

Ramsey & Parkeston Parish Council

Statement of Internal Control 2022/23

Introduction

Ramsey & Parkeston 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 Finance Committee, who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control environment, and 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 (2014 edition).

The Internal Control Environment

The Council has adopted Financial Regulations which set parameters for the Council's financial operations. The Council has appointed a Responsible Finance Officer who implements financial systems and controls.

The Council uses Microsoft Excel to record transactions and monitor performance against budget. Payroll services are provided by James Todd & Co.Ltd, 1 & 2 The Barn, Oldwick, West Stock Road, Lavant, Chichester, West Sussex. Banking services are provided by the Co-Operative Bank.

The internal audit service is reviewed annually; newly appointed as from end of year 31st March 2022 is Mrs V Evans, 11 The Magpies, Epping Green, Epping, Essex CM16 6QG

The Internal Auditor, an independent person specialising in local council matters, reports to the Council on the adequacy of its records, procedures, systems, internal control and risk management. Any issues raised by the Internal Auditor are reported in writing to the Council 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 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 Responsible Finance Officer 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 Clerk is the Council's Responsible Finance Officer who acts as the Council's legal advisor and administrator. The Clerk is responsible for administering the Council's finances, for advising on compliance with laws and regulations which the Council is subject to, and for managing risks. The Clerk also provides advice to help the Council ensure that its procedures, control systems and policies are adhered to.
- The Members of the Council have collective responsibilities within this area. The full council has the responsibility to monitor progress by receiving relevant reports from the Responsible Finance Officer.

The External Auditor, it is a legal requirement that the Council must have an external auditor appointed by the Audit commission under section 3 of the Audit Commission Act 1988. The appointment of Littlejohn LPP as external auditor to the Council to audit the annual return of the Council was confirmed by the Audit Commission for five years from 2019/24. The external auditor will also take into considerations any issues raised by local residents and, if warranted, takes action deemed necessary.

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

In the year there were no significant or fundamental weaknesses identified or reported in the annual return, however the Council continuously seeks to address and action any recommendations to improve controls and manage risk.

Signed: _____

Cllr B Davidson, Chairman

13th January 2022

Original signed by the Chairman at the meeting of the RPPC