

Skegness Town Council

Financial Regulations

June 2020

Steve Larner – Town Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer

Town Gardens Pavilion

Rutland Road, Skegness

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These Financial Regulations were adopted by the Council at its Meeting held on 24th June 2020

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. A serious 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 that the approvals are shown in the accounting records; and
 - measures to ensure that risk is properly managed.
- 1.13. The council is not empowered by these Regulations or otherwise to delegate certain specified decisions. In particular any decision regarding:
- setting the final budget or the precept (Council Tax Requirement);

- approving accounting statements;
- approving an annual governance statement;
- borrowing;
- writing off bad debts;
- declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence; and
- addressing recommendations in any report from the internal or external auditors,

shall be a matter for the full council only.

1.14. In addition the council must:

- determine and keep under regular review the bank mandate for all council bank accounts;
- 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, a member other than a payment 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 similar document) as evidence of verification. Alternatively, the reconciliations may be verified by the Mayor with copies of the reconciliations, statements and verifications reported to the appropriate Committee as part of the quarterly governance function. This activity shall on conclusion be reported, including any exceptions, to and noted by the council.

- 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;
 - demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, be free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships; and
 - have no involvement in the financial decision making, management or control of the council.
- 2.7. Internal or external auditors may not under any circumstances:
 - perform any operational duties for the council;
 - initiate or approve accounting transactions; or
 - direct the activities of any council employee, except to the extent that such employees have been appropriately assigned to assist the internal auditor.
- 2.8. For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to internal audit the terms 'independent' and 'independence' shall have the same meaning as is described in proper practices.

- 2.9. The 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. Each committee shall review its five-year forecast of revenue and capital receipts and payments in line with the Council's Business Plan. Having regard to the forecast, it shall thereafter formulate and submit proposals for the following financial year to the council not later than the end of November each year including any proposals for revising the forecast.
- 3.2. The RFO must each year, by no later than 30th September, prepare detailed estimates of all receipts and payments including the use of reserves and all sources of funding for the following financial year in the form of a budget to be considered by the committees and the council.
- 3.3. The council shall consider annual budget proposals in relation to the council's five year 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. 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 the third week 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 or publish this on the Council's website.
- 3.5. 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:

- delegated authority to the Clerk in respect of any single item identified in the budget approval process (for avoidance of doubt this includes all budgeted operational annual expenditure and approved projects);
- the council for all other items over £10,000 (except where special provision has been made in respect of a major Capital Project);
- a duly delegated committee of the council for items over £5000 but below £10,000;
- The Clerk in respect of any items below £5000.

Such authority is to be evidenced by a Minute or by an authorisation slip duly signed by the Clerk (or officer delegated by him), 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, duly delegated committee or as otherwise set out in Standing Orders or Financial Regulations. During the budget year and with the approval of council having considered fully the implications for public services, unspent and available amounts may be moved to other budget headings or to an earmarked reserve as appropriate ('virement').
- 4.3. Within a class of expenditure, the Clerk has delegated authority to move money between detailed budget headings where this does not change the overall class of expenditure budget.
- 4.4. Unspent provisions in the revenue or capital budgets for completed projects shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year without Council approval.
- 4.5. The salary budgets are to be reviewed at least annually in September 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. Where the review is undertaken by a Committee, the signed minutes of that Committee will be deemed to satisfy this requirement. The RFO will inform committees of any changes impacting on their budget requirement for the coming year in good time.
- 4.6. 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 £3000. 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 necessary funds are available and, if required, the requisite

borrowing approval has been obtained. It is expected that Council will put in place specific controls for each and every Capital Project having regard to the specific risks.

- 4.8. All capital works shall be administered in accordance with the council's standing orders and financial regulations relating to contracts.
- 4.9. The RFO shall provide the appropriate Committee with a statement of income and expenditure to date under each head of the budgets, comparing actual expenditure to the appropriate date against that planned as shown in the budget as part of the Quarterly Governance Report. These statements are to be prepared at least at the end of each financial quarter and shall show explanations of material variances. For this purpose "material" shall be in excess of £100 or 10% of the budget whichever is the greater.
- 4.10. Changes in earmarked reserves shall be approved by council as part of the budgetary control process or within the end of year accounts.

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. The RFO shall prepare a schedule of payments requiring authorisation, forming part of the Agenda for the Meeting and present the schedule to council making any supporting invoices available for inspection. The council shall review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied itself shall authorise payment by a resolution of the council. The approved schedule shall form part of the minutes of the Meeting. Personal payments (including salaries, wages, expenses and any payment made in relation to the termination of a contract of employment) may be summarised to remove public access to any personal information.
- 5.3. All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the RFO (or other Officer delegated by him) 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 or by the Clerk under delegated authority and subsequently authorised by Council.
- 5.4. The RFO (or other Officer delegated by him/her) shall examine invoices for arithmetical accuracy and record them under the appropriate expenditure heading. The RFO may under delegated authority pay all invoices received, which are in order and present these for authorisation at the next available Council Meeting.

- 5.5. The Clerk and RFO shall have delegated authority to pay items only in the following circumstances:
- a) If a payment is necessary to avoid a charge to interest under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998, and the due date for payment is before the next scheduled Meeting of council, where the Clerk and RFO certify that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council for approval.
 - b) An expenditure item authorised under continuing contracts and obligations provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council
 - c) Any item where the Council or a Committee has specifically authorised the spending, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council for approval
 - d) Any other expenditure item not exceeding £10,000 provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council for approval
 - e) Fund transfers to satisfy the Investment Strategy criteria. Or generally within the councils banking arrangements up to the sum of £50,000, provided that a list of such transfers shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council.
- 5.6. For each financial year the Clerk and RFO may additionally draw up a list of due payments which are not otherwise covered by Financial Regulation 5.5 and arise on a regular basis as the result of a continuing contract, statutory duty, or obligation (such as but not exclusively, Salaries, PAYE and NI, Superannuation Fund and regular maintenance contracts and the like for which council may authorise payment for the year provided that the requirements of regulation 4.1 (Budgetary Controls) are adhered to, provided also that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council
- 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 £10,000 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 signed off by two members of staff.

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. In accordance with Financial Regulation 5 above, the Clerk, RFO or Deputy Clerk shall give instruction that a payment shall be made.
- 6.3. All payments shall be made by cheque, electronic banking payment or other instructions to the council's bankers, or otherwise, in accordance with a resolution of Council.
- 6.4. The Clerk is authorised to use electronic transfer or electronic banking. Where an electronic or e-banking transaction is to take place, an e-banking proforma must be signed by two cheque signatories and countersigned by the Clerk prior to the transaction taking place. Actual payment on the Council's banking system shall be authorised by two Officers (this effectively puts in place the same checks and controls as for cheque payments). Electronic banking transactions shall be shown separately itemised on the schedule of payments presented to Council under 5.2 above.
- 6.5. Cheques or orders for payment drawn on the bank account, in accordance with the schedule as authorised by council, shall be signed by two members of council and countersigned by the Clerk. If a member who is also a bank signatory has declared a disclosable pecuniary interest, or has any other interest, in the matter in respect of which the payment is being made, that Councillor shall be required to consider Standing Orders, and thereby determine whether it is appropriate and / or permissible to be a signatory to the transaction in question.
- 6.6. 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 if used.
- 6.7. The Town Clerk has delegated authority (in place from 23rd May 2018) to make payment, for recurring supplies (e.g. energy, fuel, telephone, water, support contracts) and any National Non-Domestic Rates, by variable Direct Debit provided that the instructions are reported to council and payments made form part of the list of payments for approval. The approval of the use of delegated powers in this respect shall be renewed by resolution of the council at least every two years. The review and approval of Financial Regulations will be deemed to satisfy this requirement.

- 6.8. If thought appropriate by the council, payment for certain items may be made by Banker's Standing Order provided that the instructions are signed, or otherwise evidenced by two members are retained and any payments are reported to council as made. The approval of the use of a Banker's Standing Order shall be renewed by resolution of the council at least every two years.
- 6.9. Payment for certain items may be made by BACS or CHAPS methods provided that the instructions for each payment are signed, or otherwise evidenced, by two authorised bank signatories are retained and any payments are reported to council as made.
- 6.10. 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 placed in the Council's safe in a sealed dated envelope. This envelope may not be opened other than by the Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk or otherwise in the presence of two other councillors or a councillor and an employee. After the envelope has been opened, in any circumstances, the PIN and / or passwords shall be changed as soon as practicable. Alternatively, system security measures (such as Microsoft Active Directory) will be deemed to meet this requirement where this is managed and accessible by both the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk.
- 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, other than is set out in 6.10.
- 6.12. Regular back-up copies of the records on any on-site computer shall be made and shall be stored securely away from the computer in question, and preferably off site. Where information is stored in "the cloud" this will be through reputable companies that have robust access control and backup routines in place.
- 6.13. The council, and any members using computers for the council's confidential 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 [RFO] shall be appointed as the Service Administrator. The approval of transactions shall be in accordance with 6.4 above. The bank mandate will state clearly the amounts of payments that can be instructed by the use of the Service Administrator alone.
- 6.15. Access to any internet banking accounts will be directly to the access page and not through a search engine or e-mail link. Remembered or saved passwords facilities must not be used for any 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 (e.g invoice) or for on-line businesses by verification through their official website. Payment proformas

will be marked to show that it is a new account and these will be checked by two of the Clerk, another employee or a member. A programme of regular checks of standing data with suppliers will be followed.

- 6.17. Any Debit or Credit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk with any issued cards individually identifying the holder. These will be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £1000 unless authorised by Council or an appropriate Committee before any order is placed. Any credit card shall have a card limit of £2000 and shall be settled each month by Direct Debit so as to avoid any interest charge.
- 6.18. The RFO may provide petty cash to officers for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses. Vouchers for payments made shall be forwarded to the RFO with a claim for reimbursement.
- a) The RFO shall maintain as petty cash float of up to £250 for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses. Vouchers for payments made from petty cash shall be kept to substantiate the payment and shall be recorded in the computerised accounts under the appropriate expenditure heading.
 - b) Income received must not be paid into the petty cash float but must be separately banked, as provided elsewhere in these regulations.
 - c) Payments to maintain the petty cash float 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 in accordance with the terms of the contracts of employment or as agreed by council, or duly delegated committee from time to time.
- 7.2. Payment of salaries and payment of deductions from salary such as may be required to be made for tax, national insurance and pension contributions, or similar statutory or discretionary deductions, must be made in accordance with the payroll records and on the appropriate dates stipulated in employment contracts, provided that each payment is reported to the next available council meeting, as set out in these regulations above.
- 7.3. No changes shall be made to any employee's pay (other than by way of contractual increments, national pay awards or changes to the National Minimum Wage), emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the council or relevant committee, if so delegated.

- 7.4. The Clerk has delegated authority to authorise paid overtime to staff, where this is required to meet a statutory or contractual service or is in respect of paid services, but only where this can be managed within the requirements of 4.1 above (budgetary control) or where the additional income will cover the cost.
- 7.5. All payments and deductions relating to employees' remuneration shall be entered into the Council's computerised payroll system which will be used to calculate and record statutory and discretionary deductions to the appropriate creditor. This system 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 valid need to know;
 - b) by the internal auditor;
 - c) by the external auditor; or
- by any person authorised under Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation.
- 7.6. 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.
- 7.7. An effective system of personal performance management should be maintained for the senior officers.
- 7.8. Any termination payments shall be supported by a clear business case and reported to the council. Termination payments shall only be authorised by council.
- 7.9. Before employing interim staff under delegated powers the Town Clerk must consider the reasons for doing so and make these available to Council if so requested.

8. LOANS AND INVESTMENTS

- 8.1. All borrowings shall be made 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. 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.

- 8.4. 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 Investment Strategy and Policy shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.
- 8.5. All investments of money under the control of the council shall be in the name of the council.
- 8.6. All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO.
- 8.7. 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 at least 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 ensure the completion of the electronic VAT Return that is required. Any repayment claim due shall be made in accordance with HRMC making tax digital for VAT regulations.
- 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 the Mayor's Charity shall be paid into a bank account for that purpose. Instructions for the payment of funds due from the account to the council (to meet expenditure incurred by the authority) will be given by the Mayor separately from any council meeting and all records for this account shall be considered to be completely external to the responsibilities of the Council and under the management of the Clerk in conjunction with the current Mayor.

10. ORDERS FOR WORK, GOODS AND SERVICES

- 10.1. An official order, letter or email shall be issued for all work, goods and services unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate. Online shopping baskets are in common use, and these are deemed to meet this requirement. Copies of orders shall be retained.
- 10.2. Orders shall be controlled by the RFO or other Officer delegated by him/her.
- 10.3. 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 (I) below.
- 10.4. A member may not issue an official order nor 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

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 solicitors, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants;

- 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 or software;
 - 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.
 - vii. where goods and services are purchased through a pre-procured public sector catalogue such as Crown Commercial Services or ESPO, or through a Council approved Framework Agreement.
- b. Where it is intended to enter into a contract exceeding £60,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Clerk shall invite tenders from at least three suitable firms.
 - c. 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.
 - d. 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.
 - e. 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.
 - f. If less than three tenders are received for contracts above £60,000 or if all the tenders are identical the council may make such arrangements as it thinks fit for procuring the goods or materials or executing the works.
 - g. Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to Standing Order 30d and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.
 - h. When it is to enter into a contract of less than £60,000 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 £100 the Clerk or RFO shall strive to obtain 3 estimates. Otherwise, Regulation 10 (3) above shall apply.

- i. 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.
- j. 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).
- k. The council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.
- l. Should it occur that the council, duly delegated committee or Officer, does not accept any tender, quote or estimate, the work is not allocated and the council requires further pricing, provided that the specification does not change, no person shall be permitted to submit a later tender, estimate or quote who was present when the original decision making process was being undertaken.
- m. The European Union Procurement Directive shall apply and the terms of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2006 (and 2009 amendments) including thresholds shall be followed.
- n. Framework contracts may be used that have been procured in compliance with any applicable regulation or law. Where a framework contract is used all requirements to seek tenders, quotations or other competitive prices will have deemed to have been met. For contracts below £10,000 the Town Clerk or RFO can determine when to use a framework agreement for goods or services. For contracts of £10,000 or above the decision to use Framework Contracts will be made by Council or duly delegated Committee.
- o. The Town Clerk or RFO is authorised to sign an Access Agreement to any Framework Arrangement so long as this does not commit the Council to any financial arrangements at that point and any contract is subject to further approval in accordance with these Financial Regulations.

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

- 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, wherever possible, 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.

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. For the avoidance of doubt, consent of Council is deemed to have been given where expenditure is approved as part of the budget setting process.
- 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 conditions in 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 Financial Regulation 17), the RFO shall take out all insurances and negotiate all claims on the council's insurers. The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances taken out by the council and the property and risks covered thereby and annually review it.
- 15.2. 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 or the appropriate committee at the next available meeting.
- 15.3. 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. LIMITED COMPANY

Where the council is the sole shareholder of a limited company, separate accounts shall be kept of the funds held on a commercial basis and separate financial reports made in such form as shall be appropriate and that these are to form no part of the Council's accounts other than as a balance sheet entry in respect of any asset or liability. These limited company accounts are not governed by these financial regulations.

18. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 18.1. The council is responsible for putting in place arrangements for the management of risk. The Clerk [with the 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 or appropriate committee at least annually.
- 18.2. When considering any new activity, the Clerk shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration and adoption by the council.

19. SUSPENSION AND REVISION OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

- 19.1. 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.

- 19.2. 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.

20. FINANCIAL PROCEDURES

- 20.1 The RFO shall maintain the Council's detailed Financial Procedures necessary to comply with these Financial Regulations and shall be duly authorised to review adapt and change these as required from time to time.