

# Internal Audit

## Longcot Parish Council

### Year ending March 2025

Internal auditor Lisa Wilkinson

This internal audit report is based upon the Practitioners' Guide to Governance and Accountability in Local Authorities.

<b>Name of Council</b>	<b>Longcot</b>	<b>Name of Clerk to the Council</b>	Tina Brock
<b>No. Of Councillors</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Name of RFO</b>	Tina Brock
<b>Quorum</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Precept (for audit year)</b>	<b>£8,000</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>443</b>	<b>Gross budgeted income</b>	<b>£8,442</b>

A sample-based review was carried out, assessing relevant policies, procedures, and controls. Findings were referenced through the examination of digital records, paper documentation, and a review of the parish council's website.

This report highlights the issues identified during the internal audit but does not provide an exhaustive list of all potential weaknesses or areas for improvement.

Internal control objective	Response	Notes/Recommendations
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the year	Yes	<p>Excel is used as the accounting system. They are kept up to date by the Clerk.</p> <p>The opening balances in the cashbook agree to the audited accounts for 23-24, as published on the Council website. The opening balance on the bank accounts was £15,470. This agrees to box 7 on the audited accounting statements for 23-24</p> <p>Checks of the accounting confirmed that the cashbook arithmetic was correct. Difference between boxes 7 &amp; 8 were explained as per income and expenditure accounting.</p> <p><b>A council this size is generally recommended to use receipts and payments accounting.</b></p> <p>Draft minutes are published on the website within a month of the Council meeting. They are signed by the chair at the following meeting.</p>

Internal control objective	Response	Notes/Recommendations
B. is authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for	Yes	<p>Standing orders are reviewed annually.</p> <p><b>Recommend that the latest version (updated 2022) is adopted.</b></p> <p>Financial Regulations are reviewed annually in May. The new Regulations (2024) have been adopted.</p> <p>Standing Orders and Financial Regulations specify the same tender thresholds.</p> <p>A sample of payments gave a reasonable view of the Council's practices with orders authorised, invoices verified and payments listed in the minutes thus adhering to Financial Regulations.</p> <p>Statutory power to authorise is listed in the minutes.</p> <p>Two councillors authorise payments and the bank mandate is up to date.</p> <p>The Council does not hold a debit/credit card.</p>

Internal control objective	Response	Notes/Recommendations
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	Yes	<p>The risk assessment was reviewed and minuted in April 2024. The insurance policy is up to date and covers all assets. The policy was reviewed in May 2024 and is reviewed before renewal each year.</p> <p>The appropriate levels of insurance cover including fidelity guarantee, public liability and employers' liability are in place.</p> <p>There is an annual ROSPA inspection of the playground. A contractor inspects quarterly and councillors visually inspect regularly. The Council is registered with the ICO.</p>

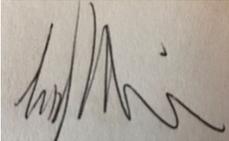
Internal control objective	Response	Notes/Recommendations
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate	Yes	A formal budget was approved at the November 2023 meeting for the year subject to internal audit and is published on the website. The full Council approved the precept for the year subject to audit. Budget reports are approved at Council meetings quarterly and any variances are dealt with. Earmarked reserves are reviewed as part of the budget setting process.

Internal control objective	Response	Notes/Recommendations
E. Expected income was fully received based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT appropriately accounted for		The precept received agrees to central government records and was fully received by the Parish Council. VAT reclaims are made annually if the amount is in excess of £100. The VAT reclaim for financial year 2023-24 was provided. There is a satisfactory procedure in place for collection of allotment fees. There is no other income.
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 the authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied		The clerk has a formal contract of employment. The Council is registered as an employer with HMRC and PAYE is properly dealt with. A payroll software company is used. A payslip has been provided as evidence. A pension has been offered to the clerk.
H. Asset and investment registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained		A formal asset register is maintained and reviewed annually. Last reviewed in May 2024. Assets are listed at cost value. There have been no additions or disposals this financial year.
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year		Bank reconciliation is carried out quarterly due to the size of the Council. Quarter 3 reconciliation provided as evidence. These are authorised at Council meetings. Year end bank reconciliation agrees to supporting bank statements.
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and		Accounting statements agree to the Council's cashbook. Precept received matches line 2 in Accounting Statements. Income and expenditure match the corresponding lines in the Accounting Statements. Value of the asset register is correctly noted on the Accounting Statements.

expenditure), agreed to the cashbook, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and, where appropriate, debtors and creditors were properly recorded		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in the prior year, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt		The Council meets the criteria for exemption from a limited assurance review and the Certificate of Exemption is displayed appropriately.
L. The authority publishes information on a free to access website / web page, up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with any relevant transparency code requirements	Yes	The Council has published, for the prior financial year, all the information as required by the Transparency Code: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• End of year accounts</li> <li>• Annual governance statement</li> <li>• Internal audit report</li> <li>• List of councillor or member responsibilities</li> <li>• Location of public land and building assets</li> <li>• Minutes, agendas and papers of formal meetings</li> </ul> <b>Recommend that a list of items of expenditure above £100 is published.</b>
M. The authority, during the previous year, correctly provided for the period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations	Yes	Notice of Public Rights was displayed correctly. The Council confirmed in the minutes the dates set (this is not a statutory requirement but it is accepted as audit evidence that the Council complied with the publication requirements).
N. The authority complied with the publication requirements for the prior year AGAR	Yes	The Annual Governance Statement, the Accounting Statements and the explanation of significant variances are published on the website with the correct minute references. Review of Effectiveness of Internal Control was undertaken in July 2024.
O. Trust funds (including charitable) - the Council met its responsibilities as a trustee	N/A	

Internal control objective	Response	Notes/Recommendations
<b>Miscellaneous</b>		
Website Accessibility	Yes	There is an accessibility statement
Members' interests		The revised 2022 Code of Conduct has been adopted. List of Members' Interests is held on the Vale of White Horse District Council website. Declaration of Members' Interests are minted at each meeting.
Policies		A range of policies are available to view on the website. GDPR: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Privacy Notice</li> <li>• Document Retention and Disposal</li> <li>• Information &amp; Data Protection</li> <li>• Freedom of Information Publication scheme</li> </ul> <b>Recommend that a Biodiversity policy is adopted in line with the Biodiversity Duty that Councils are subject to.</b>
S137/General Power of Competence (GPC)		GPC was adopted 9/5/2024

Any further comments
<p>The overall internal audit assurance rating is GOOD.</p> <p>A council this size is generally recommended to use receipts and payments accounting.</p> <p>Recommend that the latest version of standing orders (updated 2022) is adopted.</p> <p>Recommend that a list of items of expenditure above £100 is published</p> <p>Recommend that a Biodiversity policy is adopted in line with the Biodiversity Duty that Councils are subject to.</p>
Acknowledgments
<p>The help and co-operation of Tina Brock is greatly appreciated.</p>

<p><b>Internal audit carried out by</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>(signed)</b></p> 	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>(print)</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Lisa Wilkinson</b></p>
<p><b>Audit type (delete as appropriate)</b></p>	<p><del><b>INTERIM</b></del>    <b>ANNUAL</b></p>	
<p><b>Date 19/05/2025</b></p>		

<p><b>Part 3 of Annual Return form completed and signed</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>19/5/2025</b></p>
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