

Audit Report

Bradley Stoke Town Council

Audit Plan Year: 2023/24 In Year Assurance

Audit Status: Audit Completed

Audit Review Date: 5th, 6th & 7th February 2024

Report Distribution:

Rachel Pullen - Finance Manager / RFO Bradley Stoke Town Council

Sharon Petela - Clerk to Bradley Stoke Town Council

1. Objective

The objective of the audit was to provide an independent opinion on the appropriateness of the financial control procedures operated in the Council. Audit Officer Rachel Massey examined these procedures.

2. Opinion

The highlighted wording in the table below provides the opinion for this internal audit review and its accompanying description.

High Standard	Systems and processes are excellent providing good assurance. Significant strengths have been identified and are to be commended, any recommendations made will serve to further strengthen existing arrangements.
Reliable Standard	There are very few significant matters arising from the audit, systems of control are good and provide reasonable assurance.
Improvements Required	Existing procedures need to be improved in order to ensure that they are fully reliable. Extensive recommendations have been made but the issues are not of such a significance to represent a major risk to the Council.
Significant Improvements Required	Existing procedures are weak and reasonable assurance could not be provided over a number of areas. Prompt action is necessary to improve the situation and avoid unnecessary risks.
Fundamental Weaknesses Identified	The matters arising from the audit identify that there are fundamental weaknesses which place doubt on the reliability of the procedures reviewed. Urgent action is necessary to improve the current situation and reduce risk exposure.

• Key Strengths

- There are regular quorate meetings of the Full Council and its Committees, the budget and precept are reviewed regularly and agreed annually at Full Council.
- Bi-monthly financial reports are sent via email to Councillors, prior to the meetings and monthly expenditures are clearly documented within the meeting minutes.
- Where high value purchases and tenders are proposed, there is evidence of 3 quotes or more. The quotations are discussed at Council, documented in meeting minutes before proceeding with agreed works/purchase. It is noted that the lowest quotation is not always accepted, reasons are provided in the minutes.
- The Council has allocated earmarked reserved, which are reviewed regularly. General reserves are in line with NALC guidance.
- A sample of hire agreements for room and pitch bookings were reviewed for adequacy. Hire

agreements have terms and conditions on the back of the document, are completed, income is collected timely. Regular lettings are issued with invoices. Hire fees are reviewed annually.

- **Key Risks**

- None

- **Key Actions**

- None

6. Advisory Points

- None

No matters are arising from this years' audit.

7. The Control Environment

Key Control Objectives		Achieved?
A.	Appropriate accounting records have been kept properly throughout the financial year.	Yes
B.	The authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved, and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	Yes
C.	The authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	Yes
D.	The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	Yes
E.	Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT appropriately accounted for.	Yes
F.	Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved, and VAT appropriately accounted for.	Yes
G.	Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	Yes
H.	Asset and investment registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	Yes

I	Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	Yes
J	Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	Test at Year End.
K	Councils with turnover of below £25,000. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2022/23, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. <i>(If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2022/23 AGAR tick "not covered")</i> .	Not currently applicable to any SGC clients.
L	The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	Test at Year End.
M	The authority, during the previous year (2022-23) correctly provided for the period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations <i>(evidenced by the notice published on the website and / or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set)</i> .	Yes
N	The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2022/23 AGAR <i>(see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes)</i> .	Yes
O	Trust funds (including charitable) - The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	N/A

8. Auditors & Acknowledgements

Audit Manager	Justine Poulton
Auditor	Rachel Massey