Ashburton Town Council

Statement on Internal Control for the Year 2026

Date Adopted	12 May 2026
Review date	2027 - 2028

Signed by Town Mayor:

Date:

Ashburton Town Council

Ashburton Town Council Statement on Internal Control for the Year 2026

1. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY
Ashburton Town Council (the Council) is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently, and effectively.

In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council is also responsible for ensuring that there is a reliable system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions, and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

2. THE PURPOSE OF THE SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROL
The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level, rather than to eliminate all risk of failure, to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised, and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

3. THE INTERNAL CONTROL ENVIRONMENT
The Council
The Council has appointed a chairman who is responsible for the smooth running of meetings and for ensuring that all Council decisions are lawful.

The Council reviews its obligations and objectives and approves budgets for the following year between the September and December meetings. Then at the January or February meeting the Council approves the level of precept for the following financial year.

The Finance and Town Hall Buildings Committee (FTHBC) has been nominated to monitor progress against objectives, financial systems and procedures, budgetary control and carry out regular reviews of financial matters on a monthly basis. The Full Council meets 11 times each year and monitors progress against its aims and objectives at each meeting by receiving relevant reports from the Chairman of the (FTHBC)

Clerk to the Council / Responsible Financial Officer:
The Council has appointed a Clerk to the Council who acts as the Council’s advisor and administrator. The Clerk is responsible for day-to-day compliance with laws and regulations to which the Council is subject and for managing risks. The Clerk also ensures that the Council's procedures, control systems and polices are adhered to.

Payments:
Where possible all payments are made promptly by the Clerk. Agreed levels of delegated authority are in place. All payments are reported to the Council for approval and minuted. The FTHBC endorse direct debit and standing order payments annually. All other payments outside of the delegated agreements are endorsed via a 'payments request sheet' produced every month by the Responsible Financial Officer and presented at the FTHBC meetings for clearance. Spot checks on various accounts of the Council are made monthly. Invoices are cross-checked against requests for cheque payments and invoices. Signatures to cheques and BACS payments require two out of four authorised signatories.

Risk Assessments / Risk Management:
The Council carries out regular risk assessments in respect of actions and regularly reviews its systems and controls.

Internal Audit:
The Council has appointed an Independent Internal Auditor who reports to the Council on the adequacy of its:
- records
- procedures
- systems
- internal control
- regulations
- risk management
- reviews

The effectiveness of the internal audit is usually reviewed every 6 months when an intermediate internal audit takes place and annually when the annual return is completed. This year a further intermediate audit was undertaken to guide the new Clerk.

External Audit:
The Council's External Auditors, The Audit Commission, submit an annual Certificate of Audit, which is presented to the Council.

4. REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS
The Council has responsibility for conducting an annual review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control. This is informed by the work of:

- the Full Council
- the Clerk to the Council / Responsible Financial Officer who has responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control environment and managing risks.
- the independent external examiner who reviews all the systems introduced by the Council and advises on any additions or amendments to the controls if necessary.
- the independent Internal Auditor who reviews the Council's system of internal control
- the Audit Commission, the Council's external auditors, who make the final check using the Annual Return, a form completed and signed by the Responsible Financial Officer, the Chairman and the Internal Auditor. The Audit Commission issues an annual audit certificate.
- the number of significant issues that are raised during the year.

5. SIGNIFICANT INTERNAL CONTROL ISSUES

Whilst a few internal control issues were identified during the year, the Council continues to resolve these and strives for the continuous improvement of the system it has adopted for internal control. The Council continues to address all the minor issues and weaknesses raised and reported during the review process.

CHAIRMAN...

CLERK..

DATE...