

IR797: Langstone Community Council

Date: 16 November 2021

Langstone Community Council

I am writing in response to your request for information dated 19 October 2021 in which you requested information regarding Langstone Community Council.

For ease of reference, I have reproduced your questions below in bold and set out our corresponding responses:

1. When did you last audit Langstone Community Council?

We last completed an audit for 2019-20. The 2020-21 audit is in progress.

2. Can you provide a copy of the audit report findings?

I have attached the Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2020, and a copy of the 'issues arising' report. See Annex 1 and 2 to this response.

Information is also available on the Council's website http://www.langstonecommunitycouncil.org.uk/Finance and Accounts 22895.asp x

3. Have you received any compliants / requests to audit Langstone Community Council?

The Council is subject to an annual audit and the 2020-21 audit is in progress.

Relevant audit staff will consider any relevant matters brought to their attention regarding the Council, and may take account of them insofar as they are relevant to assessing risk in relation to arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and



effectiveness. The exemption in section 33(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 applies where disclosure of information would, or would be likely to prejudice audit functions. I have applied the public interest test and consider the balance lies in maintaining the exemption, on the basis that arguments in favour of disclosure such as transparency, do not outweigh the factors in favour of applying the exemption.

Further, section 44 (1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 provides that information is exempt if its disclosure (otherwise than under the Freedom of Information Act) by the public authority holding it is prohibited by or under any enactment. Section 54 (1)(b) of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 sets out a 'restriction on disclosure of information' – thereby prohibiting disclosure of information relating to another person or body which is obtained in the course of an audit or study, except under the conditions laid out in subsection (2). To disclose outside the circumstances set out in s54(2) of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 is a criminal offence. The exemption under section 44 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 is engaged and is absolute, meaning application of the public interest test is not required.

4. When do you next plan to audit Langstone Community Council?

As above answer to Q3 - the Council is subject to an annual audit, the 2020-21 audit is in progress.

5. Can the public complain and provide information to audit Wales which might trigger an audit?

Electors can make an objection to the accounts, ask questions of the auditor or provide information they believe the auditor may wish to take into account during the audit. Our 'Access to Council's Accounts' guidance provides further clarification.

Members of the public can provide information directly to Audit Wales on a number of matters. Our <u>'Contact Us'</u> page on the Audit Wales website provides signposting to various pages, and we refer you to the following documents to help clarify the ways in which the public can provide information to Audit Wales:

The Auditor General welcomes correspondence that can help him with his work. Our <u>Guide for correspondents</u> provides some guidance to help people understand the work we can do on correspondence and how writing to us can help our core work. We will consider whether correspondence that complains about organisations



audited by the Auditor General raises any concerns that may inform our audit work. We suggest that if members of the public wish to complain about their Council, they should follow the complaints procedure in place at the relevant body.

The Auditor General is classed as a prescribed person. This means that a worker can report concerns about wrongdoing in a workplace to the Auditor General, as well as, or instead of, their employer. Our Whistleblowing leaflet sets out how a disclosure can be made. Please note that the Auditor General will consider, but is not obliged to investigate, every disclosure he receives.

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you can request an internal review please write to Martin Peters, Head of Law and Ethics, by email to martin.peters@audit.wales or by post to Audit Wales, 24 Cathedral Road, Cardiff, CF11 9LJ.

I must also refer you to section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act under which you may apply to the Information Commissioner for a decision on whether or not your request has been dealt with in accordance with the Act. The Information Commissioner's contact details are:

Information Commissioner's Office

Wycliffe House

Water Lane

Wilmslow

Cheshire SK9 5AF

email: casework@ico.gsi.gov.uk

Tel: 01625 545745 Fax: 01625 524510

You should note, however, that the Information Commissioner would normally expect you to have exhausted our internal complaints procedures before dealing with such an application. Further guidance may be found on the Information Commissioner's website: https://ico.org.uk/

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

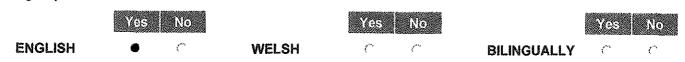


Yours sincerely, Information Officer

Community and Town Councils in Wales Annual Return for the Year Ended 31 March 2020

LANGUAGE PREFERENCE

Please indicate how you would like us to communicate with you during the audit. Note that audit notices will be issued bilingually.

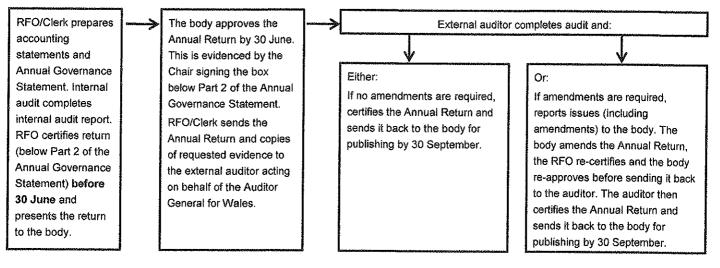


THE ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT PROCESS

Section 12 of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 requires community and town councils (and their joint committees) in Wales to make up their accounts each year to 31 March and to have those accounts audited by the Auditor General for Wales. Regulation 14 of the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014 states that smaller local government bodies i.e. those with annual income and expenditure below £2.5 million must prepare their accounts in accordance with proper practices.

For community and town councils and their joint committees, proper practices are set out in the One Voice Wales/Society of Local Council Clerks publication **Governance and accountability for local councils in Wales – A Practitioners' Guide** (the Practitioners' Guide). The Practitioners' Guide requires that they prepare their accounts in the form of an Annual Return. This Annual Return meets the requirements of the Practitioners' Guide.

The accounts and audit arrangements follow the process as set out below.



Please read the guidance on completing this Annual Return and complete all sections highlighted pink including BOTH sections of the Annual Governance Statement.

APPROVING THE ANNUAL RETURN

There are two boxes for certification and approval by the body. The second box is only required if the Annual Return has to be amended as a result of the audit. You should only complete the top box before sending the form to the auditor.

The council must approve the Annual Return BEFORE the accounts and supporting documents are made available for public inspection under section 30 of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004.

The Auditor General for Wales' Audit Certificate and report is to be completed by the auditor acting on behalf of the Auditor General. It MUST NOT be completed by the Clerk/RFO, the Chair or the internal auditor.

Audited and certified returns are sent back to the body for publication and display of the accounting statements, Annual Governance Statement and the Auditor General for Wales' certificate and report.

Accounting statements 2019-20 for:

Name of body: LANGSTONE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

		Year	ending	Notes and guidance for compilers
		31 March 2019 (£)	31 March 2020 (£)	Please round all figures to nearest £. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or nil balances. All figures must agree to the underlying financial records for the relevant year.
St	atement of in	come and expen	iditure/receipts	and payments
1.	Balances brought forward	62,841	41,293	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Must agree to line 7 of the previous year.
2.	(+) Income from local taxation/levy	40,233	44,912	Total amount of income received/receivable in the year from local taxation (precept) or levy/contribution from principal bodies.
3.	(+) Total other receipts	19,386	20,487	Total income or receipts recorded in the cashbook minus amounts included in line 2. Includes support, discretionary and revenue grants.
4.	(-) Staff costs	19,140	20,269	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include salaries and wages, PAYE and NI (employees and employers), pension contributions and related expenses eg. termination costs.
5.	(-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on external borrowing (if any).
6.	(-) Total other payments	62,026	71,834	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook minus staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7.	(=) Balances carried forward	41,293	14,589	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal $(1+2+3) - (4+5+6)$.
Sta	atement of ba	lances		
8.	(+) Debtors and stock balances	0	0	Income and expenditure accounts only: Enter the value of debts owed to the body and stock balances held at the year-end.
9.	(+) Total cash and investments	41,293	14,589	All accounts: The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and investments held at 31 March. This must agree with the reconciled cashbook balance as per the bank
				reconciliation.
10.	(-) Creditors	0	0	Income and expenditure accounts only: Enter the value of monies owed by the body (except borrowing) at the year-end.
11.	(=) Balances carried forward	41,293	14,589	Total balances should equal line 7 above: Enter the total of (8+9-10).
12.	Total fixed assets and long-term assets	143,589	145,674	The asset and investment register value of all fixed assets and any other long-term assets held as at 31 March.
13.	Total borrowing	0	0	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).
14.	Trust funds disclosure note	Yes No N/A	Yes No N/A	The body acts as sole trustee for and is responsible for managing (a) trust fund(s)/assets (readers should note that the figures above do not include any trust transactions).

We acknowledge as the members of the Council, our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including the preparation of the accounting statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the accounting statements for the year ended 31 March 2020, that:

		Agre Yes	ed? No	'YES' means that the Council:	PG Ref
1.	 We have put in place arrangements for: effective financial management during the year; and the preparation and approval of the accounting statements. 	(°	C	Properly sets its budget and manages its money and prepares and approves its accounting statements as prescribed by law.	6, 12
2.	We have maintained an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption, and reviewed its effectiveness.	€	ens.	Made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.	6, 7
3.	We have taken all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and codes of practice that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of the Council to conduct its business or on its finances.	Œ	<u></u>	Has only done things that it has the legal power to do and has conformed to codes of practice and standards in the way it has done so.	6
4.	We have provided proper opportunity for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014.	6	C	Has given all persons interested the opportunity to inspect the body's accounts as set out in the notice of audit.	6, 23
5.	We have carried out an assessment of the risks facing the Council and taken appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.		C	Considered the financial and other risks it faces in the operation of the body and has dealt with them properly.	6, 9
6.	We have maintained an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems throughout the year and have received a report from the internal auditor.	æ	C	Arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether these meet the needs of the body.	6, 8
7.	We have considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on the Council and, where appropriate, have included them on the accounting statements.	e	r	Disclosed everything it should have about its business during the year including events taking place after the year-end if relevant.	6
8.	We have taken appropriate action on all matters raised in previous reports from internal and external audit.	6	č"	Considered and taken appropriate action to address issues/weaknesses brought to its attention by both the internal and external auditors.	6, 8, 23
9.	Trust funds – in our capacity as trustee, we have: discharged our responsibility in relation to the accountability for the fund(s) including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes No	MIA	Has met all of its responsibilities where it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.	3, 6

^{*} Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'no' response given; and describe what action is being taken to address the weaknesses identified.

Annual Governance Statement (Part 2)

			000000000000000000000000000000000000000	r .	'YES' means that the Council:
		Yes	No.	N/A	
1.	We have prepared and approved minutes for all meetings held by the Council (including its committees) that accurately record the business transacted and the decisions made by the Council or committee.	æ	C	ę ^{ś.,}	Has kept and approved minutes in accordance with Schedule 12, Paragraph 41 of the Local Government Act 1972.
2.	We have ensured that the Council's minutes (including those of its committees) are available for public inspection and have been published electronically.	æ	Č	ţ	Has made arrangements for the minutes to be available for public inspection in accordance with section 228 of the Local Government Act 1972 and has published the minutes on its website in accordance with section 55 of the Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013.

Council approval and certification

The Council is responsible for the preparation of the accounting statements in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014 and for the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement.

Certification by the RFO Approval by the Council I certify that the accounting statements contained in this Annual I confirm that these accounting statements and Return presents fairly the financial position of the Council, and its Annual Governance Statement were approved by the income and expenditure, or properly presents receipts and Council under minute reference: payments, as the case may be, for the year ended Minute ref: 19 204 31 March 2020. Chair of meeting signature: **RFO** signature: Medenes Name: **Heather Jones** Name: Carol Bryant Date: 8th June 2020 Date: 13th July 2020

Council re-approval and re-certification (only required if the Annual Return has been amended at audit)

Certification by the RFO I certify that the accounting statements contained in this Annual Return presents fairly the financial position of the Council, and its income and expenditure, or properly presents receipts and payments, as the case may be, for the year ended 31 March 2020.	Approval by the Council I confirm that these accounting statements and Annual Governance Statement were approved by the Council under minute reference: Minute ref:
RFO signature:	Chair of meeting signature:
Name: Date:	Name: Date:

Auditor General for Wales' Audit Certificate and report

The external auditor conducts the audit on behalf of, and in accordance with, guidance issued by the Auditor General for Wales. On the basis of their review of the Annual Return and supporting information, they report whether any matters that come to their attention give cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

We certify that we have completed the audit of the Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2020 of:

LANGSTONE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

External auditor's report

[Except for the matters reported below]* On the basis of our review, in our opinion, the information contained in the Annual Return is in accordance with proper practices and no matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

[[These matters along with]* Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the body and our recommendations for improvement are included in our report to the body dated ____O3 | 11 | 20 10 .]

Other matters and recommendations

On the basis of our review, we draw the body's attention to the following matters and recommendations which do not affect our audit opinion but should be addressed by the body.

Please see enclosed report

and The Southsukou

(Continue on a separate sheet if required.)

External auditor's name:

BDO LLP Southampton United Kingdom

External auditor's signature:

Data

2/11/20

For and on behalf of the Auditor General for Wales

* Delete as appropriate.

Annual internal audit report to:

Name of body: LANGSTONE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

The Council's internal audit, acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, has included carrying out a selective assessment of compliance with relevant procedures and controls expected to be in operation during the financial year ending 31 March 2020.

The internal audit has been carried out in accordance with the Council's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the following control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of the Council.

		Yes	A No:	greed? N/A	Not covered**	Outline of work undertaken as part of the internal audit (NB not required if detailed internal audit report presented to body)
1.	Appropriate books of account have been properly kept throughout the year.	(©	(**\	E POSITIONIS CONTRACTOR IN	(**	Insert text
2.	Financial regulations have been met, payments were supported by invoices, expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	(٣	C	C	Insert text
3.	The body assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	(ë	C	C	<i>(</i> *	Insert text
4.	The annual precept/levy/resource demand requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process, progress against the budget was regularly monitored, and reserves were appropriate.	©	<u>(</u>	r	C	insert text
5.	Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked, and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	æ	C	£**	₹	Insert text
6.	Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	(€	Ö	ζ~	C	insert text
7.	Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with minuted approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	(°	([™]	С	<i>(**</i> *	Insert text
8.	Asset and investment registers were complete, accurate, and properly maintained.	(ē~	C	C	Insert text

			Ag	reed?		Outline of work undertaken as part of	
		Yes	No*	N/A	Not covered**	the internal audit (NB not required if detailed internal audit report presented to body)	
i	Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.	(C	(~	C	Insert text	
(((((((((((((((((((Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments/income and expenditure), agreed with the cashbook, were supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records, and where appropriate, debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	€	C	C	C"	Insert text	
t	Trust funds (including charitable trusts). The Council has met its responsibilities as a trustee.	C	C	(٣.	Insert text	

For any risk areas identified by the Co controls existed:	zil) lionui	tany eth	er risk ar	eas below o	on separate sheets if needed) adequate
		A	greed?		Outline of work undertaken as part of
	Yes	No*	N/A	Not covered**	the internal audit (NB not required if detailed internal audit report presented to body)
12. Insert risk area	Č	C	(C	insert text
13. Insert risk area	C.	(~~	(g.c.c.	Insert text
14. Insert risk area	C	c	(©	g. Car	Insert text

^{*} If the response is 'no', please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

Internal audit confirmation

I/we confirm that as the Council's internal auditor, I/we have not been involved in a management or administrative role within the body (including preparation of the accounts) or as a member of the body during the financial years 2018-19 and 2019-20. I also confirm that there are no conflicts of interest surrounding my appointment.

Name of person who carried out the internal audit: Vivian Lyn Llewellyn

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit: V L Llewellyn by email (Lee attached)

Date: 03/06/2020

^{**} If the response is 'not covered', please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned, or if coverage is not required, internal audit must explain why not.

03/06/2020

Guidance notes on completing the Annual Return

- 1. You must apply proper practices when preparing this Annual Return. Proper practices are set out in the Practitioners' Guide.
- 2. Make sure that the Annual Return is fully completed ie, no empty red boxes. Please avoid making any amendments to the completed return. If this is unavoidable, cross out the incorrect entries, make sure the amendments are drawn to the attention of the body, properly initialled and an explanation for them is provided to the external auditor. Please do not use correction fluid. Annual returns that are incomplete or contain unapproved and/or unexplained amendments or correction fluid will be returned unaudited and may incur additional costs. Ask your auditor for an electronic copy of the form if required.
- 3. Use a second pair of eyes, perhaps the Chair or a member, to review your Annual Return for completeness before sending the original form to the auditor.
- 4. Make sure that your accounting statements add up, that the balance carried forward from the previous year (line 7 of 2019) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (line 1 of 2020). Explain any differences between the 2019 figures on this Annual Return and the amounts recorded in last year's Annual Return.
- 5. Explain fully any significant variances in the accounting statements. Do not just send in a copy of your detailed accounting records instead of this explanation. The external auditor wants to know that you understand the reasons for all variances. Include a detailed analysis to support your explanation and be specific about the values of individual elements making up the variances.
- 6. Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation you send to your auditor with the Annual Return covers all your bank accounts and cash balances. If there are no reconciling items, please state this and provide evidence of the bank balances. If your Council holds any short-term investments, please note their value on the bank reconciliation. The auditor should also be able to agree your bank reconciliation to line 9 in the accounting statements. More help on bank reconciliations is available in the Practitioners' Guide.
- 7. Every council must send to the external auditor, information to support the assertions made in the Annual Governance Statement even if you have not done so before. Your auditor will tell you what information you need to provide. Please read the audit notice carefully to ensure you include all the information the auditor has asked for. You should send copies of the original records (certified by the Clerk and Chair as accurate copies) to the external auditor and not the original documents themselves.
- 8. Please do not send the auditor any information that you are not specifically asked for. Doing so is not helpful.
- 9. If the auditor has to review unsolicited information, repeat a request for information, receives an incomplete bank reconciliation or explanation of variances or receives original documents that must be returned, the auditor will incur additional costs for which they are entitled to charge additional fees.
- 10. Please deal with all correspondence with the external auditor promptly. This will help you to meet your statutory obligations and will minimise the cost of the audit.
- 11. Please note that if completing the electronic form, you must print the form for it to be certified by the RFO and signed by the Chair before it is sent to the auditor.

Completion	checklist – 'No' answers mean that you may not have met requirements	Den	e?
initial sulom	ission to the external auditor	Yes	No
Accounts	Do the papers to be sent to the external auditor include an explanation of significant variations from last year to this year?	/	
	Does the bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2020 agree to Line 9?	/	
Approval	Has the RFO certified the accounting statements and Annual Governance Statement (Regulation 15 (1)) no later than 30 June 2020?	/	
	Has the body approved the accounting statements before 30 June 2020 and has Section 3 been signed and dated by the person presiding at the meeting at which approval was given? 13th July		X
All sections	Have all pink boxes in the accounting statements and Annual Governance Statement been completed and explanations provided where needed?	V	
	Has all the information requested by the external auditor been sent with this Annual Return? Please refer to your notice of audit and any additional schedules provided by your external auditor.	/	

If accounts are amended after receipt of the Auditor General's report on matters arising

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Accounts

Have the amended accounting statements been approved and Section 3 re-signed and re-dated as evidence of the Council's approval of the amendments before re-submission to the auditor?

ISSUES ARISING REPORT FOR Langstone Community Council Audit for the year ended 31 March 2020



Introduction

The following matters have been raised to draw items to the attention of Langstone Community Council. These matters came to the attention of BDO LLP during the audit of the annual return for the year ended 31 March 2020.

The audit of the annual return may not disclose all shortcomings of the systems as some matters may not have come to the attention of the auditor. For this reason, the matters raised may not be the only ones that exist.

The matters listed below are explained in further detail on the page(s) that follow;

Issues Raised

Minor issues

Langstone Community Council

The following issue(s) have been raised as there are minor errors on the annual return which we wish to draw to the attention of the body so they do not occur again in future years.

Minor issues

What is the issue?

The following issue(s) has been raised as the comparatives have been changed:

The comparative figures disclosed in the Accounting Statements of the Annual Return do not agree to the audited Annual Return for last year. We believe the figures have been input in error but the error does not affect the balance carried forward into the current year.

Why has this issue been raised?

This is raised to bring the matter to the attention of readers of the annual return.

What do we recommend you do?

No further action is required.

Further guidance on this matter can be obtained from the following source(s):

Governance and Accountability in Local Councils in Wales - A Practitioners Guide, OVW/SLCC

No other matters came to our attention.

For and on behalf of BDO LLP

Date: 03 November 2020