

Interim Internal Audit Report Ventnor Town Council

Council:	Ventnor Town
Internal Auditor:	Maxine Warr
Date of Report	November 2024

This interim audit is at the request of Ventnor Town Council following the completion of the External Audit report. As previously detailed it was not possible to carry out a full audit, as recommended by the Practitioners Guide 2023, prior to the Annual Return being submitted, due to changes in the staffing structure and omissions on the website. The items examined in this audit do not cover all the financial aspects as these were examined and reported on earlier in the year.

All items have been discussed with the Clerk.

To the Mayor of Ventnor Town Council

I have examined council business including policies, agendas & minutes and website content. Management of the council appears robust with updates and improvements being made to the website and the internal processes.

A summary of findings is set out below.

- 1) A number of policies are scheduled for review in December 2024, including Standing Orders. Most policies are reviewed on a biannual basis and some policies already updated, such as Financial Regulations, Complaints and the CCTV policy, have been uploaded to the website. However, there are still some doubling up of policies on the website which could be confusing to the lay person looking for the current copy.
- 2) Councillor responsibilities on the website are not completely up to date and not all have register of interests available to view. There is no mention of a reminder to review the register of interests at the Annual Meeting.
- 3) The Website Accessibility Statement has not been updated since April 2022 and was due for review in December 2022.
- 4) Performance Development Reviews for staff are currently taking place and job descriptions will be updated as part of the process. Pension provision has been recorded and reviewed.
- 5) Staff and Member training is being reviewed as part of the budget process. There is not a training policy, but staff training is recorded.
- 6) All meetings with reports are published on the website, however the Annual Town Meeting on 24th May 2024 is only available through June meeting tab rather than as a standalone meeting.
- 7) Assets have been reviewed and a schedule is in place to regularly inspect items such as play equipment, fire extinguishers and defibrillators.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is clear that the internal processes are robust and being reviewed and updated to reflect the current improvements. However, from an outside perspective the website is still quite cumbersome and it is not always clear how to access current information, as many of the items still have a date of 2022, which can be off putting. Therefore, I would suggest the following may be useful:

- Ensure only the current policy is uploaded and add a date reviewed and next review date on the front cover for clarity.
- Update all councillor details with current responsibilities and roles and ensure all register of interests are available. Include an item on the Annual Meeting to remind councillors to review interests.
- Review and update website accessibility statement.

On other matters the following items are for consideration:

- Consider adopting a training policy for staff and Members and expand the training register to include Members.
- NALC has published an updated model for Financial Regulations and it may be useful to review the existing policy before the planned two year review.
- It is considered good practice to review Standing Orders and Financial Regulations yearly, often at the Annual Meeting, but I understand the Town Council policy is for bi annual reviews.

Yours sincerely



Maxine Warr
14th November 2024