



WINSFORD TOWN COUNCIL

STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL FOR YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2025

1. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

Winsford Town Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards and that public money is used properly.

The Council is 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.

2. THE PURPOSE OF THE SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROL

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than 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 a process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to achieving the Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of these risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them effectively.

3. THE INTERNAL CONTROL ENVIRONMENT

Winsford Town Council reviews its obligations and objectives and approves budgets for the following year at its January full Council meeting. The January meeting of Winsford Town Council considers the level of precept for the following financial year and the budget is then confirmed at the February meeting of the Town Council (although this is usually after the precept request has been submitted to Cheshire West and Chester).

Committees

Winsford Town Council has an Internal Committee in place, which meets eleven times during the financial year. Members of the Committee review progress against budgets and carry out regular reviews of financial matters. The minutes of meetings of the Committee are circulated to all Members of the Council and are a matter of public record. Full Council also meets eleven

times a year and monitors progress against the objectives and aims set out in the Council's Business Plan and receives minutes, recommendations and reports from the Internal Committee; Planning Committee; Allotments Committee and various meetings of other Committees which cover the work of the Council.

Winsford Town Council reviews its internal controls, systems and procedures on a regular basis.

Clerk to the Council/Responsible Financial Officer

The Council appoints a Town Clerk who acts as the Town Council's principle advisor and administrator. The Clerk is also 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/regulations to which Winsford Town Council is subject and for managing risks. The Clerk also provides advice to help the Council ensure that it adheres to its procedures, control systems and policies.

Payments

Payments are taken from the various accounts of Winsford Town Council. All payments are reported to Winsford Town Council. Payments are generally made via electronic bank transfer (BACS) and all such payments are approved by the Council. In a small number of cases, cheques are used for payments and two Members of the Town Council must sign every cheque and the Council signs off the schedule of accounts presented at each meeting.

Income

All income received is recorded and banked in the Council's name in a timely manner and reported to the Internal Committee/Council.

Risk Management/Risk Assessments

Winsford Town Council reviews its Risk Management Strategy & Policy on an annual basis, as well as its risk register/assessment. Systems and controls are also reviewed regularly.

Internal Audit

Winsford Town Council appoints an independent Internal Auditor on an annual basis, who reports to the Town Council.

External Audit

The Council's external auditors submit an annual certificate of audit which is presented to the Council

4. REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS

Winsford Town Council has responsibility for conducting an annual review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control which should include a review of the effectiveness of internal audit. The results of that review must be considered by the Council, which should also approve the Statement on Internal Control.

APPENDIX A

INTERNAL CONTROL STATEMENT

Winsford Town Council as a whole is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that the Council has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of their functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

Winsford Town Council regularly reviews its processes to ensure that accounting records are being properly kept.

The following checks are completed on a regular basis: -

- That the cashbook is correct
- That cheques/payments agree with invoices
- That bank reconciliations are regularly undertaken
- That income due is received
- That VAT returns have been completed
- That salary payments agree with Council approved amounts
- That petty cash is balanced and agrees with receipts
- That financial statements produced for the Council agree with accounting records
- That the asset register is updated regularly
- That the risk assessment is updated and reviewed annually
- That all income/expenditure is reported to the Council and properly approved

Winsford Town Council considers these to be reasonable controls, but care should always be taken to ensure that internal control checks are proportionate and relevant and that are not seen as or intended to be undue interference in the day to day management of financial matters by the RFO.

Winsford Town Council reviews its system of internal control on an annual basis and a report on the findings of this review will be considered by Full Council along with the Council's statement of internal control and formally recorded in the minutes.