

Parish Council

**SADDLEWORTH**

**STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL**

**Scope of Responsibility**

Saddleworth Parish Council (the Council) is a local authority funded by public money and is responsible for ensuring its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for, used economically, efficiently and effectively.

In meeting this responsibility assurance is required that there is a sound system of internal control and that the Council’s accountability framework is ‘risk’ based; proportionate to that risk and to the amounts of public money involved and to the stakeholders’ need for assurance.

**The Purpose of the System of Internal Control.**

The system of internal control is designed to ensure that risks are managed to a reasonable and acceptable level forming part of an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the authority’s policies, aims and objectives and to evaluate and manage those risks accordingly.

**The Internal Control Environment**

**The Council:**

* appoints a Chairman to be responsible for the smooth running of meetings and for ensuring that all Council decisions are lawful with the Clerk’s advice.
* reviews its obligations and objectives and approves budgets for the following year at its January meeting. This meeting also approves the level of precept for the following financial year.
* Meets at least 11 times each year (the ordinary meetings take place monthly, except for August; the Annual Meeting is held in May) and monitors progress against its aims and objectives.

**The Clerk to the Council**

* is appointed by the Council to act as the Council’s advisor and administrator
* is responsible for the day to day compliance with laws and regulations that the Council is subject to and for managing risks
* ensures that the council’s procedures, control system and policies are adhered to.
* a Staffing Committee has been formed which meets four times per year with the Clerk.

**Responsible Financial Officer:**

* the Council’s Responsible Financial Officer is responsible for administering the council’s finances

**Payroll Controls:**

* the Clerk & RFO have a contract of employment with clear terms and conditions.
* salary paid is in line with NALC guidelines and approved by the Staffing Committee.
* All HMRC deductions are properly operated by the Council as an employer and monthly submission are made to HMRC under Real Time via our Payroll Provider.
* Payments are made in a timely manner each month by SPC directly.
* pension contributions are made in accordance with the Greater Manchester Pension Fund Regulations (GMPF) on a monthly basis.

**Payments:**

* payments within the Council’s normal course of business are reported retrospectively to the Council for approval;
* are made by BACS transfer, cheque, direct debit or debit card. All payments are approved by the Clerk within the agreed delegation arrangements
* payments outside the Council’s normal course of business are approved by the Chairman of Finance and, where appropriate, the Chairman of the relevant spending committee and are reported retrospectively to the Council for approval.

**Income**

* is banked in the Council’s name in a timely manner and reported to the Council

**The Internal Audit**

* is carried out by an independent Internal Auditor who reports to the Council on the adequacy of its records, procedures, systems, internal controls, regulations and risk management reviews.

**Standing Orders**

* the Council has its own Standing Orders which are based on the Model Standing Orders as recommended by N.A.L.C.

**Financial Orders**

* the Council has adopted and reviews updates as necessary each year.

**VAT**

* VAT payments are identified, recorded and will be reclaimed as appropriate.

**Petty Cash**

* all petty cash expenditure is recorded, supported by receipts and reimbursed at regular intervals.

**Asset Register**

* the Council maintains a register of all material assets owned or in its care. The RFO and Clerk to update as and when necessary and to be approved annually.

**Insurance**

* The Council’s insurance provision is reviewed annually both in relation to its schedule of cover and also its value for money.

**Code of Conduct**

* The Council has adopted the Local Government Association’s Code of Conduct;
* Each member must sign an Acceptance of the Code and complete a Register of Interest form. Members to consider every item on the agenda and ensure that any interest is declared at the beginning of the meeting or before the matter is discussed.
* an item ‘Declarations of Interest’ will be placed on every agenda.

**Next review February 2027**