

INTERNAL AUDIT CHECKLIST

Council: Stapleton Parish Council

Date: 19th April 2024

1. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the year AND Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year	
REVIEW	COMMENT
Ensure the correct roll forward of the prior year cashbook balances to the new financial year	Correct. £14,444 was the cashbook balance at the end of 2022/23.
Check a sample of financial transactions in cashbooks to bank statements, etc: the sample size dependent on the size of the authority and nature of accounting records maintained.	Chq 644. Invoice from S A Ruell for £546. Incorrect cheque number stated on invoice. Chq 652. Invoice from S A Ruell for £150. Incorrect cheque number stated on invoice. Sample checked and correct. Above are very minor errors and not material.
Ensure that bank reconciliations are prepared routinely, are subject to independent scrutiny and sign-off by members.	Bank reconciliations are presented quarterly to Council and minuted.
Verify the accuracy of the year-end bank reconciliation detail and ensure accurate disclosure of the combined cash and bank balances in the AGAR, section 2, line 8.	Checked and correct.
Where the authority has bank balances in excess of £100,000 it has an appropriate investment strategy.	N/A

2. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	
REVIEW	COMMENT
Review the procedures in place for acquisition of formal tenders and quotes, ensuring they are in line with the SOs and FRs which should be based on the latest version.	Procedures checked and correct. Financial regulations are followed.
Ensure that consistent values are in place for the acquisition of formal tenders between SOs and FRs (frequently different limits are recorded in the two documents)	Checked and correct. Values are consistent.
Review the procedures for receipt of invoices, agreement of invoice detail and confirmation of goods/services delivery and approval for payment: ideally, a suitably designed certification stamp should be in place providing for evidencing of these checks and payment authorisation.	Procedure is appropriate for the size of Council. Invoices are presented to Council for payment approval and authorised in the minutes. "Approved" stamp in use.
Check that there is effective segregation between the writing of cheques or the setting up of online payments, and physical release of payments.	Appropriate segregation in place. Cheques are presented to Council where payments are approved and then signed.

2. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	
REVIEW	COMMENT
Check that VAT reclaims are prepared and submitted in a timely manner in line with the underlying records and in accordance with current HMRC requirements	Checked and correct. VAT reclaimed. There is a balance of £4 outstanding.
Where debit / credit cards are in use, establish the total monthly and individual transaction limits and ensure appropriate controls over physical security and usage of the cards are in place	N/A

3. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	
REVIEW	COMMENT
Ensure that authorities have prepared, and formally adopted, at least once annually, an appropriate and comprehensive register of assessed risks, both regular and ad hoc.	Checked and correct. Document is published on the Council website.
Ensure that appropriate levels of insurance cover are in place for land, buildings, public, employers' and hirers' (where applicable) liability, fidelity / employees (including councillors) liability, business interruption and cyber security.	Checked and correct.
Ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for monitoring play areas, open spaces and sports pitches: such reviews should be undertaken by appropriately qualified external inspectors or, if by officers or members, that they have received the appropriate training and accreditation.	N/A
Review the effectiveness of internal control carried out by the authority.	Internal controls are appropriate for the size of the Council.

4. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	
REVIEW	COMMENT
Ensure that the full Authority, not a committee, has considered, approved and adopted the annual precept for the coming year in accordance with the required parent Authority timetable.	Checked and confirmed. 20/11/23: Minute 5.4
Ensure that current year budget reports are prepared and submitted to Authority / Committees periodically during the year with appropriate commentary on any significant variances.	Budget reports presented quarterly to Full Council.
Review the budget performance either during the year or at the financial year-end seeking explanations for any significant or unanticipated variances.	Budget reports are considered by Council.

4. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	
REVIEW	COMMENT
Ensure that the Authority has considered the establishment of specific earmarked reserves and, ideally, reviews them annually as part of the budget assessment process	No earmarked reserves identified.
Ensure that the precept received in the accounts matches the prior year submission form to the relevant authority and the public record of precepted amounts .	Checked and correct.

5. Expected income was fully received based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT appropriately accounted for.	
REVIEW	COMMENT
Review "Aged debtor" listings to ensure appropriate follow up action is in place.	None identified.
Allotments: ensure that appropriate signed tenancy agreements exist, that an appropriate register of tenants is maintained identifying, that debtors are monitored.	N/A
Burials: ensure that a formal burial register is maintained that it is up-to-date and that a sample of interments and memorials are appropriately evidenced, that fees have been charged at the correct approved rate and been recovered within a reasonable time: (Authorities should also acquire and retain copies of Burial / Cremation certificates)	N/A
Hall hire: ensure that an effective diary system for bookings is in place identifying the hirer, hire times and ideally cross-referenced to invoices raised.	N/A
Leases: ensure that leases are reviewed in a timely manner in accordance with the terms of the lease and rents similarly reviewed appropriately at the due time.	Council does not have any leases in place.
Other variable income streams: ensure that appropriate control procedures and documentation are in existence to provide a clear audit trail through to invoicing and recovery of all such income.	Limited income received. Controls are appropriate for size of Council.
Where amounts are receivable on set dates during the year, ensure that an appropriate control record is maintained duly identifying the date(s) on which income is due and actually received / banked.	The only regular income is the precept. This is monitored and reported to Council/minuted.

6. Petty Cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	
REVIEW	COMMENT
A number of authorities are now running down and closing their petty cash accounts and	Not covered.

6. Petty Cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	
REVIEW	COMMENT
using debit / credit cards for ad hoc purchases. Consequently, a "Not covered" response is frequently required in this area.	
Review the systems in place for controlling any petty cash and also cash floats (used for bar, catering, etc).	N/A
Check a sample of transactions during the financial year to ensure appropriate supporting documentation is held.	N/A
Review the existence of evidenced periodic independent verification of the petty cash and any other cash floats held.	N/A
Ensure that VAT is identified wherever incurred and appropriate.	N/A
Physically check the petty cash and other cash floats held.	N/A
Where bar or catering facilities are in place, ensure that appropriate cashing-up procedures are in place reconciling the physical cash takings to the till "Z" total readings.	N/A

7. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with the authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	
REVIEW	COMMENT
Ensure that, for all staff, a formal employment contract is in place together with a confirmatory letter setting out any changes to the contract.	Checked and correct.
Ensure that appropriate procedures are in place for the payment of members allowances and deduction of any tax liability	Members do not receive allowances. N/A
Ensure that, for a sample of staff salaries, gross pay due is calculated in accordance with the approved spinal point on the NJC scale or hourly rate, if off-scale, and also with the contracted hours.	Checked and correct.
Ensure that appropriate tax codes are being applied to each employee.	Checked and correct.
Where free or paid for software is used, ensure that it is up to date.	Checked and correct.
For the test sample of employees, ensure that tax is calculated appropriately.	Only one employee. Checked and correct.
Check the correct treatment of Pension contributions	No pension is in place.
For NI, ensure that the correct deduction and employer's contributions are applied: NB. The employers allowance is not available to councils but may be used by other authorities	Checked and correct.

7. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with the authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	
REVIEW	COMMENT
Ensure that the correct employers' pension percentage contribution is being applied	N/A
Ensure that for the test sample, the correct net pay is paid to the employee with tax, NI and pension contributions correctly paid to the respective agencies.	Checked and correct.

8. Asset and investment registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained. This section/assurance includes loans to or by the authority	
REVIEW	COMMENT
Tangible Assets	
Ensure that the Authority is maintaining a formal asset register and updating it routinely to record new assets at historic cost price, net of VAT and removing any disposed of or no longer serviceable assets.	Checked and correct. The asset register was updated and approved on 8 th April 2024.
Physically verifying the existence and condition of high value, high risk assets may be appropriate.	No high value, high risk assets owned. 2 defibrillators have been purchased.
The register should identify for each asset the purchase cost and, if practicable, the replacement/insured cost, the latter being updated annually and used to assist in forward planning for asset replacement.	Checked and correct.
Additions and disposals records should allow tracking from the prior year to the current.	No disposals made. 2 defibrillators have been added.
Ensure that the asset value to be reported in the AGAR at section 2, line 9 equates to the prior year reported value, adjusted for the nominal value of any new acquisitions and / or disposals.	Checked and correct.
Compare the asset register with the insurance schedule to ensure that all assets as recorded are appropriately insured or "self-insured" by the Authority.	No assets included on the insurance. Recommend that Council considers adding the defibrillators to its insurance cover.
Fixed asset investments:	
Ensure that all long-term investments (i.e., those for more than 12 month terms) are covered by the "Investment Strategy" and reported as Assets in the AGAR at section 2, line 9.	N/A
Borrowing & Lending:	
Ensure that the authority has sought and obtained appropriate DMO approval for all loans acquired	No new loans have been taken out.
Ensured that the authority has accounted for the loan appropriately (i.e., recorded the full value of the loan. Any arrangement fee should be regarded as an admin expense) in the year of receipt.	Checked and correct.

8. Asset and investment registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained. This section/assurance includes loans to or by the authority	
REVIEW	COMMENT
Tangible Assets	
Ensure that the combined principal loan repayment and interest for the year is correctly recorded in the AGAR at section 2 line 5	AGAR needs to be amended to reflect that the loan has been fully repaid.
Ensure that the outstanding loan liability as at 31 st March each year is correctly recorded in the AGAR at section 2, line 10 (value should be verified via the DMO website)	The outstanding loan has now been paid in full and no longer appears on the DMO website.
Where the Authority has issued loans to local bodies, they should ideally seek signed indemnities from the recipient body, or their members, agreeing to underwrite the loan debt	N/A

9. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cashbook, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and, where appropriate, debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	
REVIEW	COMMENT
To ensure that the financial detail reported at section 2 of the AGAR reflects the detail in the accounting records maintained for the financial year.	Checked and correct.
Ensure that, where annual turnover exceeds £200,000, appropriate records are maintained throughout the year on an Income and Expenditure basis to facilitate budget reporting in that vein.	N/A
Ensure that appropriate accounting arrangements are in place to account for debtors and creditors during the year and at the financial year-end.	Correct. Accounts are receipts and payments.

10. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in the prior year, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt.	
REVIEW	COMMENT
<p>Ensure that, all relevant criteria are met (receipts and payments each totalled less than £25,000)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the correct exemption certificate was prepared and minuted in accordance with the statutory submission deadline that it has been published, together with all required information on the Authority's website and noticeboard 	Checked and correct.

11. The authority publishes information on a free to access website / web page, up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	
REVIEW	COMMENT
Review the Authority's website ensuring that all required documentation is published in accordance with the relevant legislation.	Checked and correct.
12. The authority, during the previous year, correctly provided for the period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	
REVIEW	COMMENT
Examine a copy of the required "Public Notice" ensuring that it clearly identifies the statutory 30 working day period when the Authority's records are available for public inspection.	Checked and correct.
Check whether councils have minuted the relevant dates at the same time as approving the AGAR	Dates of the Public Notice were not minuted. Recommend that the statutory 30 day working period is minuted in future.
13. The authority complied with the publication requirements for the prior year AGAR.	
REVIEW	COMMENT
Ensure that the statutory disclosure/publication requirements in relation to the prior year's AGAR have been met as detailed on the front page of the current year's AGAR.	Checked and correct.
14. Trust funds (including charitable) - the Council met its responsibilities as a trustee	
REVIEW	COMMENT
Confirm that all charities of which the council is a Trustee are up to date with CC filing requirements	N/A
That the council is the sole trustee on the Charity Commission register	N/A
That the council is acting in accordance with the Trust deed	N/A
That the Charity meetings and accounts recorded separately from those of the council.	N/A
Review the level and activity of the charity and where a risk based approach suggests such, review the Independent Examiners report .	N/A

ACTION PLAN:

REVIEW	RECOMMENDATION
Compare the asset register with the insurance schedule to ensure that all assets as recorded are appropriately insured or "self-insured" by the Authority.	No assets included on the insurance. Recommend that Council considers adding the defibrillators to its insurance cover.
Check whether councils have minuted the relevant dates at the same time as approving the AGAR	Dates of the Public Notice were not minuted. Recommend that the statutory 30 day working period is minuted in future.

REVIEW	RECOMMENDATION
AGAR	The AGAR needs to be updated to show the correct loan balance.