

Creeping St Peter Parish Council

Internal Audit Report 2021/22 - Implementation of Recommendations

There were seven recommendations and four comments encouraging further action included in the Council's internal audit report for 2021/22, dated 18 July 2022, prepared by Suffolk Association of Local Councils. The following actions were agreed by the Council:

(REC01) Council should look to review its Standing Orders annually.

The Parish Clerk will arrange for the Council to review its Standing Orders in 2022/23 and to confirm its approval of a final version in the minutes of its meeting in October 2022.

(REC02) Council should look to review its Financial Regulations annually.

The Parish Clerk will arrange for the Council to review its Financial Regulations in 2022/23 and to confirm its approval of a final version in the minutes of its meeting in either November 2022 or January or March 2023.

(REC03) To ensure full transparency of payments made, records detailing which councillors/RFO authorised the payments should be kept, or recorded. This not only protects public money, but also the RFO and authorised members.

The Responsible Financial Officer will arrange for the Chair's signature to be obtained and recorded on the payments summary following the Council's approval of the payments presented and for the signatures of two councillors to be obtained as confirmation of the approval of the payments made online. The process will be introduced by the RFO at the Council's meeting in October 2022.

(REC04) A review of risks should be undertaken at least annually to ensure the council is managing risks appropriately. This is a requirement of the Annual Internal Report Internal Control Objectives (C).

The Parish Clerk will arrange for the Council to review its risks in 2022/23 and to confirm its approval of a final version of a risk assessment in the minutes of its meeting in either November 2022 or January or March 2023.

(REC05) The Internal Controls should be reviewed annually to demonstrate public finances are adequately protected and managed and evidence necessary steps have been taken to mitigate any risks identified. Documentation to support control procedures adopted by the council for payments helps protect the RFO and fulfils an internal control objective.

The Responsible Financial Officer will arrange for the Council to review its controls in 2022/23. An annual checklist of internal controls will be presented to the Council for review and approval at its meeting in January 2023. A Member of the Council, independent of the financial function, will also be appointed to carry out the work, guided by the RFO, for reporting back to the Council at its meeting in March 2023.

(REC06) By reviewing the terms of reference and effectiveness for internal audit the council would follow guidance and demonstrate that it recognises that the function of internal audit is to test and report to the authority on whether its system of internal control is adequate.

The Responsible Financial Officer will arrange for the Council to review the scope, independence and competence of the current internal auditor and its access to the Council's records at its meeting in October 2022 in advance of the approval of the formal appointment for 2022/23. Implementation of this task will be monitored by the Council when it reviews the completed annual checklist of internal controls at its meeting in March 2023.

(REC07) It is for full council/committee to review and ensure the insurance policy provides full coverage and this should be minuted to advise this has been carried out.

The Responsible Financial Officer will arrange for the Council to review the adequacy of its insurance cover in 2022/23 and for this to be confirmed in the minutes of its meeting in October 2022.

(COM01) Council must remember to inform the Pension Regulator of any changes to staff and complete a redeclaration.

The Responsible Financial Officer will investigate the current situation regarding the Council's obligation to submit a declaration to the Pension Regulator in 2022/23 and then provide an update on the employment of staff. Implementation of this task will be monitored by the Council when it reviews the completed annual checklist of internal controls at its meeting in March 2023.

(COM02) The council did not confirm the appointment of the Internal Auditor within the minutes made available to the auditor.

The Responsible Financial Officer will arrange for the Council to consider and confirm approval of its appointment of the internal auditor for 2022/23 in the minutes of its meeting in October 2022.

(COM03) Registration with the ICO has now expired, and council should ensure this is renewed.

The Responsible Financial Officer will investigate whether the annual registration fee was finally paid to the Information Commissioner's Office by the Council in 2022/23 when it fell due in May 2022.

(COM04) Council could look to increase its portfolio of documentation to include some of the following: Consent Form, Data Asset Register, Data Protection Management Policy, General Privacy Notice, Privacy Notice Staff/Councillors, Security Breach Procedure and Subject Access Request Policy (SAR).

The Parish Clerk will arrange for the Council to consider increasing its GDPR portfolio of documentation which could include Consent Form, Data Asset Register, Data Protection Management Policy, General Privacy Notice, Privacy Notice Staff/Councillors, Security Breach Procedure and Subject Access Request Policy (SAR). The approval of any new documentation introduced by the Parish Clerk will be concluded by the Council at its meeting in either January or March 2023.