



Bingham Town Council

Statement of Internal Control and Annual Review of Effectiveness of Internal Control

1.0 **Overview**

- 1.1 Regulation 4 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations, 2003 as amended, imposes a duty on local councils to ensure “that the financial management of the body is adequate and effective and that the body has a sound system of internal control.”
- 1.2 Local councils are required, at least once a year, to conduct, in accordance with proper practices, a review of the effectiveness of its system of internal control. The Town Council is required to sign the Annual Governance Statement (on the Annual Return submitted to the external auditor) to evidence that this review has been undertaken.
- 1.3 In order for the Town Council to review the effectiveness of the internal control system there needs to be clarity on the internal controls in place.
- 1.4 Some internal controls are listed in the Financial Regulations document, but the system of controls goes beyond this. A Statement of Internal Controls has therefore been prepared and this is included following this report.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That the Town Council consider the attached Statement of Internal Controls, reviewing it to consider whether the controls currently in place are effective.

Updated by: Joanne Riddle
Town Clerk (Proper Officer of Council and Responsible Financial Officer)
11 March 2024

The following statement of internal control was considered and accepted by the Full Council on 19 March 2024

Minute Reference: 8

Statement of Internal Control

Financial Regulations & Standing Orders

- The Town Council has adopted Financial Regulations and Standing Orders, based on the model versions prepared by NALC/SLCC. The Town Council has updated their Financial Regulations and Standing Orders, based on the latest model versions prepared by NALC/SLCC. The Standing Orders and Financial Regulations were reviewed and adopted at the Annual Town Council meeting in May 2023. The Financial Regulations and Standing Orders will be reviewed for continued relevance at least annually and amended where necessary by the Proper Officer with any proposed amendments subject to approval by the Town Council.

Budgetary controls

- The annual budgets are prepared by the Responsible Financial Officer and are subject to amendment. Draft budgets are reviewed by the Standing Committees and a final Budget is considered and is approved by Full Council, as evidenced by reports and minutes in advance of the start of the financial year.
- The precept is set on the basis of the budget and submitted in advance of the deadline, set by Rushcliffe Borough Council.

Order/Tender controls

- The Financial Regulations list the number of estimates, quotes or full tenders that must be invited depending on the value and nature of the work. Any exceptions to this is recorded in the minutes for transparency
- Framework Agreements as set out in Standing Orders are utilised when appropriate to do so
- Official purchase orders are issued to suppliers for services which are not regular in nature, and these are signed by the Responsible Financial Officer

Payment controls

- An officer checks the purchase invoice to indicate that the supply has been received, that the supply has not previously been paid and that the invoice calculations are correct, and this is checked by the Responsible Financial Officer when each payment pack is created
- Purchase orders/emails/letters ordering the work are matched to purchase invoices where applicable
- Payment processing is checked by two members of staff
- Payments will be listed in their corresponding payment packs in the account's files
- Payments over £5,000 (exclusive of VAT) to be identified separately for payment approval by Full Council and will be recorded in the minutes

- Payments over £2,000 and below £5,000 (exclusive of VAT) are subject to additional authorisation by the relevant Committee Chair the expenditure relates to
- Invoices are prepared for payment and held in a payment pack which is authorised by two Councillors, who are authorised to sign on the Town Council's bank mandate
- All invoices for payment are listed on the report tabled at the Finance, Policy & Resources Committee meeting where the expenditure is to be verified
- Payments are subject to scrutiny at the Finance, Policy & Resources Committee meeting
- Payments are published on the website with every Finance, Policy & Resources agenda pack.
- Original invoices are available to all Councillors to view
- Upon request, all Councillors are authorised for read-only access to the Council's current finance software package
- The Responsible Financial Officer, Deputy Clerk and an administrative assistant are authorised to transfer funds from one Town Council account to another Town Council account
- The Responsible Financial Officer maintains control of the cheque book at all times, cheques will be signed by two Councillors who are authorised to sign on the Town Council's bank mandate
- When invoices are paid by cheque, they are with identified by the cheque number and referenced in the cashbook by the cheque number. This is cross checked with the bank statements
- Changes to bank account details received for suppliers are checked before being acted upon using previously held contact details
- On-line payments made via Bankline are restricted to the Responsible Financial Officer, Deputy Clerk and an Administrative Assistant
- A second officer checks and signs the payments made via Bankline
- The Town Council maintains a petty cash float in accordance with its Financial Regulations
- The petty cash float is reconciled every month and is part of the banking reconciliation reports sent to the Finance, Policy & Resources Committee meetings for approval

Income controls

- The Responsible Financial Officer ensures that precept amount received is correct in accordance with the precept demand made to Rushcliffe Borough Council

- The Responsible Financial Officer ensures that the precept instalments are received when due
- The Responsible Financial Officer ensures that other receipts (deposit interest, room hire charges, leases, sports rental, wayleaves and cemetery fees) are received when due and correctly calculated
- Receipts are issued for cash received and a copy kept
- Income is banked promptly

VAT repayment claims

- The Responsible Financial Officer ensures that all invoices are addressed to the Town Council
- The Responsible Financial Officer ensures that proper VAT invoices are received where VAT is payable
- The Responsible Financial Officer maintains a VAT account to show that the correct amount of VAT is reclaimed in the year
- VAT is checked and reclaimed on a quarterly basis

Payroll controls

- Staff contracts are prepared by the Town Clerk in consultation with the Council's HR advisors. They are reviewed and amended where necessary by the Town Clerk and are considered by the Human Resources Committee and are approved by the Town Council.
- The Town Clerk's contract is prepared by the Town Clerk with the direct involvement of at least two members of the Human Resources Committee. The Human Resources Committee review and agree the contract with approval being sought from Full Council.
- All employees are paid under PAYE as an employee and the necessary system for HMRC RTI is in place
- All employees' salaries are set by the Town Council and a minute is prepared to show the agreed salary
- Salaries are paid by bank transfer to all employees monthly
- The Responsible Financial Officer will ensure that all the necessary payroll returns are made to HMRC and will retain evidence that this has been done
- The Responsible Financial Officer will ensure that all necessary pension returns are made to the Local Government Pension Scheme and any other pension provider

Staff expenses

- Staff submit a request for reimbursement of monies owing. The Town Clerk will approve the reimbursement of the monies owed which will then be included in the payments list reviewed by the Finance, Policy & Resources Committee. Two Councillors approve any reimbursement claimed as with all other payments.
- The expenses cover any out of pocket expenses as well as motoring expenses as laid down by joint SLCC/NALC guidelines

Cash Book/Bank Reconciliations

- The cash book is kept electronically, maintained up to date from original documents (cash received, invoices, payments, standing orders, direct debits and bank transfers made and cheques as they are prepared)
- The cash book is reconciled to the bank statements monthly
- Reconciled accounts are presented at every meeting of the Finance, Policy & Resources Committee
- The latest financial position and movements of the Town Council can be traced back to the expenditure approved at previous meetings

Financial reporting

- A budget control, comparing actual receipts and payments to the budget is prepared on a quarterly basis and presented to the Finance, Policy & Resources Committee

Asset Control

- The Responsible Financial Officer maintains a full asset register which is reviewed annually
- The existence and condition of assets should be checked on an annual basis by the Town Clerk
- All assets disposed of by way of sale or failure are to be approved by the Full Council
- The adequacy of insurance of the Parish Council's assets is considered in advance of the insurance renewal
- The Clerk will add assets to the register using the purchase date and value

Risk Assessment

- A Risk Assessment, in the form of this document, the Statement of Internal Control and Annual Review of Effectiveness of Internal Control, is carried out annually by the Responsible Financial Officer and is approved and minuted as adopted by the Town Council

Payments made under section 137 of the 1972 LGA (“The Free Resource”)

Bingham Town Council has the General Power of Competency, if this power lapses the Town Council will return to operating payments under S.137 as instructed below.

- A separate s137 account will be maintained
- The Responsible Financial Officer will calculate the maximum amount of s137 expenditure able to be made each year and will ensure that it is not exceeded. The amount will be confirmed to the Town Council
- The corresponding legal power will be identified in advance of any expenditure
- Where requests for expenditure from s137 are made, it will be made clear at the Policy and Resources meeting where the payment is to be approved
- A minute authorising expenditure from s137 will be recorded on each occasion

Internal Audit

- The current cycle of internal audit review is on an annual basis following the end of the financial year
- The internal auditor produces a written report after completion of their audit review which will highlight any deficiencies in the internal controls and make recommendations or confirming that the Town Council’s internal controls are sufficiently robust
- The report will be considered by Full Council with approved recommendations being implemented at the earliest opportunity
- The Town Clerk will keep the Finance, Policy & Resources Committee updated on the adoption of the auditor’s recommendations