Walberswick Parish Council

External Audit Report Response & Action Plan 2025/26 - 12 October 2026

There were matters relating to the compliance of Assertion 10 included in the Council's external audit report for 2025/26, prepared by PKF Littlejohn LLP, dated 7 September 2026. The following responses and actions were agreed by the Council on 12 October 2026:

Section 1, Assertion 10 has been incorrectly completed and should have been answered 'No'. This is because the Council has not fully complied with its data protection and accessibility responsibilities. (1) The internal audit identified that the Data Protection Policy is not reviewed annually, (2) no Data Protection Impact Assessment or data audit has been undertaken, (3) the Data Retention Policy does not include disposal arrangements, and (4) there is no evidence of regular data protection training for councillors and staff. In addition, (5) the Council's website accessibility statement requires updating to meet current accessibility standards, and (6) no website accessibility testing was carried out during the financial year.

(1 & 2) The Vice Chair will submit proposals to the Council relating to annual reviews of the Data Protection Policy, the adoption of a Data Impact Assessment identifying the various categories, format and legal justification involved and the adoption of Data audits including mapping and risk assessments.

Subject to the Council's approval, these matters will be addressed by the end of March 2027.

(3) We are already committed in our Data Retention Policy to following NALC Legal Topic Note 40 which has been held on our web site since it was adopted and can be seen here:

https://walberswick.onesuffolk.net/assets/Parish-Council/Agendas/Agendas-2018/October-2018/LTN-40-Local-councils-documents-and-records-revised-Nov-2016-copy.pdf

Our existing Data Retention Policy also contains the following clause: *"Once data is not needed any more, is out of date or has served its use and falls outside the minimum retention time of Council's document retention policy, it will be shredded or securely deleted from the computer"*.

Consequently, this matter requires no additional action to be taken.

(4) The Vice Chair will submit a proposal to the Council relating to Regular Data Protection Compliance training for council staff and councillors.

Subject to the Council's approval, this matter will be addressed by the end of March 2027.

(5 & 6) It is proposed that the ongoing compliance to our own Accessibility Statement will become part of an annual review, introduced by the Vice Chair, to be ratified as completed at each Annual Meeting of the Council. The Accessibility Statement can be seen here:

https://walberswick.onesuffolk.net/walberswick-parish-council/accessibility-statement

Subject to the Council's approval, this matter will be addressed by the end of March 2027.

(1 - 6) As an overarching safeguard, the Responsible Financial Officer will propose that an additional item be included on the Internal Controls Checklist when it is reviewed by the Council at its meeting in January 2027. The wording will reflect the Council's opportunity earlier in the year to consider the implications of the findings of the internal audit report and whether it decided to make any amendments to the Annual Governance Statement before its submission by the end of June.

Subject to the Council's approval, this matter will be addressed by the end of March 2027.