

<b>Issued to:</b>	Head of Planning and Coastal Management, P Ridley Planning Manager – Policy, Delivery and Specialist Services, A McMillan Chief Finance Officer and S151 Officer, L Rogers
<b>Issued by:</b>	Head of Internal Audit, S Martin
<b>CC:</b>  (For Information Only)	Chief Executive, C Bally Strategic Directors, K Blakemore, A Jarvis, N Khan Audit and Governance Committee Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management, Cllr K Yule Ernst & Young (External Auditor), M Russell
<b>Date:</b>	May 2023

### 1. Scope and Objective of Review

1.1 This review provides certification in relation to Biodiversity Net Gain Grant 2022/23, and will be reported in addition to the 2022/23 Annual Internal Audit Plan, which was approved by the East Suffolk Council Audit and Governance Committee on 14 March 2022.

The business objective for this review was to use government funding in accordance with the required grant conditions.

This review will undertake appropriate investigations and checks that in all significant respects the required grant conditions set by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) have been complied with.

East Suffolk Council was allocated £43,467 for the Biodiversity Net Gain Grant.

### 2. Audit Assurance Opinion

2.1 The overall assurance of **Effective** has been given, which means evaluated controls are adequate, appropriate, and effective to provide reasonable assurance that risks are being managed and objectives are being met.

### 3. Grant Condition Compliance

Grant Condition Summary	Opinion
(1) Funding is spent to prepare for the introduction of Biodiversity Net Gain.	Full compliance
(2) Grant agreement and Evidence of Spend to be submitted to DEFRA.	Full compliance
(3) Chief Executive and Head of Internal Audit to submit a declaration.	Full compliance
(4) and (5) Repayment of grant to Minister of State if notified.	n/a – not required
(6) Carry forward of funds.	Full compliance

- 3.1 As detailed on the 'Evidence of Spend', the total expenditure declared to DEFRA as at 30 March 2023 is £15,118.13. The remaining allocation of £28,348.87 will be carried over into 2023/24 as per condition 6.
- 3.2 The Chief Executive and Head of Internal Audit of ESC are required to provide an assurance declaration to DEFRA confirming grant conditions have been met. The results of this audit have been used to provide a declaration to DEFRA.

### 4. Additional Considerations

- 4.1 The expenditure declared to DEFRA may be subject to change due to the declaration being required by 30<sup>th</sup> March 2023 which is prior to both the end of the funding period (31<sup>st</sup> March 2023) and year end accounts being finalised. This observation was included in the declaration to DEFRA.
- 4.2 Two Priority 4 recommendations have been provided to the service area as advice to enhance the return should a further certification be required in 2023/24.

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