


Smaller authority name:

ALCESTER TOWN COUNCIL

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

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

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

| NOTICE | NOTES |
|--|--|
| <p>1. Date of announcement <u>Wednesday 5 June 2024</u> (a)</p> <p>2. Each year the smaller authority's Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) needs to be reviewed by an external auditor appointed by Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Ltd. The unaudited AGAR has been published with this notice. As it has yet to be reviewed by the appointed auditor, it is subject to change as a result of that review.</p> <p>Any person interested has the right to inspect and make copies of the accounting records for the financial year to which the audit relates and all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers, receipts and other documents relating to those records must be made available for inspection by any person interested. For the year ended 31 March 2024, these documents will be available on reasonable notice by application to:</p> <p>(b) Mrs Vanessa Lowe, Town Clerk Alcester Town Council Globe House, Priory Road, Alcester, B49 5DZ Email: clerk@alcester-tc.gov.uk Phone: 01789 766084</p> <p>commencing on (c) <u>Thursday 6 June 2024</u></p> <p>and ending on (d) <u>Wednesday 17 July 2024</u></p> <p>3. Local government electors and their representatives also have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The opportunity to question the appointed auditor about the accounting records; and• The right to make an objection which concerns a matter in respect of which the appointed auditor could either make a public interest report or apply to the court for a declaration that an item of account is unlawful. Written notice of an objection must first be given to the auditor and a copy sent to the smaller authority. <p>The appointed auditor can be contacted at the address in paragraph 4 below for this purpose between the above dates only.</p> <p>4. The smaller authority's AGAR is subject to review by the appointed auditor under the provisions of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and the NAO's Code of Audit Practice 2015. The appointed auditor is:</p> <p>Moore (Ref AP/HD) Rutland House Minerva Business Park Lynch Wood Peterborough PE2 6PZ</p>  <p>MOORE</p> <p>5. This announcement is made by (e) Vanessa Lowe, Town Clerk and RFO</p> | <p>(a) Insert date of placing of the notice which must be not less than 1 day before the date in (c) below</p> <p>(b) Insert name, position and address/telephone number/ email address, as appropriate, of the Clerk or other person to which any person may apply to inspect the accounts</p> <p>(c) Insert date, which must be at least 1 day after the date of announcement in (a) above and extends for a single period of 30 working days (inclusive) ending on the date appointed in (d) below</p> <p>(d) The inspection period between (c) and (d) must also include the first 10 working days of July.</p> <p>(e) Insert name and position of person placing the notice – this person must be the responsible financial officer for the smaller authority</p> |

LOCAL AUTHORITY ACCOUNTS: A SUMMARY OF YOUR RIGHTS

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

The basic position

By law, any interested person has the right to inspect the accounting records of smaller authorities. If you are a local government elector or registered to vote in the local councils' elections, then you are able to ask questions about the accounts and object to them.

The right to inspect the accounting records

When your council has finalised its accounts for the previous financial year, they must advertise that they are available for people to inspect. You must then provide the council with reasonable notice of your intentions. Following this, by arrangement you will then have 30 working days to inspect and make copies of the accounting records and supporting documents. You may be required to pay a copying charge.

The right to ask the auditor questions about the accounting records

If you have any questions regarding the accounting records, you should first ask your smaller authority. This must be done during the 30-day period for the exercise of public rights. You may also ask the appointed auditor questions about an item in the accounting records. However, the auditor can only answer 'what' questions, not 'why' questions so is limited with their response. To avoid any confusion, it is advised that you put your questions in writing.

The right to make objections

Should you view something as unlawful or believe there are matters of wider concern in the accounts, you may wish to object. If you are a local government elector, you have the right to ask the external auditor to apply to the courts for a declaration that an item is contrary to the law and should be reported as a matter of public interest. This must be done by telling the appointed auditor which specific item in the accounts you object to and why you believe it to be unlawful or think a public interest report should be made about it. You must provide clear evidence to support your objection, and this should be done in writing and the copied to the council.

You should not use the 'right to object' to make a personal complaint or claim against your smaller authority. Complaints of this nature should be taken to your local Citizens' Advice Bureau, local Law Centre or to your solicitor.

A final word

Smaller authorities, and so local taxpayers, meet the costs of dealing with questions and objections. In deciding whether to take your objection forward, the auditor must consider the cost that will be involved. They will only continue with the objection if it is in the public interest to do so. If you appeal to the courts against an auditor's decision, you may have to pay for the action yourself.

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

We acknowledge as the members of:

ALCESTER 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 2024, that:

| | Agreed | | | 'Yes' means that this authority: |
|---|--------|-----|-----|--|
| | Yes | No* | | |
| 1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements. | ✓ | | | <i>prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i> |
| 2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness. | ✓ | | | <i>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</i> |
| 3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances. | ✓ | | | <i>has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.</i> |
| 4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations. | ✓ | | | <i>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.</i> |
| 5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required. | ✓ | | | <i>considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.</i> |
| 6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems. | ✓ | | | <i>arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.</i> |
| 7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit. | ✓ | | | <i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i> |
| 8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements. | ✓ | | | <i>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.</i> |
| 9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit. | Yes | No | N/A | <i>has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.</i> |
| | | | ✓ | |

***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:

04/06/2024

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE 6.2

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

Chair

[Signature] SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk

[Signature] SIGNATURE REQUIRED

www.alcester-tc.gov.uk PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24 for

ALCESTER TOWN COUNCIL

| | Year ending | | Notes and guidance |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|---|
| | 31 March 2023 £ | 31 March 2024 £ | |
| 1. Balances brought forward | 447,665 | 204,118 | 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 | 306,536 | 329,813 | Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received. |
| 3. (+) Total other receipts | 266,357 | 284,888 | 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 | 221,560 | 231,025 | 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 | 25,574 | 20,092 | Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any). |
| 6. (-) All other payments | 569,306 | 313,004 | 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 | 204,118 | 254,698 | 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 | 194,932 | 238,733 | 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 | 623,073 | 642,141 | 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 | 134,564 | 112,857 | 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 exclude any Trust transactions. |

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2024 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

Vanessa Eccles

Date

31/05/2024

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

04/06/2024

as recorded in minute reference:

6.3 REFERENCE

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

Bill REQUIRED