



SAXMUNDHAM TOWN COUNCIL

INTERNAL CONTROLS STATEMENT

2024-2025

Annual Approval: March 2025
Minute Item: 146/24TC



1. Scope of Responsibility

Saxmundham Town Council is responsible for ensuring that its operations comply with legal and regulatory standards while safeguarding public funds. The Council is committed to ensuring efficient, economical, and effective use of resources.

To support this, the Council maintains a robust system of internal controls to facilitate the proper execution of its functions, including risk management measures.

2. Purpose of the Internal Control System

The internal control system is designed to manage risk at a reasonable level rather than eliminate all risks entirely. It provides reasonable assurance regarding the achievement of objectives while identifying, prioritising, and mitigating potential risks.

3. Regulatory Framework

The Accounts & Audit (England) Regulations 2015 strengthen governance and accountability by mandating internal control measures and independent audits. The regulations require proactive involvement from Council members in ensuring sound financial management.

Internal control measures must be proportionate to risk and should not interfere unduly with the Responsible Financial Officer's (RFO) daily financial management duties.

The Local Government Transparency Code 2014 requires the publication of specific financial and operational information when a Parish or Town Council's gross income or expenditure exceeds £200,000 annually.

4. Internal Control Environment

The Council reviews its objectives and approves budgets, including the precept, at its December or January meetings.

The Resources Committee, which meets monthly, monitors financial procedures, budgetary control, and overall financial health. Its minutes are reviewed and approved at full Council meetings.

The Town Clerk, as the Proper Officer, oversees administrative and advisory functions. Supported by the Deputy and Assistant Town Clerks, the Town Clerk also serves as the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) responsible for financial management.

An annual review of the internal control system is conducted, with findings reported to the Resources Committee and the Council.

Saxmundham Town Council remains committed to maintaining a strong internal control framework that supports financial accountability, transparency, and regulatory compliance. The Council will continue to review and enhance its internal control measures to ensure effective governance and risk management.



5. Control Tests and Compliance

Control Test	Details
Asset Register Maintenance	<p>Reviewed and approved by Council annually (next review - 10/03/25).</p> <p>A physical audit of assets was completed during the year.</p>
Physical Asset Maintenance	<p>Independent ROSPA inspections (Chantry Road, Memorial Field, Seaman Avenue) conducted annually (last review - 23/09/24). Reviewed by the Amenities and Services Committee (last review – 17/10/24).</p> <p>Medium-risk maintenance scheduled; no high-risk items identified.</p> <p>Weekly checks conducted by the Maintenance Officer.</p> <p>Quarterly inspections conducted by East Suffolk Council. Reviewed by the Amenities and Services Committee (last review – 20/02/25).</p>
Insurance Adequacy & Risk Management	<p>Reviewed and approved by Council annually (last review - 13/01/25).</p> <p>Fidelity guarantee increased to £500,000 (February 2024).</p>
Financial Regulations Awareness	<p>Reviewed and approved by Council annually (last review - 08/07/24).</p> <p>Legislative updates are received from the Suffolk Association of Local Councils, implemented by the Town Clerk, and approved by the Resources Committee and Council.</p>
Standing Orders Awareness	<p>Reviewed and approved by Council annually (last review - 10/06/24).</p> <p>Legislative updates are received from the Suffolk Association of Local Councils, implemented by the Town Clerk, and approved by the Resources Committee and Council.</p>
Contract Reviews	<p>Reviewed and approved by the Town Clerk annually.</p>



	Legislative updates are received from the Suffolk Association of Local Councils, implemented by the Town Clerk, and approved by the Staffing Sub-Committee.
Bank Reconciliations	Conducted monthly and examined by a non-signatory. Reviewed and approved by the Resources Committee.
Financial Records & Expenditure Approval	Expenditure is authorised annually and detailed on an Approved Payments List or authorised by Committees acting within their delegated authority and the Financial Regulations. Payments processed via online transfer or direct debit, requiring dual authorisation by Councillors. Authorised signatories consider each payment against the relevant invoice prior to authorisation. The Resources Committee scrutinises the financial records and approves or ratifies all expenditure at its monthly meetings. Council reviews all expenditure at its monthly meetings. Purchase Order system implemented for budget control.
Legislative Expenditure Compliance	General Power of Competence adopted (13/11/23). All spending is documented and supported by invoices.
Precept & Budget Approvals	2025-2026 budget and precept reviewed and approved by Council (last review – 13/01/25 and 10/02/25).
Employment & Payroll Compliance	Staff contracts reviewed annually. Payroll and pensions administered by external providers (Suffolk Association of Local Councils and Nest). Compliance re-declared with Pensions Regulator (next declaration – October 2025).
VAT Compliance	VAT reclaimed quarterly via Rialtas software.
Audit Effectiveness	Reviewed and approved by Council annually (last review – 10/06/24). Annual internal audit conducted by an independent auditor from the Suffolk Association of Local Councils.



	External audit conducted by PKF Littlejohn LLP.
Local Government Transparency Code 2015 Compliance	<p>Quarterly reporting on expenditure exceeding £500 and procurement details published on the Town Council website.</p> <p>Annual reports on land assets, grants, organisational structure, and constitution are published on the Town Council website.</p> <p>The requirements were reviewed in accordance with the latest guidance (update – 29/01/25).</p>
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Compliance	<p>CIL receipts and expenditures reviewed by the Resources Committee and Town Council.</p> <p>Annual report submitted to the District Council and published on the Town Council website (deadline - 31/12/24).</p>
Data Protection (GDPR) Compliance	<p>Secure record-keeping in place.</p> <p>Policies reviewed and approved periodically.</p> <p>Staff refresher training scheduled for the next financial year.</p>
ICO Data Controller Registration	Renewed annually (last review - 09/11/24).
Minutes & Record-Keeping	<p>Consecutive numbering maintained on all Council and Committee minutes).</p> <p>Minutes securely stored in both digital and hard-copy formats.</p>
Councillor Interests & Hospitality	<p>Registers of Interests submitted to the District Council and linked on the Town Council website.</p> <p>Councillors are requested to declare any interest relating to agenda items at all Council and Committee meetings.</p> <p>No gifts or hospitality accepted this year.</p>
Code of Conduct & Ethical Governance	<p>LGA Model Code of Conduct 2020 reconfirmed annually (last review - 13/05/24.</p> <p>Civility and Respect Pledge adopted on 09/02/24.</p>
Declarations of Acceptance	All Councillors and the Chair have completed and signed their Declarations of Acceptance of Office.