Risk	Asses	ssm	nent
	HIGH	0	
M	EDIU	M	1
	IOW	15	

New Romney Town Council INTERNAL AUDIT 2022-2023 AUDIT PLAN WITH COMMENTS / FINDINGS

I am pleased to report to Members of the New Romney Town Council (the "Council"), that I have completed my year-end internal audit of the Council's records for the twelve month period to 31 March 2023, following my audit visit and subsequent conversations on 22 May 2023.

Councillors should be aware that my work cannot be relied upon to identify the occasional omission or insignificant error, nor do I actively seek evidence of breaches of trust or statute, neglect or fraud, which may have taken place. It is the responsibility of the Councillors of the Council to guard against such events, but if during my audit testing such events are discovered I am duty bound to disclose such events to the Council.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Clerk/RFO Mrs Cathy Newcombe and the Deputy Town Clerk Mrs Tracy Morris for their assistance given to me during my audit visit.

During my visit I advised the Clerk that this would be my last Internal Audit visit as I am proposing to wind-down my auditing work after the completion of the 2022-23 Year-end Audit season. It has been a pleasure working with the Council over the last 9 years, my first audit visit was in May 2013!

Area	ltem		Comments / Findings	
			Year-end Audit 31 March 2023	
Previous Audits	•	Date of last External Audit Certificate or Exemption Certificate for 2021-22	PKF Littlejohn signed off the Report & Certificate 2021-22 on 27 September 2022. There were no comments. The Council noted the External Auditors report at Council 12 Oct 2022 Min 272/22-23	
	•	Comments if any Publication on website.	The website includes all the expected AGAR forms related to the 2021-22 AGAR submission.	
	•	Date of last Internal Audit Comments if any	June 2022 Internal Audit Report considered by Council 29 June 2022 Min 088/22-23 & 1096/22-23 The were no outstanding matters to follow up.	
	•	Review of any items outstanding from previous internal / external audit reports.	NB Council was advised of the change of External Auditor to Mazars LLP for the next 5-years beginning with 2022- 23 AGAR – Council 19 Dec 2022 Min 377/22-23	

Minutes	•		Minutes referred to as part of this Internal Audit.
		Council's meetings and the Finance Committee.	General Power of Competence approved by Council on 15 May 2019 Min 031/2019-20 for the next 4 years subject to retaining the necessary qualification criteria. The Town Clerk advised that the General Power of
	•	General Power of Competence	Competence had been renewed for the next 4-years to May 2027 at the Annual Council Meeting 17 May
	•	Dispensations	2023.
	•	•	Personnel Panel – renamed Personnel Committee – Council 12 Oct 2022 Min 273/22-23
Code of Conduct/	•	Date adopted	16 Clirs (two wards Town and Coast)
Acceptance of Office	•	members since last Audit 2	Cllr Nevard resigned – Council 10 Aug 2022 Min 149/22-23 A by-election was called for, 20 Oct 2022, Council agreed a "policy" that for any By-Election polling cards would be issued (Council 7 Sept 2022 Min 220/22-23 & 12 Oct 2022 Min 274/22-23) but was uncontested – Mrs K Terry elected Oct 2022.
	•		Cllr Kapoor resigned Oct 2022 reported to Council 9 Nov 2022 Cllr E Carr was elected by way of a by-election
	•		held on 8 Dec 2022.
	•	New Governance Compliance	Cllr Paice resigned – Council 19 Dec 2022 Min 377/22-23
	•	NEXT ELECTION ?	
			Some of the DPI's on the website are extremely old and need removing and replacing with the new DPI's for all Councillors following the May 2023 Election before sending through to FHDC 4 th May 2023 Election resulted in 5 candidates being elected for Cost Ward and 8 candidates for the Town Ward. There are 3 seats available for "co-option" in the Coast Ward applicants to be considered at the Annual Meeting held on 17 May 2023
Standing Orders and Financial Regulations		Have they been formally adopted and applied?	Standing Orders and Financial Regulations were reviewed by Council 25 May 2022 Min 022/22-23.
	•	Have any changes been made	There was a further review taking into account internal procedures, financial and personnel matters – Council 8 Feb 2023 Min 498/22-23
	•	Have any changes been formally	Emergency Delegated Powers first approved 18 March 2020. Council 17 March 2021 Min 491/2020-21 (iii) the current emergency extended delegation be extended again until end of Sept 2021.
	•	Virtual Meetings / Delegation to	Council 8 Sept 2021 Min 212/2021-22 (ii) the current emergency extended delegation be extended again until end of the Civic Year (May 2022).
	•	Updated re New NALC Models SO's 2018, Fin Regs 2019 ?	All remaining emergency delegations were rescinded by Council on 13 April 2022 Min 646/2021-22
	•	Two signature rule still in place?	

Risk Management

- Risk Assessments Are they:
 - Carried out regularly?
 - o Adequate?
 - O Reported in the minutes?
 - Inspections of play equipt etc if carried out by staff/Cllrs have they been trained, accredited?
 - O ANNUAL REVIEW?
- Insurance cover is it:
 - Appropriate/Adequate?
 - o LTA in place?
 - o Reviewed regularly?
 - Fidelity Guarantee Cover £
 (Balances + ½ Precept)
- Internal controls are they:
 - o Documented?
 - o Adequate?
 - Reviewed regularly?
 - Statement of Internal Control (SIC)?
- Systems and Procedures are they:
 - O Documented?
 - o Adequate?
 - o Followed?
 - Reviewed regularly?

Commercial Services (KCC) carry out a monthly inspection of paly equipment, ROSPA inspection done by Playsafety

Council 9 Feb 2022 approved "weekly visual safety inspections" to be brought "in-house" following training of the Council's Parish Caretaker Team. Training completed and inspections being done.

Risk Management Statement 2022-23 is to be approved by Council at its meeting on 14 June 2023 and then published on the Council's website.

A 3-year Long-term Agreement (LTA) with Zurich Municipal was approved by F&GP 23 March 2022 Min 598/2021-22 approved a 3-year LTA to 1 April 2025.

Property reinstatement cost assessment carried out by Barrett Corp & Harrington Ltd – March 2022

£2m Fidelity cover

Financial Checks 2022-23 Annual Council 25 May 2022 Min 033/22-23 Cllrs Tillson and Davies appointed to undertake monthly finance checks for 2022-23.

Review of effectiveness of Internal Control Procedures 2022-23 – to be approved by Council at its meeting on 14 June 2023 and then published on the Council's website.

Councillors can view all policies via Sharepoint.

Statement of Intent for 2022-23 approved by Council 16 March 2022 Min 575/2021-22

NB Statement of Intent for 2023-24 - to be approved by Council at its meeting on 14 June 2023 and then published on the Council's website.

Budgetary Controls	•	reported and approved by the Council? Budget/Precept amounts minuted? Review of All Reserves included as part of the Budget Setting Process? Is the actual performance against the budgets reported to the Council during the year Compare with Fin Regs? Are significant variances explained in sufficient detail?	The Financial Reports to Council include a bank reconciliation, a list of receipts and list of payments to be approved by Council. Budget Monitoring Reports are provided to each Committee on a regular basis eg Personnel 28 Sept 2022 Min 232/22-23, F&GP 28 Sept 2022 Min 247/22-23 Reserve Fund balances are reviewed as part of the annual budgeting process and contributions thereto are adjusted accordingly each year as part of that process. Reserve Fund Balances noted and approved by F&GP 23 November 2022 Min 349/22-23 as part of the detailed discussions regarding the budgetary requirements for 2023-24, which included a table showing the "reserve fund contributions" and therefore the position of each Reserve Fund. Budget & Precept 2023-24 F&GP 23 Nov 2022 Min 351/22-23 recommended to Council a Draft Budget for 2023-24 of £374,894. Endorsed by Council on 11 Jan 2023 Min 428/22-23 approved a Net Budget and Precept of £374,894 (£363,553 for 2022-23). Details of the Budget/Precept 2023-24 were published in a Press statement and Advert - Council advised 8 Feb 2023 Min 492/22-23
Section 137 expenditure £8.82 FOR 2022-23 (£8.41 FOR 2021-22)	•		Not necessary with GPC in place. For Info. The S137 limit for 2023-24 has recently been announced as £9.93 a 12.5% increase (the RPI increase Sept 2021 to 2022)
Book-keeping	•	Fit for purpose? Up to date? Arithmetically correct? Balanced regularly? Turnover above £200k pa? Income & Expenditure basis of accounting?	Rialtas Business Solutions (RBS) Omega Accounting Package used for the 2022-23 Accounts following training 23 rd and 24 th June 2022. Package includes Sales Ledger with invoicing and Tax Digital for VAT. RBS consultants provided support during the first closure of accounts cycle – approved by F&GP 18 Jan 2023 Min 453/22-23 The Council accounts on an Income & Expenditure basis already.

Petty Cash	Has the amount of petty cash float	Petty Cash float balance at 31 March 2023 was £248.09.
	been agreed?	
	 Are all petty cash entries recorded? 	
	Are payments made from petty	
	cash fully supported by receipts /	
	VAT invoices?	
	 Are petty cash reimbursements 	
	signed for?	Last re-imbursement 3 Feb 2023 - £300
	 Date of last petty cash reimbursement ? 	Last re-impursement 3 Feb 2023 - £300
	 Is petty cash balance independently 	
	checked regularly	
	enconcu regularly	
Doursell		Current staff as per website
Payroll	 Who is on the payroll and are 	
	contracts of employment in	Town Clerk (22.5hrs pw) Catherine Newcombe
	•	Deputy Town Clerk & RFO & Town Sergeant (19.5hrs pw) Tracy Morris (Took over RFO role from 1 April 2023
	***************************************	Personnel Comm 21 Dec 2022 Min 4012-23)
	Annual Appraisal in place ?	Planning Clerk (14hrs pw) Ms Gemma Hall permanent contract confirmed WEF 21/07/22. Finance Clerk – Julie Field appointed and started in April 2023 working 15 hrs pw.
	Have there been any changes to	Finance Clerk – Julie Field appointed and started in April 2023 working 13 hrs pw.
	the establishment and/or changes	Facilities & Communications Clerk (20hrs pw) Judith Ruffhead (NB Revised job title and duties from April 2023,
	to individual contracts during the year?	part of the staffing review to enable the appointment of the additional member of staff - Finance Clerk mentioned
	Members Allowances in place	above)
	and paid via payroll system?	Parish [′] Caretaker was 37hrs pw – Philip Maquire
	 Have new appointments and 	Asst Parish Caretaker – 25hrs pw vacancy to fill on a 1 year contract initially - Jon Lodge appointed commenced -
	changes to contracts been	1/07/22, but left 18 Jan 2023. Replaced by Kevin Bennett in April 2023
	approved and minuted?	
	Do salaries paid agree with those	Manager Community of the action of the National World and
	approved by the Council?	Mayor's Sergeant (ad hoc hours as required) Shaun Woolger
	 Have PAYE/NIC requirements been 	Payroll outsourced to S H Bureau Payroll & Bookkeeping Services P45's and P60's and payroll records checked.
		a syron sales also a tribured i ayron a bookkooping sorvious i 400 and 1 000 and payron records chooked.
	Payroll outsourced?	
	WORKEL A OF BENGION IN	LGPS – 6 staff have opted into the pension scheme.
	 WORKPLACE PENSION IN PLACE 	
	FLACE	

Pavments

- Are all payments recorded and supported by appropriate documentation?
- Are payments minuted?
- Review of DD's and SO's ?
- STAFF costs definition for inclusion in Box 4 for 2022-23. check parity for 2021-22? Currently includes salary, tax, NIC & Pension (employee & ers) + taxable benefits (home working allowance, broadband & phone allowance etc NOT incl.
- Has VAT been identified, recorded and reclaimed?
- Have internal control procedures been adhered to?
- Contracts:
 - What contracts exist?
 - Compliance with SO's
 - Have any new contracts or contract variations/extensions been awarded in the year?
 - Procedures adopted for letting of contracts
 - Have contract payments been made in accordance with the contract document?

Detailed payment reports are made available to Cllrs as part of the Council Agenda, the list of payments are listed within the "agenda". Schedules of the payments and receipts are normally presented to the Monthly Council Meetings, these are also on the Council's website.

There are a several DD's in place for utility supplies and services, which are reviewed and re-approved annually

The collation of the staff costs follows the Box 4 definition.

VAT advice sought from Elysian Associates re VAT position and new build of the Community Hall and Sports Facility. VAT registered from 1 April 2022

VAT to claim from 1 Oct 2021 to 31 March 2022 = £20,387 to claim in 2022-23 recd 18 Nov 2022

VAT 1 April to 30 June 2022 - £6,820 recd 25 Aug 2022

VAT claims from 1 July 2022 to 31 March 2023 made monthly ranging from £1,000 to £9,480 in value, most reimbursed within a couple of months of end of period. Amount for March 2023 - £4,568 claimed in April 2023

Sample of contracts in place:-

MPR IT Solutions and TROOLI re upgrade to Town Hall IT systems and telephony

Landscape Services – play & gym equipt inspection services (NB ended 30 June 2022 as inspections to be done "in-house")

BILT Ltd – builders merchants trade account

W&E Rolfe & Sons - trade account

S H Bureau Ltd – payroll services

B E Ames Ltd re annual contract to inspect the roof and rainwater goods at the Assembly Rooms, Community Hall and Maude Pavilion – contracts extended F&GP 28 Sept 2022 Min 251/22-23

Printform Direct – stationery supplies

Veolia – 1100 ltr euro bin – Town Hall

M Coleman Arboricultural Services – Grounds Mtce contract includes allotments, Church Lane ditch management,

The Greens, Fairfiled Road Rec. and Flagstaff Land

C Simm – window cleaning Town Hall & Assembly Rooms

Red Alert Security - CCTV works/support

Synergy Construction & Property Consultants and Guy Holloway Architects and Project Management and Architects for the Community Centre Project

Ashe Alarms Ltd – alarm service contract

Receipts	•	Are all receipts promptly banked?	Capital Receipt Land Sale Title No. K815301 – £1.129m Uther Non Precept income = £50,192 in 2022-23 mainly from the re-opening of facilities included Bank and Investment income = £11,850 in 2022-23 Hut & Winch Site Letting Policy and T&C's - Council on 9 Feb 2022 Min 521/2021-22 Charges, Rents and Fees for 2023-24 F&GP 23 Nov 2022 – most remained unchanged including the Allotment Rents.	
Bank reconciliation & PWLB Loans	•	What current/deposit accounts exist? Investment Strategy recommended where bank balances are in excess of £100k. FSCS aware? Are bank reconciliations regularly carried out for each account? Level of Balances to Precept ratio Are the cheque counterfoils, paying-in books and bank statements adequately referenced? When was the last review of the banking arrangements? Internet Banking/Corporate Card and if in place Financial Regs updated? Signature review (Two signatures required?)	Bank account balances as at 31 March 2022 NSI Income Bond (3900) £651,453 NatWest Business Reserve a/c (0530) £754,786 Lloyds Bank Business a/c (1868) £868,501 Unity Trust Bank a/c (7680) £77,140 NatWest Current a/c (0942) £500 Petty cash £248 Total Bank balances as at 31 March 2023 = £2,352,628 Annual Investment Strategy for 2022-23 approved by Council 16 March 2022 Min 575/2021-22 Bank Working Party — Task & Finish to evaluate additional banking facilities. F&GP 23 Aug 2021 Min 191/2020-21 The whole banking set-up needs to be overhauled and streamlined maximising the use of the Unity Trust on-line banking system and the opening of a new Deposit Account (2.15% int currently ?) with Unity Trust an operate both current and deposit accounts like the NatWest accounts. Suggest closure of the NatWest accounts entirely to get better returns and avoid the £75 qtrly fee for the current sweep arrangements which would NOT be required if all daily transactions went through the Unity Trust Accounts. The savings with NSI are fully protected so further investment with NSI should explored. Other investment institutions to explore include the Cambridge and Counties Bank and Nationwide, both popular with my other clients and offering much better rates than the NatWest and Lloyds accounts Lloyds Multipay card via Unity Trust Bank from February 2021 monthly spend limit £3,000 Town Clerk and Deputy F&GP 2 Nov 2022 Min 316/22-23 extended the use to withdraw cash for Petty Cash purposes following closure of the New Romney Lloyds Branch The Town Clerk advised that Bank Signatories have been reviewed for 2023-24 (Annual Council 17 May 2023) and additional signatories appointed, to be dealt with by the RFO as soon as is practically possible.	
	•	Any PWLB loans ?	PWLB Loan approval arrived 6 Jan 2023 as agreed by Council 9 Nov 2022 Min 330/22-23. Loan to be for £1m, 40 years with a draw down end-date of 6 Jan 2024.	

Assets and Asset Are all the material assets owned by the Council recorded in an AR ? Net increase in assets to 31 March 2023 is £28,634, to £3,644,280. Register (AR) New assets included 5 commemorative benches (£9360), new civic robes (£9,540), Flagstaff Land – bollards Is the AR up to date? (£8,700), IT upgrade (£6,020) and Festival Lighting (£5,150). Basis of Asset Values? Scrappages totalled = £10,800 Are long-term investments recorded? The Council sold a parcel of land for £1.129m Are the valuations regularly reviewed? Does the AR show the insurance values? Digital Photographic evidence? Is there a separate Inventory List of low value items (e.g. below the insurance excess levels)? Year-end procedures Accounting records were checked against the figures to be used in the AGAR Statement of Accounts for 2022-23, Does the 2022-23 AGAR Statement of Accounts agree with including the Bank Reconciliation. Inc. AGAR the cashbook? Is there an audit trail from the financial records to the accounts? Have debtors and creditors been properly recorded? • Date of approval of 2021-22 **AGAR & Certificate of Exemption** criteria met, exemption declared The AGAR 2021-22 was approved by Council 29 June 2022 Mins 098/22-23(ii)(a) and (b), the RFO had signed off the Statement of Accounts on 23 June 2022 **PROOF** of public rights provision during summer 2022 & website- AIAR ICOs Date of Announcement - 30 June 2022 Public Inspection period - 1 July to 11 Aug 2022 Evidence - 30 June 2022 was the website posting date. **Public Inspection Period** Minuted? The Council 29 June 2022 noted the proposed Public Inspection Period as mentioned above. New governance compliance regime - refer to new Practitioners' Guide 2021

Additional tests – (as necessary)

- Computer systems:
 - up of computerised records
 - Council owned PC/laptop ?
 - **Email security**
 - **Encryption of data?**
- Trust Funds/Charities Charity **Commission filing?**
- Annual review of the effectiveness of Internal Audit inc. Appointment of IIA
- Website host and Webmaster and any changes?
- Website functionality & accessibility NALC L09-18
- TRANSPARENCY CODE compliant especially for Exempt Authorities
- Post GDPR (May 2018)
 - Privacy Notice
 - O Cllr email addresses?
 - o Email disclaimer
 - Other matters inc DPO arrangements

MPR IT Solutions & TOOLI providing IT support and broadband services as part of the Upgrade of the Town Hall The procedures for the backing IT Systems approved in December 2021, included 5 new laptops improved hi-speed broadband. Office 365 systems and internet phones.

> Council 15 Dec 2021 Min 413/2021-22 reported the return of Councillor Laptops with all the email accounts reset, the Clerk advised that the "electronic service of communications and documents would resume from Jan 2022.

NOT applicable

Review of Effectiveness of Internal Audit 2021-22 – Council 29 June 2022 Min 097/22-23

Vision ICT Ltd website provider, Ms Judith Ruffhead the Facilities & Communications Clerk is regarded as the webmaster in consultation with the Town Clerk.

Accessibility Statement provided by Vision ICT last updated Feb 2020 available at the foot of the website "home page". The functionality of the website is good. Well done.

Satswana – DPO services (retained for 2022-23)

All staff have generic style eg town.clerk@newromney-tc.gov.uk Councillors have been issued with their generic email addresses for use with their laptops to be used solely for Council business. NB The aging laptops (Notebooks) are being replaced with Apple iPads for all Clirs to use. The old Notebooks are being wiped of all data and then donated to worthy organisations etc. for re-use.

Data Protection Policy "Date Audit and "Date Retention Policy" approved by Council 16 March 2022 Min 575/2021-22