

Longcot Parish Council
Review of Effectiveness of Internal Audit 2021/2022 Meeting the Standards

Longcot Parish Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standard and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council is also responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk and for reviewing the effectiveness of internal audit.

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

Table 1 Review of Effectiveness of Internal Audit

Expected Standard	Evidence of Achievement	Has the Standard been met?
Scope of Internal Audit.	The scope of audit work includes reference to the risk management processes and wider internal control. Terms of reference are set out in the letter of appointment of the internal auditor. Council approved appointment of Jane Olds at its meeting on 11 October 2021 minute 187/21..	Yes
Independence.	Internal Auditor has direct access to the RFO and if necessary the Chairman. The Internal Auditor does not have any other role within the Council.	Yes
Competence.	The Internal Audit report 2020/2021 was carried out by Tim Light, Lightatouch on 20 April 2021 and received by Council at its meeting on 26 May 2021 minute 115/21 i. Quarterly financial summaries are presented to Council. There is no evidence that internal audit work has not been carried out ethically, with integrity and objectivity.	Yes
Relationships.	Responsibilities are defined in the job description for the Clerk/RFO Responsible Officer (Clerk / RFO) is consulted on the internal audit plan and on the scope of each audit. (Evidence on audit files.) Responsibilities of RFO and internal audit are defined in relation to internal control, risk management and fraud and corruption matters. The responsibilities of Council members are understood; training of members is carried out as necessary.	Yes
Audit Planning and Reporting.	The Annual Return 2020/2021 was signed by the Internal Auditor on 20 April 2021.. The Plan has been approved by Council 11 October 2021 minute 187/21. Internal Audit reports are carried out in accordance with the Plan and submitted to Council when completed.	Yes
Characteristics of 'Effectiveness'	Evidence of Achievement	Areas for development
Internal Audit Work	Planned internal work is based on risk assessment and designed to meet the Council's governance assurance needs. Financial statements and bank reconciliations are produced by RFO. Accounts for inspection at quarterly Council meetings.	Reviewed each year

Characteristics of 'Effectiveness'	Evidence of Achievement	Areas for development
	<p>An analysis of income and expenditure for setting the precept 2021/22 has been produced for review by Council at its meeting today 24 November 2021.</p> <p>Cheques and electronic payments are signed and cheque stubs initialled by two Councillors.</p> <p>Invoices are available for inspection when payment is authorised at Council meetings.</p> <p>Accounts are held on the computer and are backed up regularly.</p>	
Understanding the organisation, needs and objectives.	The annual audit plan shows how audit work will provide assurance in relation to the Council's annual governance statement.	Reviewed each year.
Being seen as a catalyst for change.	Any recommendations from the Internal Auditor for improvements is reported to Council for action. Keeping a good relationship with contractors and outside bodies. Continuous improvement is encouraged.	Internal auditor to check.
Be forward looking	When identifying risks and in formulating the Annual Audit Plan, changes on national agenda are considered. Internal audit maintains awareness of new developments in the services, risk management and corporate governance.	
Be challenging.	Internal audit focuses on risks and encourages members to develop their own responses to risks, rather than relying solely on audit recommendations. The aim of this is to encourage greater ownership of the control environment.	
Ensure the right resources are available.	<p>Adequate resource is made available for internal audit to complete its work.</p> <p>Internal Auditor understands the body and the legal and corporate framework in which it operates.</p> <p>Access to a range of Council documents are available on the website.</p> <p>Finance for the internal audit is included under Audit Fees of the budget when setting the precept.</p>	

Reviewed 29 November 2021 minute 212/21.