

Internal Audit 2020-21

Actions/ Recommendations for BATC

Recommendations from the auditor	Auditor Ranking	Council Response
Bank Deposits The Council need to review its bank deposits to ensure as far as possible that not more than £85,000 is held with one Bank or associated Banks providing they are covered by the FSCS	Essential	That Finance Committee are tasked with addressing this recommendation and establishing additional accounts as covered by the FSCS.
Statements of Payments/Income Reported To The Council To comply with its own Financial Regulations the Council should have such statements attached to its Agenda (where included) and on its Minutes. Subject to the possible exception of personal information.	Essential	All future reports and minutes will comply with this recommendation. The 2020-21 minutes will be presented to Full Council for authorisation of amendment to include the agreed schedule of payments. (see item X of Agenda for June 2021 Meeting)
Grants The Council should consider amending its Application Terms and Conditions so that applicants should include a copy of their immediate and long term plans with an indication as to how these would be funded.	Essential	That the Finance Committee consider amending the Application Terms and Conditions.
Future Precepts To consider whether the Council's Reserves are at such a level at the time of determining its Precept for 2022/23 that the Council could consider a reduction in its Precept. This is of course assumes that no additional projects are contemplated by the Council under any 3 or 5 year long term plan it might then be considering.	Desirable	Members to Consider this as part of the budget setting for 2022-23.
VAT To state in future reports to the Council whether any purchase/quotation is inclusive of vat.	Desirable	All future request for purchasing of equipment or services will include a cost breakdown.
Insurance cover for the Kingsway premises The Town Clerk to clarify the basis of reinstatement valuation applied to the	Desirable	Members to agree to engage e Quantity Surveyor to prepare a valuation.

<p>premises and if necessary engage the services of a Quantity Surveyor to prepare a valuation including all the ancillary costs referred to elsewhere in my report.</p> <p>The Town Clerk to clarify the ownership of the skatepark floodlights for both the asset register and insurance cover purposes.</p>		<p>Town Clerk to clarify ownership of the Skate Park Floodlights.</p>
<p>The New Offices</p> <p>Before granting any leases out on the new accommodation the Council should clarify whether the new premises qualify for the Small Business Rate Relief scheme.</p> <p>If so any such leases should make the lessees responsible for their own general rates rather than be included in a general service charge which might work against the Council if it does not itself pay general rates.</p>	Desirable	<p>Currently the BATC qualify for Small Business Rate Relief Scheme. Town Clerk to query whether leasing of offices will impact upon this. Members to consider overall strategy for Kingsway and consider rates as part of their decision process.</p>
<p>Trees</p> <p>To continue with the commissioning of annual surveys (unless the Council's Tree Surgeon recommends otherwise).</p> <p>To contact the Weardale Railway Company re the overhanging branches next to the Pollards allotments</p>	Other	<p>Currently the Town Council has undertaken annual tree surveys on a 2 year cycle, with the 2021 being the next cycle. Town Clerk to obtain quotations for this service for 2021 and present to Council. Overall allotment site inspections will be undertaken during the summer of 2021 and will be reported to Council with an action plan of findings and needed works.</p>
<p>Food Festival</p> <p>The Council should, whenever a Food Festival is proposed, request a financial statement from the County Council for the cost of running this event in order to be satisfied that it is a loss leading event but still providing value for money as a community based event.</p>	Other	<p>Food Festival Representative has been invited to present at the July 2021 Town Council Meeting. They will be asked to include this information in their presentation to Members.</p>
<p>Members Training</p> <p>All Councillors should endeavour to attend suitable attend suitable training sessions.</p>	Other	<p>All available Member training will be shared with all Council Members encouraging Members to attend.</p>
<p>Staffing Matters</p> <p>The Council should review staff salaries on a regular basis particularly at this time when the Council has been without a new Clerk for some time, transferred its offices</p>	Other	<p>Item X of the June 2021 agenda addresses staffing matters of this Nature.</p>

and has had to deal with some of issues arising during the Covid-19 pandemic.		
Website Apart from the other matters raised regarding the website the Town Council should consider an Index being added to make navigation a little easier.	Other	Members to consider a review of accessibility and ease of use of the Town Council Website.