



## POYNTON TOWN COUNCIL FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

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These Financial Regulations were adopted by the council at its meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023

\*For the avoidance of doubt all amounts referred to in these regulations exclude VAT

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

1.7 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.

1.8 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 RFO;

- 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.

1.10 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, as the case may be, or management information prepared for the council from time to time comply with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

1.11 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.

1.12 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 the Finance & General Purposes Committee 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 or delegated committee 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 £10,000; and
- 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.

1.15 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).

## **2. Accounting and audit (internal and external)**

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.

2.2 On a regular basis, at least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, the Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee or a cheque signatory shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the RFO. The member shall sign the reconciliations and the original bank statements, or where original statements are not available a copy of the statement certified by the RFO as evidence of verification. This activity shall on conclusion be reported, including any exceptions, to and noted by the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

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.

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 RFO, 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
- has 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 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.

2.10 The RFO 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 Following presentation of the provisional budget for the next financial year, each Standing committee shall review its forecast of revenue and capital receipts and payments. Having regard to the forecast, it shall thereafter formulate and submit revisions/proposals for the following financial year to the Finance and General Purposes Committee not later than the Mid December each year including any proposals for revising the forecast.

3.2 The RFO assisted by the Town Council's accountant, must each year, by no later than 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.

3.3 The Finance and General Purposes Committee shall consider annual budget proposals in relation to the council's annual forecast of revenue and capital receipts and payments including recommendations for the use of reserves and sources of funding and update the forecast accordingly.

3.4 Thereafter, the Finance and General Purposes Committee shall submit them to a meeting of the Town Council no later than early January each year, with a recommendation of the precept to be levied for the ensuing financial year. The RFO shall produce an overview Budget Report relating to the proposed business of the Council.

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.

#### **4. Budgetary control and authority to spend**

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:

- a. Salaries in accordance with the budget by the RFO
- b. Other expenditure up to £2,500 by the RFO
- c. Other expenditure between £2,501 and £10,000 by the RFO and the spending committee or the RFO and the Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee
- d. Other expenditure above £10,000 by the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

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 Chairman.

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, unspent and available amounts may be moved to other budget headings or to an earmarked reserve as appropriate ('virement').

In the event of a budget provision being exceeded, the RFO will advise the Finance and General Purposes Committee at the earliest opportunity in accordance with the following provisions:

4.3 Variations in revenue expenditure may be dealt with as follows:

- a. Where an individual budget code is exceeded by an amount up to £1,000, the RFO may approve a virement \* between budget codes.
- b. Where a budget code is exceeded between £1,000 and £5,000, the Finance and General Purposes Committee may approve a virement between budget codes.
- c. Where a budget code is exceeded by over £5,000, the Finance and General Purposes Committee may approve a virement between budget codes, subject to ratification at the next meeting of the Town Council.
- d. If virement between budget codes is not possible, a supplementary budget, to be financed from Reserves, must be prepared by the Finance and General Purposes Committee and approved at the next meeting of the Town Council.

\* The transfer of a surplus from one account to cover a deficit in another.

4.4 Unspent provisions in the revenue or capital budgets for completed projects shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year.

4.5 Unspent provisions in the revenue budget shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year, but may be transferred to an appropriate Earmarked Reserve, where the sum had already been approved and the expenditure is likely to be spent in the next financial year.

4.6 The salary budgets are to be reviewed at least annually in November for the following financial year and such review shall be evidenced by a hard copy schedule signed by the Clerk and the Chairman of Council or relevant committee. The RFO will inform committees of any changes impacting on their budget requirement for the coming year in good time.

4.7 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 £500. The Clerk shall report such action to the chairman as soon as possible and to the council as soon as practicable thereafter.

4.8 The RFO (when possible in consultation with the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Financial and General Purposes Committee) may incur expenditure on behalf of the Council which is necessary to carry out any repair, replacement or other work which is of such extreme urgency that it must be done at once, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £2,500. The RFO shall report the action to the Chairman of the appropriate Committee and Financial and General Purposes Committee as soon as practicable thereafter.

4.9 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.

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

4.11 Variations up to 5% or £2,000, whichever is the greater, in the budget of a Capital Scheme may be approved by the RFO, subject to being reported to the next Financial and General Purposes Committee.

4.12 Variations up to 10% or £5000, whichever is the greater, in the budget of a Capital Scheme may be approved by the Financial and General Purposes Committee, subject to being reported to the next meeting of the Town Council.

4.13 For other variations in the budget of a Capital Scheme, the approval of the Town Council is required. In the case of all variations, an attempt must be made to find compensating savings in the project or in other capital projects.

4.14 The RFO shall regularly provide the Financial and General Purposes Committee with a statement of income and expenditure to date under each head of the budgets, comparing actual expenditure against that budgeted. These statements are to be prepared at least at the end of each financial quarter and shall show explanations of material variances. Copies of these reports must be available to all members of Council.

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



## **5. Banking arrangements and authorisation of payments**

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.

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. Delegation of RFO authority will be made to the Deputy Town Clerk in times of absence of RFO due to sickness or annual leave.

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

5.4 The RFO and two members of the Council (in line with the bank mandate) shall have delegated authority to authorise the payments. Delegation of RFO authority will be made to the Deputy Town Clerk in times of absence of RFO due to sickness or annual leave.

5.5 The Clerk or Deputy Clerk shall prepare a schedule of payments to be made by BACs or cheque each invoice having been signed by the RFO will be countersigned by *one* of the council's bank signatories as approval for payment, and the schedule will be signed by two signatories, after comparison with the invoices. This can be actioned by wet or digital signature.

5.6 The RFO shall prepare a schedule of payments for each month, forming part of the Agenda for the Meeting of the next Finance & General Purposes Committee and present the schedule to the Committee. The committee shall review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied itself shall note the payments.

5.7 A monthly audit will be performed on the standing data used for processing electronic payments to suppliers and employees. This will be undertaken by the Town Clerk / RFO with Town Council staff and shall be evidenced by RFO signature on source documentation. This shall be retained for audit purposes.

5.8 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.

5.9 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.

5.10 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.

5.11 Any changes in the recorded details of suppliers, such as bank account records, shall be approved in writing by the RFO.

## **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 All payments shall be affected by cheque or other instructions to the council's bankers, or otherwise, in accordance with a resolution of council.

6.3 The Clerk or Deputy Clerk will raise online payments using the Banks Online Payment portal and complete an Online Payment Authorisation Schedule. Prepare any cheque payments and indicate the cheque number on the corresponding invoice.

6.4 Where online payments are made, the Deputy Clerk is required to load the payments on to the bank system and prepare the cheques and the RFO is required to approve them. The RFO will approve the payment by initialling the invoice and in the case of online payments the schedule of online payments drawn up by the Deputy Clerk.

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 invoice and the cheque counterfoil. Two Council bank signatories will sign the prepared cheques, after checking the details match the invoice and each initial the cheque stubs.

6.6 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.

6.7 Where an online payment is required the two bank signatories who have signed the schedule will log into the Council's bank online payment portal and approve the raised payments, ensuring the details match the invoices. Once the payment is approved, they will sign the online payment schedule. The completed online payment schedule will be kept by the Clerk for accounting purposes.

6.8 Payments may be made by variable direct debit or standing orders provided that the instructions are signed by two signatories and any payments are reported to the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

6.9 If approved by the council, payment for certain items may be made direct debit, standing order or by internet banking transfer. Evidence of which bank signatories approved the bank transfer must be retained. A list of direct debits and standing orders will be approved by the Finance and General Purposes Committee at the start of each financial year.

6.10 Passwords and PIN number are kept in a secure app which the Clerk and Deputy Clerk have access to.

6.11 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.

6.12 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.

6.13 The council, and any members using computers or other devices 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.

6.14 Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the Clerk and Deputy Clerk shall be appointed as the Service Administrators.

6.15 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.

6.16 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. A programme of regular checks of standing data with suppliers will be followed.

6.17 Any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Clerk and Deputy Clerk and will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £1,000 unless authorised by council or finance committee in writing before any order is placed.

6.18 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.

6.19 A limit of £2,000 is set for the corporate credit card. No cash transactions will be allowed.

6.20 Personal credit or debit cards of members or staff shall only be used as a last resort.

6.21 Purchases made by credit card will be in line with Financial Regulation 4: Authority to Spend.

6.22 The monthly credit card statements will be approved by the Clerk / RFO and the Chair of the Finance & General Purposes Committee (or a bank signatory in the absence of the Chair). Approval will be evidenced by signature on the bank reconciliation pack.

6.23 Credit card statements are checked by the Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee as part of the bank reconciliation each month. The bank reconciliation packs are noted by the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

6.24 The RFO shall maintain a petty cash float of £300 which must be kept in the safe for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses. Vouchers for payments made from petty cash shall be kept to substantiate the payment.

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

6.26 Payments to maintain the petty cash float shall be shown separately on the schedule of payments presented to council under 5.2 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 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 Finance & General Purposes Committee 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 Management and Establishment 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 An effective system of personal performance management should be maintained for all staff.

7.7 Any termination payments shall be supported by a clear business case and reported to the council. Termination payments shall only be authorised by council.

7.8 Before employing interim staff, the council must consider a full business case.

## **8. Loans and investments**

8.1 All borrowings shall be affected 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 in accordance with Item 4.1 of these regulations. 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 a copy of the statement to be issued to the Clerk. Where the account is only available online the Clerk will log on to the account and take a screenshot of the account. As part of the reconciliation

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.

8.7 All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be 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 (Instructions for 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 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.

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

10.4 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 Regulations<sup>1</sup>.

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)<sup>2</sup>.

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. Tenderers will be required to complete suitability assessment questions.

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) If less than three tenders are received for contracts above £25,000, or if all tenders are identical, the Council may make such arrangements as it thinks fit for procuring the goods or materials or executing the works.

h) 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.

i) 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

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<sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>2</sup> 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)



£1,000 the Clerk or RFO shall strive to obtain 3 estimates. Otherwise, Regulation 10.3 above shall apply.

j) The council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate. The reasons for the decision will be recorded.

k) 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 The following provisions, namely 12.2, 12.3, and 12.4, relate to contracts with a value of £10,000 or more.

12.2 Prior to any contract signature, the Finance and General Purposes Committee will decide whether it is appropriate to request a Performance Bond.

12.3 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).

12.4 For contracts with a value of £5,000 or more, any variation or addition to or omission from such contracts must be approved by the Financial and General Purposes Committee and confirmed by the RFO to the Contractor in writing. The Chair and Vice Chair have the option to call a special meeting. The Financial and General Purposes Committee must also be informed where the final cost of the contract 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 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 £500.

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.

15.2 The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the council and the property and risks covered thereby and annually review it.

15.3 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 the Finance and General Purposes Committee at the next available meeting.

15.4 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 and 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 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.