

## LEVINGTON AND STRATTON HALL PARISH COUNCIL

### INTERNAL CONTROL STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2017

#### 1. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

Levington and Stratton Hall Parish 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.

The council is 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 on-going 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

##### **Levington and Stratton Hall Parish Council:**

The Parish Council reviews its obligations and objectives and approves budgets for the following year at its Parish Council meeting. The January meeting of the Parish Council approves the level of precept for the following financial year.

The Council has appointed a Finance Advisory Group. The Group meets several times during the financial year. Members of the Group monitor progress against objectives, financial systems and procedures, budgetary control and carry out regular reviews of financial matters. The minutes of the meetings of the Group are circulated to all members of the Council.

The full council meets six times each year and monitors progress against its aims and objectives at each meeting by discussing set agenda items, reviewing the financial statement, bank reconciliations, correspondence list, timesheets and other relevant reports from the Parish Clerk.

The Parish Council carries out regular reviews of its internal controls, systems and procedures each year end as part of the internal audit procedure and to remain compliant against the Transparency Code.

##### **Clerk to the council/Responsible Finance Officer:**

Levington and Stratton Hall Parish Council has appointed a Clerk [Lucy Buckle] to the Parish 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 Parish Council's finances. The Clerk is responsible for advising on the day to day compliance with laws and regulations that the Council is subject to and for managing risks. The Clerk also provides advice to help the Council ensure that its procedures, control systems and policies are adhered to.

**Payments:**

All payments are reported to the Parish Council for approval. Two members of the Council must sign every cheque or order for payment. The signatories should consider each cheque against the relevant invoice, sign the invoice and initial the cheque counterfoil. All authorised cheque signatories are members of the Council. **No officer of the Council can sign cheques.**

**Income:**

All income is received and banked in the council's name in a timely manner and reported to the council.

**Risk Assessments/Risk Management:**

The council reviews its risk assessment annually in March, and regularly reviews its systems and controls.

**Internal Audit:**

The council appoints an independent internal auditor [Heelis and Lodge] who reports to the council on an annual basis on the adequacy of it's:

- Records
- Procedures
- Systems
- Internal control
- Regulations
- Risk management

**4. REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS**

Levington and Stratton Hall Parish Council has responsibility for conducting an annual review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control, which should include a review of the effectiveness of internal audit. The results of that review must be considered by the Council, which should also approve the Statement on Internal Control.