



BARNSTAPLE TOWN COUNCIL

MANAGEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL SYSTEMS

The Town Council will ensure a robust level of corporate governance by a series of tests and evaluations carried out by elected members of the council, the Town Clerk and the Finance Officer, and by the promotion of good practice amongst both councilors and staff.

The Corporate Governance Working Party has responsibility for the overview of the Town Council's corporate governance and the management of internal control

GENERAL

The Town Council is comprised of 24 councillors and delegates its powers, with the exception of setting the Precept and authorising any borrowing, to six standing committees:- Planning & Transportation, Environment, Properties, Staff, Heritage and Finance & General Purposes.

The Council has appointed a Corporate Governance Working Party whose remit is to scrutinise Council policies and procedures and make recommendations on any amendments or changes required to ensure that systems of internal control remain robust and fit for purpose. The Working Party reports to its parent committee, Finance & General Purposes.

The principal internal control measures can be defined as

- Financial management
- Risk management
- Decision making process

This policy has been written under the guidance of "The Corporate Governance Practitioners' Checklist" published by SLCC. (Jan 2006)

MANAGEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL

a) Financial management

- Standing Orders and Financial Regulations include Orders for Contracts, payment processes and delegation of decisions. To be reviewed at least annually or more frequently if statutory regulations so require.
- Financial Statements including current balances and Budget Monitoring Statements to be submitted to each meeting of Finance & General Purposes Committee and approved by Resolution of that Committee.
- All payments to be verified and signed by two councillors.
- Cheque signatories to be limited to Mayor and Deputy Mayor plus Chairmen of Standing Committees.
- Investments and interest levels to be monitored regularly to ensure appropriate level of return.
- Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy and Whistleblowing Policy in place and reviewed on a regular basis.
- Regular reports from Internal Auditor presented to Finance and General Purposes Committee and approved and/or actioned by Resolution.

b) Risk management

- Insurance policy to be reviewed at least annually or when there are any variations to the items or services insured.
- Standing Orders and Financial Regulations reviewed annually to minimise risk.
- Corporate Governance Working Party appointed to monitor and review Council procedures and policies.
- Valuation of properties and assets to be reviewed every five years or as circumstances require.
- Risk management reports produced for all Council properties and reviewed annually.
- Risk management reports produced for all Council functions and reviewed annually.
- Risk management reports produced for all events organised by Council.

- Regular training for staff and councillors to ensure compliance and understanding of current and future legislation and guidance.
- An independent Human Resources Consultancy employed by the Council to advise on all aspects of employment including contracts and disciplinary processes.
- Policies in place governing internet usage and social media usage

c) Decision making process

- All Councillors to have signed Declaration of Acceptance of Office, Code of Conduct and Register of Interests.
- Standing Orders in place governing the conduct of meetings, voting and quorum.
- Financial Regulations in place governing the procedures for the award of contracts.
- A Community Engagement Strategy is in place, and reviewed annually.
- The Town Council's Development Plan sets out the Council's aims and objectives and is to be reviewed on an annual basis.

Next Review date: March 2015.

