

Langley with Hardley Parish Council

Internal Audit Report

For Langley with Hardley Parish Council

Financial Year 2022/23

Including Explanatory Notes for Annual Return
(where a 'no' has been marked)

Prepared by Catherine Moore
25th May 2023

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I have completed an internal audit of the accounts for Langley with Hardley Parish Council for the year ending 31st March 2023. My findings are detailed below using the tests provided in the Governance and Accountability document. I would like to thank the Clerk / RFO for providing me with all the information required for the Internal Audit.

Internal Control	Test	Observations / Recommendations
Proper bookkeeping	Is the cash book maintained and up to date?	Yes
	Is the cash book arithmetically correct?	Yes
	Is the cash book regularly balanced?	Yes
Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, and Payment Controls	Has the Council formally adopted Standing Orders and Financial Regulations?	Yes
	Date Standing Orders last reviewed	January 2023
	Date Financial Regulations last reviewed	January 2023
	Has a Responsible Financial Officer been appointed with specific duties?	Yes – Parish Clerk
	Have items or services above the de minimus amount been competitively purchased?	N/a
	Are payments in the cash book supported by purchase orders, invoices, authorised and minuted?	Yes
	Has VAT on payments been identified, recorded and reclaimed?	No – see recommendation
	Is S137 expenditure separately recorded and within statutory limits?	Yes
	Have S137 payments been approved and included in the minutes as such?	Yes
Risk Management Arrangements	Does a review of the minutes identify any unusual financial activity?	No
	Do minutes record the Council carrying out an annual risk assessment or review of their risk management scheme?	Yes
	Is insurance cover appropriate and adequate?	Yes

Internal Control	Test	Observations / Recommendations
	Are internal financial controls documented and regularly reviewed?	No – see recommendation
Budgetary Controls	Has the Council prepared an annual budget in support its precept and has this been minuted as being approved?	Yes
	Has the precept been calculated from the budget and been approved?	Yes
	Does the budget include an actual completed year?	Yes
	Is actual expenditure against budget regularly reported to the Council?	Yes
	Has the Council agreed a General Reserve Policy and is this figure reflected in the 'free balance'?	No – see notes
	Are there any significant unexplained variances from budget?	No
Income Controls	Is income properly recorded and promptly banked?	Yes
	Does the precept recorded agree to the Council Tax authority's notification?	Yes
	Are security controls over cash and near-cash adequate and effective?	Yes
Petty Cash Procedures	Is all petty cash spent recorded and supported by VAT invoices / receipts?	N/a
	Is petty cash expenditure reported to each Council meeting?	N/a
	Is petty cash reimbursement carried out regularly?	N/a
Payroll Controls	Do all employees have contracts of employment with clear terms and conditions?	Yes
	Do salaries paid agree with those approved by the Council?	Yes
	Are salaries above the National Living Wage / Minimum Wage?	Yes

Internal Control	Test	Observations / Recommendations
	Are other payments to employees reasonable and approved by the Council?	Yes
	Have PAYE/NIC been properly operated by the Council as an employer?	Yes
Asset Controls	Does the Council maintain a register of all material assets owned or in its care?	Yes
	Are the assets and investments registers up to date? When were these last reviewed?	Yes – March 2023
	Does the asset insurance valuations agree with those in the asset register?	Yes
Bank Reconciliation	Is there a bank reconciliation for each account and is this reported to Council?	Yes
	Is a bank reconciliation carried out regularly and in a timely fashion?	Yes
	Are there any unexplained balancing entries in any reconciliation?	No
Year-End Procedures	Are year-end accounts prepared on the correct accounting basis? (Receipts and Payments or Income and Expenditure)	Yes – Receipts and Payments
	Do accounts agree with the cash book?	Yes
	Has a year-end bank reconciliation been undertaken?	Yes
	Is there an audit trail from underlying financial records to the accounts?	Yes
	Where appropriate, have debtors and creditors been properly recorded?	N/a
Procedural	Is eligibility for the General Power of Competence properly evidenced?	N/a – not eligible

Internal Control	Test	Observations / Recommendations
	Have points raised on the last Internal Audit report been considered by Council and actioned?	Some
Transparency: For smaller councils with turnover under £25,000	Are minutes for the whole year on the website?	Yes
	Are agendas for the whole year on the website?	No – May 2022 missing
	Are payments over £100 detailed on the website?	Yes
	Have electors' rights been correctly advertised on the website, including explanatory notes?	No – see notes
	Are councillors' responsibilities detailed on the website?	Yes
	Is the last financial year's Annual Return on the website?	Partial – missing Page 4
	Are the land and building asset details on the website?	Yes
Councils that are Burial Authorities	Are fees levied in accordance with the Council's approved scale of fees and charges?	N/a
	Have fees for the cemetery been reviewed and agreed by the Council?	N/a
	Were comparisons made with other cemeteries prior to setting the fees?	N/a
	Have burial books been kept up to date and are they safely stored?	N/a
Councils with Allotments	Has a list of allotment holders with amounts paid to Council been submitted?	N/a
	Have fees for the allotments been reviewed and agreed by Council?	N/a
Councils with Charities	Are all Charities up to date with Charity Commission filing requirements?	Yes
	Has the Council been named as Sole Trustee on the Charity Commission Register?	Yes

Internal Control	Test	Observations / Recommendations
	Is the Council acting in accordance with the Charity Trust Deed?	Unknown
	Are the Charity meetings and accounts recorded separately from those of the Council?	Yes
General Data Protection Regulation	Has the Council adopted a Data Protection Policy?	Yes
	Has the Council put in place Privacy Notices?	Yes
Miscellaneous	Is the Council registered with the Information Commissioners Office?	Yes
	Does the Council's website meet accessibility requirements (random sample)	Yes

Summary of Recommendations:

The Internal Control Policy was last reviewed May 2019, this should be reviewed annually and should be accompanied by a Statement of Internal Control, detail what actions the Council takes to detect and deter fraud.

Notes

The contact details for the Council need updating on the Information Commissioners Office register, they still show the former Clerk's address.

A claim has not yet been made for the £142.86 VAT due under VAT126 claim for 2021/22, this should be claimed within 3 years of the VAT being incurred. A claim of £269.73 is in progress for 2022/23.

The May 2022 meeting was the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council, where the first item of business should have been Election of Chairman. This item of business did not for the 2022/23 civic year.

I note that discussion of the General Reserve Policy has been scheduled for the June 2023 meeting.

I have been advised that the outstanding HMRC payment for the previous Clerk's last three payments is to be discussed, with a view to engaging a specialist to advise on this.

The May agenda was not published on the Council's website. Page 4 of the Annual Return was not published on the website. The Notice of Electors Rights was not published in relation to the 2021/22 accounts, therefore I must tick 'No' to Statements K, L, M and N on the Internal Audit Report.

An appendix accompanies the Internal Audit Report page of the Annual Return which must accompany its publication.

Signed:..... Date:

Notes to accompany the Internal Audit Report – to be published alongside Page 4 of the Annual Governance Annual Return

Statement K – the Council did not publish the Notice of Electors Rights or Page 4 (Internal Audit Report) in relation to the 2021/22 accounts.

Statement L – the Council did not publish the May meeting agenda on the website.

Statement M – the Council did not publish the Notice of Electors Rights in relation to the 2021/22 accounts.

Statement N – the Council did not publish the Notice of Electors Rights or the Internal Audit Report page in relation to the 2021/22 accounts.

Catherine Moore
Internal Auditor
25th May 2023