

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.

The Council has adopted the model NALC Financial Regulations 2018, 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 6 times each year.

Each meeting, a member other than the Chairman or a bank signatory, shall be appointed to perform an Internal Control. This member works through the Internal Control Checklist and makes any comments where necessary. 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.

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 RFO shall quarterly provide the council with a 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 Clerk 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 authorise every payment. Internet banking controls are such that the Clerk may only set up payments, and two councillors can only authorise such payments. For cheques, two members may sign, but 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.

Stephen Pickard
(Chairman)

Pat Bird
(Responsible Financial Officer / Clerk)