Response to External Audit Qualification of the 2024/25 Accounts

During the year-end process, our previous payroll provider did not submit the NEST pension contribution in time, resulting in the associated direct debit appearing on the April 2025 bank statement. As the payment related to the 2024/25 financial year, both the year-end close-down service and the internal auditor advised that the amount should be included in the 2024/25 accounts.

However, the external auditor has taken a different view and queried whether the accounts would be restated to exclude this amount. As the original advice supported its inclusion, the accounts were submitted accordingly, leading to a qualified opinion from the external auditor.

Action to be Taken:

- No retrospective action is required at this stage.
- Going forward, we will ensure that our new payroll provider submits NEST contributions in a timely manner to ensure the corresponding direct debit falls within the correct financial year.
- We will also seek clarification in advance of the next year-end on whether to restate the figure in line with the external auditor's position or to continue presenting it as originally advised, in order to avoid a repeat qualification.