Risk Assessment HIGH 0 MEDIUM 0 LOW 16

Faversham Town Council INTERNAL AUDIT 2023-2024 AUDIT PLAN WITH COMMENTS / FINDINGS

I am pleased to report to Members of the Faversham Town Council (the "Council"), that I have completed my year-end audit of the Council's records for the twelve month period to 31 March 2024, following my audit visit and subsequent conversations on 1 May 2024.

Councillors should be aware that my work cannot be relied upon to identify the occasional omission or insignificant error, nor do I actively seek evidence of breaches of trust or statute, neglect or fraud, which may have taken place. It is the responsibility of the Councillors of the Council to guard against such events, but if during my audit testing such events are discovered I am duty bound to disclose such events to the Council.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Town Clerk, Ms Louise Bareham and the Finance & Minutes Asst Ms Emma Sunley for their assistance given to me during my audit visit.

Area	Item	Comments / Findings	Comments / Findings
		Interim visit 18 Oct 2023	Year-end Audit 1 May 2024
Previous Audits	 Date of last External Audit Certificate or Exemption Certificate for 2022-23 Comments if any Publication on website. Date of last Internal Audit Comments if any Review of any items outstanding from previous internal / external audit reports. 	Mazars signed off the Report & Certificate 2022-23 on 4th October 2023 with one "except for" matter relating to a comment in my Internal Report regarding the payments checks by the Councillor Auditors had not been completed for the last quarter of 2022-23. Council 18 Oct 2023 noted the Auditors Report and Certificate for 2022-23. The unaudited AGAR was posted correctly in June 2023 but due to the delayed sign-off by Mazars the Conclusion of Audit Notice was not posted until October 2023 missing the 30 Sept deadline. The Year-end Internal Audit Report for 2022-23 was considered by Cllrs attending P&R Comm 5 June 2023 Min 010 noting the "savings options".	P&R Comm 6 Nov 2023 Min 066 – considered the Interim Report noting the improvements made regarding contracts
<u>Minutes</u>	 Scan of the minutes of the Council's meetings and the Finance Committee. General Power of Competence (GPC) ? Dispensations S.40 LA&A Act 2014 filming/recording 	Minutes and Agendas are available to view on the website as are any accompanying reports/papers. Following the May 2023 Election the Council resolved to adopt the General Power of Competence – Council 15 May 2023 Min 009	P&R Comm 5 Feb 2024 Min 081 – reviewed the Committees and Meeting Calendar for 2024-25. Recommendations to Town Council included resuming monthly meetings and Creek Working Group and Heritage & Buildings Working Group to combine to form a Committee. The informal Strategy/Budget WG becomes a formal Strategy WG reporting to P&R Comm. The HWRC WG be replicated into a general campaign working group.

Code of Conduct/ Acceptance of Office	Date adopted Any changes in elected/co-opted members since last Audit? DPI's complete DPI's on website or weblink New Governance Compliance NEXT ELECTION?	All 4 Wards held elections on 4 May 2023 resulting in 14 Cllrs being elected. There are 7 new Cllrs and 7 returning Cllrs. NB Notice of Vacancies posted to website on 25 Oct 2023 following the resignations of Cllr Eddie Thomas (Watling) and Cllr Chris Williams (Abbey) DPIs available via the website May 2027	Cllr Gibson & Jones elected ? Attended first Council Meeting and appointed to serve on various Committees - Council 8 Jan 2024 Min 158 tappointment to Comms. The DPI information is available via a weblink on the Swale BC website although all the DPIs are summarised, which is not ideal as there is no reference to date of appointment/election etc.
Standing Orders and Financial Regulations •	since they were adopted or the last audit? Have any changes been formally adopted by the Council?	Scheme of delegation to Committees, Working Groups and Staff reviewed by P&R Comm for	New Model Financial Regulations published by NALC since my audit visit. They have undergone a major overhaul with a greater emphasis on Risk Management and separate sections on the new forms of electronic payment arrangements such as BACS, CHAPS and debit & credit cards. The Contract Finders threshold has increased to £30k. as notified via the NALC LTN 87 dated Jan 2024. Post Audit Note: The P&R Comm scheduled to discuss at the June 2024 Meeting. Committee Scheme of Delegation approved by the P&R Comm in Nov 2023 and revised spending limits in Dec 2023

Risk Management

- Risk Assessments Are they:
 - Carried out regularly?
 - Adequate?
 - Reported in the minutes?
 - Inspections of play equipt etc if carried out by staff/Cllrs have they been trained. accredited?
 - **ANNUAL REVIEW?**
- Insurance cover is it:
 - Appropriate/Adequate?
 - LTA in place?
 - Reviewed regularly?
 - Fidelity Guarantee Cover £ (Balances + ½ Precept)
- Internal controls are thev:
 - Documented?
 - o Adequate?
 - Reviewed regularly?
 - (SIC)?
- Systems and Procedures are they:
 - Documented? 0
 - Adequate?
 - Followed?
 - Reviewed regularly?

The Risk Assessment and Management Strategy Policy approved by P&R Comm 17 April 2023 Min 439

P&R Comm 2 Oct 2023 Min 053 – Reinstatement Valuation of the Town Hall building noted and to be forwarded to the Insurance Company. The Council is not responsible for any play

areas/equipment.

Insurance arrangements for 2023-24 noted by Council 15 May 2023 Min 023

The second year of the existing 3-year LTA with Zurich Municipal commenced on 1 April 2023 as advised to the new Council at it Annual Meeting held on 15 May 2023.

The vehicle insurance renewed to 2 Aug 2024 with Zurich Municipal.

Haves Parsons Specialist insurance broker to renew the Collection Insurance Policy, From 16 May 2023 to 15 May 2024.

O Statement of Internal Control The Statement of Internal Control for 2023-24 was discussed and accepted by P&R 17 April 2023 Min 438

> P&R Comm 5 June 2023 Min 012 – appointment of Cllrs Cook & Crayford (reserve) to carry out the monthly audits on behalf of the Committee. P&R Comm 5 June 2023 Min 008 resolved to accept 2023 Min 064 – accepted the 5 strategic pillars set the List of Policies and the proposed review dates. Min 009 to accept of the Grant Policy. P&R Comm 4 Sept 2023 Min 045 Policies reviewed

and accepted – Code of Conduct, Dignity at Work, Civility and Respect on Social Media, Complaints, Safeguarding and the Publication Scheme. P&R Comm 2 Oct 2023 Min 052 Policies reviewed and accepted – Vexatious Complainant and Document Retention Policies

The Town Clerk advised that all policies will be reviewed and updated as necessary through the vear.

The Risk Assessment and Management Strategy 2024-25 approved by P&R Comm 2 April 2024 Min

Council 8 April 2024 Min 207 insurance cover for 2024-25 (the final year of the LTA) approved.

The Statement of Internal Control for 2024-25. which included the Cllr Audits was discussed and accepted by P&R 2 April 2024 Min 098. Cllr Audits up todate.

P&R Comm 4 Mar 2024 Min 089 – Cllr Eyre nominated to replace Cllr Crayford as a Cllr Auditor

Draft Strategic Plan discussed by P&R Comm 6 Nov out in the draft Plan.

P&R Comm 6 Nov 2023 Min 065 – policies reviewed included Scheme of Delegation, Employee Privacy Notice, Members of the Public Privacy Notice. P&R Comm 4 Dec 2023 Min 072 - policies reviewed included Grant Policy and Application Form, Cllr Privacy Notice, General Terms of Reference for Committees and amended spending limits of Committees contained within the Scheme of Delegation.

P&R Comm 2 April 2024 Min 100 – Non-Councillor Member Policy

Budgetary Controls Section 137	• Is the distribution of the control	eported and approved by the council? Budget/Precept amounts minuted? Review of All Reserves included as part of the Budget Setting Process? In the actual performance against the budgets reported to the Council wring the year Compare with Fin Regs? In esignificant variances explained in sufficient detail?	Quarterly Reports available on the website. Earmarked Reserves Review – P&R 15 Aug 2023 Min 030 2024-25 Budget & Precept Cllrs Budget Workshop scheduled for 9 Dec 2023 Annual Finance Meeting 15 Jan 2024.	
expenditure	• Is	s a separate account/analysis	by 12.5% (the RPI increase Sept 2021 to 2022) to £9.93	or o in place.
£9.93 FOR 2023-24 (£8.82 FOR 2022-23)			Not required GPC adopted in May 2023.	
		lave the spending powers been roperly used and Minuted?		
Book-keeping	• F	it for purpose?	Finance Clerk (Ms Palmer)	Rialtas Omega system used to produce the year- end accounts, managed by Emma Sunley Finance
	• A	lp to date? .rithmetically correct? alanced regularly?	Facilities Booking System also provided by Rialtas	and Minutes Officer
	Ir a • R a	urnover above £200k pa ? ncome & Expenditure basis of ccounting? Record keeping and the rrangements in place to store revious year's accounts etc.		The Council accounts on an Income and Expenditure basis.

Petty Cash	 Has the amount of petty cash float been agreed? Are all petty cash entries recorded? Are payments made from petty cash fully supported by receipts / VAT invoices? Are petty cash reimbursements signed for? Date of last petty cash reimbursement? Is petty cash balance independently checked regularly 	Weekend event to pay for expenses.	No float in existence at year-end
Payroll	 Have there been any changes to individual contracts during the year? Members Allowances in place and paid via payroll system? Have new appointments and changes to contracts been approved and minuted? Do salaries paid agree with those approved by the Council? 	Changes to the Establishment are as follows:- Maternity Cover for the Finance Clerk continues - Ms Fiona Palmer working 10 hrs pw from 14 March 2023. Staffing Comm and Council 16 June 2023 Min 057 - New Events Officer position approved. Ms Claire Elliott appointed to commence 30 Oct 2023 (32 hrs pw). Visit Faversham Co-ordinator – to be made permanent at the end of the trial period Sept 2023 (10 hrs pw) The Facilities Apprentice to be offered a permanent position of Town Ranger with agreed job description and salary (full-time) Worknest provides HR Advice and support.	
	 Payroll outsourced? WORKPLACE PENSION IN PLACE 		the payroll administration duties.

Payments	SI	are all payments recorded and upported by appropriate ocumentation?	P&R Comm 2 Oct 2023 Min 051 – Payments for Authorisation review, resolved to accept the current process, which is compliant with the Fin Regs.	
	• A	re payments minuted?	Monthly schedules checked against payments approved and paid – these are then listed on the	
		Review of DD's and SO's ?	website. Cllrs are expected to undertake monthly checks of the payment system. Check lists up to date.	CHECK
	ir c C N + w	heck parity for 2022-23 ? Surrently includes salary, tax,	DD's & SO's set up for Sage payroll, Bulb, Royal Mail, New Star Networks, Lease Plan Uk Ltd RBS Omega accounting package fully complies with the AGAR definition of "staff costs".	Octopus Energy (electric supply to 12 Market Place, Guildhall and Fav jetty), Countrystyle Recycling
			Vat claims:- Qtr. 4 Jan to 31 Mar 23 - £9,861 recd 13 April 23 Qtr. 1 Apr to 30 Jun 23 - £8,450 recd 8 Aug 23 Qtr. 2 July to 30 Sept 23 - £6,326 recd 10 Oct 23	Qtr 3 1 Oct to 31 Dec 2023 - £7,120 recd 7 Feb 24 Qtr.4 1 Jan to 31 Mar 2024 - £9,793 recd 30 April 24
		lave internal control procedures een adhered to?	Sample contracts/agreements in place- Mitec Group – IT support Office 365 licences & TalkTalk contracts	
	• C	Compliance with SO's Have any new contracts or contract variations/extensions been awarded in the year? Procedures adopted for letting of contracts	KCS Prof. Services – Office printer rental Stannah Lift Services Ltd – lift mtce/servicing Zonkey Solutions Ltd – Council website design/development Berendt Consulting Ltd – consultant for the "parishes to town" initiative. Countrystyle – wheelie bin service Active Cycling Projects – Town Bike Hire Scheme Amethyst Horticulture – seasonal planters/watering Brogdale CIC – 3 year contract Cedar Bookkeeping & Payroll Ltd – payroll mgt. Worknest – employment law and HR support services commenced a 5-year contract on 16 Nov 2022. Gatherwell – Lottery management services	P&R Comm 6 Nov 2023 Min 066 Mention of noted improvements regarding contracts Glass Structures Ltd – new security entry doors to 12 Market Place Guardian Security – fire alarm Vibe Community Ltd – Youth Provision in Faversham (NB contract due to end, 6 month's notice given to Vibe/Brogdale CIC) Wiglet Design & print – various artwork designs as requestd eg Newsletters, Mayor's Christmas Card, Town Map and 50th Anniversary pin badge

Receipts	Are all receipts promptly banked? Precept, CTSG and Sect 136 payments Are income records inc allotments, burials, hirings adequate? Are invoicing arrangements adequate?	card payment machine approved to enable card payments. Council 11 Sept 2023 Min 100 resolved to cease the bike hire trial (Bike APP) as SBC's funding has been expended. Community Transport Grant - £59,295 used for a 3-year lease vehicle to provide a localised community transport service.	to distribute to worthy causes. Sum-up machine in place for card payments. Main other income sources - Weddings - £2,958 Transport week-end £4,289 Grants received = £12,894 Year-end debtors were considered by P&R Comm 17 April 2023 Min 440 and agreed to delegate to the Town Clerk for resolution
Bank reconciliation & PWLB Loans	exist? Investment Strategy	NatWest Current a/c No. 1133 - £100 NatWest Deposit a/c No. 8193 - £125,809	Bank Balances as at 31 Mar 2024 checked NatWest Current a/c No. 1133 - £100 NatWest Deposit a/c No. 8193 - £77,444 NatWest Deposit a/c No. 5901 - £7
	recommended where bank balances are in excess of £100k. FSCS aware?	Lloyds Bank a/c No. 9160 - £107,580 Nationwide a/c No. 8973 - £86,531 TOTAL £339,577	NatWest Liq Man 35day No. 8240 - £65,274 Lloyds Bank Current a/c No. 9160 - £136,988 Nationwide a/c No. 8973 - £89,568
	Are bank reconciliations regularly carried out for each account?	1 Unpresented cheque for £62.40.	TOTAL £369,381 Unpresented payments - £9,508
•	Level of Balances to Precept ratio Are the cheque counterfoils, paying-in books and bank statements adequately referenced?		There are monthly bank reconciliations checked by the Cllr Auditors.
•	•	with the added advantage that there is no restriction in terms of savings protection (normally up to £85k)	P&R Comm 5 Feb 2024 Min 079 – resolved to delegate to the Town Clerk in consultation with Cllr Eyre to open suitable accounts and transfer money up to £85k per Fin Institution, and look at the signatory requirements.
•	Internet Banking/Corporate Card and if in place Financial Regs updated ?	Council 15 May 2023 Min 016 reviewed the bank signatories for the Lloyds, NatWest & Nationwide,	P&R Comm 4 Mar 2024 Min 088 – noted proposed investments inc £50k into CCLA deposit a/c, £65k NatWest 35 Day Saver a/c, £100k into Unity Trust deposit a/c Council 12 Feb 2024 Min 176 listed the
•	Signature review (Two signatures required?)	signatories were no-longer Cllrs. Additional Cllrs were added to all 3 banks, Lloyds + 3 (6 in total) Cllrs, NatWest + 4 (8 in total) and Nationwide + 6 (8	proposed accounts. Cllrs T Martin, C Martin, Rowlands, Saunders & Eyre be signatories to the CCLA (now opened) and Unity Trust (limited to £85k).
•	Any PWLB loans ?	in total) NatWest changes have been delayed not helped by the branch closure. PWLB loans o/s as at 31 Mar 2023 = £1,035,350	PWLB Loans Year-end sums outstanding at 31 March 2024 = £1,023,932

Assets and Asset Register (AR) •	Is the AR up to date? Basis of Asset Values? Are investments recorded? Are the valuations regularly reviewed? Does the AR show the insurance values? Digital Photographic evidence?	The Council has leased a community mini bus, which can be shown as a "memo item" within the Asset Register BUT not included in the value of assets shown in Box 9 on the Statement of Accounts. There have been no new assets to report since 31 March 2023. Council 11 Sept 2023 Min 099 resolved to seek the transfer of TS Hazard and Town Quay into the Council's ownership.	T S Hazard Building - Council 12 Feb 2024 Min 178 Quote from Bailey for a reinstatement valuation and Mr Richard Murr of Tassells for legal representation. New items purchased in 2023-24 totalled £57,937 Net figure = £56,208 Living Roof Bus Shelters - £31,606 Guildhall Hearing Loop Witches Commemorative Plaque Millfield Seat Asset Value at 31 March 2024 = £3,182,910
Year-end procedures Inc. AGAR	 Date of approval of 2022-23 AGAR & Certificate of Exemption if applied PROOF of public rights provision during summer 2023 & website- AIAR ICOs Public Inspection Period 	Year-end procedures to be checked at final audit	Draft AGAR 2023-24 figures for the Statement of Accounts were audited and compared to the RBS reports and bank statements provided.

Additional tests – (as necessary)	 The procedures for the backing up of computerised records Council owned PC/laptop? Email security Encryption of data? Trust Funds/Charities – Charity Commission filing? Annual review of the effectiveness of Internal Audit inc. Appointment of 	There have been no major changes to the IT support, back-up and security arrangements since my last visit in May 2023. IT security arrangements including back-up in place and overseen by MITEC Solutions Office 365 applications in use Virtual meetings via Teams and Zoom. VOIP phone system in place. n/a P&R Comm 3 July 2023 Min 022 I was appointed IIA for the year 2023-24.	No changes since my Interim Audit visit.
1	Website host and Webmaster and any changes?		
	 Website functionality & accessibility NALC L09-18 	The website provided by Zonkey Solutions Ltd went live in December 2020.	
,	 TRANSPARENCY CODE compliant especially for Exempt Authorities 	Functionality is good, although the ability to open more than one webpage at a time would be useful. Webmaster is the Town Clerk	
	 Privacy Notice Cllr email addresses? Email disclaimer Other matters inc DPO arrangements 	Policies & Procedures page on the website includes policies relating to GDPR including "privacy notices" Elected Cllrs have their own @favershamtowncouncil.gov.uk email address MITEC have been advised of the Cllrs who have stood down, to have their email addresses closed and new ones have already been set-up for the 7 new Cllrs and published on the website	