

BISHOP AUCKLAND TOWN COUNCIL

RESPONSE TO INTERNAL AUDITORS RECOMMENDATIONS

Agreed at the Council Meeting held on 25th June 2019

(Minute No TC. TC.40/18 refers)

Auditor's Recommendations	Response
<p>1. Deposits The Council to transfers some funds to alternative Banks with the FSCS cover (subject to the appropriate notices being given) to reduce the balances in each account held to below the £85,000 maximum.</p>	<p>This was reviewed by the Finance Committee on 18th June 2019.</p> <p>The Auditor had suggested opening a savings account with the Bank of Ireland (UK). Business accounts for this bank now have to be opened in person at a branch. The nearest bank in in Belfast.</p> <p>An account in in the process of being opened with NE First, credit union.</p>
<p>2. Insurance To review the insurance provider when the current policy matures</p>	<p>A three year fixed term deal was agreed with Zurich Municipal ending September 2019. Quotes will be sought for a new deal. Discussions will take into account requirements of the Council owning its own offices and acting as landlord to a number of tenants. This will also include possibility of business interruption insurance. (ref 4 below)</p>
<p>3. 3 pcs To add the recent IT equipment purchased on both the Council's asset register and in its insurance cover.</p>	<p>These have now been added to the Asset Register</p>
<p>4. Business Interruption The Clerk to add this risk to the Council's cover when moving offices.</p>	<p>See 2 above</p>
<p>5. Allotments There is one issue which needs to be addressed and it relates to the ongoing issue of pest control on the Woodhouse allotment site.</p> <p>According to my information in recent years, and possibly for future years, the cost of dealing with this problem is likely to be in the order of £3000 per year.</p>	<p>To be considered by the Allotments and Environment Committee.</p>

Auditor's Recommendations	Response
<p>I would strongly recommend that the Clerk prepares a report on the running costs for this site (including water charges, general repairs, pest control etc – but for the time being not administration costs) and the income received. This should be compared with similar costs for the other allotment sites.</p> <p>If the Woodhouse site is shown to be a major loss leader then the Council should give serious consideration as to the reasons behind the source of the problem and how it can be discouraged. Possibly some form of rent adjustment to discourage certain livestock/birds being kept on site.</p>	
<p>6. Members Training The Clerk to clarify whether there are implications to the Council in Councillors not attending sufficient training sessions and to encourage Members to attend any future training sessions.</p>	
<p>7. Staff Salaries The Council should review staff salaries on a regular basis. With the likelihood of extra work and responsibilities arising from the purchase of new offices, and the recent changes, in the Transparency code and GDPR it might now be an opportune time for the Clerk to submit a detailed report on the matter.</p>	To be reviewed by a person external to the Council