

This Authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices/vouchers and all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for

It was noted when carrying out the 2022/23 Internal Audit that the Clerk had difficulty posting the 2022/23 VAT Return on line and this would be submitted during the 2023/24 financial year. I now note that £713.80 VAT refund against the 2022/23 expenditure, was claimed in January 2024, together with a claim for a refund of £146.25 for 2023/24. This amounted to a total VAT Refund of £860.05 which is shown as income in the 2023/24 Accounts. A further £5.80 VAT paid on an invoice after the claim was submitted will be carried forward and claimed when the next VAT claim is submitted.

A sample of payments as shown in the cash book and as approved and shown in the Minutes, were tested and they provide a full audit trail to invoices, payments and Council Minutes giving approval for payment. Cheque stubs showing payments were also countersigned by the authorised signatories and VAT was properly recorded.

Council assessed the significant risks to achieving its objective and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these?

There is evidence that the Policy adopted by the Council was reviewed at the Parish Council meeting held on 21st February where it was agreed there would be no amendments to the existing policy. Therefore the policy is reviewed and adopted and Minuted on 21st February 2024 and shown on the web site.

The precept of rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process, progress against the budget is regularly monitored and reserves are appropriate?

The Clerk reports bank balances at Council Meetings and this is recorded in the Minutes. The Clerk produced a list of actual expenditure against each heading in the 2023/24 accounts as guidance for the 2024/25 precept. Therefore, the precept set for 2024/25 resulted in a thorough examination of the year end position for 2023/24 and the Council's needs for 2024/25.

The Internal Auditor for the 2021/22 Accounts did suggest that as bank charges are being applied to the HSBC Account an alternative bank account should be sought. I noted in the Internal Audit Report 2022/23 that this did not appear to have been carried out. At that time I suggested there are accounts available at other banks who do not apply bank charges. At that time I suggested two banks who did not apply bank charges for Community accounts. However, from personal experience this year I know that these banks no longer offer this type of account and it is impossible to open a Community Account which does not incur bank charges. I therefore accept that bank charges will be applied. The bank charges applied for 2023/24 amounted to £80.

Expected Income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked, and VAT was appropriately accounted for.