recreation Park, Gary Cooper Recreation Park, or another non-political Dunstable name of fame”.
10. Councillor Richard Atwell – Motion
Given the seriousness of the situation, magnitude of complains and upset residents we all seem to be experiencing right across all the wards in Dunstable with seemingly no response or improvements from the Police to date regarding youths riding illegal motorbikes with balaclavas, no crash helmets and a total disrespect to the law and other people I think we all need to join forces and do whatever we can with a unified approach. We simply can't have masked gangs running amok on motorbikes like this speeding and doing wheelies on our roads, parks, and green spaces, it is totally unacceptable, illegal, intimidating, and dangerous. As Councillors we owe our residents the right for peace and quiet in their own homes and the freedom to enjoy our parks and open spaces without the risk of injury to children, the elderly, and families alike. With this in mind, I would like to propose: *for Madam Mayor to write a letter to the Bedfordshire Police Commissioner on behalf of the Council to request greater support for our Dunstable residents against this and other anti-social behaviour which sadly seems to have escalated alarmingly in recent months before a*

serious accident or situation occurs and to request a meeting with the Police Commissioner, the Mayor and a representative group of Councillors to discuss the police's response and approach.

11. To receive and note the outcome of the External Audit for financial year 2022/2023 (page 22)
12. To receive reports/updates by Members of Central Bedfordshire Council on matters of interest to the Town Council
13. RECOMMENDED In terms of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, the following items will be likely to disclose exempt information relating to establishment and contractual matters and it is, therefore, RECOMMENDED that pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded.
14. Town Centre Services – to discuss a report from the Town Clerk & Chief Executive (Report to follow)

Yours faithfully



Paul Hodson
Town Clerk and Chief Executive

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

HELD ON MONDAY 2 OCTOBER 2023 COMMENCING AT 7.00

P.M.

Present: Councillors Liz Jones (Town Mayor), Louise O’Riordan (Deputy Mayor) Trevor Adams; Gregory Alderman; Richard Attwell; Wendy Bater; Robert Blennerhassett; Matthew Brennan; Alex Butler; Phillip Crawley; Kenson Gurney; Peter Hollick; Matthew Neall and Johnson Tamara with Paul Hodson (Town Clerk and Chief Executive) and Georgia Pearson (Democratic Services Manager).

Present: John Crawley (Head of Grounds and Environmental Services) and Lisa Scheder (Head (via Teams) of Finance and Responsible Financial Officer)

Apologies: Councillors Mark Davis; John Gurney; Michelle Henderson and Nicholas Kotarski

Public Attendance: One

192/23 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 26 June 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor.

193/23 DECLARATIONS

There were no specific declarations of interest.

194/23 CHAIRMAN’S REMARKS

The Town Mayor spoke in support of a report relating to her activities up to September 2023.

195/23 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions put to the meeting.

196/23 COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

The Vice Chair of the Community Services committee provided a summary to members of the community services committee held on 4 September.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 4 September 2023 be received.

197/23 GROUNDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

The Chair of the Grounds and Environmental Services committee provided a summary to members of the Grounds and Environmental Services committee held on 11 September.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee held on 11 September 2023 be received.

198/23 FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

The Chair of the Finance and General Purposes committee provided a summary to members of the Finance and General Purposes committee held on 18 September.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 18 September 2023 be received.

199/23 REFERRAL REPORT FROM THE PLANS-SUB COMMITTEE: CHANGE OF MEETING DATE AND TIME

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: that the change of date on which Plans Sub-Committee meetings are held be moved from Tuesday nights at 7pm to Monday nights at 6pm.

200/23 TO AGREE ANY NOMINATIONS TO THE BEDFORDSHIRE ASSOCIATION OF THE TOWN & PARISH COUNCILS – CORRESPONDANCE

Councillors Kenson Gurney and Matthew Neall put their names forward to be nominated to the Bedfordshire Association of Town and Parish Councils Committee to represent Dunstable Town Council who are their largest subscriber in the area. It was agreed by Members that Councillors Kenson Gurney and Matthew Neall be nominated to represent the Town Council on the Committee.

201/23 CEMETERY WORKING GROUP REPORT

The Head of Grounds and Environmental services summarised the report given.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: That Councillors Gregory Alderman; Richard Attwell; Matthew Brennan; Kenson Gurney; Liz Jones and Louise O’Riordan form the new cemetery working group.

202/23 REPORTS/UPDATES BY MEMBERS OF CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL ON MATTERS OF INTEREST TO THE TOWN COUNCIL

Councillor Kenson Gurney gave an update to members advising that CBC are in talks regarding the proposal to change the time and nature of their meetings. He also advised that the school’s for the future programme has been paused.

Councillor Crawley updated members that a sinkhole had appeared in his ward and he undertook to keep members updated of the progress.

203/23 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND THE PUBLIC

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: in terms of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, the following items will be likely to disclose exempt information relating to establishment and contractual matters and therefore, pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded.

204/23 PRIORY HOUSE FUNDING REPORT

The Town Clerk and Chief executive summarised the report. Members congratulated the team on their hard work.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: to receive the National Lottery Heritage Fund grant of £1,142,730 and to accept the terms and conditions for the grant.

205/23 VERBAL UPDATE ON CREASEY PARK MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The Town Clerk and Chief executive provided members with an update regarding the Creasey Park management arrangements. Central Bedfordshire Council have informed the Town Council that they will not extend the current management agreement with Dunstable Town Council for the management of the Creasey Park Community Football Centre but will now undertake a procurement process on the open market.

The meeting closed at 20:03

Date	Event	Who went	Daytime / Evening / Weekend	Time spent at event, including travel in minutes	Comments
06/10/2023	Mayors Ploughman's Supper	M	E	320	A great evening raising money for my charities in Grove House
16/10/2023	Circus HR	M	E	180	An interesting evening in Houghton Regis
18/10/2023	Dukeminster Community Challenge	M	D	90	As part of the October Challenge I was invited into the home to meet with residents and to reminisce over a cup of tea.
20/10/2023	Sea Cadet Parade Night	M	E	180	Cllr Rob Blennerhassett accompanied the Mayor to the annual parade night which demonstrated the excellent skills and commitment by all in the unit.
21/10/2023	Cultural Consortium 40s day	M	D		A great event on the Square with lots of activities for all
21/10/2023	Kumon Awards	DM	E	120	A great evening celebrating the achievements of students
22/10/2023	Wombles Litter Pick	M	D	90	An opportunity to congratulate the Wombles on their recognition at the Anglia In Bloom awards this year
22/10/2023	Lithuanian Store Opening	M	D	60	The opening of Sala the new Lithuanian Store was a great opportunity to welcome the new owners to town
02/11/2023	Larkrise School Chess club	M & DM	D	60	An absolute pleasure to visit the school and watch the children so engaged and involved in strategic thinking - chess has really taken off and the children benefited from 4 new chess sets from myself and the Deputy Mayor. Following my community plea for sets the school went from 2 sets to 12 sets !
03/11/2023	Flitwick Quiz Night	M	E	180	Well we didn't come last ! Lovely evening but not the questions were hard
09/11/2023	Queensbury Academy Parliament Week	M	D	60	Four very inspiring students talked to me about what they would like to see in Dunstable, why they have opted to nominate themselves for the Junior Leadership Team and how they would like to be more involved in the wider community. It was also an opportunity to see the completed refurbishment of West Block - totally transformed!
10/11/2023	Bedfordshire & Luton Community Awards	M & DM	E	240	An inspirational evening listening to the citations of all nominees who made to the final of this years awards. It was an honour to have been nominated and be given a highly commended for my charity work over many years.
11/11/2023	Remembrance Day	M	D	120	As always Dunstable Town Council remembered those who gave their lives to conflict.
11/11/2023	Christmas Card Winner Presentations	M	W	60	The four winners met with the Mayor and Cllr O'Riordan and were presented with their gift bags full of christmas prizes.
12/11/2023	Remembrance Day	M	D	180	An extremely well supported remembrance Sunday parade by both organisations, voluntary groups, residents and in particular it was pleasing to see the number of Town Councillors who supported this event this year.
13/11/2023	Priory Academy MUGA	M	D	90	Cllr Greg Alderman accompanied the Mayor to the Priory Academy MUGA opening and were given a tour of the school which was exceptional and highlighted the positive changes across the school.
14/11/2023	Sea Cadets AGM	RB	E	90	Cllr Blennerhassett attended this event on behalf of the Mayor as neither the Deputy Mayor or past Mayor were available

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

HELD ON MONDAY 30 OCTOBER 2023 FROM 19:00

Present: Councillors Liz Jones (Town Mayor), Louise O’Riordan (Deputy Mayor) John Gurney (Chair), Robert Blennerhassett (Vice-Chair), Trevor Adams, Gregory Alderman, Wendy Bater, Nicholas Kotarski and Matthew Neall.

In Attendance: Becky Wisbey (Head of Community Services), Gina Thanky (Events Officer), Lisa Stephens (Cultural Services Manager) and Georgia Pearson (Democratic Services Manager) and Michelle Collings (HSHAZ Manager)

In Attendance: Councillor Peter Hollick, Annette Clynes (Town Centre Manager) and Paul Hodson (Town Clerk and Chief Executive)
(Remotely)

Apologies: Councillor Kenson Gurney

Public: Nil

206/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

207/23 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 4 September 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

208/23 UPDATES ON SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS

Town Guides: Kay Kempster

Kay Kempster summarised what the Town Guides provide to the town along with other organisations who help to make it all happen. The Council’s funding enables training for their guides, provide a library for the guides to utilise history books to aid their walks and insurance is provided. The SLA helps the prices of guided walks to stay at a lower cost which have not changed for 8 years.

Teatime tales are also aided by the SLA and these ticket prices have not raised since 2016.

BRCC: Cliff Andrews

Members were provided with a PowerPoint summarising the usage of the SLA provided. Dunstable Cultural Consortium utilises the funds provided to help engage the community in activities within the town.

Good Neighbours has managed to help 2,245 clients over the last 12 months with the help of 16 regular volunteers and has also seen 76 new clients in this time seeking acts of help

across the community.

Time banking and Wellbeing walks and You can do it in Dunstable have been hosted to provide residents with assistance and support all with the help of volunteers.

Dunstable Town Band: Becky Williams

Members were provided with an update on the Town Band's expenditure which is funded through the SLA. The band now pays for a conductor. The village hall used for rehearsal sees a yearly fee of £1,050 however no storage is charged which sees a saving for the band. Insurance of instruments and licencing are paid out by the Town Band. The SLA provides security to the Town Band to enable them to continue to spread joy across the community at different events.

Dunstable Food Bank – Jemma Watkeys (Operations Manager) and Stuart Douglas (Chairman)

Dunstable Food Bank provided members with a PowerPoint. The SLA supports the food bank's work to host 2 distribution centres across Dunstable. In 2022 the food bank saw an increase of 47% due to the cost-of-living crisis.

In the first year of funding from the SLA the foodbank was able to buy a freezer, work bench and provide fresh food for the community in need. The freezer enables the food bank to utilise food for a longer period and minimises food waste.

In year 2 the food bank was able to increase the variety of fresh food provision to people in need.

209/23 TOWN CENTRE SERVICES

Members received the report provided. The Town Centre Manager updated members that for Middle Row Markets on 11 November there are now 18 stalls and for 18 November there are now 33 stalls.

The Town Centre Manager advised members that Ashton Square toilets had retained its Platinum rating overall with the Loo of the year awards. The Ladies toilets won a Platinum + award which was a first for Ashton Square. The Men's got Platinum and the disabled received Gold.

In 2024 the Vegan markets and Street food heroes have been booked and since the report there will be a new group, Continental Foods who will be joining the markets next year.

For Christmas markets and Torch lights there are now 10 stalls booked + Priory House and Rotary will be joining this year.

For the Twilight markets, Friday 8 sees 28 stalls booked, Saturday 9 sees 41 stalls booked and Sunday 10 sees 22 stalls booked.

The Christmas Tree is confirmed to be delivered on November 7.

210/23 **OLDER PEOPLES' SERVICES**

Members received the report provided.

211/23 **GROVE CORNER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Members received the report provided.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: to submit a funding application to the National Lottery's Million Hours funding for youth work.

212/23 **EVENTS**

Members received the report provided. Cllr Hollick declared an interest due to holding an honorific position with Dunstable musical theatre.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: that the Council apply to the National Lottery's Million Hours Fund for £100,000 to be spent on youth work over two years, and that the Council accepts a grant if awarded.

213/23 **PRIORY HOUSE**

Members received the report provided. The Cultural Services Manager updated members on the key points of the report.

214/23 **HIGH STREET HERITAGE ACTION ZONE (HSHAZ)**

Members received the report provided. The HSHAZ Programme Manager summarised the key elements of the report to members.

215/23 **PRIORY HOUSE SECOND FLOOR USE**

Members received the report provided.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: that members agreed to approve the use of the second floor of Priory House (post repair works) for the sole purpose of Priory House operations and cease letting out of this space.

216/23 **UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND**

Members received the report provided.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: that members agreed to apply to Central Bedfordshire Council for UKSP funding and to delegate authority to the Town Clerk and Chief

Executive to determine the contents of this application, in liaison with the Chair of Community Services, and the Town Mayor.

217/23 **COMMUNITY SERVICES BUDGET 2024-25**

Members received the report provided. The Town Clerk and Chief Executive summarised key points of the report. Members were invited to ask questions or make suggestions to officers in the following weeks to support the preparation of the final version of the budget for the next meeting of the Committee.

218/23 **REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES**

South Beds Dial-a-Ride Management Committee – Cllr John Gurney

Cllr Jones declared an interest in South Beds Dial-a-Ride being one of her charities this year and her spouse is employed with them.

Cllr Gurney has been unable to attend any meetings however in regard to the location of buses for South Beds Dial-a-Ride on Watling House land, CBC have been approached and it is in discussion if they will retain that land.

Dunstable Town Band – Cllr Robert Blennerhassett

No Update.

Men in Sheds – Cllr Richard Attwell

No Update.

The meeting closed at 20:58pm

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GROUNDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
COMMITTEE**

**HELD AT THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, GROVE HOUSE, HIGH STREET NORTH,
DUNSTABLE**

ON MONDAY 6 NOVEMBER 2023 FROM 19:00

Present: Councillors Liz Jones (Town Mayor), Louise O’Riordan (Deputy Town Mayor), Matthew Brennan (Chairman), Richard Attwell (Vice-Chairman), Trevor Adams, Phillip Crawley, Mark Davies, Michelle Henderson, and Matthew Neall

In Attendance: Councillor Peter Hollick, Paul Hodson (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), John Crawley (Head of Grounds and Environmental Services), Mary Dobbs (Cemetery Manager), Hayley McKee (Creasey Park Community Football Centre Manager), Dimitrisz Sopisz (Grounds Operations Manager), James Slack (Sports and Leisure Facilities Manager), Kathy Doyle (Parks and Green Space Development Officer) and Georgia Pearson (Democratic Services Manager)

Apologies: Councillor Kenson Gurney

Public: Nil.

219/23 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no specific declarations of interest.

220/23 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of Grounds and Environmental Services Committee held on 11 September 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

221/23 PLANS-SUB COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meetings of the Plans Sub-Committee held on 12 September 2023 and 3 October 2023 be received.

222/23 ACTION TRACKER

Members received the Action tracker provided.

223/23 CREASEY PARK COMMUNITY FOOTBALL CENTRE AND SPLASH PARK

The Sports and Leisure Facilities Manager provided members with an update the progress report for the operations at Creasey Park Community Football Centre and Bennett's Splash Park.

224/23 GROUNDS – INFORMATION REPORT

Members received the report provided.

Cemetery

The Cemetery Manager summarised the report giving details about various activities and works completed in the cemetery. The Cemetery Manager touched on the recent support the council provided in aid of Baby Loss Awareness Week for the local community.

Allotments

Councillor Michelle Henderson declared an interest due to being an allotment holder.

The Cemetery Manager summarised the report and highlighted that the waiting list for allotments was at its highest level for several years.

Members asked officers to consider opportunities to develop allotment land at each recreation ground as part of the management plan development scheme.

ACTION - Head of Grounds and Environmental Services

Recreation Grounds – play areas.

The Grounds Operations Manager summarised the report given to members.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)

Members received the update provided.

It was proposed, seconded and,

RESOLVED:

1.1. To accept the offer of grant funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and from S106 funds, should the applications prove successful.

1.2. To recommend to the Finance and General Purposes committee the release of any funding secured to deliver the project applied for.

Town Rangers

The Grounds Operations Manager summarised the report given to members.

Dunstable in Bloom and Green Space Projects

The Parks and Green Space Development Officer summarised the report given.

225/23 FENCING AT MENTMORE RECREATION GROUND – DECISION REPORT

Members received the report provided. Due to a misunderstanding regarding the meterage of the fence needed the quote provided in the report was incorrect and would be an extra £800.

Members asked officers to review options for adding bollards or other security measures at the entrance to Mentmore to ensure vehicles are not able to access the site once it is made accessible to wheelchair and buggy users, and to put measures in place if this is possible within existing revenue budgets.

ACTION - Head of Grounds and Environmental Services

It was proposed, seconded and,

RESOLVED: To recommend to the Finance and General Purposes Committee the release of £6,019 from the earmarked Fencing Reserve to supply and install fencing and modify the existing entrance access at Mentmore Recreation Ground.

226/23 RECREATION GROUND MANAGEMENT PLANS – DECISION REPORT

Members received the report provided. Members suggested that future surgeries be linked to consultations, possibly being held in the relevant recreation ground in the summer months.

It was proposed, seconded and,

RESOLVED:

- I. For Mentmore to move to year two and Brewers Hill to year one in the Recreation Grounds Management Plans timetable.
- II. To approve the programme to develop simple management plans for 10 recreation grounds and open spaces outlined in section 3 of this report.

227/23 VEHICLE REPLACEMENT PROGRAMME – DECISION REPORT

Members received the report provided.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: That members approved the vehicle replacement programme summarised in section 3 and detailed in full in Appendix 1.

**228/23 PRE-PURCHASE OF GRAVE SPACES AT DUNSTABLE CEMETERY –
DECISION REPORT**

The Head of Grounds and Environmental services summarised the report to members.

It was proposed, seconded and,

RESOLVED:

- I. To change the current pre-purchase policy, in line with Option 2, and no longer allow residents or non-residents to pre-purchase a grave space, with immediate effect.
- II. To keep under review Options 3 and 4, taking account of progress and further works to secure new burial land.

229/23 GROUNDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES BUDGET FOR 2024/25

Members received the report provided. The Town Clerk and Chief Executive summarised key points of the report. Members were invited to ask questions or make suggestions to officers in the following weeks to support the preparation of the final version of the budget for the next meeting of the Committee.

230/23 REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

CBC Development Committee – Cllr Nicholas Kotarski

No update

The meeting closed at 20:43

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

**HELD AT THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, GROVE HOUSE, HIGH STREET NORTH,
DUNSTABLE**

ON MONDAY 13 NOVEMBER 2023 FROM 19:00

Present: Councillors Liz Jones (Town Mayor), Louise O’Riordan (Deputy Town Mayor), Peter Hollick (Chair), Gregory Alderman (Vice-Chair), Richard Attwell, Nicholas Kotarski, Matthew Brennan, Robert Blennerhasset, Philip Crawley, Michelle Henderson, and Johnson Tamara.

In Attendance: Paul Hodson (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), Georgia Pearson (Democratic Services Manager) and Lisa Scheder (Head of Finance and Responsible Financial Officer)

Apologies: Councillors Mark Davis, and John Gurney

Public: Nil.

231/23 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 18 September 2023 were approved as a correct record following one minor amendment and were signed by the Chair.

232/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no specific declarations of interest.

233/23 ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Members received the report provided.

234/23 REFERRAL REPORTS

Members received and noted the report.

UK Shared Prosperity and S106 Funding Applications,

RESOLVED:

To release any funding secured from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and from S106 funds to deliver the projects applied for.

Fencing Reserve Spending approval,

RESOLVED:

To release £6,019 from the Fencing Reserve to undertake the works identified in the report.

235/23 FINANCE

RESOLVED:

- i. To agree the revenue budget position for the period from 1 April 2023 to 30 September 2023.
- ii. To note the current balance of the Council's earmarked reserves as at 31 October 2023.
- iii. To note the outcome of the External Audit for financial year 2022/23.
- iv. To note current investments.

236/23 CORPORATE AND FINANCIAL RISK MANAGEMENT

Deferred to next meeting.

237/23 DRAFT BUDGET FOR 2024/25

Members received the report provided. The Town Clerk and Chief Executive summarised key points of the report. Members were invited to ask questions or make suggestions to officers in the following weeks to support the preparation of the final version of the budget for the next meeting of the Committee.

238/23 MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive Officer summarised the report provided. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive informed Members that a rates card for advertising in Talk of the Town had been put in place, and one advertiser secured for the next edition.

239/23 ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING

Members received a report and discussed the report's recommendation to hold the event at the same venue and for the same budget as the previous year.

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive reminded Members that alcohol is never served or sold before or during a meeting, only after a Council meeting has concluded.

Councillor Tamara informed members that he had spoken to a representative from the Conference Centre during the day and had been advised that the venue had offered to reduce their charge by £600.

The following amendment to the report's recommendation was proposed by Councillor Alderman and seconded:

That the council cuts the catering costs of the upcoming ACM and mayor making ceremony, by charging for alcoholic drinks at the bar, and asking for those attending to reduce food and soft drink costs of the event through voluntary contributions. This amendment is considered in light of the costs of providing these provisions from last year being £160.20 and £666.67, respectively a cost that is likely to rise this coming year. This motion is also informed by the public expectation that taxpayer money be used for public services not for food and drink at an already costly event.

Following a debate, the following proposals were made:

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED:

That the Council agree the most cost-effective venue considering the event and ensure that the cost of refreshments are kept within or below those for 2023.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED:

That officers look at whether the Peter Newton Pavilion would be a suitable meeting venue given the nature of the event.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED:

That if the event is to be held at the Peter Newton Pavilion the Council offer a pay bar.

It was proposed, seconded and

NOT RESOLVED:

That if the event is to be held at the Dunstable Conference Centre the Council offer tea and coffee and soft drinks only.

240/23 REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

- Citizen's Advice Management Committee – Councillor Richard Attwell

Cllr Attwell advised that CA recently held a meeting where the audits were signed off.

- Dunstable International Town Twinning Association – Councillors Liz Jones, Peter Hollick and Kenson Gurney

Cllr Hollick advised that 1 member of the Twinning Association recently visited Ports however advised members that a meeting needed to be held for the future of the organisation.

- Hospice at Home Management Committee - Councillor Liz Jones

Cllr Jones advised that there will be another meeting this week for the organisation. Recently training for volunteers have been provided and further extension has been added to the organisation, so they are now dementia friendly to reach a wider audience who need their support.

- Ashton Almshouses Charity – Councillors Louise O’Riordan and Gregory Alderman

Cllr O’Riordan advised members that a property was available, and a tenant was being sought.

- Ashton Schools Foundation - Councillors Peter Hollick and Gregory Alderman

Recently the foundation has placed a grant application which will enable funding for new laptops for 10 students.

- Chew’s Foundation - Councillors Matthew Brennan and Kenson Gurney

No Update.

- Poor’s Land Charity - Councillors Hollick and Liz Jones

Next meeting will be 1st February 2024 to discuss the share of money.

- Lockington Charity and Marshe Charity - Councillors Kenson Gurney and Liz Jones

No Update.

- Dunstable and District Scout Council Executive - Councillor Nicholas Kotarski

There have been no meetings since the last report. The next meeting is due on Wednesday 22nd November 2023.

Cllr Kotarski met with the new District Commissioner after the Remembrance Day Parade. He will continue the efforts to reintroduce scouting into the Dunstable South area.

241/23 EXCLUSIONS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: in terms of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, the

following item will be likely to disclose exempt information relating to establishment and contractual matters and therefore, pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded.

242/23 PRIORY HOUSE WORKS – VERBAL UPDATE

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive updated members regarding the ongoing works to Priory House. No details of cost or timescale for the additional works required were yet available. Further updates will be provided to future meetings.

The meeting closed at 20:56

Committee	Minute	Date	Action	Action Full	Responsible	Update	Status
FULL	200/23	02/10/2023	BATPC nomination	The Council nominated Councillors Kenson Gurney and Matthew Neall to represent the Town Council on the Bedfordshire Association of Town and Parish Councils (BATPC).	Town Clerk and Chief Executive	Councillor Kenson Gurney was elected to membership by the BATPC.	Completed

Mrs L Scheder
Dunstable Town Council
Grove House
76 High Street North
Dunstable
Bedfordshire
LU6 1NF

Direct line: +44 (0)191 383 6348

Email: local.councils@mazars.co.uk

Date: 26 September 2023

Dear Mrs Scheder

Completion of the audit for the year ended 31 March 2023

We have completed our audit for the year ended 31 March 2023 and I have pleasure in enclosing the certified Annual Governance and Accountability Return. The External Auditor's Certificate and Report is given in Section 3.

If there are any significant matters arising from the audit, they are summarised in the External Auditor's certificate in Section 3. If we have identified minor scope for improvement we have recorded this on page 2 of this letter. The Council must consider these matters and decide what action is required. In most cases this will be self-evident. In some instances we have referred to further guidance available, in particular, in the publication "*Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – A Practitioners' Guide (England) 2022*". This can be obtained via your NALC or SLCC branch, or downloaded free of charge.

Action you are required to take

The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 set out what you must do at the conclusion of the audit. In summary, you are required to:

Publish (which must include publication on the authority's website) a statement:

- that the audit has been concluded and that the statement of accounts has been published;
- of the rights of inspection conferred on local government electors by section 25 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014; and
- the address at which, and the hours during which, those rights may be exercised.
- Keep copies of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for purchase by any person on payment of a reasonable sum.
- Ensure that the Annual Governance and Accountability Return remains available for public access for a period of not less than five years beginning with the date on which the Annual Governance and Accountability Return was first published.

The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 do not specify the period the Completion Notice needs to be on the council's website but this period must be reasonable.

Minor scope for improvement in 2023/24

The Council has left Box 11a in Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) blank. Although the answer that the Council are not sole trustees for any trust funds could be inferred from other answers on the AGAR the Council should ensure all boxes are filled in, marking nil or not applicable where appropriate.

Accessibility Regulations

We are aware that the Accounts and Audit Regulations requirement for a physical 'wet ink' signature on the original AGAR, does not allow parish council's to fully comply with the Accessibility Regulations. The National Audit Office are aware that the two pieces of legislation are not compatible, therefore smaller authorities are advised to make it clear on their website that the document is a scan and will not be fully compliant with the Accessibility Regulations.

Audit fee

Our fee note for the audit, which is in accordance with the audit fee scales set by SAAA, and available at <http://www.localaudits.co.uk/fees.html> will follow.

We would be grateful if you could arrange for this to be paid at the earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely



Cameron Waddell

Partner

For and on behalf of Mazars LLP

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23 Form 3

To be completed by Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities*:

- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure exceeded £25,000 but did not exceed £6.5 million; or
- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure was £25,000 or less but that:
 - are unable to certify themselves as exempt (fee payable); or
 - have requested a limited assurance review (fee payable)

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23

1. Every smaller authority in England that either received gross income or incurred gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 **must** complete Form 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** must be completed by the authority's internal auditor.
 - **Sections 1 and 2** must 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 and published on the authority website/webpage **before 1 July 2023**.
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 is requesting a limited assurance review, **must** return to the external auditor by email or post (not both) **no later than 30 June 2023**. Reminder letters will incur a charge of £40 +VAT:
 - the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Sections 1 and 2, together with
 - a bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2023
 - an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements
 - notification of the commencement date of the period for the exercise of public rights
 - Annual Internal Audit Report 2022/23

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

Once the external auditor has completed the limited assurance review and is able to give an opinion, the Annual Governance and Accountability **Section 1, Section 2 and Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate** will be returned to the authority by email or post.

Publication Requirements

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

Before 1 July 2023 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounting statements are as yet unaudited;
- **Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2022/23**, approved and signed, page 4
- **Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2022/23**, approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2023 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of conclusion of audit
- **Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate**
- **Sections 1 and 2 of AGAR** including any amendments as a result of the limited assurance review.

It is recommended as best practice, to avoid any potential confusion by local electors and interested parties, that you also publish the Annual Internal Audit Report, page 3.

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 the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2022/23

- The authority **must** comply with *Proper Practices* in completing Sections 1 and 2 of this AGAR. *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 AGAR is complete (no highlighted boxes left empty) and is properly signed and dated. Any amendments must be approved by the authority and properly initialled.
- The authority **should** receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report before approving the Annual Governance Statement and the accounts.
- Use the checklist provided below to review the AGAR for completeness before returning it to the external auditor by email or post (not both) no later than 30 June 2023.
- The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) must be approved on the same day or before the Accounting Statements (Section 2) and evidenced by the agenda or minute references.
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) must certify the accounts (Section 2) before they are presented to the authority for approval. The authority must in this order; consider, approve and sign the accounts.
- The RFO is required to commence the public rights period as soon as practical after the date of the AGAR approval.
- You must inform your external auditor about any change of Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chairman, and provide relevant authority owned generic email addresses and telephone numbers.**
- Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation to be sent to your external auditor with the AGAR 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 full variance.
- If the bank reconciliation is incomplete or variances not **fully** explained then additional costs may be incurred.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and that the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2022) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2023).
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), on behalf of the authority, **must** set the commencement date for the exercise of public rights of 30 consecutive working days which **must** include the first ten working days of July.
- The authority **must** publish on the authority website/webpage 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 **before 1 July 2023**.

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 been completed by the internal auditor and explanations provided?	✓	
Section 1	For any statement to which the response is 'no', has an explanation been published?	✓	
Section 2	Has the Responsible Financial Officer signed the accounting statements before presentation to the authority for approval?	✓	
	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 been published where required?	✓	
	Has the bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2023 been reconciled 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 as a body corporate is a sole managing trustee? NB: do not send trust accounting statements unless requested.		✓

**Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices*, can be downloaded from www.nalc.gov.uk or from www.ada.org.uk

Annual Internal Audit Report 2022/23

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

ENTER PUBLIC www.dunstable.gov.uk / WEBSITE ADDRESS

During the financial year ended 31 March 2023, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2022/23 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	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 bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2021/22, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2021/22 AGAR tick "not covered")			✓
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	✓		
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (during the 2022-23 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2021-22 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2021/22 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).	✓		
O. (For local councils only) 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

22/11/2022 28/02/2023 06/06/2023

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

SF Christopher for Auditing Solutions Ltd

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

SF Christopher

Date

06/06/2023

*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 2022/23

We acknowledge as the members of:

DUNSTABLE TOWN 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 2023, 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, as a body corporate, 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 and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.**

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

26/06/2023

and recorded as minute reference:

MIN 158/23

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

Chairman

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

ENTER PUBLICLY www.dunstable.gov.uk EBPAGE ADDRESS

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2022/23 for

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2022 £	31 March 2023 £	
1. Balances brought forward	1,866,332	2,196,772	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	2,393,969	2,480,490	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	1,579,975	2,268,793	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	1,832,647	1,987,336	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	108,426	109,364	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	1,702,431	1,988,805	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	2,196,772	2,860,550	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	2,302,961	2,821,081	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	7,873,739	7,901,976	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	850,443	998,395	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)				The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)			✓	The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2023 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

14/06/2023

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

26/06/2023

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE 159/23

Signed by Chairman of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Section 3 – External Auditor’s Report and Certificate 2022/23

In respect of

Dunstable Town Council

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 2023; 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 2022/23

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.

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

Not applicable

3 External auditor certificate 2022/23

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 2023.

*We do not certify completion because:

Not applicable

External Auditor Name

Mazars LLP, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 1DF

External Auditor Signature

Mazars LLP

Date

26 September 2023