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Haddenham Parish Council Statement of Internal Control

Adopted 15th February 2021

Reviewed February 2026 (Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting 23/02/26: Item F26
27 i)

Review due February 2029

1. Purpose of the policy

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require smaller authorities, each financial year, to conduct a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control and prepare an annual governance statement in accordance with proper practices in relation to accounts.

The purpose of the annual governance statement is for an authority to report publicly on its arrangements for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law, regulations and proper practices and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for.

The Council must assert that it has maintained an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness. An effective internal control processes needs to be in place and monitored in order to achieve this

2. Responsibilities

- 2.1. The Council as a corporate body is responsible for setting the precept and approving the annual governance and accountability statement. These responsibilities cannot be delegated.
- 2.2. The Finance and General Purposes Committee has delegated responsibilities for management of the Council's finances, policies and procedures and reports back to Council at each meeting.
- 2.3. In accordance with section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council employs a Clerk who is also the Responsible Finance Officer and is responsible for the financial administration of the Council.
- 2.4. The Council appoints a suitably qualified internal auditor who will carry out an independent audit of the Council's finance records and control systems. Any issues raised by the internal auditor are noted and addressed.
- 2.5. The scope and plan of the internal audit will be assessed by the Council to ensure that it properly takes into account and minimises risk to the Council.

- 2.6. An external auditor is appointed in line with the statutory audit and accounting framework. All notices in respect of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return will be posted by the Clerk on the Council's website and noticeboard.

3. Controls

3.1. Standing Orders

The Council will adopt and annually review standing orders to govern how it operates. The policy will be based on the latest NALC recommended template documents. The Chair of the Council and the Clerk will be responsible for ensuring that the Standing Orders are followed.

3.2. Financial Regulations.

The Council will adopt and annually review finance regulations to ensure it operates within the legal framework. The policy will be based on the latest NALC recommended template documents. The regulations will include the procurement framework and spending.

3.3. Scheme of Delegation

- 3.3.1. The Council will delegate to its committees and officers responsibility for day-to-day management of its assets and routine expenditure.
- 3.3.2. Terms of reference for each committee including delegated responsibilities will be prepared and reviewed annually at the Annual Parish Council meeting, where committee members will also be appointed.
- 3.3.3. The decisions of each Committee will be recorded in the minutes of its meetings and these will be noted at the next meeting of the Council.

3.4. Banking Arrangements

- 3.4.1. All accounts held will be set up with a minimum of 4 account signatories who will include the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council.
- 3.4.2. The Clerk will be a signatory on the accounts for administrative purposes only and cannot authorise payments.
- 3.4.3. Each transaction (cheque or BACS) will require authorisation by two signatories.
- 3.4.4. The account signatories will be reviewed and confirmed annually.
- 3.4.5. The Clerk and Facilities Manager will each hold a charge card linked to the Council's current account that can be used for purchases in shops or online. The maximum limit of expenditure on the cards will be £1,500 and £500 respectively.

3.5. Investments

The Council will adopt and annually review an investment policy which will be based on the priorities in order of Security - Liquidity – Yield.

3.6. Payments and Receipts

- 3.6.1. All invoices will be checked by the Clerk who will certify that the work, goods or service to which the invoice relates has been received, carried out, examined and represents expenditure previously approved by the Council.
- 3.6.2. Certified invoices will be scanned and emailed to two account signatories for checking before payment. For expenditure on the charge card invoices will be certified by the Clerk and then initialled by two account signatories.
- 3.6.3. The Council subscribes to Rialtas Business solutions (RBS) for a specialist Omega finance software. The Clerk is responsible for overseeing the maintenance of an accurate and up to date set of accounts.
- 3.6.4. A list of payments over £500 will be prepared for the Council at each meeting and will be recorded in the minutes. The receipt of the precept payments will be noted.
- 3.6.5. Payments made under contract by direct debit will be monitored for frequency and accuracy and a schedule prepared for review by the Council. A review of direct debits will be carried out at the Annual Meeting of the council.

3.7. Financial Reporting

- 3.7.1. The Clerk will prepare quarterly finance reports to monitor income and expenditure against budgets. These will be reviewed in detail by the Finance and General Purposes Committee and reported to full Council.
- 3.7.2. Quarterly bank reconciliations will be checked against bank statements and signed by a member of the Finance and General Purposes Committee and confirmed at the meeting.

3.8. VAT

The Council is VAT registered and set up to submit quarterly VAT returns electronically via Omega. For larger projects where it may be possible to opt to tax or there may be shared costs with another party, the Council will obtain advice from a VAT specialist.

3.9. Budgeting and Precept setting

Once the half year finance reports are available, budgeting for the next financial year will commence based on the current year position and projected year-end. Each committee will review its budgets for submission to the Finance and General Purposes Committee who will carry out a detailed budgeting process once the tax base is known usually in December. The precept will be resolved at a full meeting of the Council in line with the budget. Buckinghamshire Council will be notified of the Council's precept request before the January deadline.

3.10. Reserves

The Council will adopt and annually review a reserves policy.

3.11. Risk

The Council will carry out an over-arching risk assessment of its activities which will be reviewed annually. Individual risk assessments will be carried out where required, to ensure health and safety guidelines are implemented.

3.12. Loans and Long-Term Liabilities

The Council does not currently have any outstanding loans.

3.13. Fixed Assets and Equipment

The Council's assets need to be secured, properly maintained and efficiently managed by use of an Asset Register which is reviewed annually. Appropriate procedures need to be followed for any asset disposal and for the use of any resulting capital receipt.

4. Staff and salaries

- 4.1.1. The Council has delegated responsibility for staffing matters to its Personnel Committee.
- 4.1.2. All staff will be employed on NALC template contracts, on a specified scale point of the NALC and SLCC salary scales.
- 4.1.3. Staff appraisals will be carried out annually in March with an interim appraisal in September.
- 4.1.4. Salaries will be reviewed in line with NALC recommendations annually in April.
- 4.1.5. A payroll specialist is employed to prepare the monthly payslips and amounts due to HMRC and pensions.
- 4.1.6. The Council has signed up for the Electric Vehicle Salary Sacrifice Scheme. Eligible staff who sign up for the scheme will have deductions made from their salaries each month to cover the cost of their vehicle.
- 4.1.7. The Council will enrol all eligible employees in The People's Pension Scheme of which it is a member.
- 4.1.8. A budget for staffing will be recommended to the Council by the Personnel Committee each year when setting the precept.

5. Digital and Data Management

- 5.1. Each Councillor and member of staff will be assigned an email account hosted on the domain @haddenham-bucks-pc.gov.uk. This account will be the only account used for communication on behalf of the Council.

- 5.2. The Council will host a website using its domain which meets the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.2 AA](#) and the [Public Sector Bodies \(Websites and Mobile Applications\) \(No. 2\) Accessibility Regulations 2018](#)
- 5.3. To comply with the [Freedom of Information Act 2000](#) the Council will publish on its website a Publication Scheme along with Publications Scheme Guidance. This will be updated in line with any changes made by the Information Commissioner.
- 5.4. The Council will have in place policies and procedures to comply with the requirements of the the UK [General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\) - Data Protection Act 2018](#) and Data (Uses and Access) Act 2025. These will be regularly reviewed and updated in line with legislative changes.

Internal Control Monitoring

Financial Year 25/26

Annual Checks	Due date	Done Min Ref
Review of Standing Orders	May 2025	PC26 14
Review of Finance Regulations	May 2025	PC26 14 / PC 26 71 (x)
Review of Committee Terms of Reference	May 2025	PC26 12 (ii)
Appointments to Committees	May 2025	PC26 12 (iii)
Confirmation of bank account signatories	May 2025	PC26 15
Review of Direct Debits	May 2025	PC26 16
Confirm account signatories	May 2025	PC26 15
Review of asset register	April 2026	PC26 103 (v)
Review of Risk assessment	May 2025	PC26 18
Review of investment strategy	Feb 2026	FGP26 27 (ii)
Review of reserves policy	Jan 2026	PC26 71 (vi)
Review of scheme of delegation	Feb 2026	FGP26 27 (i)
Staff interim appraisals	Sept 2025	Partly completed
Staff annual appraisals	March 2026	Completed
Salary review / NALC pay rises	April 2025	August 2025
Year End Internal Audit (prior year)	April 2026	PC26 103 (iv)
Annual Governance Statement (prior year)	July 2026	FGP July 26
Annual Accounting statement (prior year)	July 2026	FGP July 26
Review of effectiveness of the Internal Audit (prior year)	July 2026	FGP July 26
Interim Internal Audit (current year)	Jan 2026	28 th January 2026
Agree a budget for the next financial year	Jan 2026	PC26 71 (vii)
Approve the precept for the next financial year	Jan 2026	PC26 71 (viii)
Quarterly Checks		
Quarterly Finance reports to Council & budget review	Q1 Aug 25	PC26 42 (iii)
	Q2 Jan 26	PC26 71 (iii)
	Q3 Mar 26	PC26 88 (ii)
	Q4 Apr 26	PC26 103 (iii)
Bank reconciliations checked & signed	Q1 Cllr JW	04/08/2025
	Q2 Cllr DT	17/11/2025
	Q3 Cllr DT	18/12/2026
	Q4 Cllr GS	29/06/2026

List of payments noted and signed	Mar-Jun	PC26 42 (ii)
	Jul-Sept	PC26 71 (ii)
	Oct-Dec	PC26 88 (ii)
	Jan-Mar	PC26 103 (ii)