

Sevenoaks Town Council

NOTICE OF APPOINTMENT OF DATE FOR THE EXERCISE OF ELECTORS' RIGHTS

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2015

**Audit Commission Act 1998, Sections 15 and 16 and
The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 (SI 2011 No 817)**

NOTICE	NOTES
<p>1. Date of announcement <u>24 April 2015</u> (a)</p> <p>2. Each year the body's annual return needs to be reviewed by an external auditor appointed by the Audit Commission. Any person interested has the right to inspect the accounts and make copies of the annual return and all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers and receipts relating to the accounting statements. For the year ended 31 March 2015 these documents will be available on reasonable notice by application to:</p> <p>(b) <u>JULIE LOBLEY, RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER</u> <u>SEVENOAKS TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES</u> <u>BRADBOURNE VALE RD, SEVENOAKS TN13 3QG</u> <u>(OFFICE HOURS)</u></p> <p>commencing on (c) <u>08 May 2015</u></p> <p>and ending on (d) <u>05 June 2015</u></p> <p>3. Local government electors and their representatives also have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The opportunity to question the auditor about the accounts; and • The right to make objections to the accounts or any item in them. Written notice of an objection must first be given to the auditor and a copy sent to the body. <p>The auditor can be contacted at the address in paragraph 4 below for this purpose on (e) 08 June 2015 and until the audit has been completed.</p> <p>4. The body's annual return is subject to review by the appointed auditor under the provisions of the Audit Commission Act 1998, the Accounts and Audit Regulations (England) 2011 and the Audit Commission's Code of Audit Practice, all as transitionally saved. The appointed auditor is:</p> <p>PKF Littlejohn LLP Ref: SBA 2nd Floor 1 Westferry Circus Canary Wharf London E14 4HD (sba@pkf-littlejohn.com)</p> <p>5. This announcement is made by (f) <u>JULIE LOBLEY</u> <u>RESPONSIBLE FINANCE</u></p>	<p>(a) Insert date of placing of the notice which must be not less than 14 days before the date in (c) below</p> <p>(b) Insert name, position and address 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 14 days after the date of announcement in (a) above and at least 21 working days before the date appointed in (e) below</p> <p>(d) The inspection period between (c) and (d) must be 20 working days and (d) must be at least one working day before the date appointed in (e) below</p> <p>(e) The date appointed by the auditor</p> <p>(f) Insert name and position of person placing the notice</p>

OFFICER

COUNCIL ACCOUNTS: A SUMMARY OF YOUR RIGHTS

Please note that this summary applies to all smaller relevant bodies, including drainage boards and other small bodies.

The basic position

By law any person interested has the right to inspect a parish council's or parish meeting's accounts. If you are entitled and registered to vote in local council elections then you (or your representative) also have the right to ask the appointed auditor questions about the council's accounts or object to an item of account contained within them.

The right to inspect the accounts

When your council has finalised its accounts for the previous financial year it must let you know that they are available for inspection. Giving your council reasonable notice of your intentions, you then have 20 working days to look through the accounting statements in the annual return and any supporting documents. By arrangement you will be able to inspect and make copies of the accounts and the relevant documents. You may have to pay a copying charge.

The right to ask the auditor questions about the accounts

You can only ask the appointed auditor questions about the accounts. The auditor does not have to answer questions about the council's policies, finances, procedures or anything else not related to the accounts. Your question must be about the accounts for the financial year just ended. The auditor does not have to say whether they think something the council has done, or an item in its accounts, is lawful or reasonable.

The right to object to the accounts

If you think that the council has spent money that they shouldn't have, or that someone has caused a loss to the council deliberately or by behaving irresponsibly, you can object to an item of account by sending a formal 'notice of objection' to the auditor at the address below. **The notice must be in writing.** In it, you must tell the auditor why you are objecting and what you want the auditor to do about it. The auditor must reach a decision on your objection. If you are not happy with that decision, you can appeal to the courts.

You may also object if you think that there is something in the accounts that the auditor should discuss with the council or tell the public about in a 'public interest report'. **You must give your reasons in writing** to the auditor at the address below and send a copy to the council. The auditor must then decide whether to take any action. The auditor does not have to, but usually will, give reasons for their decision and you cannot appeal to the courts.

You may not use this 'right to object' to make a personal complaint or claim against your council. You should take such complaints to your local Citizens' Advice Bureau, local Law Centre or to your solicitor.

What else you can do

Instead of objecting, you can give the auditor information that is relevant to their responsibilities. For example, you can simply tell the auditor if you think that something is wrong with the accounts or about waste and inefficiency in the way the council runs its services. You do not have to follow any set time limits or procedures. The auditor does not have to give you a detailed report of their investigation, but they will usually tell you the outcome.

A final word

Councils, and so local taxpayers, meet the costs of dealing with questions and objections. In deciding whether to take your objection forward, one of a series of factors the auditor must take into account is 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 will have to pay for the action yourself.

For more detailed guidance on electors' rights and the special powers of auditors, copies of the publication *Council Accounts – a guide to your rights* are available from the Audit Commission website.

If you wish to contact your Council's appointed external auditor please write to the address in paragraph 4 of the notice of appointment of date for the exercise of electors' rights.