

Section1 – ‘We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the financial statements’

The annual governance statement was not finalised and approved by the stipulated deadline.

The annual governance statement was signed by one person as he was serving both as Proper Officer (unpaid) and Chair.

Section 2 ‘We maintained an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness’

During the year 23-24, the Council was unable to follow its own Financial Regulations. This included but was not limited to:

- o Budget to Actual analysis has not been presented to either the Finance Committee nor the Council during the year
- o No virements to the budget have been presented to either the Finance Committee nor the Council during the year. The use of consultants has, for example, exceeded budget by >£65k during the year.
- o Inspection of the accounts indicates that expenditure >£5k to one organisation has not been routinely agreed in advance by either the Finance Committee nor the Council during the year
- o Payments Lists have not been presented to the Council since December 2023
- o Bank Reconciliations have not been presented to the Finance Committee and the Council since October 2023
- o An analysis of reserves was not provided at year end.

These issues have now been addressed with the appointment of a Town Clerk in August 2024

Section 3 ‘We took reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances’

- As above, the Council’s own Financial Regulations have not been adhered to in respect to day-to-day financial control
- Contracts were agreed that did not follow correct authorisation procedures
- Further, the Council’s own Financial Regulations have not been adhered to in respect of budget setting, including but not limited to 3 year budgets not being completed
- The Annual Return for the Community Centre, required under the Lease arrangement, due November 2023, has not been produced

These issues have now been addressed with the appointment of a Town Clerk in August 2024

Section 5 ‘We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal control and or insurance cover where required.’

- *No risk assessment has been carried out during the year*

This issue has now been addressed with the appointment of a Town Clerk in August 2024

Section 6 'We maintained an adequate system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems'

- Internal audits were carried out by Heelis and Lodge but the Internal Audit reports dated 4/10/2023 and 7/6/2024 were not presented to the Finance and Governance Committee nor Full Council.

They have been presented on 07/01/2025

Section 7 'We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit'

- **No action could be taken as the reports were unrepresented.**

Section 8 'We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on the authority and where appropriate have included them in the accounting statements.'

- **No risk assessment has been carried out during the year**