

# Year End Audit Report



Marske and the New Forest

Period Audited: April 2024-March 2025

YEAR 24/25

Objective (Automated)	QUESTIONS	Answer	Recommendations
Proper Bookkeeping	What systems are used -	Excel Spreadsheets	
Proper Bookkeeping	ieScribe/Rialtas/Edge/Excel/Quickbooks etc		
Proper Bookkeeping	Is cashbook maintained and up to date?	Yes	
Proper Bookkeeping	Is cashbook arithmetically correct?	Yes	
Proper Bookkeeping	Is the cashbook regularly balanced?	Yes, monthly	
Proper Bookkeeping	What basis are the accounts made up on -	Cash - receipts and payments method.	
	cash or accruals?		
A) Standing Orders and Financial Regulations adopted and applied; AND	Has the council formally adopted standing orders and financial regulations?	Yes, both reviewed and updated to reflect the new Procurement Act changes.	
B) Payment Controls			
A) Standing Orders and Financial Regulations adopted and applied; AND	Has a Responsible financial officer been appointed with specific duties?	Yes, the Clerk performs this role.	
B) Payment Controls			
A) Standing Orders and Financial Regulations adopted and applied; AND	Have items or services above the de minimus amount been competitively purchased?	N/A - minimal transactions this year. Note of considering quotes for insurance has been observed within the minutes.	
B) Payment Controls			

A) Standing Orders and Financial Regulations adopted and applied; AND B) Payment Controls	Are payments in the cashbook supported by invoices, authorised and minuted?	Yes.		
A) Standing Orders and Financial Regulations adopted and applied; AND B) Payment Controls	Has VAT on payments been identified, recorded and reclaimed?	Yes. VAT 126 process in place.		
A) Standing Orders and Financial Regulations adopted and applied; AND B) Payment Controls	Does the Council have General Power of Competence?	Yes.		
A) Standing Orders and Financial Regulations adopted and applied; AND B) Payment Controls	Is s137 expenditure separately recorded and within statutory limits?	N/A due to GPoC.		
Risk Management Arrangements	Does a review of the minutes identify any unusual financial activity?	No.		
Risk Management Arrangements	Do minutes record the council carrying out an annual risk assessment?	Yes, the minutes of the Meeting held on 21 August reference the risk register being reviewed. I have also viewed the risk register document.		
Risk Management Arrangements	Is insurance cover appropriate and adequate?	Yes.		
Risk Management Arrangements	Are internal financial controls documented and regularly reviewed?	There is reference in the minutes to a review of the internal controls being carried out.		
Risk Management Arrangements	(Burial Authorities only) Is the Council aware of the Ministry of Justice guidance on "Managing the Safety of Burial Ground Memorials"	N/A		
Burial Authority	Has a sample of burials and interments been tested and the relevant paperwork and payments found to be in place?	N/A		
Budgetary Controls	Has the council prepared an annual budget in support of its precept?	Yes, comprehensive report published to the public setting out the precept and reasons for the increase and what it will be spent on. Good document, not often seen in other areas.		
Budgetary Controls	Is actual expenditure against the budget regularly reported to the council?	Yes, quarterly.		
Budgetary Controls	Are there any significant unexplained variances from budget?	No, all variances are explained.		
Income Controls	Is income properly recorded and promptly banked?	Yes.		
Income Controls	Does the precept recorded agree to the Council Tax authority's notification?	Yes. Matches to the government report.		
Income Controls	Are security controls over cash and near-cash adequate and effective?	No cash held.		

Petty Cash Procedures	Is all petty cash spent recorded and supported by VAT invoices/receipts?	N/A	
Petty Cash Procedures	Is petty cash expenditure reported to each council meeting?	N/A	
Petty Cash Procedures	Is petty cash reimbursement carried out regularly?	N/A	
Payroll Controls	Do all employees have contracts of employment with clear terms and conditions?	Yes.	
Payroll Controls	Do salaries paid agree with those approved by the council?	Yes.	
Payroll Controls	Are other payments to employees reasonable and approved by the council?	Yes.	
Payroll Controls	Have PAYE/NIC been properly operated by the council as an employer?	Yes.	
Asset Control	Does the council maintain a register of all material assets owned or in its care?	Yes.	
Asset Control	Are the assets and Investments registers up to date?	Yes.	
Asset Control	Do asset insurance valuations agree with those in the asset register?	Yes.	
Bank Reconciliation	Is there a bank reconciliation for each account?	Yes.	
Bank Reconciliation	Is a bank reconciliation carried out regularly and in a timely fashion?	Yes, monthly.	
Bank Reconciliation	Are there any unexplained balancing entries in any reconciliation?	No.	
Bank Reconciliation	Is the value of investments held summarised on the reconciliation?	N/A - no investments held.	
Year End Procedures	Are year end accounts prepared on the correct accounting basis (Receipts and Payments or Income and Expenditure)?	Yes - receipts and payments.	
Year End Procedures	Do accounts agree with the cashbook?	Yes.	
Year End Procedures	Is there an audit trail from underlying financial records to the accounts?	Yes.	
Year End Procedures	Where appropriate, have debtors and creditors been properly recorded?	N/A	
Market Authority	Is the Council are Market Authority and if so please provide a list of regular market traders so we can check their contracts & a rate card for contracted and casual traders	N/A	
Facilities	Do you manage any facilities, what systems do you use to record bookings and payments?	N/A	
Other Issues	Is the Council registered with the Information Commissioner? If so what is the Reference Number and what is the date of expiry	No, there is no record on the ICO online register, nor a subscription payment going out of the accounts. I understand that the Council tried to sign up on 11 April 2024 but this had somehow failed. The Clerk is aware and has sorted it out for the new financial year.	
Other Issues	What arrangements does the Council have for the back up of computer files?	Files are held on the laptop and synched with onedrive.	
Other Issues	Does the Council have responsibility for any Trust Funds or Charities? If so, are they independently examined?	No.	

This is not a true backup as files deleted locally will also be deleted on onedrive. Consider using a professional service provider to ensure that documents can be recovered if necessary.

Other Issues	Record of Minutes	Minutes are all up to date and held online.	
Other Issues	Do the Council have a .gov.uk domain and dedicated email addresses for Council business?	No - there is a org.uk domain in place. the clerk has a domain linked email address but Councillors use their own personal emails.	The cost of <a href="https://www.gov.uk">gov.uk</a> domains has reduced substantially now costing only £10 to purchase. Consider moving to a new domain and adding domain linked email accounts for Councillors.
Other Issues	Internal Audit report published by 1st July on the website?	Yes.	
Other Issues	Payments made in accordance with financial regulations, cheques, online banking, BACS, DD, credit or debit cards, other payments	Yes.	
Other Issues	S137 Grants- Do Grant Recipients fill in a report after given?	N/A	
	(during the 2024-25 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2023-24 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).	Yes.	
	Are all the councils policies available to view on the PC Website?	Yes. Key items missing and not sure if these have been adopted - publication scheme, biodiversity policy, equality and diversity policy. Also Financial Regulations are adopted but don't appear on the documents page on the website.	Consider reveiwing what mandatory policies the Council should have and take necessary action. Ensure the website is updated with the latest documents.
	Any other issues that are worthy of reporting.	The Council has a low income base and it is recommended that general reserves for such a small council be held at 12 months of net annual expenditure. This is to ensure that the Council has enough to cover all of its liabilities in the event that the precept is not paid or the Clerk needs to be covered by locum support during a period of absence.	Council should consider its reserves position and adjust accordingly.