



Statement of Internal Control

Introduction

East Meon Parish Council (the Council) is a local authority funded largely by public money and is responsible for ensuring its financial business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded, 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.

The Council is required to review at least annually the effectiveness of its system of financial control. This is informed by the work of the internal auditor and the Parish Clerk, who has responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal audit environment, and also any comments made by the external auditors in their annual report.

The Purpose of the System of Internal Control

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

The system of internal control accords with the practices set out in the Governance and Accountability in Local Councils: A Practitioners' Guide (2011 edition).

The Internal Control Environment

The Council has adopted Financial Regulations (on 24 May 2012) which set parameters for the Council's financial operations. The Council has appointed a Parish Clerk who implements financial systems and controls.

The Council uses Scribe Accounting software to process transactions and monitor performance against budget. Banking Services are provided by HSBC. There is an independent internal audit service and Council's internal monitoring is undertaken by the full Council.

Reviewed May 2024 – Review due May 2026

Any issues raised by the Internal Auditor are reported in writing to the Parish Clerk and agreed actions are monitored to ensure that they have been carried out and actioned within agreed timescales. Additionally, the Council seeks and receives appropriate property, legal, insurance, and health & safety advice as appropriate to manage risk.

The Council is responsible for:

- Establishing and monitoring the achievements of the authority's objectives
- The facilitation of policy and decision making
- Ensuring compliance with established policies, procedures, laws and regulations
- Identification and management of risk
- Ensuring that best value and value for money are achieved in all purchases
- Ensuring all committees receive regular and up to date reports on financial activities under their direction
- Ensuring performance is regularly monitored against financial and operational budgets
- Control and reports on the financial management of the Council

Review of Effectiveness

The Council through the Parish Clerk has responsibility for conducting a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control and the internal audit process.

The review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is monitored by:

- The work of officers within the Council reporting to the Parish Clerk.
- The Parish Clerk acts as the Council's legal advisor and administrator. Advising on compliance with laws and regulations which the Council is subject to and managing risks. The Parish Clerk also provides advice to help the Council ensure that its procedures, control systems and policies are adhered to.
- The Parish Clerk is responsible for administering the Council's finances in compliance with all laws and regulations to which the Council is subject.
- The full Council review the accounts four times a year to monitor progress against objectives, financial systems and procedures, budgetary control, and carry out regular reviews of financial matters.
- The work of the Internal Auditor. The Internal Auditor, an independent person specialising in local council matters, reports to the Parish Clerk and the Council on the adequacy of its records, procedures, systems, internal control and risk management.
- The External Auditors in their annual report.

Any concerns about the effectiveness of the system of internal control are investigated and action taken as appropriate.