

ESSINGTON PARISH COUNCIL
STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL AND ANNUAL REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL CONTROL

1. OVERVIEW

- 1.1 Local councils are required to conduct an annual review of the effectiveness of its system of internal control. The council is required to sign the Annual Governance Statement (on the Annual Return submitted to the external auditor) to evidence that this review has been undertaken.
- 1.2 In order for the Council to review the effectiveness of the Internal Control System there needs to be clarity on the internal controls in place.
- 1.3 Some internal controls are listed in the Financial Regulations document but the system of controls goes beyond this. A Statement of Internal Controls has been prepared and is appended to this report.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the Council consider the attached Statement of Internal Controls and consider whether the controls currently in place are effective.

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Cash Book/Bank Reconciliations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Cash Books are kept up-to-date from original documents (paying-in books, invoices, cheque stubs). ▪ The Cash Books are reconciled to the bank statements on a monthly basis.
Financial Regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A document listing the Council's Financial Regulations, based on the model version prepared by NALC/SLCC, is maintained. The Regulations are reviewed for continued relevance and amended where necessary by the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) with any proposed amendments subject to approval by the Council.
Order/Tender Controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Financial Regulations list the number of estimates, quotations or full tenders that must be invited depending on the value and nature of the work. ▪ Official letters/emails/Purchase Orders are sent to suppliers for services which are not regular in nature.
Legal Powers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A proper legal power is identified in advance of any expenditure.
Payment Controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Purchase Orders/letters/emails ordering the work are matched to purchase invoices where applicable. ▪ A Schedule of Payments is presented to every ordinary meeting of the Council for approval (such approval is recorded in the Minutes). ▪ All cheques and financial documents are signed by two authorised signatories. ▪ All Direct Debits/Faster Payments/BACS transactions are authorised by two authorised signatories. ▪ Original invoices are provided to the councillors signing the cheques/authorising BACS payments. ▪ The cheque number used to settle an invoice is noted on the invoice for cross-reference purposes.

<p>The Free Resource, i.e. LGA 1972, s.137</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A separate s.137 account is maintained where necessary. ▪ The RFO calculates the maximum amount of s.137 expenditure able to be made each year and ensures that it is not exceeded. ▪ The proper minute authorising expenditure from s.137 is prepared on each occasion.
<p>The General Power of Competence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not currently adopted by the council.
<p>VAT Repayment Claims</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The RFO ensures that all invoices are addressed to the Council. ▪ The RFO ensures that proper VAT invoices are received where VAT is payable. ▪ The RFO maintains a VAT account to show that the correct amount of VAT is reclaimed in the year.
<p>Income Controls</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The RFO ensures that the Precept decision is declared to South Staffordshire Council on time. ▪ The RFO ensures that the amount of Precept received is correct in accordance with the Precept request submitted to the South Staffordshire Council. ▪ The RFO ensures that the Precept instalments are received when due. ▪ The RFO ensures that all other receipts are received when due and correctly calculated. ▪ Income is banked promptly.
<p>Financial Reporting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The performance to date and latest year end forecast against the agreed annual Budget are presented to each ordinary meeting of the Council.
<p>Budgetary Controls</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The budget is prepared in consultation with the Council. ▪ The Precept is set on the basis of the budget by the deadline set by the South Staffordshire Council.

<p>Payroll Controls</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All staff are paid under PAYE. ▪ All staff salaries are set by the Council and a minute is prepared to show the agreed salaries. ▪ Salaries are paid via BACS direct into employees Bank accounts; all payments are approved by two authorised signatories. ▪ The RFO will ensure that all the necessary payroll returns are made to HMRC and will retain evidence that this has been done.
<p>Asset Control</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The RFO maintains a full Asset Register. ▪ The existence and condition of assets is checked on an annual basis. ▪ The adequacy of insurance of the Council's assets is considered annually in advance of the insurance renewal.

Prepared by:

Mary Danby
Locum Parish Clerk and RFO

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