

**SEALAND COMMUNITY COUNCIL
INTERNAL CONTROLS POLICY**

2023/24 Financial Year

1. The Responsible Financial Officer will prepare annual estimates of income and expenditure for submission to the December meeting of the Council, following consultation with the Chair.
2. As soon as estimates have been approved at the Council's Annual Finance Meeting it shall be the responsibility of the Responsible Financial Officer to submit the precept required to Flintshire County Council, which under arrangements agreed with that Authority is received in three instalments at the end of April, August and December, and transferred automatically to the Council's 30-day notice account at Lloyds TSB Bank.
3. The Responsible Financial Officer will report to the monthly meetings the current financial position in relation to income and expenditure for the particular financial year.
4. The Responsible Financial Officer will provide on a quarterly basis a bank reconciliation to be checked by the Vice Chair and signed as correct by the Vice Chair
5. The Responsible Financial Officer shall record all payments and income in the ledger on a regular basis, to reconcile income and expenditure and remaining balances on a monthly basis and to report this to Council. At the year end to provide a final bank reconciliation report and to prepare accounts in the receipts and payments format with balance sheet and supporting statements for Council approval as soon as possible after the year end.
6. The Responsible Financial Officer shall pay all invoices approved by the Council by means of a minute reference, ensuring all cheques have the signature of three Members and that cheque stubs are initialled by the same.
7. The Responsible Financial Officer shall maintain a bank paying-in book to record receipt No., in case of cash, name of person/organisation from which received, reason for payment and amount.
8. The Responsible Financial Officer will ensure that all payments have a voucher and are kept in a folder and appropriately numbered for internal audit purposes and that all miscellaneous income is paid in promptly to the appropriate Bank account.
9. The Responsible Financial Officer will ensure that

- a) Goods should be acquired by Official Order wherever possible, having regard to the Council's Financial Standing Orders.
 - b) Payments should be made on approval of Council.
 - c) Payments must only be made on receipt of an invoice.
 - d) Whenever possible, Order Acknowledgement/Delivery Note should be attached to Invoice and Payment Voucher.
 - e) Cheques should be written by Clerk and Financial Officer.
 - f) Cheques should be signed by three authorised Members of Council.
 - g) Payments should be recorded by Clerk and Financial Officer in the Council's excel report by detailing cheque No., payee, reasons for payment, vat and gross amounts and date of payment.
 - h) Paid invoices should be kept in a lever arch file, filed in transaction order.
 - i) The authorised payment should be included within Minutes of Council and submitted to the next meeting for authorisation together with the relevant powers which allows the expenditure to be made.
10. The Responsible Financial Officer will keep the Council's two bank accounts with the Lloyds TSB Bank under review, transferring monies between each as appropriate to ensure interest earning opportunities are maximised.
 11. The Responsible Financial Officer will reclaim VAT at the year end and check that this and other incomes received automatically (precept, bank interest), or otherwise, are credited to the appropriate bank account.
 12. The Responsible Financial Officer will ensure that salary payments due to the Clerk are subject to the appropriate deductions of income tax and national insurance. The Council's payroll is undertaken by Wainwrights Accountants, Park Old Hall Road, Faversham House, Bromborough, Wirral.CH62 3NX.
 13. The Responsible Financial Officer will keep a record indicating postages to enable a check to be made on reimbursements claimed by the Clerk on a monthly basis.
 14. The Responsible Financial Officer, as part of the annual risk assessment required to be undertaken by the Council, will ensure that insurance cover is at the appropriate level and that the asset register is kept up to date.

15. As soon as the Council have approved the year end accounts the Responsible Financial Officer will arrange for the appropriate documentation to be made available to the Council's Internal Auditor.
16. The report and action plan (if any) of the Internal Auditor will be reported to the Council at the meeting following their receipt and the Responsible Financial Officer will respond to any action plan items for Council approval.
17. On receipt of notification of external audit, Responsible Financial Officer will arrange for appropriate public notice to be given, arrange for completion of the Annual Return required by the External Auditor and public notice of the completion of the audit, ensuring also that the Council is notified of both stages.
18. Council will ensure Data Protection Act compliance and having a Data Protection Act policy in place together with an Information Asset Register and Privacy Notice. Copies being on the council's web site.
19. The Clerk will ensure that Data Protection Act compliance is maintained and that all personal information that isn't in the public domain is held safe and securely and is not given to any third party.

Peter Richmond
Clerk / Responsible Financial Officer
Sealand Community Council
November 2022

This policy was reviewed and endorsed by Council at its meeting held on Monday 21st November 2022