

Briefing Note

Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) 2020-21

1.0 Background

1.1 All town and parish councils are required to undergo an annual internal audit for which a report is produced that must be signed off by the council in a public meeting. This is compulsory and is carried out so that any questions from electors can be resolved. The auditor's report and accompanying documents are published in the public domain. You can read the reports from previous years on the council's website here:

<http://www.stkeyneparishcouncil.org.uk/documents.php> (page down to Notices)

1.2 As with last year, exemptions are possible for smaller councils. The exemption is based on annual income and expenditure, together with an assessment of any previous issues that the internal auditor had flagged up.

2.0 The audit arrangements

2.1 The internal audit has been carried out in the usual way using information collated by the council's Responsible Financial Officer. This council has already appointed Linda Coles as internal auditor, and she has completed her work. All the information required to complete the audit template is in place, along with a response to the internal and external auditor's reports prepared in May 2021. These are satisfactory, and the parish council has complied with all the requirements.

2.2 The external audit is subject to financial conditions: The council's annual income for 2020-21 must be higher than £25,000 (this council's income was £21,020) and its expenditure must also be higher than £25,000 (this council's expenses were £22,186). *On this basis, the parish council does not require an external audit.*

2.3 Has the parish council had these concerns raised by the external auditor?

- Has a public interest report been issued by the auditor?
- Has a statutory recommendation relating to the authority been issues by the auditor?
- Has an advisory notice been issued by the auditor?
- Have judicial review proceedings commenced?
- Have any items in the previous declaration been deemed unlawful?

There have been no concerns raised by the auditor and no recommendations from the auditing authority. None of the other issues raised by the previous external auditor or current internal auditor are covered by the topics listed above. *This means that the parish council can opt out of the requirement to have a 'limited assurance review'.*

3.0 Options

3.1 To agree to a full limited assurance review carried out by PKF Littlejohn at a total cost of £200.

4.2 Choose to exempt the parish council from the external audit at no cost.

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