

## **Report to Stradbroke Parish Council**

### **The Internal Audit of the Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2023**

#### **1. Introduction and Summary.**

1.1 The Internal Audit for the year 2022/23 confirmed that the Council continues to maintain effective governance arrangements including a robust and effective framework of internal control and risk management. The Internal Audit review, undertaken on the documentation provided to the Internal Auditor and on the information published on the Council's website, has confirmed that the Council maintains an effective framework of financial administration and internal financial control. The Council displays many examples of good financial practice.

1.2 By examination of the 2022/23 accounts and supporting documentation it was confirmed that the Clerk, in the role as the Council's Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), satisfactorily undertook the administration of the Council's financial affairs and produced satisfactory financial management information to enable the Council to make well-informed decisions.

1.3 The Accounts for the year confirm the following:

*Total Receipts for the year: £150,205.68*  
*Total Payments in the year: £146,581.75*  
*Total Reserves at year-end: £69,998.80 (of which £53,184.00 are earmarked /restricted)*

1.4 The Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) to the External Auditors was examined and the following figures agreed with the Clerk/RFO for inclusion in Section 2 Accounting Statements 2022/23 (rounded for purposes of the Return):

<i>Balances at beginning of year (1 April 2022):</i>	<i>Box 1: £66,375</i>
<i>Annual Precept 2022/23:</i>	<i>Box 2: £38,549</i>
<i>Total Other Receipts:</i>	<i>Box 3: £111,657</i>
<i>Staff Costs:</i>	<i>Box 4: £28,328</i>
<i>Loan interest/capital repayments:</i>	<i>Box 5: £5,787</i>
<i>All Other payments:</i>	<i>Box 6: £112,467</i>
<i>Balances carried forward (31 March 2023):</i>	<i>Box 7: £69,999</i>
<i>Total cash/short-term investments:</i>	<i>Box 8: £69,999</i>
<i>Total fixed assets:</i>	<i>Box 9: £86,530</i>
<i>Total borrowings:</i>	<i>Box 10: £5,665</i>

1.5 Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR are due to be approved and signed at a forthcoming meeting of the Council. The Internal Auditor has completed the Annual Internal Audit Report 2022/23 within the AGAR.

1.6 The following Internal Audit work was carried out on the adequacy of systems of internal control in accordance with the Audit Plan. Comments and any recommendations arising from the review are made below.

**2. Governance, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and other Regulatory matters (examination of Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Code of Conduct, Formal Policies and Procedures, Tenders where relevant. Acting within the legal framework, including Data Protection legislation).**

2.1 The **Annual Parish Council meeting** took place on 9 May 2022. The first item of business was the Election of a Chairman, as required by the Local Government Act 1972.

2.2 The **Membership for the Council's Committees** (the Finance Committee, the Personnel Committee and the Planning Committee) was approved by the Council at its meeting on 9 May 2022.

2.3 The Terms of Reference for the Finance Committee, the Personnel Committee and the Planning Committee were formally approved by the Council at its meeting on 8 November 2021 (Minute 21.11.13 refers) and a copy of each has been placed on the Council's website.

2.4 The Council maintained a number of **Working Groups** in the year of account. The Groups were bound by the Council's Standing Orders; they had no delegated powers, they were unable to incur expenditure or carry out works without seeking authority from the Parish Council and were not required to be held in public. The Working Groups included those relating to Broadband and Climate Change, the memberships of which were agreed by the Council on 9 May 2022.

2.5 The Council formally noted the **Clerk's role as the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)** on 9 May 2022 (Minute 22.05.7d refers). The Council provides appropriate Delegated Authority to the Clerk/RFO. At the meeting on 9 May 2022 the Council approved the updated **Scheme of Delegation** to enable the Clerk, as the Council's Proper Officer, to make decisions on behalf of the Council as and when appropriate in accordance with the Terms of Reference included in the Scheme of Delegation Policy. The Council approved amendments to the Scheme of Delegation at the meeting on 13 June 2022. A copy has been published on the Council's website.

2.6 In overall planning and development the Council works within the **Stradbroke Neighbourhood Plan** which was formally adopted by Mid Suffolk District Council in March 2019 following a positive referendum held in Stradbroke. The Plan has an intended lifespan to 2036. The annual monitoring of the Neighbourhood Plan was reviewed and approved by the Council on 14 November 2022 following a recommendation from the Planning Committee. A copy of the Monitoring document (October 2022) has been published on the Council's website.

2.7 The Council demonstrates good governance practice by maintaining an **Annual Action Plan and Guide** which outlines the short-term objectives of the Council. The Action Plan and Guide is prepared by the Clerk/RFO and constructed from

information taken from the Council's Budgets, matters identified/approved at Council meetings, the Neighbourhood Plan and the Parish Infrastructure Investment Plan (PIIP). The documentation was reviewed and approved by the Council at its meeting on 10 October 2022.

2.8 The PIIP is routinely examined and updated by the Council. The revised PIIP and implementation plan was reviewed and approved at the meeting on 13 June 2022.

2.9 The Council's **Standing Orders** were approved by the Council at its meeting on 9 May 2022 (Minute 22.05.13a refers). The Orders are regularly reviewed and revised by the Council to reflect changing or developing governance arrangements and requirements. A revised version of the Standing Orders (with item 18 updated with points f & g removed and replaced with a new point f to accommodate procurement rules) was approved by the Council on 13 June 2022. The Standing Orders reflect the latest model documents and guidance published by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC). A copy of the Standing Orders has been published on the Council's website.

2.10 **Financial Regulations** were similarly reviewed, amended and approved by the Council at the meeting on 9 May 2022 (Minute 22.05.13b refers). A copy of the Regulations has been published on the Council's website. The financial thresholds that currently apply (at the footnote to item 11.1c) can be updated at the next review of the documents.

2.11 **The General Power of Competence** (GPoC) is being applied by the Council. At its meeting on 13 January 2020, Councillors noted that Stradbroke Parish Council meets the eligibility criteria for the GPoC as:

- a) all Councillors hold office as a result of being declared elected (as opposed to being appointed or co-opted).
- b) The Clerk is suitably qualified, holding the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CILCA).
- c) The Clerk has completed the relevant training in the exercise of the power.

The Council voted to adopt the GPoC as the power of first resort (Minute 20.01.12).

2.12 The Internal Auditor discussed with the Clerk/RFO the major works to the Health Centre. The Clerk/RFO confirmed that no tender process took place for works at the Centre in the year of account and that the works were tendered for in 2019/20 and the Covid pandemic had prevented works being undertaken. The Clerk/RFO confirmed that SALC had advised that re-tendering was not necessary but re-quotations were required. The Clerk/RFO confirmed that no area of work exceeded £25,000 and had been subject to the Contract Register provisions.

2.13 **The Council's Minutes** are very well presented and provide clear evidence of the decisions taken by the Council in the year.

2.14 The **Council is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office** (ICO) as a Fee Payer/Data Controller for the provision of council services under Data Protection legislation (Registration Z8543049 refers, expiring 22 July 2023). The Council maintains a Data Protection Policy, Privacy Statement, Privacy Notice,

Lawful Basis for Processing Data Policy, Document and Data Retention Policy and a Subject Access Request Policy in order to assist compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). The Policies have been published on the Council's website.

2.15 The Council has in place a **Freedom of Information Policy** and a Publication Scheme, both of which have been published on the Council's website.

2.16 The Council demonstrates good practice by adopting and reviewing a wide range of other formal **Policies, Procedures and Protocols**, all of which assist the Council to maintain good governance and robust management within the Council. The Policies include those relating to Communications, Press and Media, Protocols for Public Participation in Meetings, Developer Engagement Policy. Environmental Policy, Grant Awarding Policy and Playing Field Policy. All these policies and procedures are available for public inspection on the Council's website. The Clerk/RFO maintains a list of Council Policies which displays the date of the most recent approval and the date of the next programmed review.

2.17 As a responsible employer, the Council demonstrates good practice by adopting relevant **Staffing Policies and Procedures**. The Council has in place a Complaints Procedure, Grievance Policy, Disciplinary Policy, Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy (Staff), Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy (Non-Staff), Health and Safety Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Equality Policy and a Training & Development Policy. The Staffing Policies are published on the Council's website.

2.18 The Council noted on 12 December 2022 that the Finance Committee had approved a Bad Debt Policy. The Council also approved the Shed User Policy and User Agreement at the meeting on 12 December. Similarly, on 9 January 2022 the Council reviewed and approved the Health & Safety Policy and the Environmental Policy. Copies of the Policies have been published on the Council's website.

2.19 At the meeting on 9 May 2022 the Council reviewed and adopted the new Local Government Association (LGA) Model **Councillor Code of Conduct**, which details the requirements and responsibilities placed upon each individual Councillor. A copy of the Code has been published on the Council's website.

2.20 The **Council's Website** is informative, well maintained and kept up to date with a wide range of documents and data published for residents and the local community. The Council demonstrates good practice by publishing a **Website Accessibility Statement** to assist compliance with the website accessibility regulations. The Statement includes information about navigating within the website and any areas that are not compliant with the regulations.

2.21 The Council is maintaining a **Register of 'Assets of Community Value'** (listing assets upon which the Council has first option to purchase should the assets enter the sale market).

**3. Accounting Procedures and Proper Book-keeping (examination of entries in the Cashbook, regular reconciliations, supporting vouchers, invoices and receipts and VAT accounting).**

3.1 The Council has comprehensive financial documentation and data in place. The Cashbook is extremely well referenced and includes details of:

- a) the legislative authority under which payments are made;
- b) the appropriate Minute reference giving authority for the payment to be made;
- c) the payment voucher number;
- d) method of payment;
- e) payee and details of payment;
- f) any VAT payable;
- g) Total Cost with an analysis over the relevant payment headings.

3.2 A sample of Cashbook transactions was examined by the Internal Auditor and was found to be in good order. The payments examined were supported by invoices, vouchers and other documentary evidence. One minor issue is to be addressed by the Clerk/RFO. The payment of £47.94 to WEL Medical on 11 July 2022 included an amount of £7.99 VAT which has not been recorded in the Cash Book or the VAT reclaim schedule. The Clerk/RFO agreed to make the necessary entries to ensure that the amount would be reclaimed from HMRC.

3.3 The Council makes regular reclaims to HMRC for VAT paid. At the meeting held on 11 April 2022 the Council approved the reclaim of £3,025.83 VAT paid in the year 2021/22 (Minute 11.04.10b(viii) refers). The reimbursement from HMRC was received at bank on 13 June 2022 and was reported to the Council at its meeting on 11 July 2022. The Clerk/RFO confirmed that a re-claim for the £15,380.86 VAT paid in the year 2022/23 is shortly to be submitted to HMRC.

3.4 A Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Annual Report for 2022/23 has been prepared by the Clerk/RFO. The Report confirmed the balance of £24,954.01 carried forward from the previous year with CIL Receipts of £65,741.87 and CIL Expenditure of £74,685.00 in the 2022/23 year of account. The CIL funds were spent on:

Pavilion refurbishment:	£3,400
Cricket practice nets:	£11,780
Community chapel refurbishment:	£11,342
Health Centre Refurbishment:	£48,163

3.5 The CIL retained balance at the year-end, 31 March 2023, accordingly stood at £16,010.88 (of which £12,600 has been allocated to current projects) and forms part of the Overall Reserves (see item 5.8 below). The CIL Annual Report for 2022/23 is due for publication and submission to the District Council no later than 31 December 2023.

3.6 A detailed Statement of Variances (explaining significant differences in receipts and payments between the years 2021/22 and 2022/23) has been prepared by the Clerk/RFO for submission to the External Auditors and for publication on the Council's website.

3.7 The Council has received confirmation from the PWLB (UK Debt Management Office) of the Outstanding Capital Balance as at 31 March 2023 which stands at £5,665.07. The amount has been correctly entered into Box 10 of Section 2 of the AGAR.

3.8 The End-of-Year Accounts and supporting documentation were extremely well presented for the Internal Audit review.

**4. Internal Control and the Management of Risk (Review by the Council of the effectiveness of internal controls, including risk assessment, and Minuted accordingly).**

4.1 The Council has in place a **Statement of Internal Control** which was reviewed and approved by the Council at its meeting on 12 December 2022 (Minute 22.12.22 f refers). A copy has been published on the Council's website.

4.2 Similarly, the **Risk Assessment** document was considered and approved by the Council at its meeting on 12 December 2022 (Minute 22.12.11.13f refers). Councillors noted that this had been updated to reflect current practice including the scheme of delegation and transaction limit on the credit card.

4.3 The Council accordingly complied with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 which require a review by the Full Council at least once a year of the effectiveness of the Council's system of internal control, including the arrangements for the management of risk, with the review suitably Minuted.

4.4 The Council demonstrates good risk management practices, including a standing agenda item at meetings of the Council for the review of risk assessment issues relating to the Community Centre Play Park, Fitness Track, Westhall Play Park, Cemetery and Permissive Path. At the meeting on 9 May 2022 the Council appointed individual Councillors to lead on the risk assessments for each of the areas listed. (Minute 22.05.07b(vi) refers). Updates are provided to Full Council by nominated Councillors on any risks identified in each of their areas of responsibility.

4.5 The **RoSPA Play Area Safety Inspection Report** for the Play Parks and the Fitness Track Equipment is dated 27 July 2022 and was reported to the Council at its meeting on 10 October 2022. The Council agreed the remedial action to be taken (Minute 22.10.14 refers). A copy of the Inspection Report has been published on the Council's website. The Inspection Report was examined in detail by the Finance Committee on 7 November 2022 and agreed a plan to identify works to carry out. The Annual RoSPA inspection was reviewed by the Council in 14 November 2022 when the plan to identify works to be carried out was agreed.

4.6 At its meeting on 7 November 2022 the Finance Committee reviewed the Annual Fire Risk Assessment for the Health Centre (dated 4 August 2022). The Assessment was reviewed by the Full Council on 12 December 2022.

4.7 **Insurance** was in place for the year of account. At its meeting on 10 October 2022 the Council ratified the decision taken under the Scheme of Delegation to reappoint Zurich Insurance as the Council's insurers under a long-term agreement of

5 years, with effect from 1 October 2022 (Minute 22.10.09a refers). The insurance premium of £1,223.78 paid by BACS is recorded in the Financial Statement approved by the Council on 10 October 2022.

4.8 Public Liability insurance cover stands at £12m. and Employer's Liability cover at £10m. The Fidelity Guarantee (Councillors and Employee Dishonesty) cover stands at £250,000, which meets the current recommended guidelines, which provide that the cover should be at least the sum of the year-end balances plus 50% of the precept/grants.

4.9 The insurance policy lists the cover for the Medical Centre under sums insured for Buildings, Loss of Rent and Contents. As part of the All-Risks cover, the cover for the Playground Equipment, Street Furniture and outside equipment, War Memorial, Community Shed and Gates and Fences are itemised.

#### **5. Budgetary controls (*Verification of the budgetary process with reference to Council Minutes and supporting documents*).**

Precept 2022/23: £38,549 (13 December 2021, Minute 21.12.06 refers).

Precept 2023/24: £39,874 (9 January 2023, Minute 23.01.09 (d) refers).

5.1 At the meeting on 13 December 2021 the Council reviewed a draft **Budget for the year 2022/23**, submitted by the Finance Committee, which had been previously circulated. The Council approved a recommendation from the Finance Committee to set the precept for 2022/23 at £38,549 (an increase of 3.58%). The Precept was agreed in Full Council and the precept decision and amount have been clearly Minuted.

5.2 The Council approved a revised Budget for 2022/23 on 13 June 2022, following a review by a Working Party of the Finance Committee (Minute 22.06.12).

5.3 The Timetable and action plan for the budget setting process for the **Budget for the year 2023/24** as recommended by the Finance Committee were approved by the Council on 14 November 2022. The Draft Budget was considered by the Finance Committee at its meeting on 5 December 2022 and approved for submission to Full Council. The Draft Budget was reviewed and approved by the Council at its meeting on 12 December 2022 (Minute 22.12.10 (a) refers). The Precept of £39,874 was agreed in Full Council on 9 January 2023 and the precept decision and amount have been clearly Minuted.

5.4 The Clerk/RFO ensures that the Council is aware of its responsibilities and commitments and the need for forward planning and adequate reserves.

5.5 At its meeting on 12 December 2022 the Council approved the Reserves Policy (Minute 22.12.11 f refers) following updates being made. The Policy notes that the Council has been working towards gradually increasing the General Reserves to a level equal to 9 – 12 months of expenditure. This expenditure level excludes costs related to the Health Centre which are financed by the income from the rent received. The Reserves schedule is reviewed and approved quarterly by the Finance

Committee and is presented to the Parish Council with virements (transfers in or out) clearly marked. The approval of virements is Minuted at the relevant meeting. The final reserves figures are approved at the year end.

5.6 The detailed estimates prepared for the 2022/23 year were used effectively for financial control and budgetary control purposes. At its meeting on 7 November 2022 the Finance Committee reviewed and approved a detailed, comprehensive Half-Year Actual Income and Expenditure compared to the Budget Report. Reserved funds virements for the first two Quarters were also considered. At its meeting on 14 November 2022 the Full Council approved the Half-year Accounts and the Half-Year Reserved Funds Report put forward by the Finance Committee (Minute 21.11.10 (a) ii refers). The Council received the Third Quarter's expenditure information as part of its consideration of the Draft Budget for 2023/24 at its meeting on 9 January 2023.

5.7 As at 31 March 2023 the **Overall Reserves** held at bank totalled £69,998.80. This figure includes an amount of £2,095 which is part of an overall grant paid to the Community Shed User Group by the District Council and held by the Parish Council on behalf of the Group pending a bank account being opened by the Group. As the £2,095 is held in the Council's bank account as at 31 March 2023 it is included as a Restricted Reserve.

5.8 A total of £53,184 was earmarked for specific projects or restricted, as follows:

Training/Legal Fees:	£500
Health Centre:	£23,409
Playpark Equipment:	£629
Maintenance:	£1,623
Election Costs:	£750
Community Projects:	£405
Churchyard & Cemetery:	£3,772
Playing Field Drainage:	£1,950
Ditch/Tree Maintenance:	£1,500
Defibrillator:	£65
Community Shed User Gp (Restricted):	£2,095
Youth Council (Restricted):	£475
CIL Funds (Restricted):	£16,011

5.9 The **General Reserves** (Overall Reserves less Earmarked and Restricted Reserves) held accordingly stood at £16,814.80 as at 31 March 2023 (approximately 5 months equivalent of the 2023/24 Precept). The Reserves were not as high as those held at the end of the previous year. However, the Clerk/RFO advised the Internal Auditor that General Reserves had been used to fund VAT payments on CIL Projects and those VAT payments are to be reclaimed and returned to the Reserves.

5.10 As at the 31 March 2023, the Council maintained sufficient overall reserves and contingency sums to meet, within reason, any unforeseen items of expense that may occur.



**6. Income Controls (*regarding sums received from Precept, Grants, Loans and other income*).**

6.1 Councillors are informed of the Receipts during each month as per the Finance Reports schedule appended to the Minutes. Income controls were test checked and income received and banked was cross referenced on a sample basis with the Cashbook and bank statements. All was found to be in order.

6.2 The Council last reviewed and approved revised Cemetery Fees and the Updated Rules and Regulations for the Management of the Cemetery at its meeting on 8 November 2021 (Minute 21.11.13 (a) refers), following recommendations put forward by the Finance Committee on 18 October 2021.

**7. Debit/Credit Cards and Petty Cash (*Associated books and established and approved systems in place*).**

7.1 At its meeting on 20 April 2020 the Council approved a corporate multi pay card to be used solely by the Clerk/RFO with an individual transaction limit and a monthly total transaction limit (Minute 20.04.8(ii) refers).

7.2 The Clerk/RFO advised Councillors on 25 March 2022 that the single transaction limit on the Council's multipay card had been increased from £500 to £1,000. This was due to the Microsoft 365 renewal being over the original limit and payment being overdue. The required variation to Financial Regulations was agreed by the Council at its meeting on 9 May 2022 (Minute 22.05.13 refers). The Internal Auditor completed a sample check of transactions in the 2022/23 year and this proved satisfactory.

7.3 The Council does not maintain a Petty Cash Account (Financial Regulation 6.21 refers).

**8. Payroll Controls (*PAYE and NIC in place; compliant with HMRC procedures; records relating to contracts of employment*).**

8.1 A PAYE system is in place and the Council is operating Real Time Information in accordance with HMRC requirements. Regular payments for PAYE and NI were made to HMRC. The P60 End of Year Certificate for the Clerk/RFO was presented to the Internal Auditor.

8.2 At the meeting on 4 May 2021 the Council approved the Clerk/RFO's salary increase (SCP 24 to SCP 25) and the increase in living wage in accordance with the budget approved in December 2020. (Minute 21.05.13 b refers).

8.3 At the meeting on 14 February 2022 the Council agreed an immediate increase in the Clerk's weekly working hours to reflect the outcome of the review undertaken by the Personnel Committee on 23 November 2021 and following the recommendations agreed as part of the budgeting process for 2022/23 (Minute 22.02.21 (i) refers).

8.4 On 14 March 2022 the Chairman formally advised the Clerk/RFO of the revised conditions of service, to take effect from 1 April 2022:

- a) The contracted hours will increase from 20 hours per week to 25 hours per week.
- b) The Salary will increase to SCP 26 (within the salary range of SCP 24 – 28).
- c) Home Office Allowance will remain at £180 p.a. (payable £15 per month).
- d) IT Support Allowance to remain at £360 p.a. (payable £30 per month).
- e) Work related mileage will continue to be paid at 45p per mile (in accordance with HMRC/government guidelines).

8.5 At its meeting on 14 November 2022, during its approval of the Half-Year Accounts, the Council approved the nationally agreed pay rise for local government officers, to be back dated to April 2022 in order to meet the Council's contractual obligations.

8.6 The Clerk/RFO was able to clarify for the Internal Auditor the details of individual salary payments made during the year and leading to the overall gross salary of £22,230.02 in the year of account.

**9. Assets Controls (*Inspection of asset register and checks on existence of assets; recording of fixed asset valuations; cross checking on insurance cover*).**

9.1 A comprehensive **Asset Register** is in place and a copy has been published on the Council's website. The Clerk/RFO confirmed that the Register was reviewed and agreed by the Council during its consideration of the 2021/22 end of year documents.

9.2 As at 31 March 2023 the Register displays a total value of £86,530.30, an increase of £11,780 from the value of £74,750.30 at the end of the previous year (31 March 2022) and reflects the addition of Practice Nets at the Playingfield, Wilby Road. The Register complies with the current requirements which provide that each asset should be recorded on a consistent basis, year-on-year. The values are displayed at original purchase cost. Where the original purchase price was unknown at the time of first recording on the asset register, a proxy (community) value is used.

9.3 The Assets have been correctly recorded in Box 9 of Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23.

**10. Bank Reconciliation (*Regularly completed and cash books reconcile with bank statements*).**

10.1 Bank Account balances are presented to the Council as a matter of routine under the Monthly Finance Reports item on the agenda. The Chairman examines and initials the bank statements in confirmation of the balances noted. An appended schedule detailing the most recent bank reconciliation, payments for approval, VAT payable, the power under which each payment is made, the balances held in Reserves and a list of receipts is also presented to each meeting of the Council. The schedule is published on the Council's website to provide transparency in the Council's financial transactions.

10.2 The Unity Trust Current Account and Unity Trust Deposit Account bank statements as at 31 March 2023 reconciled with the End of Year Accounts and agreed with the overall Bank Reconciliation presented to the Internal Auditor. The bank statements are regularly reconciled to the Accounts during the year.

**11. Year End procedures (Regarding accounting procedures used and can be followed through from working papers to final documents. Verifying sample payments and income. Checking creditors and debtors where appropriate).**

11.1 End-of-Year accounts are prepared on a Receipts and Payments basis and were in good order. Sample audit trails were undertaken and were found to be in order.

**12. Responsibilities as a Trustee (Regarding the Council's role and responsibilities under the Charity Acts, submission of returns to the Charity Commission).**

12.1 The Council has no responsibilities regarding the sole management of Trust funds.

**13. Internal Financial Controls, Payments Controls and Audit Procedures (Confirmation that the Council has satisfactory internal financial controls in place for making payments with adequate documentation to support/evidence payments made. Any previous audit recommendations implemented).**

13.1 The Council has satisfactory internal financial controls in place. The Clerk/RFO provides comprehensive **Monthly Financial Reports** to Council meetings, including regular payments, Payments for approval (BACS payments for online authorisation), Receipts, Bank Balances with a Bank Reconciliation. The legislative power available to make each payment, together with totals of Earmarked and General Reserves, are displayed in the Reports, which are appended to the Council's Minutes as part of the overall financial control framework.

13.2 The Clerk/RFO also provides the Council with Reports on the actual receipts and payments compared to budget. The Internal Auditor examined the Half-Year Accounts which the Council reviewed at its meeting on 14 November 2022. It was confirmed that Councillors were provided with comprehensive information to enable them to make informed decisions.

13.3 The detailed Financial Reports presented to Council are published on the Council's webpage <https://www.stradbrokepc.org/documents> under 'Financial Documents'.

13.4 The Internal Audit report for the previous year (2021/22) was received, reviewed and noted by the Council at its meeting on 11 April 2022. No matters of concern were raised in the Report (Minute 22.04.10b(i) refers).

13.5 The Internal Auditor for the year 2022/23 was formally appointed by the Council at its meeting on 9 January 2023 (Minute 23.01.09 (e) refers).

**14. External Audit (*Recommendations put forward, issues arising/comments made following the annual review*).**

14.1 The **Report and Certificate** by the External Auditors, PKF Littlejohn LLP, was dated 18 July 2022. The External Auditors raised no matters of concern.

14.2 The External Auditors' Report and Certificate were received and noted by the Council at its meeting on 10 October 2022 (Minute 22.10.10 refers).

**15. Publication Requirements.**

15.1 Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 authorities must publish each year the following information on a publicly accessible website.

Notice of the period for the exercise of Public Rights  
AGAR - Sections 1 and 2.

At the meeting on 11 April 2022 the Council noted the dates of the period for the exercise of public rights (6 June to 15 July 2022)

15.2 Following the completion of the External Audit:

Notice of Conclusion of Audit  
AGAR - Section 3  
AGAR - Sections 1 and 2 (including any amendments as a result of the Limited Assurance Review).

15.3 The Internal Auditor was able to confirm that the documents were readily accessible on the Council's webpage: <https://www.stradbrokepc.org/statutory-information>

**16. Additional Comments.**

16.1 I would like to record my appreciation to the Clerk to the Council for her assistance during the course of the audit work. I would particularly like to commend the Clerk for the excellent presentation of the Council's documents for the audit.

*Trevor Brown*

**Trevor Brown, CPFA  
Internal Auditor**

**10 April 2023**

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