



Market Drayton Town Council

Notice of conclusion of audit

Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31 March 2025

Sections 20(2) and 25 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014

Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/234)

1. The audit of accounts for Market Drayton Town Council for the year ended 31 March 2025 has been completed and the accounts have been published.
2. The Annual Governance & Accountability Return is available for inspection by any local government elector of the area Market Drayton Town Council on application to:

Mrs Kate Harvey – Assistant Clerk / RFO
Town Hall, 18 Frogmore Road,
Market Drayton, Shropshire,
TF9 3AX.

Inspection rights may be exercised:
Monday to Friday
Between 09.00 – 13.00
3. Copies will be provided to any person on payment of £0 for each copy of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return.

Announcement made by: Mrs Kate Harvey, Assistant Clerk / RFO

Date of announcement: 5 September 2025

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/25 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 2024/25

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 2025**.

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 2025**. 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 2025
- 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 2024/25

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 2025 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 2024/25**, approved and signed, page 4
- **Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25**, approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2025 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) 2024/25

- 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 initialed.
- 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 2025.
- 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 Chair, 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 2024) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2025).
- 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 2025.

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 Chair of the approval meeting?	✓	
	Has an explanation of significant variations been published where required?	✓	
	Has the bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2025 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 2024/25

Market Drayton Town Council

https://www.marketdrayton.gov.uk

During the financial year ended 31 March 2025, 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 2024/25 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 non-compliance were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No
A. Appropriately 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. The authority assessed the significance of achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.		
D. The precept 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 received and properly booked, 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 of income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying reports and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.		
K. The authority's limited liability was examined for limited liability purposes review in 2023/24. If met the exemption criteria and correctly declared each exempt (if the authority has a limited liability review of the 2023/24 AGAR for "redundancy").		
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 (within the 2024-25 AGAR period, any public rights in relation to the 2023/24 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes submitted to the AGAR).		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2023/24 AGAR. (see AGAR Page 7 Guidance Notes)		
O. (For local councils only): Trust funds (held in charitable) - The optional model response is 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

20/09/2024 - 24/04/2025

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

A.C. Shepherd-Roberts

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

A.C. Shepherd-Roberts

Date

24/04/2025

Findings/Comments: Please state the implication and action plan for any weaknesses in controls. (continued on separate sheets if needed)

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

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

We acknowledge as the members of:

Market Drayton 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 2025, that

	Agreed		Yes means that this authority:
	Yes	No	
1. We have put in place arrangements to ensure that 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 other irregularities and reviewed its effectiveness,	☒	☐	made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and assets in its charge.
3. We took all reasonable steps to ensure that where there are no members of authority or potential members with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that should have a significant financial effect on the ability of the 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 sleepers' 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 the 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 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 allegation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year end, have a material 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 starting prior to the year end if relevant.
9. For local councils only: Trust funds including charities in our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our responsibility responsibilities for the fund(s) assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination of audit,	Yes	No	N/A
	☐	☐	☒

*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:

16/06/2025

and recorded as minute reference:

18.C

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

Chair

Clerk

<https://www.marketdrayton.gov.uk>

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 for

Market Drayton Town Council

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2024 £	31 March 2025 £	
1. Balances brought forward	780,507	810,913	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	546,579	554,184	Total amount of precept, (or for LDCs, rates and levies) received or receivable in the year (excluding any grants received).
3. (+) Total other receipts	131,698	170,250	Total income of receipts as reported in the accounts less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	200,591	211,893	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees, including staff salaries and wages, employers' NI contributions, employers' pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	4,325	4,005	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	445,455	445,904	Total expenditure on payments as recorded in the cash book less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (+) Balances carried forward	810,913	875,440	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	794,641	852,207	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	1,762,449	1,780,267	The value of all the property the authority owns. It is made up of all the fixed assets and long-term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	12,000	8,000	The outstanding capital balances as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including NWLs).

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
13a. Disclosure rights to Trust funds (including charitable)				The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
13b. Disclosure rights to Trust funds (including charitable)				The figures in the accounting statements above exclude any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2025 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 Practice and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

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

[Signature]

Date

07/05/2025

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

15/05/2025

as recorded in minute references:

19.C

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

[Signature]

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

In respect of **Market Drayton Town Council SH0115**

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

Date

27/07/2025