

**Minehead Town Council
Governance Review Financial Year 2025/26**

| Internal Control | Test | Observations/Recommendations | Notes | MTC Notes |
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| Proper bookkeeping | Is the cash book maintained and up to date? | Not checked. | | |
| | Is the cash book arithmetically correct? | Ditto. | | |
| | Is the cash book regularly balanced? | Ditto. | | |
| Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Payment Controls | Has the Council formally adopted Standing Orders, Financial Regulations? | Yes. | | |
| | Date S/Os last reviewed. | June 2025, adopted 22/7/25 | | |
| | Date FinRegs last reviewed. | June 2025, adopted 22/7/25 | Note: NALC has removed the footnote re high value contract via Find a Tender. Suggest reinstate as an appendix as a reminder. | Schedule Review |
| | Has a Responsible Financial Officer been appointed with specific duties? | Yes. | | |
| | Have items or services above the <i>de minimis</i> amount (per FinRegs) been competitively purchased? | Not checked. | | |

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| | Are payments in the cash book supported by purchase orders, invoices, authorised and minuted? | Ditto. | | |
| | Has VAT on payments been identified, recorded and reclaimed? | Ditto. | | |
| | Is s137 expenditure separately recorded and within the statutory limit? | Unable to calculate before year end. | Suggest separate report to council, perhaps quarterly? | Noted |
| | Have s137 payments been approved and included in the Minutes as such? | Yes, noted as grants but not all specified as s137. Suggest adding consistent specific reference. | S137 is a budget line in the budget. | |
| Risk Management Arrangements | Does a review of the Minutes identify any unusual financial activity? | Yes. | Issues relating to Somerset Council devolution; to be expected and already anticipated. | |
| | Do Minutes record the Council carrying out an annual risk assessment or review of their risk management scheme? | Yes. | March 2025. | |
| | Date of Risk Assessment/Management Policy review and adoption | March 2025, Minute 2025/47. | Note: don't forget to review again before end of financial year. | Schedule Review |
| | Is insurance cover appropriate and adequate? | Yes. | Discussion Minute 2025/26, for 2025/26 fin year renewal quotes. | |

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| | Are internal financial controls documented and regularly reviewed? | Yes. | Noted in Minutes, eg, 25/69, 6 May 2025. (note, suggest put internal control policy on website) | Noted |
| Budgetary controls | Has the Council prepared an annual budget in support of its precept and has this been minuted as being approved? | Yes, and yes. | Automatic transfer of excess income over expenditure transferred to General Reserve. (check against GR policy) (note, change the date for this budget) | |
| | Has the precept been calculated from the budget and been approved? | Yes. November 2024 Minutes. | Note that vote for approval of the Budget should be separate for approval of Precept. Two clear separate Agenda items. | |
| | Does the budget include an actual completed year? | Yes. | | |
| | Is actual expenditure against budget regularly reported to the Council? | Yes. | Monthly, noted in Minutes. | |
| | Has the Council agreed a General Reserve Policy? | Yes. | May 2025. | |
| | Are there any significant unexplained variances from budget? | Not checked. | | |

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| | Where necessary, does the council have a formal Investment Policy (bank balances over £100K)? | Yes. | May 2025. | |
| Income Controls | Is income properly recorded and promptly banked? | Not checked. | | |
| | Does the precept recorded agree to the Council Tax authority's notification? | Unknown. | Suggest add Somerset Council notification to website. | Noted |
| | Are security controls over cash and near-cash adequate and effective? | Not checked. | | |
| Petty Cash Procedures | Is all petty cash spent recorded and supported by VAT invoices/receipts? | n/a | Note: moves under way via SAPPP to remove 'petty' from this Objective, ie, to include all cash handling. | |
| | Is petty cash expenditure reported to each Council meeting? | n/a | | |
| | Is petty cash reimbursement carried out regularly? | n/a | | |
| Payroll Controls | Do all employees have contracts of employment with clear terms and conditions? | Not checked. | | |
| | Do salaries paid agree with those approved by the Council? | Ditto. | | |

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| | Are salaries above the National Living Wage / Minimum Wage? | Ditto. | | |
| | Are other payments to employees reasonable and approved by the Council? | Ditto. | | |
| | Have PAYE/NIC been properly operated by the Council as an employer? | Ditto. | | |
| Asset Controls | Does the Council maintain a register of all material assets owned or in its care? | Yes. | 2025/26 – don't forget to review before year-end. Note: check asset values 2025/26 versus 2024/25 buildings and land. Suggest add in items purchased or sold for clarity. | Noted. Schedule Review |
| | Are the assets and investments registers up to date? When were these last reviewed? | Not checked. | Is there a formal investment register now? | Scheduled |
| | Does the asset insurance valuations agree with those in the asset register? | n/a | | |
| Bank reconciliation | Is there a bank reconciliation for each account and is this reported to Council? | Yes. | Reconciliations received by council monthly. | |

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| | Is a bank reconciliation carried out regularly and in a timely fashion? | Yes. | Ditto. | |
| | Are there any unexplained balancing entries in any reconciliation? | Unknown. | Nothing mentioned in Minutes. | |
| Year-end Procedures | Are year-end accounts prepared on the correct accounting basis? (Receipts and Payments, or Income and Expenditure)? | n/a | | |
| | Do accounts agree with the cash book? | n/a | | |
| | Has a year-end bank reconciliation been undertaken? | n/a | | |
| | Is there an audit trail from underlying financial records to the accounts? | n/a | | |
| | Where appropriate, have debtors and creditors been properly recorded? | n/a | | |
| Procedural | Is eligibility for the General Power of Competence properly evidenced? | n/a | | |
| | Have points raised on the last Internal Audit report been considered by Council and actioned? | Yes. | | |
| Transparency: For smaller councils with | Have the following been published? All items of expenditure above £500; | Yes; Yes; Yes; Yes; Yes (via Annual Meeting Minutes); Yes; Yes. | | |

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| turnover over £200,000 | End of year accounts; Annual governance statement; Internal Audit Report; List of councillor or member responsibilities; Location of public land and building assets; Minutes, agendas and papers of formal meetings. | | | |
| Councils that are Burial Authorities | Records of burials and ERoBs tally with receipts? | Not checked. | | |
| Councils with Allotments | Correct notice given of increases in fees? | Not checked. | | |
| | Appropriate leases in place? | Not checked. | | |
| Councils with Charities | Are all Charities up to date with Charity Commission filing requirements? | n/a | | |
| | Has the Council been named as Sole Trustee on the Charity Commission Register? | n/a | | |
| | Is the Council acting in accordance with the Charity Trust Deed? | n/a | | |
| | Are the Charity meetings and accounts recorded separately from those of the Council? | n/a | | |
| Digital and Data Compliance (Assertion 10) | Has the Council adopted a Data Protection Policy? | Yes. | May 2025. (note, your header has slipped) | Noted |

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| | Has the Council put in place Privacy Notices? | Yes. | April 2024. | |
| | Is the Council registered with the Information Commissioner's Office? | Yes. | Suggest put annual certificate on website. | Now added to website |
| | Does the Council's website meet accessibility requirements? | Yes. | Accessibility Statement on website. Last test 11/3/25, achieved 95% score. | Updated test December 2025 |
| | Does the Council own its website? Does it operate with at least one Council-owned email address? | Yes and yes. | Suggest move away from .co.uk website (not recommended as councils are not commercial organisations) to .gov.uk (best practice) or .org.uk. | All Town Council websites and email addresses now use the official .gov.uk domain. |
| | IT Policy: date adopted. Does it include training requirements for councillors? | No. | This is missing. NALC will have a template, but it will need some work. * | Now added to website |
| | Has the council on its website an ICO-compliant Publication Scheme? | Yes. | May 2025. | |
| | FoI/SAR – does the Council have a clear procedure for dealing with these? | No. | Suggest implement asap. | Procedure in place, to be added to website |

November 2025

General comments: note that, having got the basics in place over the past year, this report is now going into more detail as part of a continuous programme of improvement. There is nothing, apart from the new Assertion 10 provisions, which gives serious concern. This report may therefore appear more negative than in reality it is.

Queries:

* The SAPPP 2025 practitioners' guide has a template IT policy as well, but be aware that there is quite a bit of work needed to adapt it to a council's specific needs. Suggest get ahead with this now.

2025 Minutes review

April: note, legally, the meeting could not convene since it was not quorate. Therefore, all that is needed is for the clerk to declare that the meeting is not quorate and so cannot convene. This will be a note, not Minutes.

May 6: why was this an extraordinary meeting? Could neither the Clerk nor Deputy Clerk send out the Summons/Public Notice?

May 27: note that vice chair is not a legal office. Therefore, the statement about remaining elected until the next annual meeting is redundant.

August: it is unlawful to exclude public and press for a vote on anything. If the councillors want to keep the vote confidential (presumably to avoid any embarrassment for the candidate), they can write votes on paper and the clerk can announce the result without detail, but p&p must remain in the room. Keep the paper votes for at least six months in case of challenge.

October: be aware of potential negatives for staff using personal mobiles for work. Include risk assessment in the IT Policy, and make clear provision/protocol for compliance with new FoI/SAR response procedures.