

Internal Audit Report for Great Glemham Parish Council for the year ending 31st March 2022

Clerk	Debbi Taylor (effective April 2022)
RFO (if different)	
Chairperson	Argus Gathorne-Hardy
Precept	£ 6,175.00
Income	£12,294.52
Expenditure	£ 5,539.35
General reserves	£ 7,322.00
Earmarked reserves	£18,861.00
Audit type	Annual
Auditor name	Victoria Waples

Introduction

The primary objective of internal audit is to review, appraise and report upon the adequacy of internal control systems operating throughout the council. To achieve this SALC adopt a predominantly systems-based approach to audit.

The council's internal control system comprises the whole network of systems established within the council to provide reasonable assurance that the council's objectives will be achieved, with reference to:

- the effectiveness of operations
- the economic and efficient use of resources
- compliance with applicable policies, procedures, laws, and regulations
- the safeguarding of assets and interests from losses of all kinds, including those arising from fraud, irregularity, and corruption
- the integrity and reliability of information, accounts, and data

Methodology

When conducting the audit, the internal auditor may:

- conduct a selective assessment of compliance with relevant procedures and controls expected to be in operation during the financial year in order to be able to complete the Annual Internal Audit Report 2020/21 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)
- review the reliability and integrity of financial information and the means used to identify, measure, classify and report such information
- review the means of safeguarding assets and, as appropriate, verify the existence of such assets
- appraise the economy and efficiency with which resources are employed, identify opportunities to improve performance and recommend solutions to problems
- review the established systems to ensure compliance with those policies, procedures, laws, and regulations which could have a significant impact on operations, and determine whether the council complies
- review the operations and activities to ascertain whether results are consistent with objectives and whether they are being conducted as planned

Section 1 – proper bookkeeping		
The internal auditor will look at the methods and processes used to manage the council’s accounts and in particular that it provides clear data for reporting and monitoring purposes. This includes checking information is accurate, kept up to date, referenced and verified.		
Evidence		<i>Internal auditor commentary</i>
<i>Is the ledger maintained and up to date?</i>	Yes	The council uses an excel spreadsheet to produce reports on a Receipts and Payments basis and ensures that the financial transactions of the parish council are as accurate as reasonably practicable. <i>Comment: the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) is advised to consider expanding the cashbook to allow for the underlying records to account for nett and gross payments using appropriate column analysis including VAT and s137.</i>
<i>Is the cash book up to date and regularly verified?</i>	Yes	The RFO has ensured that the cashbook is the focus for day-to-day accounting and is aware that the balancing off and reconciliation to the bank statement remains the most important control over the accounting system. The cashbook is reconciled on a monthly basis.
<i>Is the arithmetic correct?</i>	Yes	A number of spot checks were carried out and the functionality of the cashbook was found to be in order, but the following is noted: A Refund of £100 from Suffolk County Council for a licence has been incorrectly allocated as income as opposed to netting the money received off expenditure incurred. Council should note that the correct handling of refunds and reimbursements is for them to be netted off. <i>Comment: this error should be corrected as it has impacted the Accounting Statements (Section 2) as produced – Boxes 3 and 6 of Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return will need to be corrected.</i>
Additional comments:		

Section 2 – Financial Regulation and Standing Orders	
The internal auditor will check the date the Council conducted its annual review of both Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and in particular check if these are based on NALC’S latest model which include legislative changes.	

Evidence		Internal auditor commentary
Have Standing Orders been adopted, up to date and reviewed annually?	Yes	The Council reviewed its Standing Orders at its meeting of 15 th September 2021, a copy of which can be found on the Council's website. The Council's Orders are based on the Model Standing Orders produced by NALC in 2018 (amended 2020) which take into account changes in legislation since those produced in 2013.
Are Financial Regulations up to date and reviewed annually?	Yes	The Council's Financial Regulations were reviewed at the same meeting, a copy of which can be found on the Council's website, and which are based on the Model Standing Orders produced by NALC in 2019.
Has the Council properly tailored the Financial Regulations?	Yes	Council's Financial Regulations are fully tailored to the Parish Council.
Has the Council appointed a Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)? ¹	Yes	In accordance with Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972(d) (financial administration), the Council has appointed a person to be responsible for the administration of the financial affairs of the relevant authority. The appointment was confirmed at the meeting of 5 th May 2021.
Additional comments: Council might wish to note that LTN87 – Procurement - has provided an update on the thresholds for procuring contracts. The amended values should be incorporated into the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations at the next annual review.		

Section 3 – Payment controls		
<p>The internal auditor will specifically check bank reconciliation including credit/debit cards and management approval processes and evidence that internal Financial Regulations (FO) are being followed. The internal auditor will examine how regular payments are managed and specifically seek evidence that these have been brought back to the Council for verification purposes especially where the actual payment made differs from the amount previously agreed. VAT should be clearly identified including evidence that claims have been correctly managed. The internal auditor will check if the Council has a clear understanding on eligibility in relation to the General Power of Competence and that s.137 has been correctly applied and managed.</p>		
Evidence		Internal auditor commentary
Is there supporting paperwork for payments with appropriate authorisation?	Yes	At each full Council Meeting a list of all payments is presented to the meeting with formal approval of such expenditure being shown.

¹ Section 151 Local Government Act 1972 (d)

		<p>Payments made away from the meeting are also brought back to full Council as retrospective payments and approved at the next meeting. <i>Comment: the RFO has implemented the system whereby the 'power to pay' is allocated for all payments in the cashbook. Noting that it is the responsibility of Councillors to satisfy themselves that they have the appropriate legal power to incur expense, the RFO has ensured that reference can be made to the exact power being used to ensure that all financial decisions or payments being made are in accordance with statute and the Council is not undertaking any decisions or payments that are ultra vires.</i></p>
Where applicable, are internet banking transactions properly recorded and approved?	Yes	<p>Internet banking is operated in accordance with the Council's adopted Internet Banking Statement with regards to banking procedures, roles and responsibilities for online banking and verification of payments submitted to and approved at each meeting.</p>
Is VAT correctly identified, recorded, and claimed within time limits?	Partly met	<p>VAT is currently not identified separately within the cashbook and the year-end position could not be verified. It is however claimed in accordance with the guidelines for local authorities and similar bodies and during the year, the claim for the year ending 31st March 2021 in the sum of £133.46 was settled and accounted for within the cashbook.</p>
Has the Council adopted the General Power of Competence (GPOC)? ²	Not applicable	<p>The council does not satisfy the eligibility criteria to enable it to exercise the GPOC.</p>
Are payments under s.137 ³ separately recorded, minuted and is there evidence of direct benefit to electorate?	Yes	<p>Payments made under this power for the year under review totalled £906.40 and the following should be noted: Payment to Village Hall - £250.00 <i>Comment: Dependent upon the final use of the monies being given to the Village Hall, Council should note that more appropriate powers to be used for such a donation would have been either Local Government Act 1972 s133 or Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 14976 s19.</i></p>

² Localism Act

³ Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 ("the 1972 Act") enables local councils to spend a limited amount of money for purposes for which they have no other specific statutory expenditure. The basic power is for a local council to spend money (subject to the statutory limit – of £8.41 per elector) on purposes for the direct benefit of its area, or part of its area, or all or some of its inhabitants.

		All other expenditure was within the statutory limits and correctly allocated.
Are payments of interest and principal sums in respect of loans paid in accordance with agreements?	<i>Not applicable</i>	Council has no such loans.
Additional comments:		

Section 4 – Risk management		
The internal auditor will expect to find evidence of the management of risks from identification of what those are for each individual Council through to how these will be managed and the controls in place to mitigate these and that these have been approved by the Council.		
Evidence		Internal auditor commentary
<i>Is there evidence of risk assessment documentation?</i>	Yes	The risk assessment documentation seen on the Council’s website and as adopted by Council at its meeting of 15 th September 2021, provides details of the risks associated with the functioning of a smaller authority and the measures that the Council will undertake to mitigate such risks. <i>Comment: Council has ensured that the review date is added to the document which has demonstrated that, in accordance with Proper Practices, the risks are annually reviewed, assessed and appropriate measures are in place to protect public money. Council might wish to ensure that a number of items are added / updated in accordance with legislation: GDPR; Website Accessibility; Code of Conduct</i>
<i>Is there evidence that risks are being identified and managed?</i>	Yes	Council is aware that risk assessment should focus not only on the safety of the parish council’s assets but also its money. The parish council has taken appropriate action to identify and assess the risks associated with its operation and considered what actions or decisions it needs to take during the year in order to mitigate and manage the risk.
<i>Does the Council have appropriate and adequate insurance cover in place for employment, public liability and fidelity guarantee and has been reviewed on an annual basis?</i>	Yes	Council has insurance in place under a Parish Protect Policy which shows core cover for the following: Public liability: £10million; Public/Products Liability: £10million and Fidelity Guarantee of £25thousand. The level of Fidelity Guarantee is within the recommended guidelines which provides that the cover should be at least the sum of the year-end balances plus 50% of the precept/grants. At its meeting of 15 th September 2021, the minutes reflect

		that the Council reviewed its insurance requirements and confirmed that the current policy to be renewed was adequate for the council's needs.
<i>Evidence that internal controls are documented and regularly reviewed⁴</i>	Yes	During the year, the parish council undertook a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control which is contained within its Internal Control Statement as adopted at the meeting of 1 st March 2022.
<i>Evidence that a review of the effectiveness of internal audit was conducted during the year, including consideration of the independence and competence of the internal auditor prior to their appointment⁵</i>	Yes	The review of the effectiveness of internal audit was covered within the Internal Control Statement as adopted by Council at its meeting of 1 st March 2022. Such a review also covers the independence and competence of the internal auditor.
Additional comments:		

Section 5 – Budgetary controls		
The internal auditor will seek verification that budgets are properly prepared, agreed and monitored. In particular they will look for evidence of good practice in that the key stages of the budgetary process have been followed		
Evidence		Internal auditor commentary
<i>Verify that budget has been properly prepared and agreed and clearly minuted</i>	Yes	The budget for the year 2020–2021 in the sum of £6,005 was set at the meeting of 9 th December 2020 although there is no reference within the minutes of the budget being approved. <i>Comment: whilst Council might be aware that the preparation of an annual budget is one of the key statutory tasks to be undertaken by an authority, for clarity and transparency the level of budget set should be clearly evidenced in the Council's minutes.</i>
<i>Verify that the precept amount has been agreed in full Council and clearly minuted</i>	Yes	The precept was set at £6,175 with evidence seen that Council acknowledged that this would be an increase over that set for the previous year and would allow for regular clerk hours, a pay increase and a general increase in the level of reserves being held by the Council as recommended by the auditor.

⁴ Accounts and Audit Regulations

⁵ Practitioners Guide

<i>Regular reporting of expenditure and variances from budget</i>	<i>Partly met</i>	During the year under review at the meeting at which the budget for the forthcoming year was set, Council considered the comparisons between budgeted and actual income. <i>Comment: Council might wish to note the timescales specified within its own Standing Orders (17c) as to the reporting of receipts and payments; aggregate receipts and payments for the year to date and comparison with the budget for the financial year.</i>
<i>Reserves held – general and earmarked⁶</i>	Yes	Council's final accounts show general reserves in the sum of £7,322 with earmarked reserves at £18,861. <i>Comment: Council might wish to note guidance as issued by Proper Practices which states that it is regarded as acceptable for a council's general (non-earmarked revenue) reserves to be equal to 3 to 12 months of Net Revenue Expenditure and should ensure that the level of general reserves adopted is in accordance with its General Reserve Policy. There is no upper limit for Earmarked Reserves, but they should be held for genuine and intended purposes and their level subject to regular review and justification (at least annually).</i>
Additional comments:		

<p>Section 6 – income controls The internal auditor will seek evidence to ensure income is correct managed – recorded, banked, and reported and test mechanisms used to achieve this.</p>		
Evidence		Internal auditor commentary
<i>Is income properly recorded and promptly banked?</i>	Yes	Income is recorded in accordance with Council's Financial Regulations. A number of items of income were cross checked against the financial statements submitted to each relevant meeting and the bank statements and found to be in order.

⁶ In accordance with proper practices, the generally accepted minimum level of a Smaller Authority's General Reserve is that this should be maintained at between three (3) and twelve (12) months of Net Revenue Expenditure

<i>Is income reported to full council?</i>	Yes	Income received is reported to full Council at each relevant meeting. The RFO ensures that monies received are promptly banked.
<i>Does the precept recorded agree to the Council Tax Authority's notification?</i>	Yes	The council received precept of £6,175 during the year under review in April 2021. Evidence was provided showing the Precept being discussed and approved at the meeting of 9 th December 2020 to receipt of same in the Council's Bank Account. Council also received a Tax Base Grant of £84 in April 2021.
<i>If appropriate, are CIL reporting schedules in accordance with the Regulations?</i>	Yes	For the year under review Council received CIL Receipts in the sum of £77.68 in April 2021.
<i>Is CIL income reported to the council?</i>	Yes	CIL receipts were reported to full Council.
<i>Does unspent CIL income form part of earmarked reserves?</i>	Yes	In accordance with the 2010 Regulations, the Council having a retained balance of CIL funds has ensured that retained balances are transferred into a Restricted Reserve specifically allocated. Retained balance at 31st March 2022 was £77.68.
<i>Has an annual report been produced?</i>	Yes	Council has formally approved the Annual CIL Statement.
Additional comments:		

Section 7 – petty cash		
The Internal Auditor will seek evidence that the Council has followed its own policies, procedures, and verification processes and that these are up to date.		
Evidence		Internal auditor commentary
<i>Is petty cash in operation?</i>	<i>Not covered</i>	Council does not operate a petty cash system.
Additional comments:		

Section 8 – Payroll controls

<p>The Internal Auditor will check salaries were approved in accordance with PAYE, NI, Pension and that there is a clear understanding that the clerk is not self-employed. If the Clerk was recruited after 1st April 201, evidence will be required to show compliance with the new requirements for the statement of employment, Induction, probation periods and training requirements. The Internal Auditor will also review how payroll is managed including evidence of approval of payslips.</p>		
Evidence		Internal auditor commentary
<i>Do all employees have contracts of employment?</i>	Yes	Council had 1 employee on its payroll at the period end of 31 st March 2022. Employment contracts were not reviewed during the internal audit which was carried out via remote means. The meeting of 1 st March 2022 noted the Clerk's immediate resignation with the Clerk remaining in post until the end of the month or until a suitable replacement was found.
<i>Has the Council approved salary paid?</i>	Yes	All salary payments are authorised by full council.
<i>Minimum wage paid?</i>	Yes	The minimum wage is not applied to the one employee.
<i>Are arrangements in place for authorising of the payroll and payments to the council? Does this include a verification process for agreeing rates of pay to be applied?</i>	Yes	There are suitable payroll arrangements in place which ensures the accuracy and legitimacy of payments of salaries and wages, and associated liabilities and as such the council has complied with its duties under legislation.
<i>Do salary payments include deductions for PAYE/NIC? Is PAYE/NIC paid promptly to HMRC?</i>	Yes	The payroll function is operated in accordance with HM Revenue and Custom guidelines and completed inhouse. Cross-checks were completed on payments covering salary and found to be in order. There were no deductions paid to HM Revenue and Customs during the year under review.
<i>Is there evidence that the Council is aware of its pension responsibilities? Are pension payments in operation?</i> ⁷	Yes	The Council has completed a re-declaration of compliance with regards to automatic enrolment duties. <i>Comment: Council last carried out its re-enrolment duties ion 17th October 2021 and is aware of its re-enrolment duties and has complied with the deadlines as stated in communications from the Pension Regulator.</i>
<i>Are there any other payments (e.g.: expenses) and are these reasonable and approved by the Council?</i>	Yes	All expenses / payments made are against itemised invoices submitted to and approved by full Council.
Additional comments:		

⁷ The Pension Regulator – [website click here](#)

Section 9 – Asset control		
The Internal Audit will be seeking to establish if there is a list of assets in accordance with proper practices including the date of acquisition, location, and value. This extends to checking policies (with evidence of review) and that the Council has applied the documented approach in practice. The Internal Auditor will check not only valuation processes but the existence of reserve budgets for depreciation and adequacy of insurance. A clear audit trail should be available when items are purchased including minutes to evidence approval.		
Evidence		Internal auditor commentary
<i>Does the Council maintain a register of material assets it owns and manage this in accordance with proper practices?⁸</i>	Yes	The Asset Register was reviewed during the Internal Audit Visit for year-end and reflects those items listed within the Parish Council's remit for maintenance and ownership.
<i>Is the value of the assets included? (Note value for insurance purposes may differ)</i>	Yes	It is noted that the declared value for all assets at year-end (31 st March 2022) is £13,865 which represents movement in the asset register for the addition of new items all of which are declared at acquisition cost (grit bin).
<i>Are records of deeds, articles, land registry title number available?</i>	Not covered	Records of deeds, articles, land registry title number were not reviewed during the internal audit which was carried out via remote means.
<i>Is the asset register up to date and reviewed annually?</i>	Yes	The asset register shows a value of £13,865 which agrees with the value declared on the Draft Accounting Statements for the year ending 31 st March 2022.
<i>Cross checking of insurance cover</i>	Yes	Council has insurance under a Parish Protect Policy for all risk to its assets up to a limit as specified on its insurance schedule.
Additional comments:		
Section 10 – bank reconciliation		
The internal auditor will seek to establish that the Council understands and can evidence good practice and internal control mechanisms in relation to bank reconciliation.		
Evidence		Internal auditor commentary

⁸ Practitioners Guide

<i>Is bank reconciliation regularly completed and reconciled with the cash book and cover every account?</i>	Yes	Bank reconciliations are completed on a regular basis and reconcile with the cash sheets. Overall there is regular reporting of bank balances within the detailed financial reports submitted at each meeting.
<i>Do bank balances agree with bank statements?</i>	Yes	Bank balances agree with period end statements and, as at year end (31 st March 2022), the balance across the councils accounts stood at £26,183.00 as recorded in the Statement of Accounts and on the Year-end Bank Reconciliation.
<i>Is there regular reporting of bank balances at Council meetings?</i>	Yes	Financial reports detailing bank balances are submitted to the Council. The minutes show that bank reconciliations are received and accepted at each meeting and are independently verified by a Council appointed Councillor.
Additional comments:		

Section 11 – year end procedures		
Evidence		<i>Internal auditor commentary</i>
<i>Are appropriate accounting procedures used?</i>	Yes	Accounts are produced on a receipts and expenditure basis, and all found to be in order.
<i>Financial trail from records to presented accounts</i>	Yes	The end of year accounts were well presented for the internal auditor review.
<i>Has the appropriate end of year AGAR⁹ documents been completed?</i>	Yes	As Council is a smaller authority with gross income and expenditure not exceeding £25,000 it will be required to complete the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Form 2. The Exemption Certificate, Section 1 and Section 2 of the AGAR were completed and signed at the meeting of 11 th May 2022.
<i>Did the Council meet the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt?</i>	Yes	As the Parish Council did not have gross income and expenditure exceeding £25,000 and was able to declare itself exempt from a limited assurance review for the year 2020-2021, the minutes of 5 th May 2021 confirm that the Council, having reviewed the provisions for an exemption to a limited assurance review, formally resolved to apply for such an exemption.

⁹ Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR)

<i>During the period in question did the small authority demonstrate that it correctly provided for the exercise of public right as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015?</i>	Yes	The council ensured the period for the exercise of elector's rights during Summer 2021 was in accordance with the period specified within the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. For the year under review, the dates set for the inspection of the Council's accounts and associated documents were 14 th June to 23 rd July 2021.
<i>Have the publication requirements been met in accordance with the Regulations?¹⁰</i>	Yes	The Council has complied with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 for smaller authorities with income and expenditure not exceeding £25,000 for the year ending 31 March 2021 and published the following on a public website: Certificate of Exemption Annual Internal Audit Report Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement of the AGAR Section 2 – Annual Accounting Statements of the AGAR Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights Analysis of variances Bank reconciliation – year-end
Additional comments:		

Section 12 – internal audit		
The internal auditor will revisit weaknesses and recommendations previously identified to see if these have been addressed. They will also check if any changes introduced require further verification to ensure effectiveness of the corrective action taken.		
Evidence		<i>Internal auditor commentary</i>
<i>Has the Council considered the previous internal audit report?</i>	Yes	A review of the findings contained within the Annual Audit Report was presented to and considered by full Council at its meeting of 5 th May 2021.
<i>Has appropriate action been taken regarding the recommendations raised?</i>	Yes	There were no recommendations contained within the report.
<i>Has the Council confirmed the appointment of an internal auditor?</i>	Yes	The appointment of Suffolk Association of Local Councils as the Council's internal auditor for the year ending 31 st March 2022 was approved at the meeting of 11 th May 2022.

¹⁰ Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015

Additional comments:

Section 13 – external audit for the period under review

The internal auditor will revisit the external audit so that previous weaknesses and recommendations can be considered.

Evidence		Internal auditor commentary
<i>Has the Council considered the previous external audit report?</i> ¹¹	<i>Not applicable</i>	For the year 2020-2021 the Council was able to declare itself exempt from a limited assurance review.

Additional comments:

Section 14 – additional information

The internal auditor will look for additional evidence of good record keeping, compliance with data protection regulations, freedom of information and website accessibility regulations.

Evidence		Internal auditor commentary
<i>Was the annual meeting held in accordance with legislation?</i> ¹² <i>(Note to auditor- emergency Regulations because of the COVID-19 pandemic)</i> ¹³	Yes	Council held its Annual Meeting of the Parish Council at which the Chair and other Officers were elected on 5 th May 2021 via the Videoconferencing Platform. In accordance with the repeal of the Coronavirus Act 2020 legislation all meetings held after 7 th May 2021 were held in person.
<i>Is there evidence that Minutes are administered in accordance with legislation?</i> ¹⁴	Yes	Council is aware that minutes become legal once they are approved by the council and signed by the chairman of that meeting as an accurate record.

¹¹ Regulation 20 Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 – *following completion of an audit the Council should note that it is the Council as a whole (i.e., All members) and not a committee that should receive and consider the audit letter (including Annual Return and Certificate) from the local auditor as soon as reasonably practicable and the minutes should reflect that these have been received.*

¹² The Local Government Act 1972 Schedule 12, paragraph 7 (2) and Schedule 15 (2)

¹³ The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020

¹⁴ Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, Local Government Act 1972, and the Localism Act 2011

		Loose leaf minutes should be numbered consecutively and signed by the Chair of the meeting on each page.
<i>Is there a list of members' interests held?</i>	Yes	Evidence was seen on the website of East Suffolk Council for the Register of Interests but there is no link to the register from the Council's own website.
<i>Does the Council have any Trustee responsibilities?</i>	None	Council does not have any such responsibilities.
<i>Has the Transparency Code been correctly applied, and information published in accordance with current legislation?</i>	Yes	Council is aware that with gross income and expenditure under £25,000 it will be required to follow the Local Government Transparency Code 2014 for smaller authorities. Council should ensure that the following are published on a public website in accordance with the dates prescribed by the relevant regulations (not later than 1 July): Internal Audit Report; List of Councillors and Responsibilities; Items of Expenditure Above £100 including recoverable and non-recoverable VAT End of Year Accounts; Annual Governance Statement; Asset Register and that Agendas of Meetings; Associated Papers and Minutes should be published in accordance with the prescribed timescales as set out in the Transparency code for smaller authorities – December 2014
<i>Has the Council registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)?¹⁵</i>	Yes	The council is correctly registered with the ICO as a Data Controller in accordance with legislation. Certificate number Z7456521 with an expiry date of 11 th March 2023.
<i>Is the Council compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation requirements?</i>	Yes	Council has taken steps during the year under review to ensure compliancy and annually reviews its policies relating to GDPR. The Council's Data Protection Policy as seen on the website details the framework that the public can expect for the handling of requests from individuals who have the right to know what data is held on them, why the data is being processed and whether it will be given to any third party, as well as procedures for dealing with subject access; freedom of information requests and procedures for dealing with data breaches. Council has also adopted a Document and Data Retention policy which covers the system and procedure to be adopted in determining how specific records or documents should be kept, for how long, and how they are being disposed of after a certain time period.

¹⁵ Data Protection Act 2018

<i>Has the Council published a website accessibility statement on their website in line with Regulations?¹⁶</i>	Yes	As The Public Sector Bodies (Website and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018 are now in force, Council has ensured that it has published on its website, a Website Accessibility Statement, which has identified the areas which are not accessible and shows that Council has a forward plan so that it can make changes to improve this.
<i>Does the council have official email addresses for correspondence?¹⁷</i>	Yes	Council has use of an email address which is not connected to a personal email account and is used by only the Clerk. <i>Comment: Council might wish to consider the use of a secure e-mail system with a gov.uk address thereby identifying that it has local government status and demonstrating authenticity when building trust and credibility with the public. Such an address would be owned by the parish council (section 5.16 of the Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices – March 2021) refers.</i>
<i>Is there evidence that electronic files are backed up?</i>	Yes	Council has in place a system whereby its files are backed up to an appropriate medium.
<i>Do terms of reference exist for all committees and is there evidence these are regularly reviewed?</i>	Unclear	Council operates with one committee – Personnel Committee – but it is unclear from the minutes as to when the Terms of Reference for this committee were last reviewed. <i>Comment: Council should be aware that the terms of reference for any committee of a council should be available to the public via the council's publication scheme. Council is advised to review / adopt terms of reference for the Personnel Committee noting that legal responsibility for the decisions and actions of the committee, to which staff management has been delegated, remains with the council as a whole.</i>

Signed: Victoria Waples

Date of Internal Audit Visit: 29.06.22 & 09.07.22

Date of Internal Audit Report: 09.07.22

On behalf of Suffolk Association of Local Councils

¹⁶ Website Accessibility Regulations 2018

¹⁷ Practitioners Guide