

9th May 2024

Via email: parishcouncil@audlempc.co.uk

Dear Carol

I provide assurance in the form of an opinion whether, on the basis of the review, the accounts and other information provided are in accordance with The Joint Panel on Governance and Accountability Practitioners Guide (2023). Based on this, and the information that has been provided to me for the 23/24 period, several matters remain as concerns from the 22/23 period as follows:

- (a) It's noted that potential fraudulent transactions took place in 2022 which is why bank accounts were frozen. The matter is still under police under investigation.
- (b) The cashbook has been partially maintained by a third party (Cheshire Association of Local Councils) between 1st April 2023 and 31st May 2023. I can only presume that it is up-to-date, arithmetic and balanced. It is not possible to check transactions against the bank account/s. There is a gap in finances from April 2023 – June 2023.
- (c) It has not been possible to verify the previous years' AGAR financial statement due to the lack of supporting documents including bank statements and year end (31st March 2023) bank reconciliation.
- (d) The Council has formally adopted Standing Orders and Financial Regulations but the SO are out of date and should be reviewed together with the Finance Regs which were updated and published by NALC in May 2024.
- (e) The annual risk assessment is out of date.
- (f) Minutes are recorded and approved at meetings however no supporting documents are made available on the website and it is unclear whether they are provided to councillors in advance of the meeting.
- (g) Budget reviews are not in place, nor is actual spending measured against it.
- (h) The income and expenditure are recorded between 1st June 2023 and 31st March 2024. I am unable to clarify completeness due to a lack of bank statements for April and May 2023.
- (i) The asset register is out of date.
- (j) AGAR Notice of conclusion for 22/23 is not available on the website as the external auditors have been unable to complete the audit due to potential fraudulent transactions which took place in 2022 and are still under police investigation.

A full report is attached.

I recommend that an interim internal audit is carried out in October 2024 given the issues identified. Please can you confirm whether you wish me to schedule the 2024/25 internal audit (interim and year end) and I will schedule accordingly.

Yours sincerely



Jo O'Donoghue (FSLCC)