

CRANFORD PARISH COUNCIL
STATEMENT ON INTERNAL CONTROL



SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

Cranford Parish Council is a local authority funded by public money, and is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

In discharging this overall responsibility, Cranford Parish Council (the Council) is also responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk in accordance with the Practitioners' Guide. Governance and Accountability in Local Councils (2014 Edition)

The Council has adopted the model NALC Financial Regulations 2016, which fully explains procedures, and sections of such are used through this policy

THE PURPOSE OF THE SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROL

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

THE INTERNAL CONTROL ENVIRONMENT

The Council

The Council reviews its obligations and objectives and approves a budget for the following year at its November or December meeting. The approved annual budget shall form the basis of financial control for the ensuing year.

The Council meets twelve times each year.

Once a quarter, a member other than the Chairman shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the RFO. The member shall sign the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of verification. This activity shall on conclusion be reported, including any exceptions, to and noted by the council. In addition, this member works through the Internal Control Checklist and makes any comments where necessary

Clerk to the Council / Responsible Financial Officer

The Council has appointed a Clerk to the Council who acts as the Council's advisor and administrator. The Clerk is the Council's Responsible Financial Officer and is responsible for administering the Council's finances. The Clerk is responsible for advising on the day to day compliance with laws and regulations that the Council is subject to and for managing risks. The Clerk also provides advice to help the Council ensure that its procedures, control systems and policies are adhered to.

When the Council is to enter into a contract of above £100 and below £3,000 the Clerk/RFO shall strive to obtain 3 estimates.

The RFO shall provide the council with a quarterly statement of receipts and payments to date under each budget heading, comparing actual expenditure against that planned as shown in the budget (a budget monitoring document) and shall show explanations of material variances where over £100 or 15% of budget.

Payments

All expenditure over £50 must be authorised by the Council. Items under £50 may be authorised by the Clerk prior to a meeting, if the invoice is presented for payment at the next meeting.

The RFO shall prepare a schedule of payments requiring authorisation, forming part of the Agenda for the Meeting and, together with the relevant invoices, present the schedule to council. The council shall review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied itself shall authorise payment by a resolution of the council.

Two members of the Council must sign every cheque for payment. If only one signatory is present, the Clerk (as a bank signatory) may sign the cheque. The signatories check each cheque against the relevant invoice (which has been signed by the Clerk), sign the invoice and initial the cheque counterfoil. All authorised cheque signatories are members of the Council.

Cheques shall not normally be presented for signature other than at a council meeting, unless necessary for safety or risk remediation. Any signatures obtained away from such meetings shall be reported to the council at the next convenient meeting.

Internal Audit

The Council has appointed an Independent internal auditor (NCALC) who will report to the Council on the adequacy of its records, procedures, systems, internal control and risk management.

The system of internal control as detailed in this policy will be reviewed annually by the Council.

(Chairman)

(Responsible Financial Officer / Clerk)

Approved and adopted by Cranford Parish Council April 2020