

BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL

Decision Report

Thursday 17 July 2025

1. Request for inspection of Town Council Bank Statements and Accounts (Past Two Years) by members

Recommendation

To create a politically proportioned time limited task and finish group for the review of financial records that were requested.

Ward

Not ward specific.

Risk Management

This measure mitigates risks associated with lack of transparency and potential miscommunication around financial governance.

Crime Prevention

No crime prevention implications

Objective

To promote good governance of the Town Council by adopting transparent practices.

Background

On 22 May 2025, three newly elected councillors submitted a formal request to access the Town Council's bank statements and detailed financial accounts for the past two full financial years (April 2023 – present). They also requested copies of any ongoing contractual commitments. This request aligns with comments made at the Annual Meeting of the Council.

The request aimed to support the councillors' oversight responsibilities and enable them to:

- Analyse Expenditure Patterns: Identify key spending trends and assess areas for improved efficiency.
- Evaluate Financial Sustainability: Review the Council's cash flow, reserves, and debt obligations.

- Inform Future Decisions: Prepare for upcoming budgetary and financial policy discussions.
- Promote Accountability: Reinforce public trust through transparent handling of public funds.

On 29 May 2025, Council officers provided access to the requested financial documents, including internal and external audit reports for 2023/24 and 2024/25. The financial documents were shared with all Town Councillors.

The previous financial years accounts have received no comments, or submission from the public to the external auditor and both the internal and external auditor has raised no concerns.

Officers appreciate that all reviews, provide opportunity for new ideas and comments to be raised. To date, there has been no further follow-up from the requesting members or additional information submitted for review.

In the interest of managing staff uncertainty and maintaining transparency, it is requested that this review process be formalised through the Governance Committee, similarly to that being proposed of Performance Management for Council. A structured approach will ensure clarity of process, accountability, and equitable access to information for all members and officers.

Elaine Brown
Deputy Town Clerk

20 June 2025