



SAXMUNDHAM TOWN COUNCIL FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

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Adopted By Saxmundham Town Council

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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 orders 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. The Council has an overall duty to ensure that it has a sound system of internal control which—

- (a) facilitates the effective exercise of its functions and the achievement of its aims and objectives;
- (b) ensures that the financial and operational management of the authority is effective; and
- (c) includes effective arrangements for the management of risk.

1.6. 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.

1.7. Deliberate or wilful breach of these Regulations by an employee may give rise to disciplinary proceedings.

1.8. Members of Council are expected to follow the instructions within these Regulations and not to entice employees to breach them. Failure to follow instructions within these Regulations brings the office of councillor into disrepute.

1.9. The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) holds a statutory office to be appointed by the Council and has been appointed as RFO for this Council and these regulations will apply accordingly.

1.10. The RFO:

- acts under the policy direction of the council, and subject to any lawful instructions 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;



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- 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.

1.11. The accounting records determined by the RFO shall be sufficient to show and explain the Council's transactions and to enable the RFO to ensure that any income and expenditure account and statement of balances, or record of receipts and payments and additional information or management information prepared for the council from time to time comply with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

1.12. The accounting records determined by the RFO 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.

1.13. The accounting control systems determined by the RFO shall include:

- procedures to ensure that the financial transactions of the Council are recorded as soon as reasonably practicable and 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 RFO and that the approvals are shown in the accounting records; and
- measures to ensure that risk is properly managed.

1.14. 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.

1.15. In addition, the Council must:

- determine and keep under regular review the bank mandate for all council bank accounts;
- approve any grant or a single commitment in excess of £5,000; and



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- in respect of the annual salary for any employee have regard to recommendations about annual salaries of employees made by the relevant committee in accordance with its terms of reference.

1.16. 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).

2. ACCOUNTING, AUDIT (INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL), FINANCIAL GOVERNANCE

2.1. All accounting procedures and financial records of the council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations, appropriate guidance and proper practices.

Bank reconciliations:

2.2 On a regular basis, at least once in each quarter, a member or members other than the Chairman of the Council or a cheque signatory shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations for all accounts produced by the RFO. The member(s) shall, when satisfied, 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 Resources Committee. The Resources Committee may make a specific report to the Council on the outcome of any verification process if it considers it appropriate, and in any event the outcome of each reconciliation shall be included in the Committee's minutes which are put before the Council. At the end of each financial year, the designated member(s) shall verify the bank reconciliations for the year, and report thereon to Resources Committee, which shall make its written report to the Council.

Annual Statement of accounts etc.:

2.3 The RFO 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.

Review of effectiveness of internal control

2.4 The Council shall each year comply with its statutory duty to conduct a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control which meets the objectives set out in Regulation 1.5 above. In carrying out this duty, the Resources Committee and Council shall consider any report or recommendations made by its internal or external auditor and take any action it considers necessary or appropriate arising out of any such report. The RFO shall, without undue delay, bring to the attention of all councillors any correspondence or report from internal or external auditors.

2.5 Following the annual review of effectiveness, the Town Council, taking into account any recommendations of the Resources Committee, must—

- (a) consider the findings of the review by members of the authority meeting as a whole, and
- (b) approve the annual governance statement (see 2.12 below).

Internal audit



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2.6 The Council shall each year comply with its statutory duty to undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, control and governance processes, taking into account public sector internal auditing standards or guidance.

2.7 The Council shall ensure (amongst other matters) 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 RFO, internal auditor, or external auditor with such information and explanation as the council considers necessary for that purpose.

2.8. The Council shall appoint an internal auditor who shall carry out the work in relation to internal controls required by the Council in accordance with proper practices.

2.9. 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.

2.10. 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.

2.11. 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.

Annual Governance Statement

2.12 The Council and the RFO shall comply with their respective duties in relation to the preparation and approval of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS).

Following the completion of the annual review of the effectiveness of internal control, the Town Council shall approve its AGS, prepared in accordance with legal requirements and proper practices, by resolution of members of the authority meeting as a whole. The AGS must be approved by it before approving the annual statement of accounts.

External audit

2.13 The Council and the RFO shall comply with their respective duties in relation to the external audit, and shall provide the appointed external auditor with all requisite information. The full Town Council shall consider and take appropriate action in relation to any report or recommendations of the external auditor.

Public rights of inspection of accounts



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2.14. The RFO 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.

3. ANNUAL ESTIMATES (BUDGET) AND FORWARD PLANNING

3.1 The Town Clerk and RFO shall each year, no later than November, draw up an initial draft budget for the following financial year, including detailed estimates of all receipts and payments, and any proposed use of reserves, to be considered initially by the Resources Committee. This initial draft budget shall be based on existing policies and known commitments.

3.2 The Resources Committee shall, in November each year, consider this initial draft budget and shall, taking account of any advice and information from the Town Clerk and RFO (e.g. on inflation assumptions), decide on any proposals to make to the Council at this stage in relation to the following financial year's budget, including any significant budget options for the Council's consideration.

3.3 The Council shall, no later than December each year, consider the initial draft budget for the following financial year, taking account of

(a) information and advice from the Clerk and RFO and

(b) any proposals and options put forward by the Resources Committee,

and may give such guidance as it sees fit to the Clerk and RFO, and to the Resources Committee, with a view to finalising the budget.

3.4 Taking into account advice from the Town Clerk and RFO and any further recommendations from the Resources Committee, the Council shall agree its budget for the following year, including the detailed estimates for income and expenditure, in accordance with the billing authority's timetable, and in any event no later than the end of January.

3.5. 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 RFO shall issue the precept to the billing authority and shall supply each member with a copy of the approved annual budget.

3.6. The approved annual budget shall form the basis of financial control for the ensuing year. The RFO shall on a regular basis, and at least quarterly, provide the Resources Committee and Council with updates on the budget position (income and expenditure) and on the estimated outturn for the financial year.

3.7 The Council may, to improve its overall financial and policy forward planning, establish a multi-year budget framework. This framework, which shall be developed by the RFO in consultation and coordination with the Resources Committee, and approved by the Council, shall be updated each year taking account of developments and changes in budgets, relevant costs and policies etc.

4. BUDGETARY CONTROL AND AUTHORITY TO SPEND



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Authorisation of expenditure

4.1. Expenditure on 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 £5,000;
- The Resources Committee or other duly delegated Committee of the Council for items over £1000; or
- the Clerk, in conjunction with Chairman of Council or Chair of the appropriate committee, for any items below £1000.
- The Clerk for items below £500, being regular recurring items which fall within the list of authorised payments drawn up and approved under paragraph 5.8 below

Such authority is to be evidenced by a minute of the Council or Committee, or by an authorisation form duly signed by the Clerk and also, as required, by the appropriate Chairman.

If the relevant committee or the Clerk, as may be the case, considers that an item of proposed expenditure falls within their delegated authority, but raises important policy or other relevant issues or may be controversial, the matter may be referred (a) by the committee on to the Council, or (b) by the Clerk to the relevant committee or the Council.

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

4.2. No expenditure may 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, and having taken account of any report from the Resources Committee, 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 by the Resources Committee at least annually by December for the following financial year and the outcome of such review, including the estimated financial impact for the current and future years, shall be reported to the Council.

4.5. The RFO will inform committees of any changes within a financial year, or likely to impact on their budget requirement for the coming year, in good time.

4.6 In cases of (a) extreme risk to the delivery of Council services, or (b) clear evidence of imminent serious risk to life or of personal injury which is the Council's responsibility, 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 Clerk shall report such action to the Chairman as soon as possible and to the Council as soon as practicable thereafter.

4.7. 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



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necessary funds are available and the requisite borrowing approval has been obtained. The limit for expenditure on Revenue items should be reviewed every two years.

4.8. All capital works shall be administered in accordance with the council's standing orders and financial regulations relating to contracts.

Financial reporting and monitoring

4.9. The RFO shall regularly provide the Resources Committee 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 or to be anticipated in relation to the budget. These detailed statements are to be reported to each regular meeting of the Committee. In addition, prepared at least at the end of each financial quarter, the statements shall include the RFO's estimate of outturn against each budget head (income and expenditure), and shall show explanations of material variances. For this purpose, "material" shall be in excess of £250 or 15% of the budget, whichever is greater.

4.10. The RFO will regularly, and at least at the end of each financial quarter, provide the Council with a statement of receipts and payments in a simplified format, grouping relevant budget headings, to include the RFO's estimate of outturn for each budget area, and shall show explanations of material variances. All members of the Council shall be entitled to receive, upon request, the detailed statements provided for the Resources Committee.

4.11. Changes in earmarked reserves shall be approved by Council as part of the budgetary control process.

5. BANKING ARRANGEMENTS AND AUTHORISATION OF PAYMENTS

Banking arrangements

5.1. The Council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the RFO and approved by the Council; banking arrangements may not be delegated to a committee. They shall be regularly reviewed for safety and efficiency. The Council may seek credit references in respect of members or employees who act as signatories.

Authorisation of payments

5.2. All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the RFO 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.

5.3. The RFO shall examine invoices for arithmetical accuracy and analyse them to the appropriate expenditure heading.

5.4. Where there is clear authorisation of the payment and sufficient funds in the budget the Clerk will make any payments. Where the invoice exceeds the authorised expenditure by up to 20%, the Clerk will seek an additional approval from the chair of the Resources Committee. Where the excess amount exceeds the authorised expenditure by more than 20% the RFO will seek Committee approval.



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5.5. The RFO shall prepare and submit a schedule of payments to the Resources Committee and the Town Council for each month of the year and payments made shall be reported to the Council for ratification. The schedule of payments will indicate the source of the authority to spend.

5.6. [formerly 5.8] For each financial year the Clerk and RFO shall draw up a list of payments which arise on a regular basis as the result of a continuing contract, statutory duty, obligation or standard office administration requirements such as (but not exclusively) Salaries, PAYE and NI, Superannuation Fund and regular maintenance, stationery supplies and utility contracts and the like, and present the list to the Resources Committee. The Committee may authorise payment for the year of all items so approved, 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 the Resources Committee.

General provisions on authorisation of payments

5.7. 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. Any Revenue or Capital Grant in excess of £5,000 shall before payment be subject to ratification by resolution of the council.

5.8. 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.

5.9. 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.

5.10. Any changes in the recorded details of suppliers, such as bank account records, shall be approved in writing by a Member of the Resources Committee.

6. 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 RFO shall arrange for payments to be made in accordance with this Regulation in conjunction with Appendix A BACs Payment Processes.

6.3. All payments shall be made by internet banking, by cheque or other instructions to the Council's bankers, or otherwise in accordance with a decision of the Council or Resources Committee.

6.4. Cheques or orders for approved payments drawn on the bank account shall be signed by two members of the Council duly authorised by the Council as signatories and accepted by the Bank. A member who is a bank signatory, having a connection by virtue of family or business relationships with the beneficiary of a payment, should not, under normal circumstances, be a signatory to the payment 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.



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6.6 Internet banking instructions for approved payments drawn on the bank account shall be authorised by two members of the Council duly authorised by the Council as signatories and accepted by the Bank. A member who is a bank authoriser, having a connection by virtue of family or business relationships with the beneficiary of a payment, should not, under normal circumstances, be an authoriser of the payment in question

6.6. A list showing all payments made since the previous report shall be provided to the Resources Committee at each meeting. This list of payments shall be available to any member of the Council on request.

6.7. If thought appropriate by the Council or Resources Committee, payment for utility supplies (e.g. energy, telephone, and water) and any National Non-Domestic Rates or other regular periodic payments provided for in the budget and approved for this purpose by the Resources Committee may be made by variable direct debit provided that the instructions are signed by two members and any payments are reported to Council or Resources Committee as made.

6.8. If thought appropriate by the Council or Resources Committee, 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 or Resources Committee as made.

6.9. If thought appropriate by the Council or Resources Committee, 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 or Resources Committee as made.

6.10. If thought appropriate by the Council or Resources Committee, payment for certain items, including salaries, may be made by internet banking transfer provided evidence is retained showing which members approved the payment.

Digital security requirements

6.11. Where a computer requires use of a personal identification number (PIN) or other password(s), for access to the council's records on that computer, a note shall be made of the PIN and Passwords and shall be handed to and retained by the Chairman of Council in a sealed dated envelope. This envelope may not be opened other than in the presence of two other councillors. After the envelope has been opened, in any circumstances, the PIN and / or passwords shall be changed as soon as practicable. The fact that the sealed envelope has been opened, in whatever circumstances, shall be reported to all members immediately and formally to the next available meeting of the Council. This will not be required for a member's personal computer used only for remote authorisation of bank payments.

6.12. No employee or councillor shall disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the working of the council or its bank accounts, 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.

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.



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6.15. Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the Clerk or RFO 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. 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 under these regulations.

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 the Clerk/RFO and a member of the Resources Committee. 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 /RFO and will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £1000 unless authorised by the Resources Committee in writing before any order is placed. The single transaction maximum value of £1000 should be reviewed every two years.

6.19. A pre-paid debit card may be issued to employees with varying limits. These limits will be set by the Resources Committee. Transactions and purchases made will be reported to the Resources Committee for topping-up at the discretion of the Resources Committee.

6.20. Any corporate credit card or trade card account opened by the Council will be specifically restricted to use by the Clerk / RFO 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 RFO shall maintain a petty cash float of £50 for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses. Vouchers for payments made from petty cash shall be kept to substantiate the payment.

a) Income received must not be paid into the petty cash float but must be separately banked, as provided elsewhere in these regulations.

b) Payments to maintain the petty cash float shall be shown separately on the schedule of payments presented to Resources Committee or Council under 5.4 and 5.6 above.

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 and pension contributions 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 Resources Committee meeting, as set out in these regulations above.



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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 Resources Committee and then ratified at full Council.

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. An effective system of personal performance management should be maintained for the senior officers.

7.7. Any proposed termination payments shall be supported by a clear business case 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 Clerk will forthwith provide a copy of each statement of account received by him/her from the Council's banks and investment providers to the Chairman of the Council and of Resources Committee.

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.

8.6. All investments of money under the control of the Council shall be in the name of the council.



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8.7. All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be securely retained in the custody of the RFO.

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 (Making of payments).

9. INCOME

9.1. The collection of all sums due to the Council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO.

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 RFO and the RFO shall be responsible for the collection of all accounts due to the Council.

9.3. The Council will review all fees and charges at least 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 RFO. In all cases, all receipts shall be deposited with the Council's bankers with such frequency as the RFO 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 RFO 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 RFO 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 RFO.



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10.3. All members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times. An officer 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 11.1 below.

10.4. A member may not issue an official order or make any contract on behalf of the council.

10.5. The RFO 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 RFO 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 specialist services such as are provided by legal professionals acting in disputes;

iii. 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;

iv. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the Council;

v. for additional audit work of the external auditor up to an estimated value of £500 (in excess of this sum the Clerk and RFO shall act after consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council); and

vi. for goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and / or are only sold at a fixed price.

b) Where the Council intends to procure or award a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract as defined by The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (“the Regulations”) which is valued at £25,000 or more, the Council shall comply with the relevant requirements of the Regulations¹.

c) The full requirements of The Regulations, as applicable, shall be followed in respect of the tendering and award of a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract which exceed thresholds in The Regulations set by the Public Contracts Directive 2014/24/EU (which may change from time to time)².

¹ The Regulations require councils to use the Contracts Finder website to advertise contract opportunities, set out the procedures to be followed in awarding new contracts and to publicise the award of new contracts

² Thresholds currently applicable are:

a) For public supply and public service contracts 209,000 Euros (£181,302)

b) For public works contracts 5,225,000 Euros (£4,551,413)



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d) 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.

e) 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.

f) All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the Clerk in the presence of at least one member of Council.

g) Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to Standing Order 18, ³[insert reference of the council's relevant standing order] and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.

11h) 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 [£3,000] and above [£1000] the Clerk or RFO shall strive to obtain 3 estimates. Otherwise, Regulation 10.3 above shall apply.

i) The council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.

j) 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.

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 RFO 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 RFO 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

³ Based on NALC's Model Standing Order 18d ©NALC 2018



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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 RFO 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 RFO 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 £1000.

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 Regulation 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 RFO 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.

15. INSURANCE

15.1. Following the annual risk assessment (per Regulation 17), the RFO shall effect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the council's insurers [in consultation with the Clerk].

[15.2. The Clerk shall give prompt notification to the RFO of all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.]



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15.3. The RFO 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 RFO 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, or duly delegated committee.

16. CHARITIES

16.1. Where the council is sole managing trustee of a charitable body the Clerk / RFO 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 and RFO 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 and RFO 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 and RFO 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.



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Appendix 1- BACs Payment Processes

Online Banking Users

- 1) The Town Council in taking advantage of online banking shall establish two classes of user:

CLASS A - user rights only to view balances and create payments.

CLASS B - user rights only to view balances and authorise release of payments.

- 2) The Town Clerk and Finance and Administration Officer shall be CLASS A users.
- 3) The Council's bank signatories shall be CLASS B users.
- 4) No other users shall be permitted on the council's online banking system.
- 5) Class A users are not permitted to authorise the release of payments.

Making BACs Payments

- 1) The Finance and Administration Officer shall prepare a schedule of payments using the Rialtas accounting system.
- 2) The Clerk will check the payments list and create within the council's banking system the payments for approval by two authorised signatures.
- 3) The Finance and Administration Officer shall provide CLASS B users with an approved schedule of payments for reference when authorising payments
- 4) Two CLASS B users shall authorise payments for release. No payment shall be released without two CLASS B users having authorised the payment.