

Lambourn Parish Council

www.lambourn-pc.gov.uk

Interim Internal Audit Report 2025-26 financial year



Claire Lingard-McKay

Working the Greener Way - Online



Table of Contents

1. The role of Internal audit	2
2. Internal audit approach	3
3. Internal audit coverage	4
4. Internal Audit opinion	5
5. Council profile	6
6. Corporate governance	7
7. Annual Independent Internal Audit	8
Internal control objective 'A'	8
Internal control objective 'B'	10
Internal control objective 'C'	11
Internal control objective 'D'	13
Internal control objective 'E'	14
Internal control objective 'F'	16
Internal control objective 'G'	17
Internal control objective 'H'	18
Internal control objective 'I'	19
Internal control objective 'J'	20
Internal control objective 'K'	21
Internal control objective 'L'	22
Internal control objective 'M'	23
Internal control objective 'N'	24
Internal control objective 'O'	25
8. Audit Assurance Review	26
9. FY2025-26 Action Plan Recommendations	27
10. Confirmation of independence and Quality Assurance	28
11. Internal Audit Performance	28
12. Acknowledgements	28

This Internal Audit Report has been prepared for the sole use of Lambourn Parish Council. To the fullest extent permitted by law, no responsibility or liability is accepted by Working the Greener Way Online (WGW Online) to any third party who purports to use or rely, for any reason whatsoever, on this report, its contents or conclusions.

1. The role of Internal audit

The requirement for an internal audit function in local government is detailed within the Accounts and Audit (Wales & England) Regulations 2015, which states that a relevant body must:

‘Undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, control and governance processes, taking into account public sector and internal auditing standards and guidance’.

The standards for ‘proper practices’ in relation to internal audit are laid down in the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards 2015 as amended from time to time [the Standards].

The role of internal audit is best summarised through its definition within the Standards, as an:

‘Independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organisation’s operations. It helps an organisation accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes.’

The Council is responsible for establishing and maintaining appropriate risk management processes, control systems, accounting records and governance arrangements. Internal audit plays a vital role in advising the Council that these arrangements are in place and operating effectively.

The Council’s response to internal audit activity should lead to the strengthening of the control environment and, therefore, contribute to the achievement of the Council’s objectives.

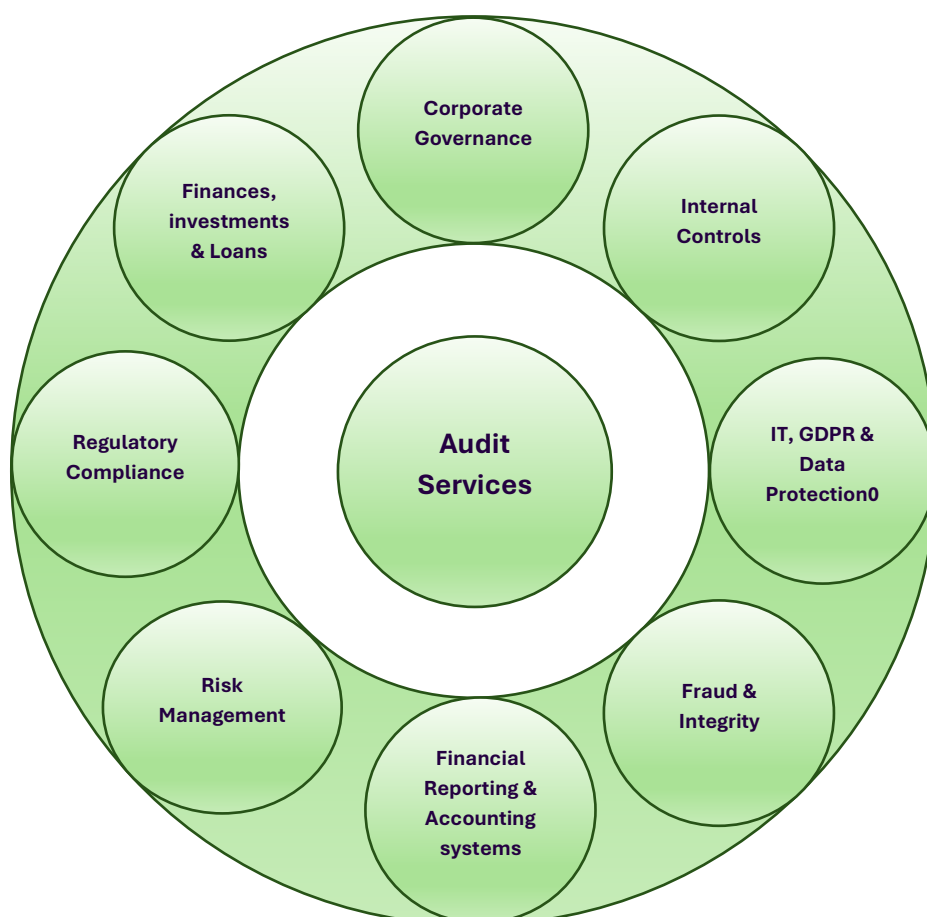
2. Internal audit approach

The risks inherent in the Council's internal control methods

To enable effective outcomes, our internal audit approach provides a combination of assurance review and consulting activities. Assurance reviews involve assessing how well systems and processes are designed and working, with consulting activities available to improve those systems and processes where necessary.

A full range of internal audit assurance reviews are performed in forming the year-end opinion with the approach to each area of review determined by:

-  The level of assurance required to meet statutory requirements;
-  The Council's short, medium, and long term objectives;
-  The level of confidence in the policies and procedures; and,
-  The risks inherent in the Council's internal control methods.



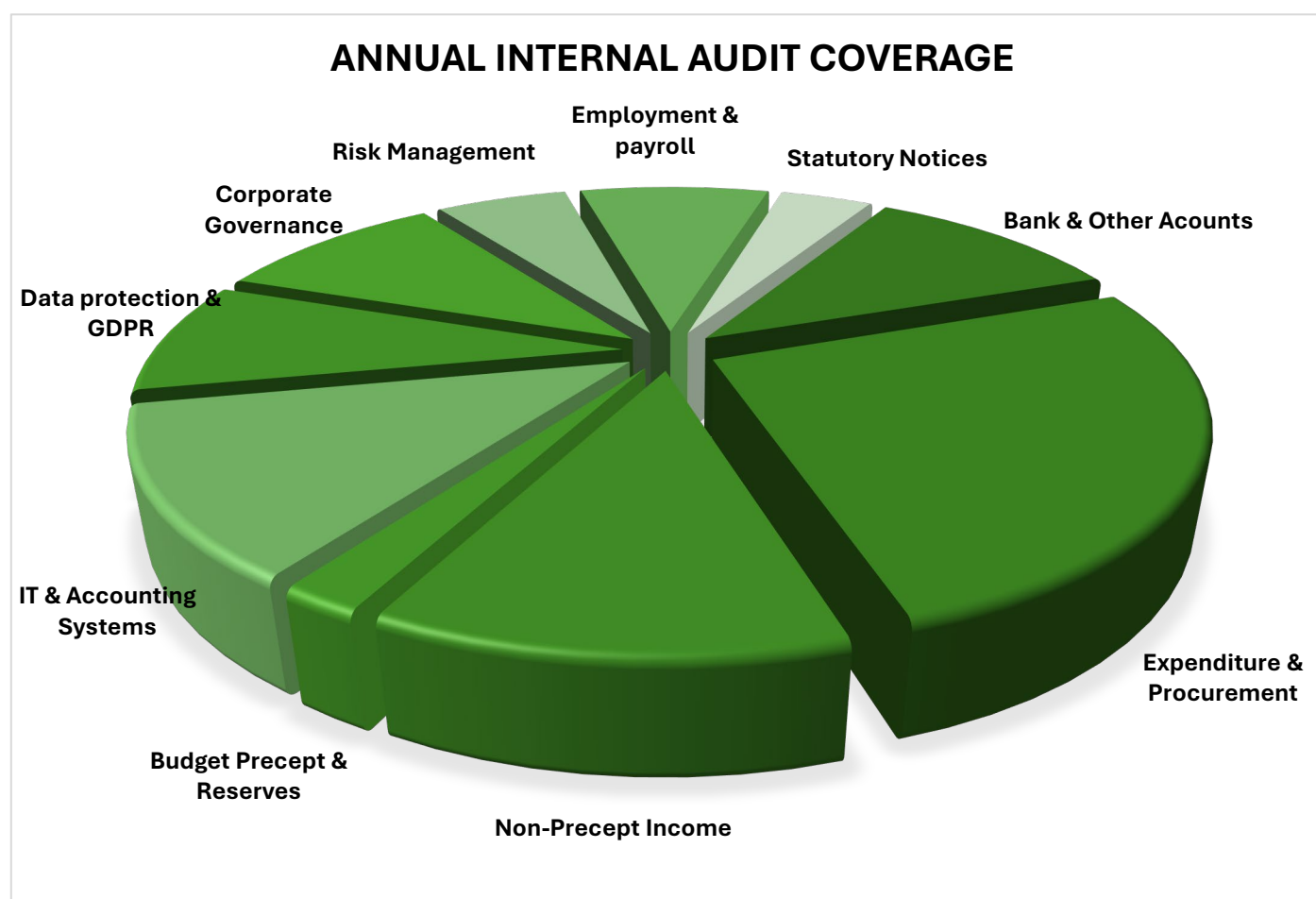
3. Internal audit coverage

The annual Internal Audit plan was prepared to take account of the unique characteristics and relative risks of Lambourn Parish Council's activities and to support the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement and the Annual Statement of Accounts contained within the Annual Return.

Assurance reviews in fifteen areas have been planned and performed to obtain sufficient information and explanation considered necessary to give reasonable assurance that the Council's Internal Controls systems are functioning effectively. The Internal Audit plan for the 2025-26 financial year was approved in consultation with the Council's Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) and was informed by our own assessment of risk and materiality.

The plan will be modified in future years, in consultation with the Clerk & RFO, and Council Members to ensure it is aligned to the objectives of, and key risks facing the Council.

WGW online has provided assurance across sixteen areas of review, including an enhanced review of Corporate Governance, which correspond to the fifteen Internal Control objectives contained within the Annual Governance & Accountability Return: Annual Internal Audit Report, during the 2025-26 financial year to the 30th of September 2025.



4. Internal Audit opinion

The Practice Manager of Working the Greener Way online is responsible for the delivery of the annual Internal Audit opinion and report that may be used by the Council to inform its Governance and Accounting statements in the Annual Return. The interim opinion, based on our first review of the 2025-26 financial year was conducted onsite with the assistance of the Clerk & RFO: Mr Gary Wyatt-Hawkins on the 12th of November 2025, examined the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's framework of governance, risk management and Internal Controls.

In giving this opinion, assurance can never be absolute and therefore, only reasonable assurance may be provided that there are no major weaknesses in the processes reviewed. In assessing the level of assurance to be given, I have based my opinion on:

-  The interim audit work & reporting completed onsite and at our offices;
-  The results of the follow up discussions conducted with the Clerk & RFO;
-  The responses of the Council to prior year's Internal Audit report;
-  The quality and performance of the Council's administrative function and the extent of compliance with the Standards defined in the Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Panel Practitioner's Guide 2025; and,
-  The proportion of Lambourn Parish Council's audit requirement that has already been covered during the interim audit.

Internal audit opinion

I am satisfied that sufficient assurance work has been carried out to allow me to form a reasonable conclusion on the adequacy and effectiveness of Lambourn Parish Council's Internal Control Ecosystem.

In my opinion, Lambourn Parish Council's framework of governance, risk management and management control has 'Substantial Assurance' with the majority of internal controls working in practice.

Where weaknesses have been identified, detailed recommendations for improvement are recorded in Section 9: 'Action Plan FY2025-26' of this Internal Audit Report.

5. Council profile

Council name:	Lambourn Parish Council
Address:	Memorial Hall, Oxford Street, Lambourn, Berkshire RG17 8XP
Unitary authority:	West Berkshire Council, Council Offices, Market Street, Newbury Berkshire RG14 5LD
Proper officer:	Mr Gary Wyatt-Hawkins
Clerk & RFO:	Mr Gary Wyatt-Hawkins
General Power of Competence:	The current Proper Officer is CiLCA qualified. The Council last reconfirmed its eligibility to employ the General Power of Competence (GPoC) during the Annual Meeting of the Town Council on Sunday the 07 th of May 2025
Members:	Fifteen seats
Elected Members:	Seven elected Members
Co-opted Members:	Three co-opted Members (Five vacant seats)
Chairperson:	Councillor Mr Steve Mead
Vice-chairperson:	No Councillor wished to stand for the position of vice-chairperson
Members Register:	A physical Members Register is in place and maintained at the Council's Office. A Hyperlinks to the redacted Member's Register entry is available from the Councillors; profiles page on the Council's official website
Head of Electorate:	3,103 (Three thousand, one-hundred and three) 01.04.25
Current precept:	£182,115 for the 2025-26 financial year.
External Auditor's report:	FY2024-25 External Auditor's opinion was 'Unqualified', report received on the 20 th of September 2025
Official website:	The Council maintains a free to access website on a secure server, published at https://www.lambourn-pc.gov.uk

6. Corporate governance

The objective in this area of review is to ensure that the Council has robust corporate governance arrangements in place, and that, as far as we may reasonably be expected to ascertain (as we do not attend Council or Committee meetings) all meetings are conducted in accordance with the adopted Standing Orders and no actions of a potentially unlawful nature have been or are being considered for implementation. To meet the above objectives, we have:

-  Noted that the Council's Financial Regulations were last Reviewed and Readopted at the 07th of September 2025 Annual Meeting of the Parish Council, under Minute reference 013-05/25;
-  Noted that the Council's Standing Orders were last Reviewed and Readopted at the 07th of September 2025 Annual Meeting of the Parish Council, under Minute reference 013-05/25;
-  Commenced our review of the minutes of Full Council and its Committees (excluding Planning) for FY2025-26 to the 30th of September 2025 ensuring that no issues affecting the Council's financial stability either in the short, medium or long term exist;
-  Noted that the Council has adopted Terms of Reference and Delegated Authority for its Committees, and its Working Groups;
-  Noted that, the Council received an 'Unqualified' External Auditor's (PKF Littlejohn) Opinion for the 2024-25 financial year;
-  Noted that the [Notice of Conclusion of Audit](#) and the External Auditor's certificate and report is published on the Council's official website at as at the 12th of November 2025;
-  Noted that the Council maintains a comprehensive portfolio of policy documents;
-  We note that the Council maintains a formal Members Register of Interests which is held in the Town Council's offices and available via Councillor's profile details on the official website;
-  Noted that the Council maintains its official website on a government specific domain at <https://www.lambourn-pc.gov.uk> upon which the Council's Minutes, Policies, and Member profiles are available;
-  Noted that all Members have been issued with council e-mail addresses for exclusive use on Council business. Councillor email-addresses are published in the footer of their profile on the Councillors section on the Council's official website;
-  Noted that the Council is registered with the Information Commissioners' Office as a Data Registrant;
-  Noted that the Council has robust General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) policies in place; and,
-  The Council is developing a comprehensive Cyber Security / resilience strategy and is working towards achieving the Cyber Security Essentials kite mark;

There were no matters arising in this area of review warranting formal comment or recommendation.

Outcome - Corporate Governance

Substantial Assurance

7. Annual Independent Internal Audit

Internal control objective 'A'

'Appropriate accounting Records have been properly kept throughout the financial year'

The objective in this area of review is to ensure that the accounting records are being maintained accurately and currently, and that no anomalous entries appear in the financial ledgers.

Finance systems

The Council maintains its financial records using Rialtas Alpha Accounting Software and has done so since the 2016-17 financial year.

To meet the above objectives of this area of review, we have: -

-  Noted that that the Clerk & RFO performed the year-end close down for the 2024-25 financial year with the assistance of Rialtas consultants;
-  Checked but was unable to verified that the closing balance for the 2024-25 financial year and noted that there was a discrepancy with the brought forward as the opening balance of the 2025-26 financial year with reference to the opening and closing balances declared on the Closing Trial Balance FY2024-25, the Opening Trial Balance for 2025-26, the Councils Bank Statements and the Approved Annual Return Accounting Statements;
-  Noted that the quality of data entry into Rialtas Alpha continues to be exemplary;
-  Noted that VAT has been properly recorded in all cases examined;
-  Noted that the Council is not required to be registered VAT and submits VAT returns on a s.126 basis. We note that no VAT reclaim has been made during the 2025-26 financial year to the 30th or September 2025;
-  Noted that Awards of Grant Aid for the period of the 01st of April to the 30th of September 2025 were made using the General Power of Competence;
-  Noted that no formal segregation of duties are in place regarding the operation of the Rialtas Alpha system as the position of the Clerk & RFO is held by the same person; and,
-  Checked and verified all transactions recorded in the Rialtas Alpha Cashbook 1: Barclays Bank current account and Cashbook 7: Barclays Bank Savings account for the months of April, June and September 2025 with no matters arising.

Bank and building society accounts

The Council retains a single Building Society Account with the Newbury Building Society; which is utilised to retain the Council's earmarked reserves, CIL and S106 funds. The account is a passbook account and has an appropriate number of Council Members as authorising signatories to ensure continuity of service.

Investments and Loans

The Clerk & RFO has certified that during the 2025-26 financial year from the 01st of April 2025 to the 30th of September 2025 the Council held no loans owed either by it or two it.

Credit & Debit cards

We note that the Council has a single debit card in place, issued on the Barclays bank account. All expenditure via the debit card is treated to the same standard of scrutiny as other payment documents. The card is issued in the Clerk & RFO's name, is held in a locked and secure location and may only be used by the Clerk & RFO for incidental expenditure.

A deposit only card is used to make cash and cheque deposits directly at the Lambourn Post Office on the day of receipt, e.g. Market rent is banked on the same day as it is received by the Council.

Conclusion & Recommendation

We were unable to verify that the closing balance for the 2024-25 had been correctly brought forward as the opening balance of the 2025-26 financial year with reference the Closing Trial balance recorded on Rialtas in our retained year-end reports for the 2024-25 financial year. The year-end balance for the Newbury Building Society account opening balance is different from the closing balance on our retained records.

1) The Clerk & RFO should check Closing Trial Balance for the 2024-25 financial year and verify this as there may have been adjustments applied subsequent to the year-end audit having been conducted. If so, the correct year-end backup file should be supplied to be retained on our permanent audit file.

We shall extend this area of review during the year-end audit.

Outcome - Internal Control Objective 'A'

Substantial Assurance

Internal control objective 'B'

'This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved, and VAT was appropriately accounted for.'

The objective in this area of review is to ensure that Council resources are released in accordance with the Council's adopted Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, budgets and other approved procedures, that payments are supported by appropriate documentation, either in the form of an original trade invoice or other appropriate form of document confirming the payment as due and/or an acknowledgement of receipt, where no other form of invoice is available, that correct analysis codes have been applied to invoices when processed, and that VAT has been appropriately identified and coded to the control account for periodic recovery. To meet the above objectives, we have: -

-  Noted that the Council was not required to undertake any formal Tenders during the 2024-25 financial year to the 30th of September 2025;
-  Checked and verified that all quotations undertaken during the period of the 1st of April to the 30th of September 2025 have been undertaken in accordance with the Council's extant Standing Orders and Financial Regulations;
-  Noted that no Purchase Order system is in place due to the size of the Council. Significant purchases are confirmed to the supplier by the Clerk & RFO, via email, at the instruction of the Council;
-  Commenced our payment document testing process for the 2025-26 financial year, to ensure compliance with the above criteria. We selected a sample of high value (non-payroll related) payments individually in excess of £1,000.00, together with a more random sample of every 20th cashbook transaction irrespective of value for the financial year to 30th of September 2025. The interim test sample comprises 17 payments, totalling £110,323.741 and equating to 65% of all non-pay related payments made to the above date. All payment documents in our test sample complied with the testing criteria;
-  Checked and verified that all payment documents, which have been validated by the Clerk & RFO, are presented to Members of the Full Council for Scrutiny and Approval;
-  Checked and verified that all payment authorisations are recorded in the Council's published in the Minutes;
-  Checked and verified the Council's VAT control account noting that the Q4 2024-25 financial year reclaim, in the amount of £2,545.04, was received to bank on the 08th of April 2025; and,
-  Noted that the Council has not submitted a s.126 VAT reclaim during the period of the 01st of April to the 30th of September 2025.

There were no matters arising in this area of review warranting formal comment or recommendation.

We shall extend this area of review during the year-end audit.

Outcome - Internal Control Objective 'B'

Substantial Assurance

Internal control objective ‘C’

‘This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.’

The objective in this area of review is to ensure that the Council has put in place appropriate arrangements to identify all potential areas of risk of both a financial and health and safety nature. We also aim to ensure that appropriate arrangements exist to monitor and manage those risks to minimise the opportunity for their coming to fruition. To meet the above objectives, we have: -

Health & Safety & Business Risk

-  Noted that the Council maintains both a Risk Management Policy and Health & Safety and Business Risk Assessments which are created and maintained with input from each of the Council’s standing committees;
-  Noted that the Council’s Risk Management Policy was last Adopted at the 07th of May 2025 Annual Meeting of the Parish Council under Minute reference 13;
-  Noted that the Council’s FY2025-26 Risk Registers were last reviewed and formally adopted during the 07th of May 2025 Annual Meeting of the Parish Council, under Minute reference 015.

Insurance

-  Examined the Council’s insurance policy to ensure that appropriate cover is in place. The Council’s General Cover is provided by Zurich Municipal under a Select for Local Councils policy, number YLL-2720841233 with the period of cover running from the 01st of October 2025 on the 30th of September 2025.

Key features include:

Public & Products Liability	£12,000,000
Employees Liability	£10,000,000
Hirers’ Liability	£2,000,000
Personal Accident (Per incident)	£2,000,000
Libel & Slander	£250,000
Fidelity Guarantee	£250,000
Legal Expenses	£200,000
Business Interruption	£10,000

It is our opinion that this level of cover is adequate for Council’s Current and ongoing insurance requirements. However, we draw the Clerk & RFO’s attention to the Statement of Fact on page 2 of the Insurance Schedule and ask that these requirements are noted.

Playground & Recreation areas

-  Noted that the Council has three playgrounds under its management: The Old Cricket Field (Skate Park), Eastbury playground and Mill Lane. The Council readopted its Playground Management Policy during the 07th May 2025 Annual Meeting of the Full Council under Minute reference 13;

-  Noted that both the Clerk & RFO and the Deputy Clerk undertake the regular visual inspections of the Council's playgrounds and recreation areas and that neither has attended a playground inspectors' course and is not a qualified playground inspector';
-  Noted that the Clerk & RFO, or the Deputy Clerk, (dependent upon who is conducting the inspection), completes a playground inspection report/form to identify any defects or concerns;
-  Noted that the Deputy Clerk's playground inspection reports are submitted for scrutiny to the BOSA Committee for action. We are advised by the Clerk & RFO that these reports are retained for the statutory required period of eighteen plus three years (twenty one years) by the Council; and,
-  Noted that the RoSPA accredited Play Inspection Company undertakes the biannual independent playground & recreation are inspections on behalf of the council. Minutes confirm the reports are subject to scrutiny at both Committee and Full Council as appropriate.

There were no matters arising in this area of review warranting formal comment or recommendation.

We shall extend this area of review during the year-end audit.

Outcome - Internal Control Objective 'C'

Substantial Assurance

Internal control objective 'D'

'The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process: progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.'

The objective in this area of review is to ensure that the Council has determined its annual budget based on sound assumptions of intended spending, that reasonable and proportionate funding is available to meet future spending plans, and that Members are kept aware of actual budgetary performance during the course of the financial year. We also seek to assess the adequacy of retained reserves, be they in respect of specific earmarked funds or the General Fund. To meet the above objectives, we have:

-  Noted from our review of the Council's Minutes that Members receive a Budget Vs Actual statement, both at Full Council and Committee level, on a monthly basis. A full Budget vs Actual report is presented to the Finance Committee on the 10th day of each month following the previous quarter end;
-  Noted that the Council was in the process of undertaking a formal budget setting and Precept determination process, to determine the Council's projected expenditure requirements for the 2025-26 financial year, as at the date of the interim internal audit on the 12th of November 2025;
-  The Clerk & RFO produces the budget/forecast report from Rialtas and breaks this down into committee reports in Excel. Each committee completes their own budget and gives their feedback to the Finance Committee which reviews this and submits a revised budget to the Full Council for Members' consideration;

Noted the Cash at bank as at 30th of September 2025

Barclays Bank Current Account	£107,734.62
Barclays Bank Savings Account	£126,694.48
Newbury Building Society Account	£85,006.84
Total	£319,435.94

There were no matters arising in this area of review warranting formal comment or recommendation.

We shall extend this area of review during the year-end audit.

Outcome - Internal Control Objective 'D'

Substantial assurance

Internal control objective 'E'

'Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.'

The objective in this area of review is to ensure that the Council maintains appropriate records to ensure that all income due to the Council is identified, invoiced accordingly, and recovered within an appropriate time scale.

To meet the above objectives, we have: -

-  Noted that the Council reviewed Approved its fees and charges for the 2025-26 financial year during the budget setting and precept determination process held in December 2024;
-  Noted that in addition to the Precept the Council receives supplementary income from a relatively limited variety of areas including: Hall hire, Burial fees, Market fees, Paddock rental, VAT reclaims, CIL and S106 funds, occasional grants and donations and Bank interest; and,
-  Commenced our Review of Income for the 2025-26 financial year by reviewing the income sources below. Checking and verifying the invoicing to receipt process and the Council's approach to Credit Control with no matters arising.

Sources of Income

Precept FY2025-26

The Council will receive a Precept in the amount of £182,115 for the 2025-26 financial year.

Burial fees

The Council has received Burial fees in the amount of £3,573.50 to the 30th of September 2025.

Market fees

The Council has received Market fees in the amount of £1,992.50 to the 30th of September 2025.

CIL fees

The Council has received CIL in the amount of £1,592.56 to the 30th of September 2025.

Hall Hire fees

The Council has received Hall Hire fees in the amount of £1,399.10 to the 30th of September 2025.

Bank Interest

The Council receives interest payments on its Barclays Bank Savings Account and its Newbury Building Society Account. The Council has received Bank Interest in the amount of £1,084.16 to the 30th of September 2025.

Paddock fees

The Council has received Burial fees in the amount of £596.00 to the 30th of September 2025.

s.126 VAT reclaims

The Council has received s.126 VAT reclaims in the amount of £2,545.04

-  Noted that the Council provides no services requiring the application of VAT;
-  Noted that the Council has no leases in place for any third party;
-  Noted that the Council holds no saleable stock; and,
-  Noted that there is clear evidence of robust and proportionate Credit Control management Internal Controls in place. There is no significant Day Sales Overdue debt as at the 30th of September 2025.

There were no matters arising in this area of review warranting formal comment or recommendation.

We shall extend this area of review during the year-end audit.

Outcome - Internal Control Objective 'E'

Substantial Assurance

Internal control objective 'F'

'Petty Cash Payments were properly supported by receipts; all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.'

The objective in this area of review is to ensure that the Council manages its Petty Cash system(s) in accordance with its adopted Financial Regulations, that items purchased are suitable for the Council's use, transactions are correctly recorded in the Council's cashbooks, that VAT is identified for recovery where appropriate and that the Petty Cash account is reconciled on an appropriate basis.

The Council does not operate a Petty Cash System, with all incidental payments being made via the Council's issued Debit Card.

There were no matters arising in this area of review warranting formal comment or recommendation.

We shall extend this area of review during the year-end audit.

Outcome - Internal Control Objective 'F'

Not Applicable

Internal control objective 'G'

'Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.'

The objective in this area of review is to ensure that the Council is appropriately observing legislation with regard to the Employee Rights Act 1998 and the requirements of HMRC legislation as regards the deduction and payment of income tax and NI contributions, together with meeting the requirements of the LGPS.

To meet the above objectives, we have: -

-  Noted that the Council has five employees: The Clerk & RFO, Deputy Clerk, Caretaker, Relief Caretaker and Litter Picker;
-  Checked and verified the Establishment list provided by the Clerk & RFO;
-  Noted that the Clerk & RFO and Deputy Clerk are in receipt of employment contracts based upon HALC model documents;
-  Noted the payroll production process remains outsourced to DCK Accounting Services;
-  Checked and verified the Payroll and Pensions reports from 01.04.24 to 30.09.25;
-  Checked and verified the gross salaries paid to individuals in September 2024 with reference to the approved Establishment List of staff salaries for 2025-26; and,
-  Verified the detail of the net salary and third-party payments of PAYE / NI and Pension contributions by reference to payslips and payroll summary reports and the subsequent payments issued.

There were no matters arising in this area of review warranting formal comment or recommendation.

We shall extend this area of review during the year-end audit to include a) a review of the Council's Payroll to the 31st of March 2026, b) an in-depth review of the Council's March 2026 Payroll and the statutory year-end papers.

Outcome - Internal Control Objective 'G'

Substantial Assurance

Internal control objective 'H'

'Assets and Investments Registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.'

The objective in this area of review is to ensure that the Council has prepared and maintains a register of its stock of land, buildings, vehicles, furniture and equipment as required by the Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Panel Practitioners' Guide 2025.

The Council maintains its Fixed Asset Register in a basic spreadsheet cashbook, with a recorded asset value as of 31/03/25 of £316,415.

There were no matters arising in this area of review warranting formal comment or recommendation.

We shall extend this area of review during the year-end audit.

Outcome - Internal Control Objective 'H'

Substantial Assurance

Internal control objective 'I'

'Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.'

The objective in this area of review is to ensure that the Council conducts regular reconciliations of the bank, building society and other investment accounts in which it maintains the public funds raised by taxation. That these reconciliations along with the corresponding account statements are presented to Members for their scrutiny and approval with that being recorded in the Minutes of the Full Council or its Committees.

To meet the above objectives, we have:

-  Noted that there is clear evidence recorded in the Council's Approved and Published Minutes and in the Council's Rialtas Accounting system that the Clerk & RFO reconciles both of the Council's cashbooks: CB1 Barclays Bank Current Account and CB7 Barclays Bank Savings Account on a monthly basis;
-  The Council's Newbury Building Society Account is reconciled once annually when the passbook is updated on the 31st of March;
-  Checked and verified the Bank Reconciliations on the Council's two Barclays Bank Accounts and the Cash & Investment reconciliation as at the 30th of April, the 30th of June, and the 30th of September 2025 with no matters arising; and,
-  Noted that the reconciliations and corresponding bank statements are subject to scrutiny by a nominated Council Member who reviews the financial accounts on behalf of the Council.

There were no matters arising in this area of review warranting formal comment or recommendation.

We shall extend this area of review during the year-end audit.

Outcome - Internal Control Objective 'I'

Substantial Assurance

Internal control objective 'J'

'Accounting Statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (Receipts and Payments or Income and Expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.'

The objective in this area of review is to ensure that accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments), agreed to the cashbook, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.' To meet the above objectives, we have:

Noted that the Council's accounts are managed in Rialtas Alpha Accounting software, a sector specific product designed for Town, Parish and Community Councils, with both Sales and Purchase Ledger Modules installed.

We have checked and verified the contents of the Council's Rialtas Alpha cashbooks, Sales and Purchase Day Books, Nominal Ledger and Trial balance as at the 30th of September 2025, and consider that the half-years transactions to the 30th of September have been accurately and properly recorded. Rialtas Alpha has been used to manage the following working records, which have all been checked and verified from the 01st of April 2025 to the 30th of September 2025 with reference to prime documentation:

Rialtas Alpha Accounting system FY2025-26



Cashbooks 1 & 7



Monthly Bank Reconciliation reports



Income & Expenditure Account



Earmarked Reserves report



VAT Preview report



Nominal Ledger report



Statutory Balance Sheet



Cash & Investment reconciliation



Reserves reconciliation report



Trial Balance report

Further, we have checked and verified the transactions contained on Cashbooks 1 and 7 the Barclays Bank current and savings accounts for the period of the 01st to the 30th of April 2025, the 01st to the 30th of June 2025 and the 01st to the 30th of September 2025 with reference to supporting prime documentation.

We have checked and verified the Trial Balance as at the 30th of September 2025, ensuring that the cashbooks remained in balance, with no matters arising.

There were no matters arising in this area of review warranting formal comment or recommendation.

We shall extend this area of review during the year-end audit.

Outcome - Internal Control Objective 'J'

Substantial Assurance

Internal control objective 'K'

If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2024-25, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt (*If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2024-25 AGAR tick "not covered"*).

The objective in this area of review is to ensure that the Council is to ensure that where a council has certified itself as exempt from a limited review in the prior financial year, it met with the exemption criteria to do so.

Lambourn Parish Council has a turnover in excess of £25,000.00 and as such it does not meet the exemption criteria. The Council was subject a limited assurance review of its 2024-25 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) as required by statute.

There were no matters arising in this area of review warranting formal comment or recommendation.

We shall extend this area of review during the year-end audit.

Outcome - Internal Control Objective 'K'

Not Applicable

Internal control objective 'L'

'The authority publishes information on a free to access website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with any relevant transparency code requirements.'

The objective in this area of review is to ensure that the Council publishes information on a free to access website, hosted on a secure server, and compliant with the Transparency Code (where applicable), prevailing Accessibility Legislation and the General Data Protection Legislation (GDPR) and has appropriate Data Protection policies in place.

To meet the above objectives, we have:

-  Noted that the Council is registered as a Data Registrant with the Information Commissioner's Office;
-  Noted that the Council maintains its official website is hosted on a JSEC Compliant server, which is required of all public authorities utilising government specific domains, published under the domain <https://lambourn-pc.gov.uk/> ;
-  Noted that the website contains a vast array of information which may be identified with ease;
-  Noted that the website is compliant with current accessibility legislation, a mandatory requirement of the Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Panel Practitioners Guide 2025;
-  Noted that the Council's turnover is in excess of £25,000 and that it is not currently required to comply with the Transparency Code;
-  Noted that the Council's currently adopted Standing Orders and Financial Regulations on its website;
-  Noted that the Council publishes its adopted Policies and Procedures on its website;
-  Noted that the Council publishes the Agenda and Minutes of its Full Council and Standing Committee meetings on its website;
-  Noted that the Council publishes an archive of the prior year Minutes & Agenda on its website;
-  Noted that although the Council publishes its audited prior year accounts with the corresponding Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) containing the External Auditor's opinion, corresponding Internal Audit reports and Notice of Conclusion of Audit announcements on its website;
-  Noted that the Council has published the diary of meetings for the 2025-26 Municipal Year on its website; and,
-  Noted that website contains contact information for a variety of service requirements.

There were no matters arising in this area of review warranting formal comment or recommendation.

We shall extend this area of review during the year-end audit.

Outcome - Internal Control Objective 'L'

Substantial Assurance

Internal control objective 'M'

'The authority, during the previous year (2024-25) correctly provided for the period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (*evidenced by the notice published on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set*).'

The objective in this area of review is to ensure that the Council has met its statutory requirements to publish the Notice for the Exercise of Public Rights meeting the following criteria: The notice must be published, at least one day after the formal announcement has been made at a meeting of the Full Council or its committees as recorded in the Council's minutes for a period of exactly 30 working days, to include the first ten working days in July. The notice is required to be published on the Council's website and prominently on its noticeboards.

To meet the above objectives, we have:

-  Checked and verified the Council's minutes to confirm that the Resolution to publish the Notice of Exercise of Public Rights for the 2024-25 financial year AGAR submission was made during the 18th of June 2025 meeting of the Town Council, under Minute reference 50(e);
-  The date of the Announcement is recorded as the 19th of June 2025;
-  The Commencement of the Period for Exercise of Public Rights is recorded as the 23rd of June 2025;
-  The Conclusion of the Period for Exercise of Public Rights is recorded as the 23rd of July 2025;
-  The Period for the Notice of Exercise of Public Rights was exactly twenty-three working days, and not the statutorily required thirty working days including the including the first ten working days in July as statutorily required;
-  Noted that the Notice of Exercise of Public Rights was not published on the Council's official website as at the 12th of November 2025; and,
-  Checked and verified that the Notice of Exercise of Public Rights was displayed, prominently, on the Council's notice boards.

Conclusion & recommendation

The Council did not comply with Regulation 15 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 as it failed to make proper provision for the exercise of public rights in relation to 2024-25 financial year AGAR and accounts as the notice was not published for the statutorily required thirty working days including the first ten working days in July.

1) The Council must answer 'No' to Assertion 4 of the Annual Governance Statement for 2025-26 and ensure that it makes proper provision for the exercise of public rights during 2026-27.

Outcome - Internal Control Objective 'M'

No Assurance

Internal control objective 'N'

The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2024-25 AGAR (*see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes*)

The objective in this area of review is to ensure that the Council has met its statutory requirements to publish the Notice of Conclusion of Audit, after the Receipt of the External Auditor's certificate and report.

To meet the above objectives, we have:

-  Noted that the Council received an 'Unqualified' External Auditor's report and certificate, in respect of the 2024-25 financial year, from PKF Littlejohn LLP dated the 20th of September 2025;
-  Noted that the Announcement of the Notice of Conclusion of Audit was made on the 20th of September 2025, by Mr Gary Wyatt-Hawkins the Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer (RFO);
-  Noted that the AGAR, External Auditor's Certificate and report and the Notice of Conclusion of Audit for the 2024-25 financial year are published on the Council's official website; and,
-  Checked and verified with the Clerk & RFO that the Notice of Conclusion of Audit for the 2024-25 financial year was published prominently on the Council's Noticeboards.

There were no matters arising in this area of review warranting formal comment or recommendation.

We shall extend this area of review during the year-end audit.

Outcome - Internal Control Objective 'N'

Substantial Assurance

Internal control objective 'O'

FOR LOCAL COUNCILS ONLY: Trust fund (*Including charitable*) - The Council met its responsibilities as a trustee.

The objective in this area of review is to ensure that the Council has met its statutory requirements where it acts as a trustee for any trust fund or charitable trust, including maintaining separate financial and bank accounts and making all required statutory returns to the Charities Commission and/or the HMRC.



The Clerk & RFO has certified that Lambourn Parish Council is not responsible for any Trust Fund or Charitable Trust and has no responsibilities as a trustee for any organisation.

There were no matters arising in this area of review warranting formal comment or recommendation.

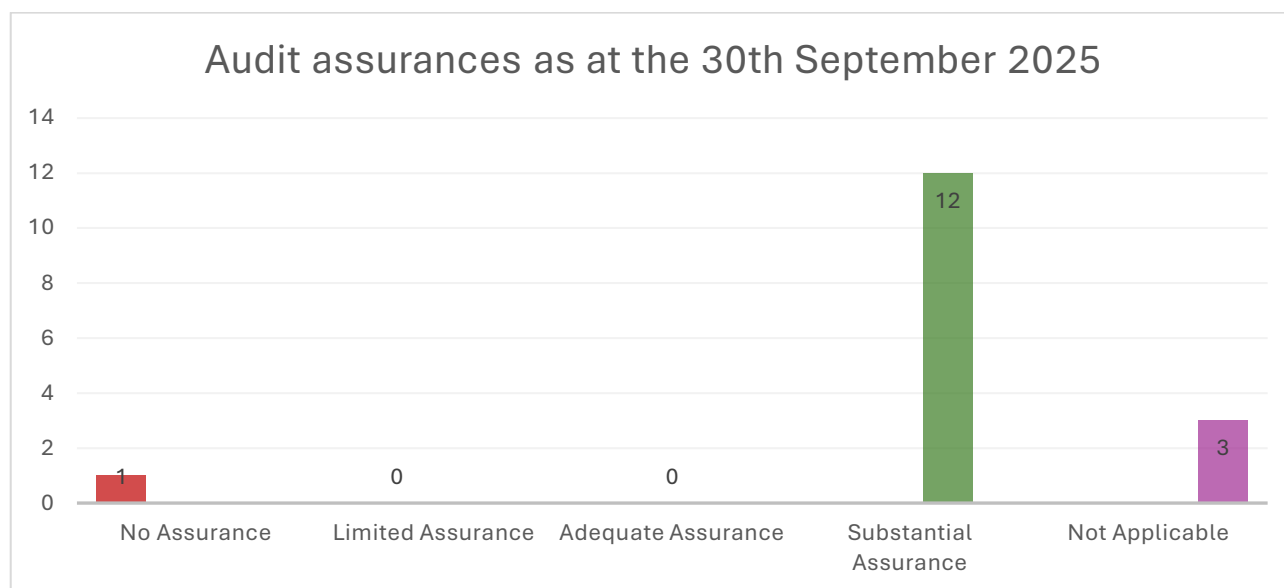
We shall extend this area of review during the year-end audit.

Outcome - Internal Control Objective 'O'

Not Applicable

8. Audit Assurance Review

During the interim internal audit for the 2025-26 financial year covering the period of the 01st of April to the 30th of September 2025, we have undertaken 313 separate audit tests, providing assurances in the sixteen areas of review which correspond to an enhanced review of Corporate Governance and the fifteen Internal Control objectives contained within the AGAR: Annual Internal Audit Report as detailed in the chart below.



Substantial: A sound framework of internal control is in place and operating effectively. No risks to the achievement of system objectives have been identified;

Adequate: Basically, a sound framework of internal control with opportunities to improve controls and / or compliance with the control framework. No significant risks to the achievement of system objectives have been identified;

Limited: Significant weakness(es) have been identified in the framework of internal control and / or compliance with the control framework which could place the achievement of system objectives at risk; or

No: Fundamental weaknesses identified in the framework of internal control, or the framework is ineffective or absent with significant risk to the achievement of system objectives.

Not Applicable: The Council does not utilise the process which is audited under this control objective. Therefore, a finding of 'not applicable' will be recorded.

9. FY2025-26 Action Plan Recommendations

Internal Control Objective A - Conclusion & recommendation	
We were unable to verify that the closing balance for the 2024-25 had been correctly brought forward as the opening balance of the 2025-26 financial year with reference the Closing Trial balance recorded on Rialtas in our retained year-end reports for the 2024-25 financial year. The year-end balance for the Newbury Building Society account opening balance is different from the closing balance on our retained records. 1) The Clerk & RFO should check Closing Trial Balance for the 2024-25 financial year and verify this as there may have been adjustments applied subsequent to the year-end audit having been conducted. If so, the correct year-end backup file should be supplied to be retained on our permanent audit file.	Comments
Internal Control Objective M - Conclusion & recommendation	
The Council did not comply with Regulation 15 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 as it failed to make proper provision for the exercise of public rights in relation to 2024-25 financial year AGAR and accounts as the notice was not published for the statutorily required thirty working days including the first ten working days in July. 2) The Council must answer 'No' to Assertion 4 of the Annual Governance Statement for 2025-26 and ensure that it makes proper provision for the exercise of public rights during 2026-27.	Comments

-o000o-

10. Confirmation of independence and Quality Assurance

During the 2025-26 financial year to the 30th of September e2025, we confirm that the internal auditor has acted independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation, based upon the internal audit programme, and has obtained appropriate evidence including copies of prime documentation to support our opinions from Lambourn Parish Council.

The interim internal audit for the 2025-26 financial year, conducted onsite the 12th of November 2025 with additional work conducted at our offices on the 18th and 19th of November and the 5th and 7th of December 2025, was carried out in accordance with Lambourn Parish Council's needs and planned coverage as reviewed with the Clerk & RFO of the Council, Mr Gary Wyatt-Hawkins.

Based on the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in the main body of this report, which corresponds to the Internal Control Objectives table contained within the FY2025-26 AGAR Annual Independent Internal Audit Report.

11. Internal Audit Performance

The following performance indicators are maintained to monitor effective service delivery & quality:

Annual performance indicators			
Aspect of service	Interim 2025-26 (Actual %)		Year-end 2025-26 (Actual %)
Internal Audit plan delivered	57%		N/A
Positive customer responses to quality appraisal questionnaire (YE)			
Compliant with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards	Y		N/A

12. Acknowledgements

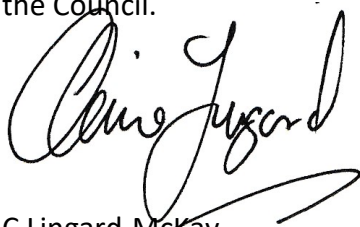
In continuing our review for the year, we have had regard to the materiality of transactions and their potential for mis-recording or misrepresentation in the AGAR Annual Statement of Accounts. Our Internal Audit programme has been developed to provide assurance that the Council's financial systems are operating effectively, with robust internal controls working in practice, thereby ensuring the integrity of transactions and the reasonable prospect of identifying material errors or possible abuse of the Council's own and the national statutory regulatory framework.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Clerk & RFO of Lambourn Parish Council: Mr Gary Wyatt-Hawkins for his assistance in performing the interim internal audit for the 2025-26 financial year. We are grateful both for the content and quality of the documentation and the responses that have been supplied to our requests for information.

We have made two recommendation for improvement as a result of the interim internal audit for 2025-26 in relation to the Notice for the Exercise of Public Rights. These recommendations are contained in the main body of the report and in the appended action plan for the 2025-26 financial year.

Please note that we have had to record an assertion of 'No Assurance' against Internal Control Objective 'M' as the Council failed to set the period for the Notice for the Exercise of Public Rights for the 2024-25 AGAR and Accounts for the correct period of time.

We now ask that the Clerk & RFO, Chairman and the Council Members consider the content of this report and acknowledge, in due course, that the report has been formally reviewed and adopted by the Council.



C Lingard-McKay
Practice Manager
WGW online internal audit practice

NOTE TO REPORT

We confirm that all confidential & sensitive information, supplied for the purposes of this audit including, Personnel Minutes, Payroll and Employment data have been permanently deleted from WGW Online's servers and any printouts made for the purposes of this audit have been destroyed in accordance with the Company's data and document retention policies and with the prevailing General Data Protection Legislation as amended from time to time.