

Title of Report:	Notice of Audit of Accounts 2025/26
Committee Report Submitted To:	Audit Committee
Date of Meeting:	17 June 2026
For Decision or For Information	For Information
To be discussed In Committee YES/NO	No

Linkage to Council Strategy (2026-31)	
Strategic Theme	Governance, Quality & Continuous Improvement
Outcome	Value for money, with a Council that maintains financial sustainability and achieves efficiency improvements
Lead Officer	Chief Finance Officer

Estimated Timescale for Completion	
<u>Date to be Completed</u>	

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	
Included in Current Year Estimates	
Capital/Revenue	
Code	
Staffing Costs	

Legal Considerations	
<u>Input of Legal Services Required</u>	NO
<u>Legal Opinion Obtained</u>	NO

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date: n/a
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date: n/a
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/No	Date: n/a
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date: n/a
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date: n/a
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date: n/a

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Audit Committee of the Appointed Date and Note of Public Rights, (by publication on the website) of the Audit of Accounts 2025-26.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 and the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 details requirements in relation to the accounts and audit of a local government body (a council or a joint committee).

Regulation 11 of the 2015 Regulations requires the local government auditor to appoint a date on or after which the rights in Articles 17(2) and 18(1) of the 2005 Order may be exercised. The day so appointed acts as a trigger in two respects:

1. it triggers the right of an interested person to question the auditor about the accounts and/or to make objections; and
2. it triggers the 20 working days period during which the local government body must make the accounts and other documents referred to in Article 17 of the 2005 Order available for public inspection.

There is provision for an interested party to contact the auditor with a view to asking questions about the accounts or making an objection in relation to the accounts. Other points worth noting specifically are:

- Article 17(1) of the 2005 Order (inspection of accounts and documents) applies to "any member of the public";
- Article 17(1)(a) of the 2005 Order entitles any member of the public to inspect the accounts and all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers and receipts relating to them. It is therefore inappropriate in the statutory notice to seek to limit the scope of those documents which the 2005 Order permits members of the public to inspect. I am not suggesting that any request, however unreasonable, must be met but it would be inappropriate for the public notice to introduce restrictions on the right to inspect documents; and
- Article 17(1)(b) entitles any member of the public who inspects the accounts and related documents to "make copies of all or any part of the accounts and those other documents". That Article does not empower the local government body to make a charge where the member of the public makes such copies.

The position would be different if the member of the public asked the local government body to make the copies. Thus, in Article 14(2)(a) and (b) of the 2005 Order, a member of the public may inspect an immediate report made by a local government auditor and make a copy of it or any part of it. But, if the member of the public requires the local government body to supply him with a

copy of the report, or any part of it, that person must pay a reasonable amount for that copy. Since the statutory language in relation to Article 17(1)(b) is to allow a member of the public to make copies, it is inappropriate for the statutory notice to state that a charge will be made.

3.0 Audit of Accounts Notice

Regulation 14 has been complied with on 27th April 2026, and a copy of the Audit of Accounts notice is attached in Appendix 1, and available via the following link.

<https://causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk/council/publications-policies/notice-of-audit-2026>

4.0 Recommendation

It is recommended that Audit Committee note the details of the Audit of Account Notice.

Audit of Accounts

Notice is hereby given that pursuant to Articles 17 and 18 of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 and the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015:

From 29 July 2026 to 26 August 2026 inclusive between 9.00 am and 4.15 pm on Monday to Friday any member of the public, on application in advance in writing to the Chief Finance Officer at the address above may inspect the accounts of the above named Council/Body for the year ended 31 March 2026 and all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers and receipts relating to them and make copies thereof.

Notice is also given that on or after 27 August 2026, at the request of an interested person*, the local government auditor, will give that person an opportunity to question the auditor about the accounts, and that any such interested person may attend before the auditor and make objections -

(i) as to any matter in respect of which the auditor could take action under Articles 19 or 20 of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005; or

(ii) as to any other matter in respect of which the auditor could make a report under Article 9 of that Order.

No objection may be made unless the auditor has received written notice of the proposed objection, stating the facts on which the interested person proposes to rely and containing, so far as possible -

(a) particulars of any item of account which is alleged to be contrary to law;

(b) particulars of -

(i) any person from whom it is alleged that the auditor should certify under Articles 20 of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order that a sum or amount of loss or deficiency is due, and

(ii) that sum or amount, and

(c) particulars of any matter in respect of which it is proposed that the auditor should make a report under Article 9 of that Order.

Such written requests and notices should be sent by the 11 September 2026 to the Local Government Auditor, Brian O'Neill at 106 University Street, Belfast, BT7 1EU. A copy of any notice of proposed objection must also be sent to the Council at the address below. The auditor plans to close the audit and certify accounts at a date in the period from 14 September 2026 to 30 September 2026.

**"Interested person": (a) a local government elector for the district of the body to which the audit relates; (b) a person liable for rates in respect of any hereditament situated in that district; or (c) a representative of a person mentioned in (a) or (b).*