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Internal Audit Report for Earl Soham Parish Council for the year ending 31st March 2021

Clerk	Guy Harvey
RFO (if different)	
Chairperson	David Grose
Precept	£13,227.00
Income	£29,471.35
Expenditure	19,084.51
General reserves	£7,478.35
Earmarked reserves	£27,006.00
Audit type	Annual
Auditor name	Vicky Waples

Introduction

The primary objective of internal audit is to review, appraise and report upon the adequacy of internal control systems operating throughout the council. To achieve this SALC adopt a predominantly systems-based approach to audit.

The council's internal control system comprises the whole network of systems established within the council to provide reasonable assurance that the council's objectives will be achieved, with reference to:

- the effectiveness of operations
- the economic and efficient use of resources

- Compliance with applicable policies, procedures, laws and regulations
- the safeguarding of assets and interests from losses of all kinds, including those arising from fraud, irregularity and corruption
- the integrity and reliability of information, accounts and data

Methodology

When conducting the audit, the internal auditor may:

- carry out a selective assessment of compliance with relevant procedures and controls expected to be in operation during the financial year in order to be able to complete the Annual Internal Audit Report 2020/21 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)
- review the reliability and integrity of financial information and the means used to identify, measure, classify and report such information
- review the means of safeguarding assets and, as appropriate, verify the existence of such assets
- appraise the economy and efficiency with which resources are employed, identify opportunities to improve performance and recommend solutions to problems
- review the established systems to ensure compliance with those policies, procedures, laws and regulations which could have a significant impact on operations, and determine whether the council complies
- review the operations and activities to ascertain whether results are consistent with objectives and whether they are being carried out as planned

Section 1 – proper bookkeeping		
The internal auditor will look at the methods and processes used to manage the council’s accounts and in particular that it provides clear data for reporting and monitoring purposes. This includes checking information is accurate, kept up to date, referenced and verified.		
Evidence		<i>Internal auditor commentary</i>
<i>Is the ledger maintained and up to date?</i>	Yes	The council uses an excel spreadsheet to produce reports on a Receipts and Payments basis and ensures that the financial transactions of the parish council are recorded and are as accurate as reasonably practicable.
<i>Is the cash book up to date and regularly verified?</i>	Yes	The RFO has ensured that the cashbook is the focus for day-to-day accounting and is aware that the balancing off and reconciliation to the bank statement remains the most important control over the accounting system. The cashbook is reconciled on a monthly basis.
<i>Is the arithmetic correct?</i>	<i>Partly met</i>	The accounting records were spot checked, and the following should be noted: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the cashbook fails to show columns for VAT using gross figures for payments made. There is no separate identification of any VAT element. <p><i>Comment: VAT payments should be separately identified within the Cashbook to ensure that all VAT payments are clearly identified for purposes of re-claim to HMRC.</i></p>
Additional comments:		

Section 2 – Financial Regulation and Standing Orders		
The internal auditor will check the date the Council carried out its annual review of both Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and in particular check if these are based on NALC’S latest model which include legislative changes.		
Evidence		<i>Internal auditor commentary</i>

Have Standing Orders been adopted, up to date and reviewed annually?	Yes	The Council formally reviewed its Standing Orders at its meeting of 5 th November 2020, a copy of which can be found on the Council's website and which are based on the Model Standing Orders produced by NALC in 2018 which take into account changes in legislation since those produced in 2013.
Are Financial Regulations up to date and reviewed annually?	Yes	The Council's Financial Regulations which were reviewed at the meeting of the Council on 5 th November 2020, a copy of which can be found on the Council's website and which are based on the Model Standing Orders produced by NALC in 2019.
Has the Council properly tailored the Financial Regulations?	Yes	Council has ensured that its Financial Regulations are fully tailored to the Parish Council by removing the [square] sections.
Has the Council appointed a Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)? ¹	Yes	In accordance with Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972(d) (financial administration), the Council has appointed a person to be responsible for the administration of the financial affairs of the relevant authority.
Additional comments: <i>Council has shown good practice by ensuring that it has in place appropriate measures governing how it operates, provisions for securing competition and regulating the manner in which tenders are invited. In accordance with proper practices, Council has ensured that its Standing Orders and Financial Regulations are regularly reviewed, fit for purpose and that Council agrees to adhere to them as written.</i>		

Section 3 – Payment controls		
The internal auditor will specifically check bank reconciliation including credit/debit cards and management approval processes and evidence that internal Financial Regulations (FO) are being followed. The internal auditor will examine how regular payments are managed and specifically seek evidence that these have been brought back to the Council for verification purposes especially where the actual payment made differs from the amount previously agreed. VAT should be clearly identified including evidence that claims have been correctly managed. The internal auditor will check if the Council has a clear understanding on eligibility in relation to the General Power of Competence and that s.137 has been correctly applied and managed.		
Evidence		<i>Internal auditor commentary</i>
Is there supporting paperwork for payments with appropriate authorisation?	Yes	At each scheduled meeting a list of all payments is presented to the meeting with formal approval of such expenditure being shown in the

¹ Section 151 Local Government Act 1972 (d)

		minutes. Spot checks were carried out on the payment schedules referred to in the minutes which are retained on file and uploaded onto the Council's website but not appended to the minutes. <i>Comment: in accordance with FR 5.6 Council has ensured that payments which arise on a regular basis of a continuing contract are included within the list of payments to be approved at the next appropriate meeting.</i>
Where applicable, are internet banking transactions properly recorded and approved?	<i>Not applicable</i>	Internet banking is not operated by the Council.
Is VAT correctly identified, recorded and claimed within time limits?	<i>Partly met</i>	VAT is not identified in the ledger book as only gross payments are entered into the ledger. VAT is however claimed in accordance with the guidelines for local authorities and similar bodies and the VAT claim for the period 01.04.18 to 10.03.21 in the sum of £562.77 was claimed in March 21. A manual check was carried out under sampling procedures and all found to be correct. <i>Comment: see comment above in section 1.</i>
Has the Council adopted the General Power of Competence (GPOC) and is there evidence this is being applied correctly? ²	<i>No</i>	The Parish Council does not use the General Power of Competence.
Are payments under s.137 ³ separately recorded, minuted and is there evidence of direct benefit to electorate?	<i>Not applicable</i>	There were no payments made under s137 for the year under review.
Where applicable, are payments of interest and principal sums in respect of loans paid in accordance with agreements?	<i>Not applicable</i>	The Council has no such loans and incurred no interest payments.
<i>Additional comments:</i>		

Section 4 – Risk management

² Localism Act

³ Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 (“the 1972 Act”) enables local councils to spend a limited amount of money for purposes for which they have no other specific statutory expenditure. The basic power is for a local council to spend money (subject to the statutory limit – of £8.12 per elector) on purposes for the direct benefit of its area, or part of its area, or all or some of its inhabitants.

The internal auditor will expect to find evidence of the management of risks from identification of what those are for each individual Council through to how these will be managed and the controls in place to mitigate these and that these have been approved by the Council.		
Evidence		Internal auditor commentary
<i>Is there evidence of risk assessment documentation?</i>	Yes	The risk assessment documentation submitted for Internal Audit provides details of the risks associated with the functioning of a smaller authority and the measures that the Council will undertake to mitigate such risks although there are no references to online banking as operated by the Parish Council. The Risk Assessment for the year ending 31 st March 2021 was reviewed by full Council at the meeting of 5 th November 2020.
<i>Is there evidence that risks are being identified and managed?</i>	Yes	Council is aware that risk assessment needs to focus on the safety of the parish council's assets and in particular its money. There is evidence that overall the parish council has taken action to identify and assess those risks and has considered what actions or decisions it needs to take during the year to manage in order to avoid financial or reputational consequences.
<i>Does the Council have appropriate and adequate insurance cover in place for employment, public liability and fidelity guarantee and has been reviewed on an annual basis?</i>	Partly met	Council has insurance in place under a Parish Protect Policy which shows core cover for the following: Public liability: £10m; Public/Products Liability: £10m; Business Interruption: £5k and Fidelity Guarantee of £25k. <i>Comment: the level of Fidelity Guarantee is not sufficient to meet the recommended guidelines which provides that the cover should be at least the sum of the year-end balances plus 50% of the precept/grants.</i> There is no minute to show that Council carried out a review of its insurance requirements prior to renewal at its meeting in September 2020. <i>Comment: Council is encouraged to recognise that it is the responsibility of the whole Council to satisfy itself that insurances are adequate and that having identified, assessed and recorded the risks, appropriate measures, such as the appropriate use of insurance cover, have been taken to mitigate and manage the risk. Such a review should be evidenced by a minute reference.</i>
<i>Evidence that internal controls are documented and regularly reviewed⁴</i>	Yes	In accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, Council has formally reviewed the effectiveness of its system of internal control to ensure

⁴ Accounts and Audit Regulations

		that it has mitigation measures in place to address the risks associated with the management of public finances. The internal control statement adopted by the Council provides evidence of the scope of responsibility for internal control and the measures in place by the Council to manage its system of internal control.
<i>Evidence that a review of the effectiveness of internal audit has been carried out during the year⁵</i>	Yes	Within the internal control statement, Council considered the effectiveness of internal audit during the year under review and has followed guidance as written under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and demonstrated 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.
Additional comments Recommendation: Fidelity Guarantee - given the current levels of finances, Council should review the appropriate level of fidelity guarantee insurance being held. Council should be aware that all cover should be risk based and should be kept under constant review to make sure it adequately reflects changes in circumstances.		

Section 5 – Budgetary controls The internal auditor will seek verification that budgets are properly prepared, agreed and monitored. In particular they will look for evidence of good practice in that the key stages of the budgetary process have been followed		
Evidence		Internal auditor commentary
<i>Verify that budget has been properly prepared and agreed</i>	Yes	The budget for the year 2020–2021 in the sum of £13,227 was set at a full Council Meeting on 9 th January 2020.
<i>Verify that the precept amount has been agreed in full Council and clearly minuted</i>	Yes	The precept was agreed at £13,227 and set at the meeting of 9 th January 2020. There is no minute to detail the amount set.
<i>Regular reporting of expenditure and variances from budget</i>	Yes	During the year under review, Council considered the comparisons between budgeted and actual income and expenditure at its November meeting (six monthly accounts).

⁵ Governance and Accountability Guide

		<i>Comment: Council should ensure that the consideration of such comparisons are in accordance with the timescales as prescribed under Council's own Standing Order 17c.</i>
<i>Reserves held – general and earmarked⁶</i>	Yes	<p>Council's final accounts show general reserves in the sum of £7,478.35 with earmarked reserves in the sum of £27,006.</p> <p><i>Council is aware of the guidance as issued by Proper Practices which states that it is regarded as acceptable for a council's general (non-earmarked revenue) reserves to be equal to 3 to 12 months of Net Revenue Expenditure and should ensure that the level of general reserves adopted is in accordance with its General Reserve Policy. There is no upper limit for Earmarked Reserves, but they should be held for genuine and intended purposes and their level subject to regular review and justification (at least annually).</i></p>
<p>Additional comments:</p> <p><i>Comment: Council has demonstrated that it follows the recommended key stages as to the budgetary process for the year:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>decide the form and level of detail of the budget;</i> • <i>review the current year budget and spending;</i> • <i>determine the cost of spending plans;</i> • <i>assess levels of income;</i> • <i>bring together spending and income plans;</i> • <i>provide for contingencies and consider the need for reserves;</i> • <i>approve the budget;</i> • <i>confirm the precept or rates and special levies; and</i> • <i>review progress against the budget regularly throughout the year.</i> <p><i>Reserves: in accordance with guidance as issued under the Practitioners Guide, the Council should have regards to the need to put in place a General Reserve Policy which will ensure that it reviews the level and purpose of all Earmarked Reserves.</i></p>		

Section 6 – income controls

The internal auditor will seek evidence to ensure income is correct managed – recorded, banked and reported and test mechanisms used to achieve this.

⁶ In accordance with proper practices, the generally accepted minimum level of a Smaller Authority's General Reserve is that this should be maintained at between three (3) and twelve (12) months of Net Revenue Expenditure

Evidence		Internal auditor commentary
<i>Is income properly recorded and promptly banked?</i>	Yes	Income is recorded in accordance with Council's Financial Regulations. A number of items of income were cross checked against cash book and bank statement and found to be in order and recorded in accordance with Proper Practices. The RFO has continued to ensure that the accounting records contain all day-to-day entries of all sums of money received.
<i>Is income reported to full council?</i>	Yes	Income received is reported within the financial reports submitted at scheduled meetings.
<i>Does the precept recorded agree to the Council Tax Authority's notification?</i>	Yes	The council received precept of £13,227 during the year under review in April and September 2020. A full audit trail confirming the Precept being requested of the Charging Authority to that received in the Council's bank account and reported in its year end accounting statement was seen within the files submitted for internal audit.
<i>If appropriate, are CIL reporting schedules in accordance with the Regulations?⁷</i>	Yes	For the year under review Council did not receive any CIL Receipts.
<i>Does unspent CIL income form part of earmarked reserves?</i>	Not applicable	The CiL annual report for 2019/20 shows that there was a retained balance of £1,904. The Council has retained balance of CIL funds which will be held in an Earmarked Reserve specifically allocated.
<i>Has an annual report been produced?</i>	Yes	
<i>Has it been published on the authority's website?</i>	Yes	
Additional comments:		

Section 7 – petty cash	
The Internal Auditor will seek evidence that the Council has followed its own policies, procedures and verification processes and that these are up to date.	
Evidence	Internal auditor commentary

⁷ Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010

<i>Is petty cash in operation?</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>	Council does not operate a petty cash system.
<i>If appropriate, is there an adequate control system in place?</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>	
Additional comments:		

Section 8 – Payroll controls		
<p>The Internal Auditor will check salaries are approved in accordance with PAYE, NI, Pension and that there is a clear understanding that the clerk is not self-employed. If the Clerk was recruited after 1st April 2011, evidence will be required to show compliance with the new requirements for the statement of employment, Induction, probation periods and training requirements. The Internal Auditor will also review how payroll is managed including evidence of approval of payslips.</p>		
Evidence		Internal auditor commentary
<i>Do all employees have contracts of employment?</i>	Yes	Council had 1 employee on its payroll at the period end of 31 st March 2021. Employment contracts were not reviewed during the internal audit which was carried out by remote means. All salary payments are authorised by full council. The minimum wage is not applied to any employees.
<i>Has the Council approved salary paid?</i>	Yes	
<i>Minimum wage paid?</i>	No	
<i>Are arrangements in place for authorising of the payroll and payments to the council? Does this include a verification process for agreeing rates of pay to be applied?</i>	Yes	There are suitable payroll arrangements in place which ensures the accuracy and legitimacy of payments of salaries and wages, and associated liabilities and as such the council has complied with its duties under legislation.
<i>Do salary payments include deductions for PAYE/NIC? Is PAYE/NIC paid promptly to HMRC?</i>	Yes	The payroll function for the year under review is operated in accordance with HM Revenue and Customs guidelines. Cross-checks were carried out covering salary and PAYE and were found to be in order. There were no relevant deductions.

<i>Is there evidence that the Council is aware of its pension responsibilities? Are pension payments in operation?⁸</i>	Yes	Council is aware of its pension responsibilities and there is no pension scheme in operation and the minutes of 5 th November 2020 confirm that the Clerk has opted out of the pension scheme.
<i>Are there any other payments (e.g.: expenses) and are these reasonable and approved by the Council?</i>	Yes	Council is aware of the changes in the Practitioners Guide for 2020 on the treatment of what can be included as employment expenses within the Annual Governance and Accountability Guide 2020 (section 2.16 refers) and submitted within Box 4 of the AGAR. All expenses / payments made are against itemised invoices submitted to and approved by full Council.
Additional comments: <i>There are robust payroll arrangements in place with ensures the accuracy and legitimacy of payments of salaries and associated liabilities and as such the Council has complied with its duties under employment legislation and has met its pension obligations.</i>		

Section 9 – Asset control The Internal Audit will be seeking to establish if there is a list of assets in accordance with proper practices including the date of acquisition, location and value. This extends to checking policies (with evidence of review) and that the Council has applied the documented approach in practice. The Internal Auditor will check not only valuation processes but the existence of reserve budgets for depreciation and adequacy of insurance. A clear audit trail should be available when items are purchased including minutes to evidence approval.		
Evidence		Internal auditor commentary
<i>Does the Council maintain a register of material assets it owns and manage this in accordance with proper practices?⁹</i>	Yes	The Asset Register as submitted for internal audit was reviewed and reflects those items listed under insurance and within the Parish Council's remit for maintenance and ownership.
<i>Are the value of the assets included? (note value for insurance purposes may differ)</i>	Yes	The declared value for all assets at year-end of 31 March 2021 is £9,436 which shows nil movement in the year.
<i>Are records of deeds, articles, land registry title number available?</i>	No	Records of deeds, articles, land registry title number were not reviewed during the internal audit which was carried out via remote means.

⁸ The Pension Regulator – [website click here](#)

⁹ Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – March 2019

<i>Is the asset register up to date and reviewed annually?</i>	Yes	All assets have been stated at cost value (fixed at 2010) in accordance with the basis as recommended by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountability (CIPFA) and where assets have been gifted or where there is no known value have been given the proxy value of £1.
<i>Cross checking of insurance cover</i>	Yes	Council has insurance under a Parish Protect Policy for assets to the value of £20,000 which is a sufficient banding for assets within its register.

Additional comments:

Council is mindful of the guidance within the Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England March 2020 on the valuation of its assets and has ensured that where the acquisition value of the asset at the time of first recording is used, that method of valuation has been consistently applied and if/where amended, it will need to publish and provide explanations in changes in value to any previously recorded assets.

Section 10 – bank reconciliation		
The internal auditor will seek to establish that the Council understands and can evidence good practice and internal control mechanisms in relation to bank reconciliation.		
Evidence		Internal auditor commentary
<i>Is bank reconciliation regularly completed and reconciled with the cash book and cover every account?</i>	Yes	Bank reconciliations are completed on a regular basis and reconcile with the cash sheets. Overall there is regular reporting of bank balances within the detailed financial reports submitted at each meeting.
<i>Do bank balances agree with bank statements?</i>	Yes	Bank balances agree with period end statements and, as at year end (31 st March), the balance across the councils accounts stood at £34,483.35 as recorded in the Statement of Accounts and on the Year-end Bank Reconciliation.
<i>Is there regular reporting of bank balances at Council meetings?</i>	Yes	Balances across the Council's accounts are reported on a regular basis to full Council within the financial reports. <i>Comment: The RFO ensures that the Council is aware that in accordance with proper practices, the bank reconciliation is a key tool for management as it assists with the regular monitoring of cash flows and therefore aids decision-making.</i>

Additional comments:

In accordance with Proper Practises, Council might wish to implement a system whereby a non-signatory Councillor carries out a quarterly reconciliation and formally signs off the bank reconciliation. This is not only good practice but also is a safeguard for the RFO and fulfils one of the authority's internal control objectives.

Section 11 – year end procedures		
Evidence		Internal auditor commentary
Are appropriate accounting procedures used?	Yes	Accounts are produced on a receipts and expenditure basis and all found to be in order.
Financial trail from records to presented accounts	Yes	The end of year accounts and supporting documentation were well presented for the internal auditor review.
Has the appropriate end of year AGAR ¹⁰ documents been completed?	Yes	As Council is a smaller authority with gross income and expenditure exceeding £25,000 it has completed Part 3 of the AGAR. The Annual Governance Statements and Accounting Statements were approved at the meeting of 20 th May 2021. Recommendation: Council should note that the following amendments are required prior to the submission of the document to the External Auditor: Annual Governance Statements - Box 9 has not been completed and the box to record the minute reference has been left blank. Accounting Statements – Box 9 and Box 11 have not been completed and the box to record the minute reference has been left blank.
Did the Council meet the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt?	Partly met	Although the Parish Council did not have gross income and expenditure exceeding £25,000 and was able to declare itself exempt from a limited assurance review for the year 19/20, there is no minute to show that Council, having confirmed its eligibility to certify itself, resolved to apply for an exemption to a limited assurance review. The AGAR forms were approved at the Annual Council meeting of 7 th May 2020, but there is no

¹⁰ Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR)

		<p>corresponding minute of that meeting to show that the Certificate of Exemption was considered by full Council.</p> <p><i>Comment: Council should note that without a formal reference at a meeting of the parish council there is no legal decision taken to claim exemption and as such the external auditor may only be able to log the parish council's intention to claim exemption and not that exemption has been claimed by the parish council.</i></p>
<p><i>During the period in question did the small authority demonstrate that it correctly provided for the exercise of public right as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015?</i></p>	<p><i>Partly met</i></p>	<p>The Internal Auditor has been provided with a copy of the notice of the dates set by the parish council in the provision for the exercise of public rights. This period was from 18 July to 28 August 2020. However the notice was not seen on the website used by the parish council and there is no minute reference to show the dates set.</p> <p><i>(See comment on the Internal Audit Report for evidence required).</i></p>
<p><i>Have the publication requirements been met in accordance with the Regulations?¹¹</i></p>	<p><i>No</i></p>	<p>The council has not complied with the requirements of the Regulations for smaller authorities with income and expenditure not exceeding £25,000 as all of the following were not published on the public website operated by the Council: for the year ending 31st March 2020:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate of Exemption, page 3 • Annual Internal Audit Report, page 4 • Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2020/21, page 5 • Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2020/21, page 6 • Analysis of variances • Bank reconciliation • Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and other information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. <p><i>Comment: as Council has income and expenditure exceeding £25,000 for the year ending 31st March 2021, it will need to comply with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 for smaller authorities with income and expenditure exceeding £25,000 and published the following on a public website:</i></p>

¹¹ Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015

		Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement of the AGAR Section 2 – Annual Accounting Statements of the AGAR Section 3 – External Audit Report and Certificate Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights Annual Internal Audit of the AGAR
Additional comments:		

Section 12 – internal audit The internal auditor will revisit weaknesses and recommendations previously identified to see if these have been addressed. They will also check if any changes introduced require further verification to ensure effectiveness of the corrective action taken.		
Evidence		<i>Internal auditor commentary</i>
<i>Has the previous internal audit report been considered by the Council?</i>	Yes	The Internal Audit Report was considered by full Council at its meeting of 5 ^h November 2020.
<i>Has appropriate action been taken regarding the recommendations raised?</i>	Yes	The following recommendations were raised in the internal report: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Annual review of Standing Orders 2. Adoption of new Model Financial Regulations (2019) 3. Annual review of effectiveness of internal audit 4. Completion of annual bank reconciliation as at 31st March 5. Review of items included within Box 4 of the Accounting Statements 6. Provision of the exercise of public rights 7. 1st item on the agenda at the Annual Council Meeting shall be the Election of the Chair 8. Compliance with GDPR and adoption and publication of relevant documents
<i>Has the Council confirmed the appointment of an internal auditor?</i>	Yes	The appointment of SALC as the Council's internal auditor was confirmed at the meeting of 5 th November 2020.
Additional comments:		

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Section 13 – external audit for the period under review		
The internal auditor will revisit the external audit so that previous weaknesses and recommendations can be taken into account.		
Evidence		<i>Internal auditor commentary</i>
<i>Has the previous external audit report been considered by the Council?</i> ¹²	Yes	As Council did not have gross income and expenditure exceeding £25,000 it was able to exempt itself from a Limited Assurance Review.
<i>Has appropriate action been taken regarding the comments raised?</i>	Not applicable	
Additional comments:		

Section 14 – additional information		
The internal auditor will look for some additional evidence of good record keeping, compliance with data protection regulations, freedom of information and website accessibility regulations.		
Evidence		<i>Internal auditor commentary</i>
<i>Was the annual meeting held in accordance with legislation?</i> ¹³ <i>(note to auditor- emergency Regulations as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic)</i> ¹⁴	Yes	Council held its Annual Council Meeting on 7 th May 2020 with the election of Chair being the first item on the agenda.. <i>Comment: In recognition of this being unprecedented times and following the Government’s guidelines for staying at home and working remotely, the Government included within s.78 in the Coronavirus Act 2020 (made 4th April 2020) the ability for the Secretary of State to have the power to make Regulations to cover the provisions for the holding of meetings. The 2020 Regulations set out those provisions. Council has followed these regulations and held its meetings via the Videoconferencing platform.</i>

¹² Regulation 20 Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 – *following completion of an audit the Council should note that it is the Council as a whole (i.e.. All members) and not a committee that should receive and consider the audit letter (including Annual Return and Certificate) from the local auditor as soon as reasonably practicable and the minutes should reflect that these have been received.*

¹³ The Local Government Act 1972 Schedule 12, paragraph 7 (2) and Schedule 15 (2)

¹⁴ The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020

<i>Is there evidence that Minutes are administered in accordance with legislation?</i> ¹⁵	Yes	Council is aware that that under LGA 1972 schedule 12, paragraphs 41(1) and 44 the draft minutes of a meeting should be formally approved (with any necessary amendments) at the next meeting. At each meeting, the Chair is given formal approval to sign the minutes.
<i>Is there a list of members' interests held?</i>	Yes	Evidence was seen on the District Authority's website of the Register of Interests for all current Parish Councillors. <i>Comment: Council is reminded that whilst the monitoring officer of the District Council must arrange for the parish council's register of members' interests to be available for inspection in the district and must be published on the district council's website, where the parish council has its own website, its register of members' interests must also be published on that website. (Openness and transparency on personal interests - A guide for councillors – August 2012).</i>
<i>Does the Council have any Trustee responsibilities and if so are these clearly identified in a Trust Document?</i>	Not applicable	
<i>Has the Transparency Code been correctly applied, and information published in accordance with current legislation?</i>	Partly met	Councils with income over £25,000 but under £200,00 will be expected (but are not legally required to do so) to follow the Local Government Transparency Code 2015 (turnover exceeding £200,000).
<i>Has the Council registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)?</i> ¹⁶	Yes	The council is correctly registered with the IO as a Data Controller in accordance with legislation. Reference: ZA762319 Expires 08/06/2021
<i>Is the Council compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation requirements?</i>	Yes	The Council is taking steps to ensure compliancy and has shown good practice by ensuring that's privacy policy details the framework that the public can expect for the handling of requests from individuals who have the right to know what data is held on them, why the data is being processed and whether it will be given to any third party. <i>Comment: Council might wish to consider the adoption of a suite of policies under GCPR, which will provide the framework for responding to Subject Access Requests (SAR); internal procedures on the handling of SARs and the manner in which security breach incidents covering organizational risks will be handled. Such policies should also include procedures for handling</i>

¹⁵ Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, Local Government Act 1972 and the Localism Act 2011

¹⁶ Data Protection Act 2018

		<i>requests for rectification, erasure or restriction of processing and a response plan for dealing with a security breach.</i>
<i>Has the Council published a website accessibility statement on their website in line with Regulations?¹⁷</i>	Yes	A website accessibility statement was seen on the Council's website as provided by the website host detailing the technical information of the website along with the methods used for testing the website; the steps being taken to improve accessibility and how the site is being improved to ensure that content meets the WCAG 2.1 Standard under Regulation 8 of the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.
<i>Is there evidence that electronic files are backed up?</i>	Yes	
<i>Do terms of reference exist for all committees and is there evidence these are regularly reviewed?</i>	Not applicable	
<p>Additional comments: <i>Transparency Code 2015 - To ensure full compliance with the requirements of the Local Government Transparency Code 2015 (turnover exceeding £200,000), the following information should be published in accordance with the required timescales:</i> <i>quarterly:</i> <i>Individual items of expenditure that exceed £500 (currently published on an annual basis);</i> <i>Government Procurement Card transactions;</i> <i>Invitations to tender for contracts over £5,000;</i> <i>Details of contracts that exceed £5,000;</i> <i>annually:</i> <i>Details of all land and building assets;</i> <i>Grants to Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Organisations.</i></p>		

Signed: *Victoria S Waples*

Date of Internal Audit Visit: 21.06.2021

Date of Internal Audit Report: 25 June 2021

On behalf of Suffolk Association of Local Councils

¹⁷ Website Accessibility Regulations 2018