Internal Control Policy

Dullingham Parish Council

Dullingham Parish Council is a local authority responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law, proper practices and good governance standards. The Council is responsible for safeguarding public money, ensuring that funds are properly accounted for and using resources economically, efficiently and effectively.

In meeting this responsibility, the Council must maintain a sound system of internal control that supports the effective exercise of its functions and includes appropriate arrangements for the management of risk.

Scope of Responsibility

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable and acceptable level. It forms part of an ongoing process to identify and prioritise risks to the Council's policies, aims and objectives, and to evaluate and manage those risks accordingly.

Purpose of the System of Internal Control

Internal control means the arrangements, procedures and checks in place to maintain sound financial governance. The Council has a Parish Clerk who acts as its adviser and administrator. The Parish Clerk is also the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), responsible for administering the Council's finances and ensuring that appropriate internal controls are established, maintained and reviewed. At least once each year, and before approving the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), the Council shall review the effectiveness of its system of internal control.

The Council

- Appoints a Chair who is responsible for the orderly conduct of meetings and, with advice from the Clerk, for ensuring that Council decisions are lawful.
- Reviews its obligations and objectives, approves budgets, and sets the level of precept for the following financial year.
- Holds regular meetings and monitors progress against its aims, objectives, budget and statutory responsibilities.

The Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

- Is appointed by the Council to act as the Council's adviser and administrator.
- Acts as the Council's Responsible Financial Officer and is responsible for administering the Council's finances.
- Is responsible for day-to-day compliance with the laws, regulations and proper practices that apply to the Council, and for supporting the management of risk.
- Ensures that the Council's procedures, control systems and policies are followed.
- Provides the Council with regular financial reports, including budget monitoring and bank reconciliation information, as appropriate.

• In consultation with the Chair, the Clerk may incur expenditure on behalf of the Council to carry out an urgent repair, whether or not budgetary provision exists, subject to the limit set out in the Council's Financial Regulations. The Clerk shall report such action to the Council as soon as practicable.

Payments

• Payments are reported to the Council for approval and recorded in the minutes.
• Payment arrangements, including cheque and electronic payments where applicable, must follow the Council's adopted Financial Regulations and be appropriately authorised.

Risk Assessments and Risk Management

• The Council identifies, assesses and manages risks relating to its activities, finances, assets, systems and responsibilities. Risk assessments and controls are reviewed regularly and at least annually.

Digital and Data Compliance

• The Council maintains appropriate arrangements for digital and data compliance, including the secure management of Council records and email, publication requirements, data protection obligations and website accessibility, in line with current proper practices.

Internal Audit

• Internal audit is carried out by an independent and competent internal auditor, who reports to the Council on the adequacy and effectiveness of its records, procedures, systems, internal controls, compliance arrangements and risk management.
• The Internal Auditor shall report to the Council at least once each financial year and complete the Annual Internal Audit Report as required for the AGAR.
• The RFO shall make arrangements for the inspection of accounts, books and supporting records, and for the publication of notices and statements required by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and current proper practices.
• The RFO shall, as soon as practicable, bring to the attention of Councillors any correspondence or report from the Internal or External Auditor, unless the correspondence is purely administrative.

External Audit

• The Council's External Auditor reviews the AGAR where required and issues the external auditor report and certificate, which are presented to the Council and published in accordance with applicable requirements.

Review of Effectiveness

• The Council is responsible for conducting an annual review of the effectiveness of its system of internal control, taking account of financial management, risk management, audit findings, compliance with proper practices and any significant events arising during the year.

Formal **Approval** of this **Internal Control Policy**

This policy is approved by:
Dullingham Parish Council
Adopted: April 2017
Reviewed: 3 July 2026