

Practitioners Guide 25 AGAR certificate reference	Internal Audit action for expected controls	Internal Auditor comments/findings	Internal Auditor recommendations
<p>A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the year. AND I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.</p>	<p>1. Ensure the correct roll forward of the prior year cashbook balances to the new financial year. 2. Check a sample of financial transactions in cashbooks to bank statements, etc: the sample size dependent on the size of the authority and nature of accounting records maintained. 3. Ensure that bank reconciliations are prepared routinely, are subject to independent scrutiny and sign-off by members. 4. Verify the accuracy of the year-end bank reconciliation detail and ensure accurate disclosure of the combined cash and bank balances in the AGAR, section 2, line 8. 5. Where the authority has bank balances in excess of</p>	<p>1. In order 2. Four transactions sampled. See separate sheet for details. 3. Unable to find evidence of sign off of regular bank reconciliations in minutes. Done in Oct 25 but unable to locate on website any others completed since 3.25 4. Year-end bank rec in order and agrees with line 8.</p>	<p>2. Review column heading “admin expenses” on accounts spreadsheet e.g. purchase of laptop not an admin expense. 3. Recommend removing bank rec from audit section on website as only the year end bank rec should be in the Audit section. You could put it under a separate heading if you wish but the requirement is for regular bank recs to be checked and recorded in the minutes, best practice 3 monthly. This has now been done.</p>

	<p>£100,000 it has an appropriate investment strategy.</p>	<p>5.N/a</p>	
<p>B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for</p>	<p>Review the procedures in place for acquisition of formal tenders and quotes, ensuring they are in line with the SOs and FRs which should be based on the latest version. 2. Ensure that consistent values are in place for the acquisition of formal tenders between SOs and FRs (frequently different limits are recorded in the two documents). 3. Review the procedures for receipt of invoices, agreement of invoice detail and confirmation of goods/ services delivery and approval for payment; ideally, a suitably designed certification stamp should be in place providing for evidencing of these checks and</p>	<p>1.Old version of STO's and Fin Regs were on website when first checked. Clerk advised that the Fin. Regs were signed off at the Sep 25 meeting and are now visible. On checking, the clerk found that the link to the correct version was broken. Internal Auditor confirms new version now visible and in order on the website. 2.Not checked. 3. No stamp in use. (Recommendation only). Unable to see this process fully in place although all invoices and payments accounted for correctly (apart from those noted on transaction spot check.</p>	<p>Clerk advised that she will be inputting/updating the website herself once there is no credit left with the LALC Webmaster service.</p>

	<p>payment authorisation. 4. Check that there is effective segregation between the writing of cheques or the setting up of online payments,</p> <p>5. Check that VAT reclaims are prepared and submitted in a timely manner in line with the underlying records and in accordance with current HMRC requirements. 6. Where debit / credit cards are in use, establish the total monthly and individual transaction limits and ensure appropriate controls over physical security and usage of the cards are in place.</p>	<p>4.Process not checked.</p> <p>5. Clerk submits returns/claims in line with VAT procedures. Two payments did not have VAT accounted for in the cash account spreadsheet. This has not affected any VAT returns as not submitted for this period yet.</p> <p>6. No debit card in use</p>	<p>5. Ensure all vat accounted for on the cash account spreadsheet. See Transaction Spot Check form and notes which accompany it.</p> <p>6.Recommend a debit card issued for the clerk asap. Fin regs 9.1 to 9.2 say “clerk must not pay for council related expenditure for items over £100 including vat”.</p>
<p>C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.</p>	<p>1. Ensure that authorities have prepared and formally adopted, at least once annually, an appropriate and comprehensive register of assessed risks,</p>	<p>1.Unable to see Risk Register or evidence of review on website.</p>	<p>1.Clerk advises this is in hand to be agreed at the November 25 meeting.</p>

	<p>both regular and ad hoc. 2. Ensure that appropriate levels of insurance cover are in place for land, buildings, public, employers' and hirers' (where applicable) liability, fidelity/ employees (including members) liability, business interruption and cyber security. 3.Ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for monitoring play areas, open spaces and sports pitches; such reviews should be undertaken by appropriately qualified external inspectors or, if by officers or members, that they have received the appropriate training and accreditation. 4.Review the effectiveness of internal control carried out by the authority.</p>	<p>2.Both certificates seen under audit 25-26 on website. Requested sight of insurance schedule. Received 11.11.25. Play area land has been under dispute and is not detailed on the Asset register. Clerk advises this should be resolved soon and will be added to Register. 3.N/A</p> <p>4. Internal audit undertaken 24/25, published on website.</p>	<p>2. For transparency, recommend insurance certificates are put under a separate heading titled Insurance. Audit 25-26 section on website should only contain items for the end of the financial year i.e. 31.3.26. 19.11.25 confirmed they have been moved to separate section and also the asset register.</p> <p>4.Practitioners Guide 25 – page 13, 1.34 to 1.37. When appointing an IA, consider their knowledge in all relevant areas, not just finance. Not relevant for this audit but may be useful in the future when appointing an internal auditor.</p>
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<p>D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate</p>	<p>1.Ensure that the full Authority, not a committee, has considered, approved and adopted the annual precept for the coming year in accordance with the required parent Authority timetable 2. Ensure that current year budget reports are prepared and submitted to the Authority/ Committees periodically during the year with appropriate commentary on any significant variances. 3. Review the budget performance either during the year or at the financial year-end seeking explanations for any significant or unanticipated variances. 4.Ensure that the Authority has considered the establishment of specific earmarked reserves and, ideally, reviews them annually as part of the budget assessment process.</p>	<p>1.In order. 2.No evidence found of periodic reviews of budget or of budget figures being kept up to date and published. Fin regs 4.9 The budget ytd figures should be circulated to members, reviewed and a resolution passed to accept. Best practice review monthly and minute. 3. As above for budget reviews. 4. Not checked.</p>	<p>2/3.Recommend budget spreadsheet set up and that columns on accounts spreadsheet match the budget. This will aid speedier updating and be clearer for Councillors when reviewing. Ensure review is minuted. Best practice is to add year to date budget to website for transparency but NOT under the audit heading. Suggest maybe heading for Finance if not one already. Some of this has been completed now or is in hand.</p>
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	<p>5. Ensure that the precept received in the accounts matches the prior year submission form to the relevant authority and the public record of precepted amounts.</p>	<p>5. received into bank account 28.4.25. In Order.</p>	
<p>E. Expected income was fully received based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT appropriately accounted for.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review “Aged debtor” listings to ensure appropriate follow up action is in place. ● Allotments: ensure that appropriate signed tenancy agreements exist, that an appropriate register of tenants is maintained, identifying that debtors are monitored. ● Burials: ensure that a formal burial register is maintained that it is up-to-date and that a sample of interments and memorials are appropriately evidenced, that fees have been charged at the correct approved rate and been recovered within a reasonable time: (Authorities should also acquire and retain copies of Burial / 	<p>None</p> <p>None</p> <p>None</p> <p>None</p> <p>None</p>	

	<p>Cremation certificates)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hall hire: ensure that an effective diary system for bookings is in place identifying the hirer, hire times and ideally cross-referenced to invoices raised. ● Leases: ensure that leases are reviewed in a timely manner in accordance with the terms of the lease and rents similarly reviewed appropriately at the due time. ● Other variable income streams: ensure that appropriate control procedures and documentation are in existence to provide a clear audit trail through to invoicing and recovery of all such income. ● Where amounts are receivable on set dates during the year, ensure that an appropriate control record is maintained duly identifying the date(s) on which income is due and actually received / banked. 	<p>None</p> <p>None</p> <p>None</p> <p>None</p>	
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<p>F. Petty Cash payments were properly supported by receipts. All petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A number of authorities are now running down and closing their petty cash accounts and using debit / credit cards for ad hoc purchases. Consequently, a “Not covered” response is frequently required in this area. ● Review the systems in place for controlling any petty cash and also cash floats (used for bar, catering, etc). ● Check a sample of transactions during the financial year to ensure appropriate supporting documentation is held. ● Review the existence of evidenced periodic independent verification of the petty cash and any other cash floats held. ● Ensure that VAT is identified wherever incurred and appropriate. ● Physically check the petty cash and other cash floats held. ● Where bar or catering facilities 	<p>WHOLE OF THIS SECTION N/A</p>	
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	<p>are in place, ensure that appropriate cashing-up procedures are in place reconciling the physical cash takings to the till "Z" total readings.</p>		
<p>G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with the authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.</p>	<p>1. Ensure that, for all staff, a formal employment contract is in place together with a confirmatory letter setting out any changes to the contract. 2. Ensure that appropriate procedures are in place for the payment of members allowances and deduction of any tax liability. 3. Ensure that, for a sample of staff salaries, gross pay due is calculated in accordance with the approved spinal point on the NJC scale or hourly rate, if off-scale, and also with the contracted hours. 4. Ensure that appropriate tax codes are being applied to each employee. 5. Where free or paid for software is used, ensure</p>	<p>1. Contract for clerk in place and seen (only employee) 2. N/A 3. Sample taken. All appears in order. 4. In order</p>	

	<p>that it is up to date. 6. For the test sample of employees, ensure that tax is calculated appropriately. 7. Check the correct treatment of Pension contributions. 8. For NI, ensure that the correct deduction and employer's contributions are applied: NB. the employers allowance is not available to councils but may be used by other authorities 9. Ensure that the correct employers' pension percentage contribution is being applied. 10. Ensure that for the test sample, the correct net pay is paid to the employee with tax, NI and pension contributions correctly paid to the respective agencies.</p>	<p>5.External provider used 6. In order 7. In order 8. In order 9. In order 10. In order</p>	
<p>H. Asset and investment registers were complete and accurate and</p>	<p>Tangible Fixed Assets: 1. Ensure that the Authority is maintaining a formal asset</p>	<p>1.Fixed asset register seen. New assets and any assets disposed of are recorded.</p>	<p>Now on website.</p>

<p>properly maintained. This section/assurance should be extended to include loans to or by the authority</p>	<p>register and updating it routinely to record new assets at historic cost price, net of VAT and removing any disposed of/ no longer serviceable assets. 2. Physically verifying the existence and condition of high value, high risk assets may be appropriate. 3 Ideally, the register should identify for each asset the purchase cost and, if practicable, the replacement/ insured cost, the latter being updated annually and used to assist in forward planning for asset replacement. 4. Additions and disposals records should allow tracking from the prior year to the current. 5.Ensure that the asset value to be reported in the AGAR at section 2, line 9 equates to the prior year reported value, adjusted for the nominal value of any new</p>	<p>2. On first check, there was no evidence on register that assets were physically verified but this has now been added and verified. 3. Currently not on asset register.</p> <p>4. In order.</p> <p>5. In order</p>	<p>3.Council might like to add current insurance value/replacement cost to register to aid ensuring insurance policy cover is adequate and to aid budgeting.</p>
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	<p>acquisitions and / or disposals. 6. Compare the asset register with the insurance schedule to ensure that all assets as recorded are appropriately insured or “self-insured” by the Authority.</p> <p>Fixed asset investments: 7. Ensure that all long-term investments (i.e., those for more than 12 month terms) are covered by the “Investment Strategy” and reported as Assets in the AGAR at section 2, line 9.</p> <p>Borrowing and Lending: 8. Ensure that the authority has sought and obtained appropriate UK Debt Management Office approval for all loans acquired. 9. Ensured that the authority has accounted for the loan appropriately (i.e., recorded the full value of the loan, any arrangement fee</p>	<p>6. Insurance schedule now seen and is on the website.</p> <p>7. N/A</p> <p>8. None</p> <p>9. N/A 9. N/A</p>	
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	<p>should be regarded as an admin expense) in the year of receipt.</p> <p>10.Ensure that the combined principal loan repayment and interest for the year is correctly recorded in the AGAR at section 2 line 5.</p> <p>11.Ensure that the outstanding loan liability as at 31st March each year is correctly recorded in the AGAR at section 2, line 10 (value should be verified from the lender and verification provided to the IA by the clerk/RFO).</p> <p>12.Where the Authority has issued loans to local bodies, they should ideally seek signed indemnities from the recipient body, or their members, agreeing to underwrite the loan debt.</p>	<p>10. N/A</p> <p>11. N/A</p> <p>12.N/A</p>	
<p>J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis</p>	<p>Whilst IAs are not required to verify the accuracy of detail to be disclosed in the AGAR, this</p>		

<p>(receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cashbook, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and, where appropriate, debtors and creditors were properly recorded.</p>	<p>assertion, together with the expectation of most Authorities, effectively requires IAs to ensure that the financial detail reported at section 2 of the AGAR reflects the detail in the accounting records maintained for the financial year. Consequently, IAs should:</p> <p>1.Ensure that, where annual turnover exceeds £200,000, appropriate records are maintained throughout the year on an Income and Expenditure basis to facilitate budget reporting in that vein.</p> <p>2. Ensure that appropriate accounting arrangements are in place to account for debtors and creditors during the year and at the financial year-end.</p>	<p>1.Receipts and payments as expected.</p> <p>2.N/A, accounts recorded on Receipts and Payments basis which is correct.</p>	
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<p>K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in the prior year, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt.</p>	<p>IAs should ensure that, all relevant criteria are met (receipts and payments each totalled less than £25,000) 1. the correct exemption certificate was prepared and minuted in accordance with the statutory submission deadline. 2. that it has been published, together with all required information on the Authority's website and noticeboard.</p>	<p>1.Confirmed. 2.Confirmed on website only. Unable to check noticeboard.</p>	
<p>L. The authority publishes information on a free to access website / web page, up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation</p>	<p>IAs should review the Authority's website ensuring that all required documentation is published in accordance with the relevant legislation.</p>	<p>Audit – all documents except for Explanation of Variances on website at first check. STO's and Fin Regs – not the up to date version. The clerk advised me that they were added on the first week of October by the LALC Webmaster and there was a problem with the link so the old versions were showing. ALL NOW UPDATED. Not all other required</p>	<p>Explanation of variances now on website 10.11.25 Recommend following the guidance on the information provided annually by the auditors about what MUST be published. See Note M. Recommend adding – Publication Scheme Data Protection Policy Transparency Code Complaints Procedure Risk Management Asset Register. Best practice to include version number/date if available. Best practice -when any policies/procedures are</p>

		documentation is on website.	reviewed or adopted, the action is recorded in the minutes and the minute number added to the document.
M. The authority, during the previous year, correctly provided for the period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	IAs should acquire / examine a copy of the required "Public Notice" ensuring that it clearly identifies the statutory 30 working day period when the Authority's records are available for public inspection. IAs may also check whether authorities have minuted the relevant dates at the same time as approving the AGAR.	1.Checked, 30 working days published as required. 2.Not included in minutes of 14.5.25, point 14	2.Recommend minuting along with other AGAR reports/documentation.
N. The authority complied with the publication requirements for the prior year AGAR.	IAs should ensure that the statutory disclosure / publication requirements in relation to the prior year's AGAR have been met as detailed on the front page of the current year's AGAR.	Cert of Exempt, Yes Int audit report, Yes AGAR sections 1 and 2, Yes Analysis of variances not on at first check. Now on 10.11.25 Bank rec as at 31.3.25 – yes. Notice of exercise of period of Public Rights – yes.	
O. Trust funds (including			

<p>charitable) - the Council met its responsibilities as a trustee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Confirm that all charities of which the council is a Trustee are up to date with CC filing requirements. ● that the council is the sole trustee on the Charity Commission register. ● that the council is acting in accordance with the Trust deed. ● that the Charity meetings and accounts are recorded separately from those of the council. ● review the level and activity of the charity and where a risk based approach suggests such, review the Independent Examiners report. 	<p>None for this whole section.</p>	

Reporting on Internal Audit

4.22. The duties of internal audit relate to reporting on the adequacy and effectiveness of an authority’s system of internal control. The minimum reporting requirement for internal audit to the smaller authority is met by completing the annual internal audit report on the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

4.23. In most cases, an additional narrative report to the authority would be expected. It is advised that all authorities publish this full report on their websites with the AGAR along with any comments from the external auditor.

4.24. Any narrative report should have conclusions that are compatible with the entries on the AGAR.

4.25. The annual internal report will inform the authority's response to Assertion 2 and Assertion 6 in the annual governance statement.

4.26. An authority should minute their review and actions planned from the outcomes of the AGAR tests and content of any narrative reports from Internal Auditors.