

EXTERNAL AUDIT FY 2024/25

Summary: To present the External Auditor's report for the FY 2024/25

Recommendation: That the External Auditor's report be noted by the Committee

Report by: Magda Glanowska – Head of Finance

INTRODUCTION

1. The external audit was performed by PKF Littlejohn LLP who are appointed by Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Ltd (SAAA) as the external auditor for the Cotswolds Conservation Board for the 5 financial years from 2022/23 to 2026/27.
2. Deadline for submission the completed AGAR form for FY 2024/25 to PKF was 1 July 2025 and it was submitted prior to that deadline.
3. The audit of accounts for Cotswolds Conservation Board for the year ended 31 March 2025 has been completed on 25 September 2025 and the accounts along with the notice of conclusion of audit was subsequently published on the CNL website.

FINDINGS

4. PKF opinion was that: "Except for the matters reported below, 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.

The AGAR was not accurately completed before submission for review. Please ensure that amendments are corrected in the prior year comparatives when completing next year's AGAR:

- The smaller authority has confirmed that bank interest of £13,816 received during the year was not posted to the accounts and has therefore been excluded from receipts in Section 2. The figures in Section 2, Boxes 3, 7 and 8 for the current year should read £4,240,142, £1,330,563 and £2,151,579 respectively."

5. The other matters mentioned that the internal auditor has drawn attention to weaknesses in relation to GDPR compliance. This has been confirmed as being addressed in FY25/26 and also presented in this meeting.

TIMETABLE FOR 2025/26

6. Next year planned submission deadline for the return of completed AGAR Form is 1 July 2026. It is anticipated that the instructions will be sent out during March 2026.

SUPPORTING PAPERS

Appendix A – Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2024/25 – Section 1&2

Appendix B – External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2024/25

Appendix C – Audit Closure Letter

Appendix D – Notice of Conclusion of External Audit 2024-25

NOVEMBER 2025