Bicester Town Council

BICESTER
TOWN COUNCIL

Bicester Town Council Meeting

Ref: BTC03/2122

Tuesday 7th September 2021
at
7.00pm

THE GARTH
LAUNTON ROAD
BICESTER
OX26 6PS

Circulation: Town Mayor – Councillor Nicholas Mawer

Members:
Cllr Nicholas Mawer - **Chairman**, Cllr Alex Thrupp– **Vice-Chairman**
Cllr Nick Cotter, Cllr Sandy Dallimore, Cllr Donna Ford, Cllr Dan Hallett,
Cllr Harry Knight, Cllr Zoe McLernon, Cllr James Metcalf, Cllr Richard Mould,
Cllr Lynn Pratt, Cllr Dan Sames, Cllr Les Sibley, Cllr Jason Slaymaker,
Cllr Fraser Webster

Other Circulation:
Cllr Calum Miller – OCC, Cllr Michael Waine – OCC,
Cllr Tom Wallis – CDC, Cllr Lucinda Wing – CDC

BICESTER
TOWN COUNCIL

Council Offices, The Garth
Launton Road
Bicester
Oxon. OX2 6PS
Telephone: 01869 252915
Email: enquiries@bicester.gov.uk
www.bicester.gov.uk

Tuesday 31st August 2021

Sir/ Madam

You are summoned to attend a meeting of the **Council** which will be held on **Tuesday 7th September 2021** at **19:00hrs** at **The Garth, Launton Road, Bicester, Oxon OX26 6PS** to commence at **7pm** for the transaction of the following business.

Phil Evans
Service Manager

Agenda

All Council Meetings are open to the public and press, unless otherwise stated.

1. Apologies for Absence

To consider apologies and reasons for absence. Committee members who are unable to attend the meeting should notify enquiries@bicester.gov.uk prior to the meeting, stating the reason for absence.

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillors are reminded to declare any interests on any item on this Agenda in accordance with Bicester Town Council's Code of Conduct.

3. Public Session

In accordance with Standing Orders 1 d-f, members of the public may make representations, ask questions and give evidence in respect of any item of business included in the agenda.

Time allocated shall not exceed 10 minutes. No member shall speak for more than 2 minutes.

4. Portrait of Sir Tony Baldry

Bicester Town Mayor, Cllr Nicholas Mawer, to receive portrait on behalf of Bicester Town Council.

5. Minutes of the Town Council Meeting

To confirm the minutes and **RESOLUTIONS** contained in the minutes of the following Town Council meeting:

BTC02/2122 – 21st June 2021

6. Minutes of the Environment Committee Meeting

To confirm the minutes and **RESOLUTIONS** contained in the minutes of the following Environment Committee meeting:

ENV01/2122 - 26th July 2021

7. Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting

To confirm the minutes and **RESOLUTIONS** contained in the minutes of the following Finance Committee meeting:

FIN01/2122 - 26th July 2021

8. Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting

To confirm the minutes and **RESOLUTIONS** contained in the minutes of the following Planning Committee meeting:

PL02/2122 - 12th July 2021
PL03/2122 - 9th August 2021

9. Questions on Working Parties and Other Groups

Members are asked to raise any questions they may have regarding the minutes of Working Parties and Other Groups contained in the Minute Book.

10. Report from Oxfordshire County/Cherwell District Councillors

A report may be delivered to Bicester Town Council from Oxfordshire County and Cherwell District Councillors.

11. Report of the Town Mayor

Council is asked to **NOTE** the Mayors report below:

Cllr Nicholas Mawer and his Consort Mrs Rebecca Mawer attended:
22nd July - The Lord Lieutenant's Thames Valley Multi-Faith Service, Dorney Lake
14th August - Launton Grange Family Day, Bicester

Cllr Nicholas Mawer attended:
4th August - Superhero's Day

12. Financial Regulations (GP8) Review

Council is asked to consider the attached report.

13. Date of Next Meeting – 16th November 2020 - 7pm

14. Exclusion of Press and Public

RECOMMENDED
That in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the items set out below on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the general interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

15. Minutes of the Special Personnel Meetings

To confirm the minutes and **RESOLUTIONS** contained in the minutes of the following Personnel Committee meeting:

PCS01/2122 - 6th July 2021
SPECIAL PCS02/2122 - 21st July 2021

16. Staff Updates

Council is asked to **NOTE** the verbal report regarding staff updates.

CLOSE OF MEETING:

BICESTER TOWN COUNCIL

Tuesday 7th September 2021

Financial Regulations (GP8) Review

Chairman: Councillor Nick Mawer
Telephone: nick.mawer@bicester.gov.uk

Contact Officer: Service Manager – Phil Evans
Telephone: 01869 252915 phil.evans@bicester.gov.uk

Ward Affected: All Wards

1. Background

1.1 The Council's Financial Regulations (GP8) were last adopted in November 2019.

1.2 They have been reviewed and updated to reflect job titles and minor changes made to the NALC Model.

1.3 A tracked changes document is attached at Appendix 1 so Council is able to see where amendments are proposed.

1.4 The procedure within the Council is for the Policy Committee to undertake initial review and recommend to Council for adoption.

1.5 Policy reviewed the amendments on 2nd March and recommends them for adoption by Council.

2. Recommendation

Council is recommended to **ADOPT** the amendments to Financial Regulations (GP8).

BICESTER
TOWN COUNCIL

BICESTER TOWN / COUNCIL
FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

INDEX

These Financial Regulations were adopted by Bicester Town Council at its Meeting held on 18th November 2019.

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[1] 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
- for 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 Chief Officer 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;

[1] Model standing orders for councils © 2018 National Association of Local Councils

- 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 appropriate 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 following a recommendation of the Finance Committee;
- declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence; and
- addressing recommendations in any report from the external auditors and the annual report of the internal auditor.

shall be a matter for the full council only.

1.14. In addition the council must

- approve any grant or a single commitment in excess of £25,000 not already specifically approved in any budget.

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, following a meeting of the Finance Committee, and at each financial year end, a member other than the Chairman of the Finance Committee shall be appointed by the Finance Committee to verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the Chief Officer. The member shall sign the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of verification. Any exceptions shall on conclusion be reported to and noted by the Finance Committee.

2.3. The Chief Officer 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 Chief Officer, 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 in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one annual written report during each financial year;
- to demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, be free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships; and
- have no involvement in the financial decision making, management or control of the council.

2.7. Internal or external auditors may not under any circumstances:

- perform any operational duties for the council;
- initiate or approve accounting transactions; or
- direct the activities of any council employee, except to the extent that such employees have been appropriately assigned to assist the internal auditor.

2.8. For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to internal audit the terms 'independent' and 'independence' shall have the same meaning as is described in proper practices.

2.9. The Chief Officer 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 Chief Officer 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 relevant committee shall review its three year forecast of revenue and capital receipts and payments. Having regard to the forecast, it shall thereafter formulate and submit proposals for the following financial year to the Finance Committee not later than the end of December each year including any proposals for revising the forecast.

3.2. The Chief Officer 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 to be considered by the relevant committee and the council.

3.3. The council shall consider annual budget proposals in relation to the council's three 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 January each year. The Chief Officer shall issue the precept to the billing authority and shall supply each member with a copy of the approved annual budget.

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:

- the council for all items over £25,000;
- a duly delegated committee of the council for items over £10,000; or
- the Chief Officer, in consultation with the Mayor or Chairman of the appropriate committee, for any items below £10,000 and above £2,500.

Such authority is to be evidenced by a minute or by an email or authorisation slip duly signed by the Chief Officer, 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').

4.3. Unspent provisions in the revenue or capital budgets for completed projects shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year without specific resolution of the council, or duly delegated committee.

4.4. The salary budgets are to be reviewed at least annually by the Personnel Sub-Committee for the following financial year and such review shall be evidenced by a hard copy schedule signed by the Chief Officer and the Chairman of Policy Committee. The Chief Officer will inform committees of any changes impacting on their budget requirement for the coming year in good time.

4.5. In cases of extreme risk to the delivery of council services, the Chief Officer may authorise revenue expenditure on behalf of the council which in the Chief Officer'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 £2,500. The Chief Officer shall report such action to the chairman of Policy Committee as soon as possible and to the council, or duly delegated committee, as soon as practicable thereafter.

4.6. No expenditure shall be authorised in relation to any capital project and no contract entered into or tender accepted involving capital expenditure unless the council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available and the requisite borrowing approval has been obtained.

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

4.8. The Chief Officer shall regularly provide the Finance 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 as shown in the budget. These statements are to be prepared for the Finance Committee meetings and shall show explanations of material variances. For this purpose "material" shall be in excess of £1000 or 15% of the budget (whichever is the greatest).

4.9. 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 Chief Officer 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 Administration Officer (Finance) shall prepare a schedule of payments requiring authorisation, this will be emailed to each councillor two days before payment allowing time for members to comment or otherwise influence the payment of specific invoices. This schedule counter-signed by the Chief Officer or Service Manager, accompanied with the relevant invoices, will be presented to two councillors who are authorised bank signatories for signature. The approved schedule shall be presented to the next Finance Committee for endorsement. A summary list of all payments shall be disclosed within or as an attachment to the minutes of the meeting at which payment was endorsed. 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 Chief Officer 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.

5.4. The Chief Officer shall examine invoices for arithmetical accuracy and analyse them to the appropriate expenditure heading. The Chief Officer shall take all steps to pay all invoices submitted, and which are in order, within 30 days of receipt.

5.5. The Chief Officer shall have delegated authority to authorise the payment of items only in the following circumstances:

a) An expenditure item authorised under 5.6 below (continuing contracts and obligations) provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of finance committee; or

b) fund transfers within the councils banking arrangements up to the sum of £300,000, provided that a list of such payments shall be countersigned by a member of Finance Committee.

5.6. For each financial year the Chief Officer shall draw up a list of due payments which arise on a regular basis as the result of a continuing contract, statutory duty, or obligation and regular maintenance contracts and the like for which a relevant Committee, may authorise payment for the year provided that the requirements of regulation 4.1 (Budgetary Controls) are adhered to, provided also that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of the Finance Committee. Salaries, PAYE and NI, Superannuation Fund payments shall be authorised annually by the Personnel Sub-Committee with payment being authorised by the Chief Officer upon submission from the payroll bureau.

5.7. A record of regular payments made under 5.6, above shall be drawn up and be signed by two members on each and every occasion when payment is authorised - thus controlling the risk of duplicated payments being authorised and / or made.

5.8. In respect of grants the Finance 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 £25,000 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 Chief Officer.

6. INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE MAKING OF PAYMENTS

6.1. The council will make safe and efficient arrangements for the making of its payments.

6.2. Following authorisation under Financial Regulation 5 above, the Chief Officer shall give instruction that a payment shall be made.

6.3. All payments shall be effected by direct payment via internet banking from the Council's bank accounts, BACS, cheque or other instructions to the council's bankers.

6.4. Cheques or orders for payment drawn on the bank account in accordance with the schedule shall be signed by two members of council , and countersigned by the Chief Officer or Service Manager. 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.

6.6. Direct payments from the bank account via internet banking, will be set up by the Administration Officer (Finance) in accordance with 5.2 above and made as agreed on the schedule by the Chief Officer or Service Manager, each having separate and individual approval access to the direct payments system, requiring access from two parties to complete payment.

6.7. The Chief Officer shall be responsible for signing cheques from the Town Mayors accounts following approval from the relevant Mayor.

6.8. If thought appropriate by the Finance Committee, payment for utility supplies (energy, telephone and water) and any National Non-Domestic Rates may be made by variable direct debit provided that the instructions are signed by two members and any payments are reported to Finance Committee as made. The approval of the use of a variable direct debit shall be renewed by resolution of the Finance Committee at least every two years.

6.9. If thought appropriate by the Finance Committee, 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 Finance Committee as made. The approval of the use of a banker's standing order shall be renewed by resolution of the Finance Committee at least every two years.

6.10. If thought appropriate by the Finance 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 Finance Committee as made. The approval of the use of BACS or CHAPS shall be renewed by resolution of the Finance Committee at least every two years.

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 the Chief Officer and retained in the safe in a sealed dated envelope. This envelope may not be opened other than in the presence of the Chief Officer or the Chairman of Policy or Finance Committee. 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 Policy Committee. 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. Daily back-up copies of the records on all computers shall be made and shall be stored securely away from the computer in question 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.

6.15. Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the Chief Officer shall be appointed as the Service Administration Officer. The bank mandate approved by the council shall identify who will be authorised to approve transactions on those accounts.

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 Chief Officer. 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 Chief Officer and Service Manager and will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £2,500 unless authorised by council or finance committee in writing before any order is placed.

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

6.20. Any corporate credit card or trade card account opened by the council will be specifically restricted to use authorised officers and shall be subject to payment in full at each month-end. Personal credit or debit cards of members or staff shall only be used under exceptional circumstances where other payment methods are not available.

6.21. The Chief Officer may provide petty cash to officers for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses. Vouchers for payments made shall be forwarded to the Chief Officer with a claim for reimbursement.

a) The Chief Officer shall maintain a petty cash float of £200 for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses. Vouchers for payments made from petty cash shall be kept to substantiate the payment.

b) In addition, a temporary float of up to £1,000 may be held to cover change requirements for events. Any requirement for float in excess of £1,000 shall be subject to prior authorisation signed by the Chief Officer and two councillors.

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

d) Payments to maintain the petty cash float shall be shown separately on the schedule of payments 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 Policy Committee at the recommendation of the Personnel Sub-Committee. Payments shall be effected via an external payroll bureau at the instruction of the Chief Officer.

7.2. Time sheets shall be submitted and certified by the relevant line manager in respect of all staff, including casual, agency or locum staff and retained by the Chief Officer.

7.3. 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, as set out in these regulations above. The Chief Officer shall verify all payments as outlined by the payroll bureau as authorisation for payment. The Chief Officer shall notify the payroll bureau of all relevant information for the purpose of keeping the above records i.e. appointments, resignations, dismissals, absence through sickness or other reason.

7.4. No changes shall be made to any employee's pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the Personnel Sub-Committee.

7.5. 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.

7.6. The total of such payments in each calendar month shall be made from a wages account recorded by the payroll bureau 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 in excess of the available budget the Personnel Sub-Committee on behalf of council must consider a full business case.

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 at the recommendation of the Policy Committee. 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 Strategy and Policy shall be reviewed by the council at least bi-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 Chief Officer.

8.7. Payments in respect of short term or long-term investments, 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 the Administration Officer (Finance) under the supervision of the Chief Officer.

9.2. Particulars of all charges to be made for work done, services rendered or goods supplied shall be agreed annually by the council or relevant committee, notified to the Chief Officer and the Chief Officer shall be responsible for the collection of all accounts due to the council.

9.3. The council, or relevant committee will review all fees and charges at least annually, following a report of officers.

9.4. Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts over £200 shall be reported to the council following review by the Finance Committee and shall be written off in the year. The Chief Officer shall have the authority to write off debts below £200 subject to having taken appropriate steps to recover such debts.

9.5. All sums received on behalf of the council shall be banked intact as directed under the supervision of the Chief Officer. In all cases, all receipts shall be deposited with the council's bankers with such frequency as the Chief Officer 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 Chief Officer shall promptly oversee the completion of any VAT Return that is required. Any repayment claim due in accordance with VAT Act 1994 section 33 shall be made quarterly.

9.9. Where any significant sums of cash are regularly received by the council, the Chief Officer shall take such steps 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.

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 Chief Officer.

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. A senior officer 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 Chief Officer 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 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;

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 Chief Officer shall act after consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Policy Committee); 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[2].

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)[3].

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[2] 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

[3] 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)

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 or the relevant committee.

e. Full sealed tender arrangements shall apply only to contracts with an expected value in excess of £60,000 unless decided otherwise by Council or the appropriate committee. Such invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Chief Officer 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 Chief Officer in the ordinary course of post. Each tendering firm shall be required to return in 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 Chief Officer 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 19, [4] 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 Chief Officer shall obtain 3 quotations (priced descriptions of the proposed supply); where the value is below £12,500 and above £2,500 the Chief Officer shall strive to obtain 3 estimates. Otherwise, Regulation 10.3 above shall apply. For expenditure of £2,500 or less in value the Chief Officer or other authorised officer shall have executive power.

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 Chief Officer upon authorised certificates of the architect or other

[4] Based on NALC's model standing order 18d © 2018 National Association of Local Councils

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 Chief Officer 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 Chief Officer to the contractor in writing, the council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the financial provision.

13. STORES AND EQUIPMENT

13.1. The officer in charge of each section shall be responsible for the care and custody of stores and equipment in that section.

13.2. Delivery notes shall be obtained in respect of all goods received into store or otherwise delivered and goods must be checked as to order and quality at the time delivery is made.

13.3. Stocks shall be kept at the minimum levels consistent with operational requirements.

13.4. The Chief Officer shall be responsible for periodic checks of stocks and stores at least annually.

14. ASSETS, PROPERTIES AND ESTATES

14.1. The Chief Officer shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the council. The Chief Officer 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, or relevant committee, together with any other consents required by law, save where the estimated value of any one item of tangible movable property does not exceed £1,000.

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 following a report of the Policy Committee. 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 Chief Officer 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 16), the Chief Officer shall effect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the council's insurers.

15.2. Senior Officers shall give prompt notification to the Chief Officer of all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.

15.3. The Chief Officer 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 Chief Officer shall be notified of any loss liability or damage or of any event likely to lead to a claim and shall report significant instances to Policy Committee 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 by the council, or duly delegated committee.

16. RISK MANAGEMENT

16.1. The council is responsible for putting in place arrangements for the management of risk. The Chief Officer 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.

16.2. When considering any new activity, the Chief Officer shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration and adoption by the council.

17. SUSPENSION AND REVISION OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

17.1. It shall be the duty of the council to review the Financial Regulations of the council from time to time following a recommendation of the Policy Committee. The Chief Officer 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.

17.2. 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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