

Great Milton Parish Council – Internal Audit Report 23-24

As the authority's internal auditor I have acted independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority. I have carried out the internal audit for 23-24 in accordance with the authority's needs and planned coverage and assessed whether the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of the authority.

Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year

The authority has maintained its electronic filing system from the previous financial year using Dropbox. All files are saved in a logical manner which makes it very easy to find the information which you are looking for. For example all of the Bank Statements are filed in a Folder called 'GMPC Bank' with Sub-Folders for each of the Financial Years. The individual monthly statements are then filed in PDF format for ease of use. In terms of appropriate accounting records all of the key information has been saved in this format including Budgets, Cash Book and Fixed Asset Register.

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

The authority has complied with its financial regulations. All payments are backed up by copies of invoices which are stored in the shared files. These are approved by a recognised signatory at the monthly meetings. VAT has been appropriately accounted for. All of the VAT paid on expenditure has been recorded and calculated as part of the VAT reclaim for 23-24. Each of the amounts listed can be reconciled back to the amounts on the Bank Statements / Cash Book.

This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these

The Council is required to undertake a regular assessment of the risks which might impact on its activities or prevent it from meeting its objectives. In anticipation that the risks will change, that new risks will be identified and existing risks may close a Risk Management document is completed each year. Council's principal objective is to 'Maintain the Parish of Great Milton and acting on behalf of residents'. The document is based around the different activities needed to fulfil this objective.

The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate;

Precept document not available for 23-24. Minutes from meeting in December have been provided though to confirm that the precept was agreed as £20,680 in line with the final budget for that year.

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

I've checked a number of samples of payments received from customers. Expected income has been fully received and based on correct prices (mainly based on advertising rates). All of the payments have been recorded in the cash book and balance back to the amounts in the bank statements. All copies of invoices have been kept and stored in the shared files and

reconcile to the cash book / bank statements. VAT is not applicable on sales invoices as below the threshold.

Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for;

GMPC does not make petty cash payments so not applicable here.

Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly carried out

Chris Ashworth was again the Finance Officer for 23-24. I've checked the budget agreed and the amounts paid are in line with this. Payments are made by cheque on a monthly basis and in line with the terms and conditions which are listed in contract which is saved on shared files. Income tax and Employer's NI has been properly calculated.

Asset and investment registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained

A draft Fixed Asset Register was prepared in April 24 and lists all of the Council's assets. This is still awaiting approval but does appear to include of the Council's assets. The value of the draft is £22,281 while the value of the Approved document for 22-23 was £19,566 so an increase of £2,715 which is due to increase in street furniture. This will need to be approved by the Committee as an outstanding action.

Periodic and year end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out:

Periodic and year end bank account reconciliations have been properly carried out by Council. I've been able to reconcile the opening and closing balances (£34,631 & £38,176) on the cash book to the corresponding balances in the Bank Statements. The movement between the opening and closing balances can be accounted for by the value of the in year payments and receipts.

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;

The Council has continued to prepare it's accounting statements during the year correctly using the receipts and payments basis (income and expenditure) rather than on accruals basis. Statements reconcile to the cash book and are backed up by an adequate audit trail. Debtors and Creditors have been properly recorded where appropriate.

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

Council does not meet the exemption criteria as it's gross expenditure is higher than £25k. As a result it has not certified itself as being exempt from a limited assurance review.

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

Up and to including 21-22 all transactions over £100 were uploaded to the website but this appears to still be needing update for 23-24.

In the year covered by AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations

The AGAR forms have been updated for 23-24 and are available on the Moore Website.

The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 22-23 AGAR

Council has fully complied with this. Full AGAR report has been provided in full.

Summary

In 23-24 the Council has again complied with the relevant procedures and controls relevant to its operation. There are a few areas which need to be addressed such as the precept documentation, the Fixed Asset Register and the Transparency but generally the Council is meeting its objectives in terms of internal control.

Matthew Hale

Internal Auditor

09-06-24