

Joint Committees

Annual return for the financial year ended 31 March 2024

The annual return on pages 2 to 5 is made up of four sections:

- Sections 1 and 2 are completed by the person nominated by the Joint Committee.
- Section 3 is completed by the PKF Littlejohn LLP as the reviewer appointed by the Joint Committee.
- Section 4 is completed by the Joint Committee's internal audit provider.

Completing your annual return

Guidance notes, including a completion checklist, are provided on page 6 and at relevant points in the annual return.

Complete all sections highlighted in red. Do not leave any red box blank. Incomplete or incorrect returns require additional work and so may incur additional costs.

Send the annual return, together with your bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2024, an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements and any additional information requested, to us, PKF Littlejohn LLP, by the due date.

We will identify and ask for any additional documents needed for our work. Therefore, unless requested, do not send any original financial records.

Once we have completed our work, certified annual returns will be returned to the Joint Committee.

It should not be necessary for you to contact us for guidance.

Additional information can be found on our website using the following link (<https://www.pkf-l.com/services/limited-assurance-regime/joint-committees-independent-review/>).

Section 1 – Annual governance statement 2023/24

We acknowledge as the members of

Enter name of
reporting joint committee

ENTER JOINT COMMITTEE NAME

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including 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 the joint committee:
	Yes	No*	
1 We approved the accounting statements prepared in accordance with the guidance notes within this Annual Return.			prepared its accounting statements and approved them.
2 We maintained an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.			made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.
3 We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with generally accepted good practice that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of the joint committee to conduct its business or on its finances.			has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with generally accepted good practice.
4 We provided opportunity during the year for interested persons to inspect and ask questions about the accounts.			has given all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about these joint committee accounts.
5 We carried out an assessment of the risks facing the joint committee and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.			considered the financial and other risks it faces and has dealt with them properly.
6 We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the joint committee's accounting records and control systems.			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 the joint committee.
7 We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal audit and external reviews.			responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external reviewers.
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 the joint committee and where appropriate have included them in the accounting statements.			disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year-end if relevant.

This annual governance statement is approved by the Joint Committee and recorded as minute reference

MINUTE REFERENCE

dated DD/MM/YYYY

Signed by:

Chair SIGNATURE REQUIRED

dated DD/MM/YYYY

Signed by:

Clerk SIGNATURE REQUIRED

dated DD/MM/YYYY

*Note: Please provide explanations on a separate sheet for each 'No' response. Describe how the joint committee will address the weaknesses identified.

Section 2 – Accounting statements 2023/24 for:

Enter name of reporting joint committee here:

ENTER JOINT COMMITTEE NAME HERE

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2023 £	31 March 2024 £	
			Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records.
1 Balances brought forward			Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the joint committee's financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2 (+) Income from local taxation and/or levy			Total amount of local tax and/or levy received or receivable in the year including funding from a sponsoring joint committee. Excluding any grants received.
3 (+) Total other receipts			Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the taxation and/or levy (line 2). Include any grants received here.
4 (-) Staff costs			Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include salaries and wages, PAYE and NI (employees and employers), pension contributions and employment expenses.
5 (-) Loan interest/capital repayments			Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the joint committee's borrowings (if any).
6 (-) All other payments			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			Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) – (4+5+6)
8 Total cash and short term investments			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 other long term investments and assets			The original Asset and Investment Register value of all fixed assets, plus other long term assets owned by the joint committee as at 31 March
10 Total borrowings			The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2024 the accounting statements in this annual return present fairly the financial position of the Joint Committee and its income and expenditure, or properly present receipts and payments, as the case may be.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer:

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date DD/MM/YYYY

I confirm that these accounting statements were approved by the Joint Committee on:

DD/MM/YYYY

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by Chair of meeting approving these accounting statements:

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date DD/MM/YYYY

Section 3 – Review report 2023/24 Certificate

We present the findings from our review of the annual return for the year ended 31 March 2023 in respect of:

Enter name of
reporting joint
committee here:

ENTER JOINT COMMITTEE NAME HERE

Respective responsibilities of the Joint Committee and the reviewer

The Joint Committee is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The Joint Committee prepares an annual return which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2024; and
- confirms and provides assurance on various governance matters in accordance with generally accepted good practice.

We have reviewed the annual return and set out our findings below. Our work does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and therefore does not provide the level of assurance of a statutory audit.

Report

Matters arising from our review

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

Reviewer signature

Reviewer

PKF Littlejohn LLP

Date

Section 4 – Annual internal audit report 2023/24 to

Enter name of reporting
joint committee here:

ENTER JOINT COMMITTEE NAME HERE

The Joint Committee's internal audit service provider, acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with relevant procedures and controls expected to be in operation during the financial year ended 31 March 2024.

Internal audit has been carried out in accordance with the Joint Committee's needs and planned coverage.

On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of the Joint Committee.

Internal control objective	Agreed? Please choose one of the following		
	Yes	No*	Not covered
A. Appropriate accounting records have been kept properly throughout the year.			
B. The Joint Committee's financial regulations have been met, payments were approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.			
C. The Joint Committee assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.			
D. The annual taxation or levy or funding requirements resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.			
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.			
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.			
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with the joint committee approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.			
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.			
I. Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.			
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, were supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records, and, where appropriate, debtors and creditors were properly recorded.			

For any other risk areas identified by the Joint Committee (list any other risk areas below or on separate sheets if needed) adequate controls existed:

Name of person who carried out the internal audit:

PRINT NAME

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit:

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date:

DD/MM/YYYY

*Note: If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

**Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned, or, if coverage is not required, internal audit must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

Guidance notes on completing the 2023/24 annual return

1. Make sure that your annual return is complete (i.e. no empty red boxes), and is properly signed and dated. Avoid making any amendments to the completed return. But, if this is unavoidable, make sure the amendments are drawn to the attention of and approved by the joint committee, properly initialled and an explanation provided to us. Annual returns containing unapproved or unexplained amendments will be returned and may incur additional costs.
2. Use the checklist provided below. Use a second pair of eyes, perhaps a member or the Chair, to review your annual return for completeness before sending it to us.
3. Do not send us any information not specifically asked for. Doing so is not helpful. However, you must notify us of any change of Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chair.
4. Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation which you send with the annual return covers all your bank accounts. If the joint committee holds any short-term investments, note their value on the bank reconciliation. We must be able to agree your bank reconciliation to Box 8 on the Accounting statements. You must provide an explanation for any difference between Box 7 and Box 8.
5. Explain fully significant variances in the accounting statements on page 3. Do not just send in a copy of your detailed accounting records instead of this explanation. We want to know that you understand the reasons for all variances. Include a complete analysis to support your explanation.
6. If we have to review unsolicited information, or receive an incomplete bank reconciliation, or you do not fully explain variances, this may incur additional costs for which we will make a charge.
7. Make sure that your accounting statements add up and the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2023) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2024).
8. Do not complete section 3. We will complete it at the conclusion of our work.

Completion checklist – ‘No’ answers mean you may not have met requirements		Done?
All sections	All red boxes have been completed?	
	All information requested has been sent with this annual return?	
Section 1	For any statement to which the response is ‘no’, an explanation is provided?	
Section 2	Approval by the joint committee confirmed by signature of Chair of meeting approving the accounting statements?	
	An explanation of significant variations from last year to this year is provided?	
	Bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2024 agrees to Box 8?	
	An explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 is provided?	
Section 4	All red boxes completed by internal audit and explanations provided?	