

Audit Report

Siston Parish Council

Audit Plan Year: 2023/24 In Year Assurance

Audit Status: Audit Completed

Audit Review Date: 8th November 2023

Report Distribution:

Sara Thomas Clerk to Siston Parish Council

Audit Report: Siston Parish Council

1. Objective

The objective of the audit was to provide an independent opinion on the appropriateness of the financial control procedures operated in the Council. Ehsamuddin Popal, Audit Officer and Kerry Woodey, Senior Audit Officer examined these procedures.

2. Opinion

The highlighted wording in the table below provides the opinion for this internal audit review and its accompanying description.

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| High Standard | Systems and processes are excellent providing good assurance. Significant strengths have been identified and are to be commended, any recommendations made will serve to further strengthen existing arrangements. |
| Reliable Standard | There are very few significant matters arising from the audit, systems of control are good and provide reasonable assurance. |
| Improvements Required | Existing procedures need to be improved in order to ensure that they are fully reliable. Extensive recommendations have been made but the issues are not of such a significance to represent a major risk to the Council. |
| Significant Improvements Required | Existing procedures are weak and reasonable assurance could not be provided over a number of areas. Prompt action is necessary to improve the situation and avoid unnecessary risks. |
| Fundamental Weaknesses Identified | The matters arising from the audit identify that there are fundamental weaknesses which place doubt on the reliability of the procedures reviewed. Urgent action is necessary to improve the current situation and reduce risk exposure. |

3. Key Strengths

- A sample of payments were reviewed, invoices were present for all payments and evidence of payments being presented to Council were available.
- Both the standing orders and financial regulations have been reviewed by Full Council in May 2023.
- The Council has adequate insurance arrangements in place.
- Budget reports are presented monthly at the Full Council meetings.
- The Notice of Public Rights has been displayed for the statutory period on both the Council's noticeboard and website and this has been documented within the relevant Council meeting minutes.

4. Key Risks

- None

5. Key Actions

- None

6. Advisory Points

- When presenting the in-year (mid-year) audit report to Full Council, it should be documented this has been provided by the Internal Auditors for clarity.

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All of the matters arising from the audit are detailed in the Action Plan together with suitable recommendations.

7. The Control Environment

| Key Control Objectives | | Achieved? |
|------------------------|---|--|
| A. | Appropriate accounting records have been kept properly throughout the financial year. | Yes |
| B. | The authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for. | Yes |
| C. | The authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these. | Yes |
| D. | The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate. | Yes |
| E. | Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT appropriately accounted for. | Yes |
| F. | Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for. | N/A |
| G. | Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied. | Yes |
| H. | Asset and investment registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained. | Yes |
| I. | Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year. | Yes |
| J. | Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded. | Test at Year End. |
| K. | Councils with turnover of below £25,000. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2020/21, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. <i>(If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2020/21 AGAR tick "not covered")</i> . | Not currently applicable to any SGC clients. |
| L. | The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation. | Test at Year End. |
| M. | The authority, during the previous year (2022-23) correctly provided for the period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations <i>(evidenced by the notice published on the website and / or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set)</i> . | Yes |
| N. | The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2022/23 AGAR <i>(see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes)</i> . | Yes |
| O. | Trust funds (including charitable) - The council met its responsibilities as a trustee. | N/A |

8. Auditors & Acknowledgements

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|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| Audit Manager | Justine Lawson |
| Auditor | Ehsamuddin Popal and Kerry Woodey |

We are extremely grateful to the following officers for their help during this review:

Sara Thomas Clerk to Siston Parish Council