Audit Report

Filton Town Council

Audit Plan Year: 2023/24 In Year Assurance

Audit Status: Audit Completed

Audit Review Date: 7th & 8th March 2024

Report Distribution:

Lesley Reuben – Clerk & RFO to Filton Town 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

- Bank reconciliations, balance sheet and Income and expenditure reports are presented to Finance and General-Purpose Committee in each meeting.
- The Council has assessed and recorded the significant risks in an appropriate Risk Register which is up to date.
- The Council's playgrounds are inspected weekly by Council staff, monthly by a Councillor and annually by ROSPA.
- Income from hirers and allotments has been received and appropriately recorded. From the selected sample there were sufficient lease agreements between the Council and the Hirers.

4. Key Risks

- Purchasing limits and procedures are unclear.

5. Key Actions

- The Standing Orders and Financial Regulations should both be reviewed and updated to align the tender limits.

6. Advisory Points

- During the audit it was noted that Full Council meeting minutes for October were physically approved but not recorded in the November Full Council meeting minutes. These meeting minutes should be recorded as approved in the next Full Council Meeting Minutes.

- Whilst approving the AGAR in the Council meeting minutes, the Council should also note the dates and locations of the display documented within the Notice of Public Rights in the meeting minutes.

- The payment related to Amazon in June 2023 should be investigated and amended on the ledger.

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. *(If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2020/21 AGAR tick "not covered").*	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 *(evidenced by the notice published on the website and / or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set)*.	Yes
N	The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2022/23 AGAR *(see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).*	Yes
O	Trust funds (including charitable) - The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	N/A

8. Auditors & Acknowledgements

Audit Manager	Justine Lawson
Auditor	Ehsamuddin Popal

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

Lesley Reuben	Town Clerk & RFO to Filton Town Council
Carla Westcott	Town Council Support to Officer Filton Town Council

No.	Matter Arising	Associated Risk	Recommendation	Responsible Officer; Proposed Timescale
Priority: Medium				
1	**Standing Orders and Financial Regulations** The tender limits do not align between the standing orders and financial regulation. Three different limits (£25000, £30000 & £60000) were noted in these two documents.	Purchasing limits and procedures are unclear.	**Recommendation** The Standing Orders and Financial Regulations should both be reviewed and updated in conjunction with one another to align the tender and purchase limits and procedures in both documents. The Full Council should then approve the updated documents.	**Responsible Officer** Full Council & Clerk **Target Implementation Date** 01/04/2024