SEALAND COMMUNITY COUNCIL

INTERNAL CONTROLS POLICY 2027/28 Financial Year

1. Following consultation with the Chair, the Responsible Financial Officer will prepare annual estimates of income and expenditures for submission to the December meeting of the Council.
2. As soon as estimates have been approved at the Council's Annual Finance Meeting, the Responsible Financial Officer shall be responsible for submitting the precept required to Flintshire County Council. Under arrangements agreed with that Authority, the precept is received in three instalments at the end of April, August, and December and automatically transferred to the Council's 30-day notice account at Lloyds 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 a bank reconciliation quarterly for the Vice Chair to check and sign as correct and reviewed by sitting councillors at the particular meeting.
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's end, to provide a final bank reconciliation report and prepare accounts in the receipts and payments format with a balance sheet and supporting statements for Council approval as soon as possible after the year's 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, are kept in a folder and are 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 the Council.
   c) Payments must only be made on receipt of an invoice.
   d) Whenever possible, Order Acknowledgement/Delivery Note should be attached to the Invoice and Payment Voucher.
   e) Cheques should be written by the Clerk and Financial Officer.
   f) Cheques should be signed by three authorised Members of the 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 review the Council's two bank accounts with Lloyds Bank and transfer money between each as appropriate to maximise interest-earning opportunities.
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. The Responsible Financial Officer shall ensure that the Council complies with the applicable annual audit requirements under the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014, as amended, and the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004. On receipt of notification of the external audit, the Responsible Financial Officer will arrange appropriate public notice, complete the Annual Return required by the External Auditor, and provide public notice of the completion of the audit, ensuring the Council is notified at both stages.
18. The Council will ensure Data Protection Act compliance, including the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and have a Data Protection Act policy in place, together with an Information Asset Register and Privacy Notice in accordance with its legal obligations. Copies will be on the council's website.
19. The Clerk shall ensure that personal information held by the Council is processed lawfully, fairly and securely in accordance with applicable data protection legislation. Access to personal information shall be restricted to authorised persons, and appropriate technical and organisational measures shall be maintained to protect against unauthorised or unlawful processing, accidental loss, destruction or damage. Personal information shall only be disclosed to third parties where there is a lawful basis for doing so or disclosure is otherwise legally required.

Ashley Griffiths
Clerk / Responsible Financial Officer
Sealand Community Council – October 2026

This policy was reviewed and endorsed by the Council at its meeting held on 19th October 2026.