

practice, any authority with income and expenditure in excess of £200,000 should plan towards 3 months equivalent general reserve.

5.35. In all of this it is important that each authority adopt, as a general reserve policy, the level appropriate to their size, situation, risks and plan their budget so as to ensure that the adopted level is maintained.

5.36. Authorities with significant self-generated income (other than the precept or levy) should take into account situations that may lead to a loss in revenue as well as increased costs and adapt their general reserve accordingly.

Earmarked and other reserves:

5.37. None of the above in any way affects the level of earmarked and/or capital receipts reserves that an authority may or should hold.

5.38. There is, in practice, no upper or lower limit to EMR/CRRs save only that they must be held for genuine and identifiable purposes and projects, and their level should be subject to regular review and justification (at least annually and at budget setting), and should be separately identified and enumerated. Significant levels of EMRs in particular may give rise to enquiries from internal and/or external auditors

It would be wise for the Council to carefully monitor reserve levels moving forward and I recommend a Reserves Policy is adopted which lays out the Council's future plans for the earmarked reserves and the level of general reserves that the Council intends to remain stable at.

The asset register is maintained and currently totals £33600 which is an increase of £6619 on the previous year, following the purchase of a Vehicle Activated Sign and Platinum Jubilee seat. The asset register is published to the Council's website. I recommend that local inspections on the playing fields, park equipment and Parish Council owned assets are recorded and kept with the Clerk to include the date of inspection, if there were any concerns or issues raised and any action taken.

I have seen evidence that robust budgetary controls are in place and are reviewed ongoing and an annual budget for the 2022-2023 financial year was minuted at a meeting of the Parish Council, along with the precept figure following last year's recommendation.

Council Policies are reviewed annually and are published to the Council's website including an Equality and Diversity Policy, Complaints Policy and a Risk Assessment (which addresses business continuity). The Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and policies were last reviewed and re-adopted at the Council's meeting in April 2023. A link to Councillor Declarations of Interests is also published to the Council's website.

Upon review of the internal audit carried out for the 2021/2022 financial year, recommendations were made as outlined in the table below and all recommendations have been actioned.

Summary

The report and findings are based on the information that was made available during the course of the audit. I am satisfied there are robust internal control measures in place to protect the Parish Council from financial risk.

To the best of my knowledge, all accounts and bank balances appear to be in order and accurate based on the information to hand, however, this internal audit does not involve the detailed inspection of all records and transactions of the Parish Council in order to detect error or fraud. With many thanks to Stephen Johnson, Clerk and RFO, for preparing the necessary documentation for the purpose of this internal audit.