

EUXTON PARISH COUNCIL

FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

INDEX

1.	GENERAL.....	2
2.	ACCOUNTING AND AUDIT (INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL)	4
3.	ANNUAL ESTIMATES (BUDGET) AND FORWARD PLANNING.....	5
4.	BUDGETARY CONTROL AND AUTHORITY TO SPEND	6
5.	BANKING ARRANGEMENTS AND AUTHORISATION OF PAYMENTS	8
6.	INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE MAKING OF PAYMENTS	10
7.	PAYMENT OF SALARIES	12
8.	LOANS AND INVESTMENTS	13
9.	INCOME.....	14
10.	ORDERS FOR WORK, GOODS AND SERVICES	14
11.	CONTRACTS.....	15
12.	PAYMENTS UNDER CONTRACTS FOR BUILDING OR OTHER CONSTRUCTION WORKS	17
13.	STORES AND EQUIPMENT	17
14.	ASSETS, PROPERTIES AND ESTATES	17
15.	INSURANCE	18
16.	CHARITIES.....	19
17.	RISK MANAGEMENT	19
18.	SUSPENSION AND REVISION OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS	19

Based on model Financial Regulation of NALC.

NALC doc often refers to 'Clerk or RFO'. As EPC Clerk is appointed RFO the Finance Committee (Committee now not in operation) agreed to use the word 'Clerk' not RFO.

All £ values given are ex VAT where applicable.

Adopted by
Euxton Parish Council
at its Meeting held on
16/06/16, added to 15/09/16
Revised 21/06/18
11.1(j) Revised 16/05/19
6.3 Revised 17/10/19

1. GENERAL

- 1.1. These financial regulations govern the conduct of financial management by the Council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the Council. Financial regulations are one of the Council's three governing policy documents providing procedural guidance for members and officers. Financial regulations must be observed in conjunction with the Council's standing orders¹ and any individual financial regulations relating to contracts.
- 1.2. The Council is responsible in law for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that the Council has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions, including arrangements for the management of risk.
- 1.3. The Council's accounting control systems must include measures:
 - for the timely production of accounts;
 - that provide for the safe and efficient safeguarding of public money;
 - to prevent and detect inaccuracy and fraud; and
 - identifying the duties of officers.
- 1.4. These financial regulations demonstrate how the Council meets these responsibilities and requirements.
- 1.5. At least once a year, prior to approving the Annual Governance Statement, the Council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control which shall be in accordance with proper practices.
- 1.6. A breach of these Regulations by an employee is gross misconduct.
- 1.7. Members of Council shall follow the instructions within these Regulations and not entice employees to breach them. Failure to follow instructions within these Regulations brings the office of Councillor into disrepute.
- 1.8. The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) holds a statutory office to be appointed by the Council. The Clerk has been appointed as RFO for this Council and these regulations will apply accordingly.
- 1.9. The Clerk;
 - acts under the policy direction of the Council;
 - administers the Council's financial affairs in accordance with all Acts, Regulations and proper practices;
 - determines on behalf of the Council its accounting records and accounting control systems;
 - ensures the accounting control systems are observed;
 - maintains the accounting records of the Council up-to-date in accordance with proper practices;
 - assists the Council to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of its resources; and
 - produces financial management information as required by the Council.

¹ Model standing orders for councils are available in Local Councils Explained © 2013 National Association of Local Councils

- 1.10. The accounting records determined by the Clerk shall be sufficient to show and explain the Council's transactions and to enable the Clerk to ensure that any income and expenditure account and statement of balances, or record of receipts and payments and additional information, as the case may be, or management information prepared for the Council from time to time comply with the Accounts and Audit Regulations².
- 1.11. The accounting records determined by the Clerk shall in particular contain:
- entries from day-to-day of all sums of money received and expended by the Council, and the matters to which the income and expenditure or receipts and payments account relate;
 - a record of the assets and liabilities of the Council; and
 - wherever relevant, a record of the Council's income and expenditure in relation to claims made, or to be made, for any contribution, grant or subsidy.
- 1.12. The accounting control systems determined by the Clerk shall include:
- procedures to ensure that the financial transactions of the Council are recorded as soon as reasonably practicable as accurately and reasonably as possible;
 - procedures to enable the prevention and detection of inaccuracies and fraud and the ability to reconstruct any lost records;
 - identification of the duties of officers dealing with financial transactions and division of responsibilities of those officers in relation to significant transactions;
 - procedures to ensure that uncollectable amounts, including any bad debts are not submitted to the Council for approval to be written off except with the approval of the Clerk and that the approvals are shown in the accounting records; and
 - measures to ensure that risk is properly managed.
- 1.13. The Council is not empowered by these Regulations or otherwise to delegate certain specified decisions. In particular, any decision regarding:
- setting the final budget or the precept (Council Tax Requirement);
 - approving accounting statements;
 - approving an annual governance statement;
 - borrowing;
 - writing off bad debts;
 - declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence; and
 - addressing recommendations in any report from the internal or external auditors,

shall be a matter for the full Council only.

- 1.14. In addition the Council must:
- determine and keep under regular review the bank mandate for all Council bank accounts;

² In England - Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011/817
In Wales - Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2005/368

- approve any grant or a single commitment in excess of £500; and
 - in respect of the annual salary for any employee have regard to recommendations about annual salaries of employees made by the Personnel Committee in accordance with its terms of reference.
- 1.15. In these financial regulations, references to the Accounts and Audit Regulations or ‘the regulations’ shall mean the regulations issued under the provisions of section 27 of the Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation, and then in force unless otherwise specified.

In these financial regulations the term ‘proper practice’ or ‘proper practices’ shall refer to guidance issued in *Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioners’ Guide (England)* issued by the Joint Practitioners Advisory Group (JPAG), available from the websites of NALC and the Society for Local Council Clerks (SLCC) or *Governance and Accountability for Local Councils in Wales - A Practitioners’ Guide*, available from the websites of One Voice Wales (OVW) and SLCC as appropriate.

2. ACCOUNTING AND AUDIT (INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL)

- 2.1. All accounting procedures and financial records of the Council shall be determined by the Clerk in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations, appropriate Guidance and proper practices.
- 2.2. On a regular basis, at least once in each quarter for that quarter, and at each financial year end, a member ideally other than the Chair or a cheque signatory shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the Clerk. The member shall sign the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of verification. This activity shall on conclusion be reported, including any exceptions, to and noted by the Council.
- 2.3. The Clerk shall complete the annual statement of accounts, annual report, and any related documents of the Council contained in the Annual Return (as specified in proper practices) as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and having certified the accounts shall submit them and report thereon to the Council within the timescales set by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 2.4. The Council shall ensure that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records, and of its system of internal control in accordance with proper practices. Any officer or member of the Council shall make available such documents and records as appear to the Council to be necessary for the purpose of the audit and shall, as directed by the Council, supply the Clerk, internal auditor, or external auditor with such information and explanation as the Council considers necessary for that purpose.
- 2.5. The internal auditor shall be appointed by and shall carry out the work in relation to internal controls required by the Council in accordance with proper practices.
- 2.6. The internal auditor shall:
- be competent and independent of the financial operations of the Council;

- report to Council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one annual written report during each financial year;
 - to demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, be free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships; and
 - have no involvement in the financial decision making, management or control of the Council.
- 2.7. Internal or external auditors may not under any circumstances:
- perform any operational duties for the Council;
 - initiate or approve accounting transactions; or
 - direct the activities of any Council employee, except to the extent that such employees have been appropriately assigned to assist the internal auditor.
- 2.8. For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to internal audit the terms 'independent' and 'independence' shall have the same meaning as is described in proper practices.
- 2.9. The Clerk shall make arrangements for the exercise of electors' rights in relation to the accounts including the opportunity to inspect the accounts, books, and vouchers and display or publish any notices and statements of account required by Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 2.10. The Clerk shall, without undue delay, bring to the attention of all Councillors any correspondence or report from internal or external auditors.

3. ANNUAL ESTIMATES (BUDGET) AND FORWARD PLANNING

- 3.1. Each committee Chair shall review its three year forecast (if any) of revenue and capital receipts and payments. Having regard to the forecast, it shall thereafter formulate and submit proposals for the following financial year to the Council not later than the end of 3rd week of November each year including any proposals for revising the forecast.
- 3.2. Outside of the Committee delegated power, all bids and budget items of more than £1000 (inc multiple bids each below £1000 for a single project) shall be accompanied by a very brief/outline description.
- 3.3. The Clerk must each year, by no later than end November, prepare detailed estimates of all receipts and payments including the use of reserves and all sources of funding for the following financial year in the form of a budget to be considered by Council. The formal budget process is as follows
- End October/begin November Committee Chairs asked to finalise budget bids (in accordance with Financial Arrangements) with explanations if required by Council
 - Using any guidance given, early November onwards the Clerk derives possible project priorities and spending plans and/or cuts so that alternatives are available for December or January Council meeting as required

- December or January Council meeting (as required) discusses and agrees budget

In order to accommodate budget items that are subject to timescales of bodies external to the Council and to accommodate significant emergency items, Committee Chairs may submit exceptional budget items up to the the precept meeting. The possibility of such additional items with as much detail as is known should, though, be provided to the Clerk as soon as possible beforehand and ideally before the end of November.

- 3.4. The Council shall consider annual budget proposals in relation to the Council's three year forecast (if any) of revenue and capital receipts and payments including recommendations for the use of reserves and sources of funding and update the forecast accordingly.
- 3.5. The Council's general reserve budget shall be set at 3 months 'routine' (ie non-discretionary) spend.
- 3.6. The Council shall fix the precept (Council tax requirement), and relevant basic amount of Council tax to be levied for the ensuing financial year not later than by the end of January each year. The Clerk shall issue the precept to the billing authority and shall supply each member with a copy of the approved annual budget.
- 3.7. The approved annual budget shall form the basis of financial control for the ensuing year.

4. BUDGETARY CONTROL AND AUTHORITY TO SPEND

- 4.1. Expenditure on non-routine revenue items may be authorised up to the amounts included for that class of expenditure in the approved budget. This authority is to be determined by:
 - the Council for all items over £500 (except as provided in para 4.5;
 - a duly delegated committee of the Council for items up to £500.

Such authority is to be evidenced by a Minute or by an authorisation slip duly signed by the Clerk, and where necessary also by the appropriate Chair.

Contracts shall not be disaggregated to avoid controls imposed by these regulations.

- 4.2. No expenditure shall be authorised that will exceed the amount provided in the revenue budget for that class of expenditure other than by resolution of the Council, or duly delegated committee. During the budget year and with the approval of Council having considered fully the implications for public services, unspent and available amounts may be moved to other budget headings or to an earmarked reserve as appropriate ('virement').
- 4.3. Unspent provisions in the revenue or capital budgets for completed projects shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year.
- 4.4. The salary budgets are to be reviewed at least annually in October for the following financial year and such review shall be evidenced by a hard copy schedule signed by the Chair of Council or the Chair of the Personnel

Committee. The Clerk will inform committees of any changes impacting on their budget requirement for the coming year in good time.

- 4.5. In cases of extreme risk to the delivery of Council services, the Clerk may authorise revenue expenditure on behalf of the Council which in the Clerk's judgement it is necessary to carry out. Such expenditure includes repair, replacement or other work, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £2000. The expenditure should be incurred ideally in consultation with the Chair or Vice Chair of the Council, and the Clerk shall report such action to the Chair as soon as possible and to the Council as soon as practicable thereafter.
- 4.6. No expenditure shall be authorised in relation to any capital project and no contract entered into or tender accepted involving capital expenditure unless the Council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available and the requisite borrowing approval has been obtained.
- 4.7. All capital works shall be administered in accordance with the Council's standing orders and financial regulations relating to contracts.
- 4.8. At each full Council meeting the Clerk shall regularly provide the Council with a statement of receipts and payments to date under each head of the budgets, comparing actual expenditure to the appropriate date against that planned as shown in the budget. These statements are to be prepared at least at the end of each financial quarter and shall show explanations of material variances, for Councils information. For this purpose "material" shall be greater than £100 or 10% of budget whichever is greater.
- 4.9. Statements are to be provided with at least 3 clear days notice or greater period if required by legislation
- 4.10. Changes in earmarked reserves shall be approved by Council as part of the budgetary control process.
- 4.11 Receipts of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) from the Principal Authority must only be used to support the development of the local area by funding: The provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure; or anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on an area.
- 4.12 The Council must prepare a report for any financial year ("the reported year") in which it receives CIL receipts. The report must include:
 - a) the total CIL receipts for the reported year;
 - b) the total CIL expenditure for the reported year;
 - c) summary of CIL expenditure during the reported year including—
 - i) the items to which CIL has been applied; and
 - ii) the amount of CIL expenditure on each item; and
 - d) details of any notices received in accordance with regulation 59E, including—
 - i) the total value of CIL receipts subject to notices served in accordance with regulation 59E during the reported year;

- ii) the total value of CIL receipts subject to a notice served in accordance with regulation 59E in any year that has not been paid to the relevant charging authority by the end of the reported year.
 - e) the total amount of—
 - i) CIL receipts for the reported year retained at the end of the reported year; and
 - ii) CIL receipts from previous years retained at the end of the reported year.
- 4.13 The Council must—
- a) publish the report on its website; and
 - b) send a copy of the report to the charging authority from which it received CIL receipts, no later than 31st December following the reported year.

5. BANKING ARRANGEMENTS AND AUTHORISATION OF PAYMENTS

- 5.1. The Council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the Clerk and approved by the Council; banking arrangements may not be delegated to a committee. They shall be regularly reviewed for safety and efficiency.
- 5.2. The Clerk shall prepare a schedule of payments requiring authorisation, forming part of the Agenda for the Meeting and, together with the relevant invoices, present the schedule to Council. Schedules of payments must be provided to Council with at least 3 clear days notice, or greater period if required by legislation. Schedules shall include the Petty Cash statement. The Council shall review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied itself shall authorise payment by a resolution of the Council. The approved schedule shall be ruled off and initialled by the Chair of the Meeting. A detailed list of all payments shall be disclosed within or as an attachment to the minutes of the meeting at which payment was authorised. Personal payments (including salaries, wages, expenses and any payment made in relation to the termination of a contract of employment) may be summarised to remove public access to any personal information.
- 5.3. The Petty Cash (if petty cash system is in operation) schedule presented to Full Council will list all items separately, show the total, the spend, vat amounts, how much the required top-up cheque is to bring the balance back to £300.
- 5.4. All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the Clerk to confirm that the work, goods or services to which each invoice relates has been received, carried out, examined and represents expenditure previously approved by the Council.
- 5.5. The Clerk shall examine invoices for arithmetical accuracy and analyse them to the appropriate expenditure heading. The Clerk shall take all steps to pay all invoices submitted, and which are in order, at the next available Council.
- 5.6. The Chair and Clerk shall have delegated authority to authorise the payment of items only in the following circumstances:

- a) If a payment is necessary to avoid a charge to interest under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998, and the due date for payment is before the next scheduled Meeting of Council, where the Clerk certifies that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of Council;
 - b) Fund transfers within the Council's banking arrangements, and a list of such transfers shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of Council.
- 5.7. If required, for each financial year the Clerk shall draw up a list of due payments which arise on a regular basis as the result of a continuing contract, statutory duty, or obligation (such as but not exclusively, Salaries, PAYE and NI, Superannuation Fund and regular maintenance contracts and the like for which Council, or a duly authorised committee, may authorise payment for the year provided that the requirements of regulation 4.1 (Budgetary Controls) are adhered to, provided also that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of Council. Approval may also be given for small variations in PAYE/NIC/Salaries.
- 5.8. A record of regular payments made under 5.7 above shall be drawn up and be signed by two members on each and every occasion when payment is authorised - thus controlling the risk of duplicated payments being authorised and/or made.
- 5.9. In respect of grants a duly authorised committee shall approve expenditure within any limits set by Council and in accordance with any Policy statement approved by Council. Outside of delegated Committee authority, any Revenue or Capital Grant in excess of £500 shall before payment, be subject to ratification by resolution of the Council.
- 5.10. Members are subject to the Code of Conduct that has been adopted by the Council and shall comply with the Code and Standing Orders when a decision to authorise or instruct payment is made in respect of a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary or other interest, unless a dispensation has been granted.
- 5.11. The Council will aim to rotate the duties of members in these Regulations so that onerous duties are shared out as evenly as possible over time.
- 5.12. Any changes in the recorded details of suppliers, such as bank account records, shall be approved in writing by 2 members.
- 5.13. Debit card - security. Physical security of the debit card, inc the PIN, is to be considered in the same way as physical security of the Council cheque books. When not in use it is to be kept in a secure place and any record of the PIN must not be kept with it. The card is to be signed by the Clerk immediately on its receipt. The default PIN provided by the Bank is to be changed immediately it is received and the PIN is not to be the same as that used for IT equipment or as that used by the Clerk for any personal debit/credit cards.
- 5.14. Cheque Book – during the Clerk’s planned absences a current council cheque book is to be held by the Chair/Vice Chair for safe keeping.

6. INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE MAKING OF PAYMENTS

- 6.1. The Council will make safe and efficient arrangements for the making of its payments.
- 6.2. Following authorisation under Financial Regulation 5 above, the Council, shall give instruction that a payment shall be made.
- 6.3. All payments shall be effected by cheque or other instructions to the Council's bankers, or otherwise, in accordance with a resolution of Council.
- 6.4. Cheques or orders for payment drawn on the bank account in accordance with the schedule as presented to Council shall be signed by two members of Council, in accordance with a resolution instructing that payment. If a member who is also a bank signatory has declared a disclosable pecuniary interest, or has any other interest, in the matter in respect of which the payment is being made, that Councillor shall be required to consider Standing Orders, and thereby determine whether it is appropriate and / or permissible to be a signatory to the transaction in question.
- 6.5. To indicate agreement of the details shown on the cheque or order for payment with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall each also initial the cheque counterfoil.
- 6.6. Cheques or orders for payment shall not normally be presented for signature other than at a Council (including immediately before or after such a meeting). Any signatures obtained away from such meetings (para 6.7 below) shall be reported to the Council at the next convenient meeting.
- 6.7. Invoices received up to the date of Council meeting can be paid by cheque, three Councillors to check invoices (two cheque signatories and one verifier).
- 6.8. If thought appropriate by the Council, payment for utility supplies (energy, telephone and water) and any National Non-Domestic Rates may be made by variable Direct Debit provided that the instructions are signed by two members and any payments are reported to Council as made. The approval of the use of a variable Direct Debit shall be renewed by resolution of the Council at least every two years.
- 6.9. If thought appropriate by the Council, payment for certain items (principally Salaries) may be made by Banker's Standing Order provided that the instructions are signed, or otherwise evidenced by two members are retained and any payments are reported to Council as made. The approval of the use of a Banker's Standing Order shall be renewed by resolution of the Council at least every two years.
- 6.10. If thought appropriate by the Council, payment for certain items may be made by BACS or CHAPS methods provided that the instructions for each payment are signed, or otherwise evidenced, by two authorised bank signatories are retained and any payments are reported to Council as made. The approval of the use of BACS or CHAPS shall be renewed by resolution of the Council at least every two years.

- 6.11. If thought appropriate by the Council payment for certain items may be made by internet banking transfer provided evidence is retained showing which members approved the payment.
- 6.12. No employee or Councillor shall disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the working of the Council, its bank accounts, or its debit cards to any person not authorised in writing by the Council or a duly delegated committee.
- 6.13. Regular back-up copies of the records on any computer shall be made and shall be stored securely away from the computer in question, and preferably off site using a council-owned cloud storage account.
- 6.14. The Council, and any members using computers for the Council's financial business, shall ensure that anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall, software with automatic updates, together with a high level of security, is used.
- 6.15. Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the Clerk shall be appointed as the Service Administrator. The Bank Mandate approved by the Council shall identify a number of Councillors who will be authorised to approve transactions on those accounts. The bank mandate will state clearly the amounts of payments that can be instructed by the use of the Service Administrator alone, or by the Service Administrator with a stated number of approvals.
- 6.16. Access to any internet banking accounts will be directly to the access page (which may be saved under "favourites"), and not through a search engine or e-mail link, unless an organisation recommends an alternative method. Remembered or saved passwords facilities must not be used on any computer used for Council banking work. Breach of this Regulation will be treated as a very serious matter.
- 6.17. Changes to account details for suppliers, which are used for internet banking may only be changed on written hard copy notification by the supplier and supported by hard copy authority for change signed by 2 members. A programme of regular checks of standing data with suppliers will be followed.
- 6.18. Any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Clerk and will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £2000 unless authorised by Council in writing before any order is placed. Petty Cash (if in operation) will be held by the Chair when the Clerk is on holiday.
- 6.19. A pre-paid debit card may be issued to employees with varying limits. These limits will be set by the Council. Transactions and purchases made will be reported to the Council and authority for topping-up shall be at the discretion of the Council.
- 6.20. Any corporate credit card or trade card account opened by the Council will be specifically restricted to use by the Clerk and shall be subject to automatic payment in full at each month-end. Personal credit or debit cards of members or staff shall not be used under any circumstances.
- 6.21. The bank account on which the debit card is issued will be limited to a maximum holding of £4000. In accordance with paras 6.4 and 6.10, annual authorisation for automatic transfers into this account to 'top it up' after the card has been used may be made only by 2 authorised signatories.

- 6.22. The accounts for any and all debit cards are to be reconciled in the same way as Bank accounts and presented to Council in the same way at each Council meeting.
- 6.23. The Clerk may hold petty cash (if in operation) for the purpose of defraying small or urgent operational and other expenses. Vouchers for payments made from petty cash shall be kept to substantiate the payment.
- a) The Clerk shall maintain petty cash of £300 per month, to be kept in a cash tin; the amount will be £600 if there is 2 months between full Council meetings.
 - b) Income received must not be paid into the petty cash float but must be separately banked, as provided elsewhere in these regulations.
 - c) Payments to maintain the petty cash float and the petty cash reconciliation shall be shown separately on the schedule of payments presented to Council under para 5.2.
 - d) Regular expenditures such as telephone, computer and photocopy charges are not to be taken from the petty cash.
 - e) Petty cash should not be used for payments that should normally be made through the normal invoice/cheque or other payment system. Purchases that are not urgently required must not be made through petty cash.
 - f) Petty Cash will be held by the Chair when the Clerk is on holiday.

7. PAYMENT OF SALARIES

- 7.1. As an employer, the Council shall make arrangements to meet fully the statutory requirements placed on all employers by PAYE and National Insurance legislation. The payment of all salaries shall be made in accordance with payroll records and the rules of PAYE and National Insurance currently operating, and salary rates shall be as agreed by Council, or duly delegated committee.
- 7.2. Payment of salaries and payment of deductions from salary such as may be required to be made for tax, national insurance and pension contributions, or similar statutory or discretionary deductions must be made in accordance with the payroll records and on the appropriate dates stipulated in employment contracts, provided that each payment is reported to the next available Council meeting, as set out in these regulations above.
- 7.3. No changes shall be made to any employee's pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the Council, on recommendation of the Personnel Committee.
- 7.4. Each and every payment to employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall be recorded in a separate confidential record (confidential cash book). This confidential record is not open to inspection or review (under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or otherwise) other than:
- a) by any Councillor who can demonstrate a need to know;

- b) by the internal auditor;
 - c) by the external auditor; or
 - d) by any person authorised under Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation.
- 7.5. The total of such payments in each calendar month shall be reported with all other payments as made as may be required under these Financial Regulations, to ensure that only payments due for the period have actually been paid.
- 7.6. Any exceptional payment (cash or in kind) outside of basic salary and approved overtime should first be approved by the Personnel Committee normally within 4 weeks, and then placed before full Council for consideration. This is to ensure that the payment will meet HMRC regulations.
- 7.7. Any employee termination payments shall be supported by a clear justification and reported to the Council. Termination payments shall only be authorised by Council.

8. LOANS AND INVESTMENTS

- 8.1. All borrowings shall be effected in the name of the Council, after obtaining any necessary borrowing approval. Any application for borrowing approval shall be approved by Council as to terms and purpose. The application for Borrowing Approval, and subsequent arrangements for the Loan shall only be approved by full Council.
- 8.2. Any financial arrangement which does not require formal Borrowing Approval from the Secretary of State (such as Hire Purchase or Leasing of tangible assets) shall be subject to approval by the full Council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to Council in respect of value for money for the proposed transaction.
- 8.3. The Council will arrange with the Council's Banks and Investment providers for the sending of a copy of each statement of account to the Clerk/RFO.
- 8.4. All loans and investments shall be negotiated in the name of the Council and shall be for a set period in accordance with Council policy.
- 8.5. The Council shall consider the need for an Investment Strategy and Policy which, if drawn up, shall be in accordance with relevant regulations, proper practices and guidance. Any Strategy and Policy shall be reviewed by the Council at least annually.

Inserted at June 2018 revision "Guidance on Local Government Investments ('the Guidance'), issued under section 15(1)(a) of the Local Government Act 2003 and effective from 1 April 2018 (3rd edition)."

This new legislation now requires Council's operating with balances over £100,000 to have an Investment Policy - and that the Council has an 'Investment Policy' in place since 19/04/18.

- 8.6. All investments of money under the control of the Council shall be in the name of the Council.
- 8.7. All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the Clerk.
- 8.8. Payments in respect of short term or long term investments, including transfers between bank accounts held in the same bank, or branch, shall be made in accordance with Regulation 5 (Authorisation of Payments) and Regulation 6 (Instructions for Payments).
- 8.9. Balances should be spread between bank accounts which have the FSCS £75,000 guarantee, new accounts sought to cover new or larger balances.

9. INCOME

- 9.1. The collection of all sums due to the Council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the Clerk.
- 9.2. Particulars of all charges to be made for work done, services rendered or goods supplied shall be agreed annually by the Council, notified to the Clerk and the Clerk shall be responsible for the collection of all accounts due to the Council.
- 9.3. The Council or delegated Committee will review all fees and charges (usually annually), following a report of the Clerk.
- 9.4. Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts shall be reported to the Council and shall be written off in the year.
- 9.5. All sums received on behalf of the Council shall be banked intact as directed by the Clerk. In all cases, all receipts shall be deposited with the Council's bankers with such frequency as the Clerk considers necessary.
- 9.6. The origin of each receipt shall be entered on the paying-in slip.
- 9.7. Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the Council.
- 9.8. The Clerk shall promptly complete any VAT Return that is required. Any repayment claim due in accordance with VAT Act 1994 section 33 shall be made at least annually coinciding with the financial year end.
- 9.9. Where any significant sums of cash are regularly received by the Council, the Clerk shall take such steps as are agreed by the Council to ensure that more than one person is present when the cash is counted in the first instance, that there is a reconciliation to some form of control such as ticket issues, and that appropriate care is taken in the security and safety of individuals banking such cash.
- 9.10. Any income arising which is the property of a charitable trust shall be paid into a charitable bank account. Instructions for the payment of funds due from the charitable trust to the Council (to meet expenditure already incurred by the authority) will be given by the Managing Trustees of the charity meeting separately from any Council meeting (see also Regulation 16 below).

10. ORDERS FOR WORK, GOODS AND SERVICES

- 10.1. An official order or letter shall be issued for all work, goods and services unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate. Copies of orders shall be retained.
- 10.2. Order books shall be controlled by the Clerk.
- 10.3. All Members and Officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times. The Clerk issuing an official order shall ensure as far as reasonable and practicable that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction, usually by obtaining three or more quotations or estimates from appropriate suppliers, subject to any *de minimis* provisions in Regulation 11 (i) below.
- 10.4. A member may not issue an official order or make any contract on behalf of the Council.
- 10.5. The Clerk shall verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before the issue of any order, and in the case of new or infrequent purchases or payments, the Clerk shall ensure that the statutory authority shall be reported to the meeting at which the order is approved so that the Minutes can record the power being used.

11. CONTRACTS

- 11.1. Procedures as to contracts are laid down as follows:
 - a. Every contract shall comply with these financial regulations, and no exceptions shall be made otherwise than in an emergency provided that this regulation need not apply to contracts which relate to items (i) to (vi) below:
 - i. for the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telephone services;
 - ii. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which consist of repairs to or parts for existing machinery or equipment or plant;
 - iii. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the Council;
 - iv. for additional audit work of the external Auditor up to an estimated value of £250 (in excess of this sum the Clerk shall act after consultation with the Chair and/or Vice Chair of Council); and
 - v. for goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and / or are only sold at a fixed price.
 - b. For any tender or contract the amount of the Council's budget for the particular project may be disclosed to contractors following a specific request.
 - c. For any tender, until the Council has decided to which tenderer it will award the contract, any and all communication from and with those invited to tender is to be conducted in writing (e-mail is acceptable), and all such communication will be shared with all potential tenderers. Any formal site visit proposed by the Council or requested by any tenderer

will be communicated and open to all tenderers. Similarly, where information is given to one tenderer that clarifies, adds to or alters information given in the tender documents this information must be given, as quickly as possible, in writing to all tenderers. Invitations to tender will inform contractors and potential contractors of this requirement.

- d. Where it is intended to enter into a contract exceeding £25,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Clerk shall invite quotations from at least three firms to be taken from the appropriate approved list.
- e. When applications are made to waive financial regulations relating to contracts to enable a price to be negotiated without competition the reason shall be embodied in a recommendation to the Council.
- f. Such invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases. The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the Clerk in the ordinary course of post. Each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specifically marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract.
- g. All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the Clerk in the presence of at least 2 members of Council. However, all members are to be invited to the opening.
- h. If less than three tenders are received for contracts above £25,000 or if all the tenders are identical the Council may make such arrangements as it thinks fit for procuring the goods or materials or executing the works.
- i. Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to Standing Orders and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.
- j. When it is to enter into a contract of less than £25,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Clerk or RFO shall obtain 3 quotations (priced descriptions of the proposed supply); where the value is below £5,000 and above £1,000 the Clerk or RFO shall strive to obtain 3 estimates. Otherwise, Regulation 10.3 above shall apply.
- k. The Council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.
- l. Should it occur that the Council, or duly delegated committee, does not accept any tender, quote or estimate, the work is not allocated and the Council requires further pricing, provided that the specification does not change, no person shall be permitted to submit a later tender, estimate or quote who was present when the original decision making process was being undertaken.

- m. The European Union Procurement Directive shall apply and the terms of the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 and the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2006 including thresholds shall be followed.

12. PAYMENTS UNDER CONTRACTS FOR BUILDING OR OTHER CONSTRUCTION WORKS

- 12.1. Payments on account of the contract sum shall be made within the time specified in the contract by the Clerk upon authorised certificates of the architect or other consultants engaged to supervise the contract (subject to any percentage withholding as may be agreed in the particular contract).
- 12.2. Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the Clerk shall maintain a record of all such payments. In any case where it is estimated that the total cost of work carried out under a contract, excluding agreed variations, will exceed the contract sum of 5% or more a report shall be submitted to the Council.
- 12.3. Any variation to a contract or addition to or omission from a contract must be approved by the Council and Clerk to the contractor in writing, the Council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the financial provision.]

13. STORES AND EQUIPMENT

- 13.1. The officer in charge of each section shall be responsible for the care and custody of stores and equipment in that section.
- 13.2. Delivery Notes shall be obtained in respect of all goods received into store or otherwise delivered and goods must be checked as to order and quality at the time delivery is made.
- 13.3. Stocks shall be kept at the minimum levels consistent with operational requirements.
- 13.4. The Clerk shall be responsible for periodic checks of stocks and stores at least annually.

14. ASSETS, PROPERTIES AND ESTATES

- 14.1. The Clerk shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the Council. The Clerk shall ensure a record is maintained of all properties held by the Council, recording the location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 14.2. No tangible moveable property shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of the Council, together with any other consents required by law, save where the estimated value of any one item of tangible movable property does not exceed £250.
- 14.3. No real property (interests in land) shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the Council, together with any other consents required by law, In each case a Report in writing shall be provided to Council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).

- 14.4. No real property (interests in land) shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the full Council. In each case a Report in writing shall be provided to Council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).
- 14.5. Subject only to the limit set in Reg. 14.2 above, no tangible moveable property shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the full Council. In each case a Report in writing shall be provided to Council with a full business case.
- 14.6. The Clerk shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date. The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the Register shall be verified at least annually, possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.
- 14.7. Own IT/telecomms equipment - security. All EPC equipment is to be kept securely in the EPC office (currently Clerk's home). It is to be taken out of the office only on EPC business and all reasonable measures are then to be taken to ensure its physical security. The Council insurance cover is to include the equipment.
- 14.8. The Clerk is to ensure that phones, computers, etc are to be 'equipped' with up-to-date anti-virus software (where applicable for the phone) which is to be regularly updated. The Clerk is to set up additional software security on phones, computers, storage devices, etc including passwords and/or pass numbers.
- 14.9. Security passwords/pass numbers and other means of access are not to be recorded on paper which is then kept with the equipment. Copies of these passwords/pass numbers (including those for any forms of data storage) are to be kept in a sealed envelope and lodged with the Council Chair/Vice Chair for access in the Clerk's absence or in emergencies.
- 14.10. EPC e-mail system - security. The EPC e-mail system is provided by a professional external organisation and contracting with that organisation is to include adequate anti-virus/spam protection. The Council's insurance is to include suitable cover for any Council liability for 'clean up' of Council, Councillors or residents' computers following 'infection'.

15. INSURANCE

- 15.1. Following the annual risk assessment (per Financial Regulation 17), the Clerk shall effect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the Council's insurers.
- 15.2. The Clerk shall be mindful of and attend to all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.
- 15.3. The Clerk shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the Council and the property and risks covered thereby and annually review it.
- 15.4. The Clerk shall be notified of any loss liability or damage or of any event likely to lead to a claim, and shall report these to Council at the next available meeting.

- 15.5. All appropriate members and employees of the Council shall be included in a suitable form of security or fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined annually by the Council.

16. CHARITIES

- 16.1. Where the Council is sole managing trustee of a charitable body the Clerk shall ensure that separate accounts are kept of the funds held on charitable trusts and separate financial reports made in such form as shall be appropriate, in accordance with Charity Law and legislation, or as determined by the Charity Commission. The Clerk shall arrange for any Audit or Independent Examination as may be required by Charity Law or any Governing Document.

17. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 17.1. The Council is responsible for putting in place arrangements for the management of risk. The Clerk shall prepare, for approval by the Council, risk management policy statements in respect of all activities of the Council. Risk policy statements and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the Council at least annually.
- 17.2. When considering any new activity, the Clerk shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration and adoption by the Council.

18. SUSPENSION AND REVISION OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

- 18.1. It shall be the duty of the Council to review the Financial Regulations of the Council from time to time. The Clerk shall make arrangements to monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and shall advise the Council of any requirement for a consequential amendment to these financial regulations.
- 18.2. The Council may, by resolution of the Council duly notified prior to the relevant meeting of Council, suspend any part of these Financial Regulations provided that reasons for the suspension are recorded and that an assessment of the risks arising has been drawn up and presented in advance to all members of Council.