

**Agenda Items 15-17**

**Year End (2019/20) Annual Governance and Accountability**

<b>Report Type:</b>	Public Report for Decision
<b>Purpose of Report:</b>	To recommend the completion of the year end financial accounts and the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2019/2020.
<b>Recommendations:</b>	<b>It is RECOMMENDED that: The Town Council:</b>  <b>(a) That Full Council APPROVE the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return “AGAR”) and that the Statement be signed by the Mayor and the Town Clerk of the meeting where approval was given.</b>  <b>(b) Full Council NOTES the Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet for the Council’s year end position as at 31 March 2020 and the period for the exercise of public rights for inspection of the financial accounts. AND That Full Council APPROVE the Annual Accounting Statements for the year ending 31 March 2020 (Section 2 of the AGAR) and the Annual Statements be signed by the Mayor of the meeting where approval was given.</b>
<b>Wards:</b>	All Wards
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Daniel Lucas – Town Clerk

**1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1. Internal audit comprised two visits to the Town Council (29 January 2020 and 26 May 2020). The concluding visit and report from the auditor is attached as Appendix A. Members are asked to note the contents therein.
- 1.2. The internal audit report is also contained in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (“AGAR”) Part 3 and is based upon an independent assessment of risk and the selected relevant procedures and controls for the financial year of 2019/2020. Members shall note no items of concern were raised for the purposes of the AGAR return.
- 1.3. Smaller authorities are required by law pursuant to the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 to prepare year end accounting statements (to 31 March 2020). These statements must accord with the practices as provided in the updated Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance, Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England Practitioner’s Guide (“JPAG”).

- 1.4. Members are asked to consider the AGAR form attached as Appendix B and to consider the assertions at Part 3, section 1. The Town Clerk can report that in addition to the assurance provided by the internal auditor, Members can be reassured that the Town Council has in place safe and secure systems of accounting and internal audit procedures to ensure that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper practices and that public money is safeguarded due to the Council's adherence to the AGAR, Part 3, section 1 assertions.
- 1.5. Members are asked to consider Part 3, section 1 and to approve the completion of this section of the AGAR in the affirmative for all parts and that the AGAR statement here can be signed by the Town Clerk and the Mayor of the meeting where approval was given.
- 1.6. Secondly, section 2 of the AGAR form provides for the year end accounting statements for 2019/2020. These figures have been reviewed and confirmed by the internal auditors. Alongside and further to the AGAR at section 2 the Town Council has produced further financial statements to provide full transparency to help an interested resident in Christchurch to appreciate the Council's financial position. Appendix C provides the Income and Expenditure Account and Appendix D the Council's Balance Sheet.
- 1.7. The Regulations of 2015 also provide for the public right of inspection of the accounts and this notice shall have an announcement date of 14 July 2020 providing any person the right to inspect the accounting records between the dates of 15 July 2020 and 13 August 2020. The full notice is shown as Appendix E.
- 1.8. Members are asked to consider Part 3, section 2 of the AGAR and approve the Annual Accounting Statements for the year ending 31 March 2020 and that the Annual Statement by signed by the Mayor of the meeting where approval was given.

## **2. IMPLICATIONS**

### **Legal**

- 2.1. The Law as highlighted above requires the return of the AGAR form and the right of the public to inspect the Council's accounts.

### **Environmental**

- 2.2. None.

### **Financial and Risk**

- 2.3. No financial risks have been identified by the internal audit process and following completion of the AGAR form the Town Clerk shall send the submission required to the Council's external auditors.

### **Equalities**

- 2.4. None.

### **Consultation and Engagement**

- 2.5. None – other than the completion of the public's right to inspect the accounts.

## **3. CONCLUSION**

- 3.1. Members are asked to consider the report and to approve the recommendations outlined.

**Appendices:**

Appendix A – Internal Audit Report conducted 26 May 2020.

Appendix B – AGAR Form.

Appendix C – Town Council's Income and Expenditure Accounts.

Appendix D – Balance Sheet.

Appendix E – Notice of Public Right to Inspect.