

BRANSTON AND MERE PARISH COUNCIL

INTERNAL CONTROLS STATEMENT

1. Purpose of Internal Controls

This statement outlines the internal control measures in place to ensure that Branston and Mere Parish Council maintains sound financial management, protects public funds, and complies with all statutory obligations. These controls support the council's objective of providing effective and transparent governance.

2. Key Internal Control Areas

a) Segregation of Duties

- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) manages day-to-day financial operations.
- The Clerk acts as the Proper Officer, ensuring statutory compliance and accurate record keeping.
- Payments are authorised by two appointed signatories, ensuring no one person is responsible for the entire process.

b) Authorisation and Approval

- All expenditure must be approved by resolution of the council or under delegated authority (e.g., in the case of urgent spend up to £500).
- Invoices are reviewed against purchase orders or council minutes before authorisation.

c) Bank Reconciliation

- Bank accounts are reconciled monthly by the RFO.
- The bank reconciliation is reviewed and verified quarterly by a councillor who is not a bank signatory, providing independent oversight.

d) Financial Monitoring

- The RFO provides quarterly financial statements to the council, comparing actual expenditure with the budget.
- Significant variances are reviewed and addressed at council meetings.

e) Budget Setting and Review

- The budget is reviewed and approved annually, with supporting documentation.
- The precept is approved by full council and submitted to the principal authority.

f) Asset and Risk Management

- The council maintains an up-to-date Asset Register.
- An annual Risk Assessment is carried out and adopted by council.
- Insurance cover is reviewed annually to ensure adequacy.

g) Internal and External Audit

- An independent Internal Auditor is appointed annually to review controls and compliance.
- The council considers internal audit reports and implements recommendations as appropriate.
- The Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) is completed in accordance with the Practitioners' Guide and submitted by the statutory deadline.

h) Transparency and Publication

- The council complies with the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities.
- Minutes, agendas, financial reports, and the AGAR are published on the council website.

3. Annual Review of Internal Controls

This statement is reviewed and approved annually by full council, forming part of the assurance process for the Annual Governance Statement (AGAR Section 1 – Assertions 2 and 6).

DOCUMENT HISTORY

Responsible Committee	Full Committee
Approval by	Full Committee
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