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Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Association of Local Councils

26th November 2024

By Email

Northstowe Town Council
The Cabin
The Green
Pathfinder Way
Northstowe
CB24 1FD

Dear Chair and Cllrs

Northstowe Town Council Mid-Year Internal Audit – 22nd November 2024

Following my visit to Northstowe Town Council on Friday 22nd November 2024, I confirm I met with Mark Nokkert to complete the 24/25 Mid-Year Internal Audit. I enclose the Mid-Year Internal Audit Report to be shared with all Parish Councillors, together with this covering letter.

Overall, I was impressed with the council's adherence to recognised procedure, the information made available to the public, as well as the commitment to further improve standards which was demonstrated by the Clerk/RFO.

The following recommendations are made at this point in the year.

Legislation

- I would recommend the council consider adopting the new NALC Model Financial Regulations which incorporate the procurement threshold amendment. As a minimum the existing document should be reviewed and the procurement threshold amended.

Risk Management

- The general risk assessment should be updated/reviewed in advance of the end of the financial year to ensure I can confirm the corresponding box on the AGAR.

Financial

- In accordance with Proper Practices and statutory guidance on local government investments, (issued under section 15(1)(a) of the Local Government Act 2003), the council should implement an Investment Strategy since the General Reserve now exceeds £100,000.

- The council should ensure its processes for signing the bank reconciliations/statements match those detailed within the Financial Regulations.
- The council has included an additional requirement in Financial Regulation 5.3 and should ensure Members undertake these checks or remove the wording when the Financial Regulations are reviewed.
- I recommend the council consider increasing the limit on the Lloyds Credit Card to ensure that the limit remains suitable for the current transaction level.

Policies

- The Clerk/RFO is fully aware of the policies required and has developed a good document identifying those; I suggest the council continue to use this to implement new policies.
- The council is advised to prioritise adoption of a Record Retention Policy, a Disciplinary Policy and a Grievance Procedure. I accept that the latter two will be included within the HR handbook being developed in collaboration with Worknest.
- The council's Publication Scheme and Health & Safety Policy should both be reviewed.
- Additionally, it may be prudent to consider a rolling review system for all policies to ensure the council has an established schedule for review of each.

Data Protection

- I recommend that the council implement a SARR¹, a ROPA² and a data breach log to help meet data protection obligations.

I will conduct a secondary visit once the 24/25 financial year has concluded and the AGAR has been prepared. At this visit the remaining parts of the audit will be undertaken, before I complete the Internal Auditors section of the AGAR for consideration by Members.

Finally, if you have any questions relating to my covering letter or the accompanying IA report, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,



V Taylor PSLCC
Internal Auditor

¹ Subject Access Request Register

² Record of Processing Activity