

**BRINKBURN & HESLEYHURST PARISH COUNCIL**  
**STATEMENT ON INTERNAL CONTROL**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31<sup>st</sup> MARCH 2024**  
**(Confirmed 14th May 2024)**

**1. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY**

The Brinkburn & Hesleyhurst Parish 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 sound 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.

The system of internal control has been introduced for the year ended 31 March 2018 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and accounts and, except for the details of significant internal control issues at section 5, accords with proper practice.

**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 at its December/January meetings. The meeting of the Council approves the level of precept for the following financial year.

The full Council meets at least 4 times each year and monitors progress against its aims and objectives at each meeting by receiving relevant reports from the Clerk/Responsible Financial Official. The Clerk/RFO presents an annual budgetary control report and a bank reconciliation statement at monthly meeting.

The Council carries out regular reviews of its internal controls, systems and procedures.

**Clerk to the Council / Responsible Financial Officer (Clerk/RFO):**

The Council has appointed a Clerk to the Council who acts as the Council's advisor and administrator. The Clerk is the Council's Responsible Financial Officer and is responsible for administering the Council's finances. The Clerk/RFO is responsible for the day to day compliance with laws and regulations and advises the Council on managing risks. The Clerk/RFO also ensures that the Council's procedures, control systems and policies are adhered to.

**Payments:**

All payments are reported to the Council for approval. Two Members of the Council from a list of a minimum three authorised signatories must authorise every cheque or online payment. These will normally be the three

appointed officers of the Council i.e., Chair, Vice Chair and RFO. There is a facility for making urgent payments out of meeting.

**Risk Assessments / Risk Management:**

The Council carries out regular risk assessments in respect of actions and regularly reviews its systems and controls. The Clerk/RFO undertakes a review of the Risk Assessments for the Parish Council in April and reports this to the May meeting of the Council.

**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 reviewed annually.

**External Audit:**

The Council's External Auditors: Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments Ltd (SAAA), submit an annual Certificate of Audit, which is presented to the Council.

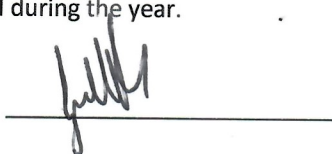
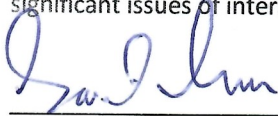
**4. REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS**

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

- the full Council;
- the Clerk to the Council/RFO who has responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control environment and managing risks;
- the independent Internal Auditor who reviews the Council's system of internal control;
- 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 Council's external auditors issue an annual audit certificate.

**5. SIGNIFICANT INTERNAL CONTROL ISSUES**

The Council strives for the continuous improvement of the system it has adopted for internal control and has addressed all the minor issues and weaknesses raised and reported during the review process. There were no significant issues of internal control during the year.



Date 14<sup>th</sup> May 2024

(Signatures of the Council's Chairman and Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer and date)