

# MONMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

## FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

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## **1. GENERAL**

- 1.1.** These financial regulations govern the conduct of financial management of 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<sup>1</sup> and any individual financial regulations relating to contracts.
- 1.2.** The Council is responsible in law for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that the Council has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions, including arrangements for the management of risk.
- 1.3.** The Council's accounting control systems must include measures:
  - for the timely production of accounts;
  - that provide for the safe and efficient safeguarding of public money;
  - to prevent and detect inaccuracy and fraud; and
  - identifying the duties of officers.
- 1.4.** These financial regulations demonstrate how the Council meets these responsibilities and requirements.
- 1.5.** At least once a year, prior to approving the Annual Governance Statement, the Council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control which shall be in accordance with proper practices.
- 1.6.** Deliberate or wilful breach of these Regulations by an employee may give rise to disciplinary proceedings.
- 1.7.** Members of Council are expected to follow the instructions within these Regulations and not to influence employees to breach them. Failure to follow instructions within these Regulations brings the office of Councillor into disrepute and may represent a breach in the Councillor's Code of Conduct.
- 1.8.** The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) holds a statutory office to be appointed by the Council.
- 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, or management information, as the case may be, for the Council from time to time complies with the Accounts and Audit (Wales) 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 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 must not delegate any decision regarding:

- setting the final budget or the precept (council tax requirement);
- the outcome of a review of the effectiveness of its internal controls
- approving accounting statements;
- approving an annual governance statement;
- borrowing;
- declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence; and
- addressing recommendations from the internal or external auditors.

**1.13.** In addition the Council, or approved Committee of 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 £5000; 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.

**1.14.** In these financial regulations, references to the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations or 'the regulations' shall mean the regulations issued under the provisions of section 39 of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004, 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 in Wales - A Practitioners' Guide* issued by the Joint Practitioners Advisory Group (JPAG), available from the websites of One Voice Wales (OVW) and SLCC as appropriate.

## **2. Risk management and internal control**

- 2.1. The council must ensure that it has a sound system of internal control, which delivers effective financial, operational and risk management.
- 2.2 The Clerk [with the RFO] shall prepare, for approval by [the council], a risk management policy covering all activities of the council. This policy and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.
- 2.3. When considering any new activity, the Clerk [with the RFO] shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration by the council.
- 2.4.** At least once a year, the council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control, before approving the Annual Governance Statement.
- 2.5.** The accounting control systems determined by the RFO must include measures to:
  - ensure that risk is appropriately managed;
  - ensure the prompt, accurate recording of financial transactions;
  - prevent and detect inaccuracy or fraud; and
  - allow the reconstitution of any lost records;
  - identify the duties of officers dealing with transactions and
  - ensure division of responsibilities.
- 2.6.** At least [once in each quarter], and at each financial year end, a member other than the Chair {or a cheque signatory} shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the RFO. The member shall sign and date the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of this. This activity, including any exceptions, shall be reported to and noted by the council {Finance Committee}.
- 2.7.** Regular back-up copies shall be made of the records on any council computer and stored either online or in a separate location from the computer. The council shall put measures in place to ensure that the ability to access any council computer is not lost if an employee leaves or is incapacitated for any reason.

### **3. ACCOUNTING AND AUDIT (INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL)**

- 3.1.** All accounting procedures and financial records of the Council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations, appropriate guidance and proper practices.
- 3.2.** The accounting records determined by the RFO must be sufficient to explain the council's transactions and to disclose its financial position with reasonable accuracy at any time. In particular, they must contain:
  - 3.2.1. day-to-day entries of all sums of money received and expended by the council (documented in the cash book) and the matters to which they relate;
  - 3.2.2. a record of the assets and liabilities of the council.
- 3.3.** On a regular basis, at least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, a member other than the Chairperson 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. This activity shall on conclusion be reported, including any exceptions, to and noted by the Council [Finance Committee].
- 3.4.** 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 (Wales) Regulations.
- 3.5.** 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.
- 3.6.** 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.
- 3.7.** 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.
- 3.8.** The internal auditor shall:
  - be competent and independent of the financial operations of the Council;
  - report to Council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one annual written report during each financial year;
  - to demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, be free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships; and

- have no involvement in the financial decision making, management or control of the Council.

**3.9.** 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.

**3.10.** For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to internal audit the terms 'independent' and 'independence' shall have the same meaning as is described in The Practitioners Guide.

**3.11.** 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 Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004, or any superseding legislation, and the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations.

**3.12.** The RFO shall, without undue delay, bring to the attention of all Councillors any correspondence or report from internal or external auditors.

#### **4. ANNUAL ESTIMATES (BUDGET) AND FORWARD PLANNING**

**4.1.** Before setting a precept, the council must calculate its budget requirement for each financial year by preparing and approving a budget, in accordance with The Local Government Finance Act 1992 or succeeding legislation.

**4.2.** Each committee (if any) shall review its one 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 & Policy Committee of the Council not later than the end of November each year including any proposals for revising the forecast. Full details of proposals should be included and this should be the final budget proposal of each committee, with further additions or amendments only to be considered with the agreement of the Chair of Finance & Policy Committee and the Clerk/RFO.

**4.3.** The RFO 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 first by the Finance & Policy Committee and then by the Council.

**4.4.** The Council shall consider annual budget proposals in relation to the Council's forecast of revenue and capital receipts and payments including recommendations for the use of reserves and sources of funding and update the forecast accordingly.

**4.5.** The Council shall fix the precept (Council tax requirement), and relevant basic amount of Council tax to be levied for the ensuing financial year not later than by the end of

the second week in 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.

- 4.6. Any member with council tax unpaid for more than two months is prohibited from voting on the budget or precept by Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and must disclose at the start of the meeting that Section 106 applies to them.
- 4.7. The RFO shall issue the precept to the billing authority no later than the end of February and supply each member with a copy of the agreed annual budget.
- 4.8. The approved annual budget shall form the basis of financial control for the ensuing year.

## **5. BUDGETARY CONTROL AND AUTHORITY TO SPEND**

A committee of the council has full control of funding within the delegated budget for that committee approved by Full Council, provided the proposed expenditure falls within the terms of reference of that committee.

- 5.1. Expenditure on revenue and capital 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 £500 or
  - the Clerk and/or RFO, in conjunction with Chair of Council or Chairperson of the appropriate committee, for any items below £500.
  - The Clerk and/or RFO, for all administration budget expenditure (within the Finance & Policy Committee budget), up to a maximum of £3000 and within the approved budget cost codes.

Such authority is to be evidenced by a minute or by an authorisation slip duly signed by the Clerk and/or RFO, and where necessary also by the appropriate Chairperson. Formal contracts or official orders for goods/services should not be issued prior to this authority being granted.

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

- 5.2. 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 previously considered the full implications for public services), unspent and available amounts may be moved to other budget headings or to an earmarked reserve as appropriate ('virement').
- 5.3. Unspent provisions in the revenue or capital budgets for completed projects shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year.
- 5.4. 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 Chairperson of Council or relevant committee. The RFO will inform committees of any changes impacting on their budget requirement for the coming year in good time.

- 5.5. In cases of clear emergency which present certain 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 1% of the precept. The Clerk shall report such action to the Council as soon as practicable thereafter.
- 5.6. 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/or the requisite borrowing approval has been obtained.
- 5.7. All capital works shall be administered in accordance with the Council's standing orders and financial regulations relating to contracts.
- 5.8. The RFO shall regularly provide the Council or Finance & Policy 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 at least at the end of each financial quarter and shall show explanations of material variances.
- 5.9. Changes in earmarked reserves shall be approved by Council as part of the budgetary control process. When setting the precept/budget commitment, Council should always take into account the level of reserves and balances.
- 5.10. All new suppliers must be set up by the Support Officer on the Council's Accounting System for the purpose of purchase orders and payments. Provision for this must also be made when delegated authority is given by Council or its Committees.

## **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 final authorisation, forming part of the Agenda for the Meeting and, together with the relevant invoices, present the schedule to the Council or Finance and Policy Committee. The Council / committee shall review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied itself shall authorise release of payment by a resolution. The approved schedule shall be initialled by the Chairperson of the Meeting. A detailed list of all payments shall be disclosed within or as an attachment to the minutes of the meeting at which payment was authorised. Personal payments (including salaries, wages, expenses and any payment made in relation to the termination of a contract of employment) may be summarised to remove public access to any personal information.

- 5.3.** All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the RFO to confirm that the work, goods or services to which each invoice relates has been received, carried out, examined and represents expenditure approved by the Council.
- 5.4.** The RFO shall examine invoices for arithmetical accuracy and analyse them to the appropriate expenditure heading. The RFO shall take all steps to pay all invoices submitted, and which are in order, at the next available Council or Finance & Policy Committee meeting.
- 5.5.** The Clerk/RFO shall have delegated authority to authorise the payment of items only in the following circumstances:
- a) If a payment is necessary to avoid a charge to interest under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998, and the due date for payment is before the next scheduled Meeting of Council, where the Clerk/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 or Finance & Policy Committee
  - b) 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 Council or Finance & Policy Committee; or
  - c) Fund transfers within the Councils banking arrangements, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of Council or Finance & Policy Committee and such transactions are properly documented and in accordance with the Council's procedures.
  - d) Where the placing of the order has been agreed previously by committee, the final cost is consistent with the order agreed and where it would not be practical to delay release of payment until the next appropriate Council or Committee meeting (provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate Council or Committee meeting).
- 5.6.** For each financial year the Clerk/RFO shall draw up a list of due payments which arise on a regular basis as the result of a continuing contract, statutory duty, or obligation (such as but not exclusively, Salaries, PAYE and NI, Superannuation Fund and regular maintenance contracts and the like for which Council, or a duly authorised committee, may authorise payment for the year provided that the requirements of regulation 4.1 (Budgetary Controls) are adhered to, provided also that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of Council or Finance Committee.
- 5.7.** (Removed at review 27/02/2017).
- 5.8.** In respect of grants a duly authorised committee shall approve expenditure within any limits set by Council and in accordance with any policy statement approved by Council. Any Revenue or Capital Grant in excess of £10,000 shall before payment, be approved by 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 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 confirmed in writing by the supplier and subsequently approved an authorised signatory, prior to being actioned by the RFO.

## **6. INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE MAKING OF PAYMENTS**

- 6.1. The Council will make safe and efficient arrangements for the making of its payments.
- 6.2. Following authorisation under Financial Regulation 5 above, the Council, a duly delegated committee or, if so delegated, the Clerk/RFO shall give instruction that a payment shall be made.
- 6.3. All payments shall be effected by cheque or other instructions to the Council's bankers, or otherwise, in accordance with a resolution of Council or duly delegated committee.
- 6.4. Cheques or orders for payment drawn on the bank account in accordance with the schedule as presented to Council or committee shall be authorised by one member[s] of Council, and countersigned by the Clerk/RFO in accordance with a resolution instructing that payment. 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/authoriser to the payment in question.
- 6.5. To indicate agreement of the details shown on the cheque with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall each also initial the cheque counterfoil.
- 6.6. (Removed at review 27/02/2017).
- 6.7. If thought appropriate by the Council, payment for utility supplies (energy, telephone and water), any National Non-Domestic Rates and any other regular payments may be made by variable direct debit provided that the instructions are signed by two members (who should be authorised signatories) and any payments are reported to Council as made. The approval of the use of a variable direct debit shall be renewed by resolution of the Council at least every two years.
- 6.8. If thought appropriate by the Council, payment for certain items (principally salaries), or other regular payments, may be made by banker's standing order provided that the instructions are signed, or otherwise evidenced by two members and are retained and all 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. If thought appropriate by the Council, certain payments may be made by BACS or CHAPS methods provided that the instructions for each payment are signed, or otherwise evidenced by two authorised bank signatories, are retained and any

payments are reported to Council as made. The approval of the use of BACS or CHAPS shall be renewed by resolution of the Council at least every two years.

- 6.10.** If thought appropriate by the Council payment for certain items may be made by internet banking transfer, provided an appropriate audit trail of authorisation and approval has been established. The authorisation of approved transfers should be restricted to approved signatories.
- 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 stored in the Town Council Office in a locked cabinet, the key for which will be held by the Town Clerk or RFO. If access to the PIN and Passwords is required by Councillors, in any circumstances, it will only be permitted by the Chairperson of the Council in the presence of 2 other Councillors. If access is required, the PIN and / or passwords shall be changed as soon as practicable. The fact that the PIN or password has been accessed by Councillors, in whatever circumstances, shall be reported to all members immediately and formally to the next available meeting of the Council. This will not be required for a member's personal computer used only for remote authorisation of bank payments.
- 6.12.** No employee or Councillor shall disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the working of the Council or its bank accounts, to any person not authorised in writing by the Council or a duly delegated committee.
- 6.13.** Regular back-up copies of the records on any computer shall be made and stored securely away from the computer in question, and preferably off site.
- 6.14.** The Council, and any members using computers for the Council's financial business, shall ensure that anti-virus, anti-spyware, malware, and firewall software with automatic updates, together with a high level of security, is used.
- 6.15.** Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the Clerk [RFO] shall be appointed as the Service Administrator, or in their absence, an officer appointed by resolution of the Council. The bank mandate approved by the Council shall identify a number of Councillors who will be authorised to approve transactions on those accounts. The bank mandate will state clearly the amounts of payments that can be instructed by the use of the Service Administrator alone, or by the Service Administrator with a stated number of approvals.
- 6.16.** Access to any internet banking accounts will be directly to the access page (which may be saved under "favourites"), and not through a search engine or e-mail link. Remembered or saved passwords facilities must not be used on any computer used for Council banking work. Breach of this Regulation will be treated as a very serious matter under these regulations.
- 6.17.** Changes to account details for suppliers, which are used for internet banking may only be changed on written hard copy notification by the supplier and supported by hard copy authority for change signed by two of the Clerk & RFO and a Member. A programme of regular checks of standing data with suppliers will be followed.

- 6.18.** Any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Clerk/RFO or an Officer appointed by resolution of the Council and will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £500 unless authorised by Council or Finance and Policy Committee in writing before any order is placed. A maximum of two cards will be held at any one time. If an employee is in receipt of a card issued on the Council's bank accounts, on the termination of their employment, the card will be returned to the Council, signed for and immediately destroyed.
- 6.19.** A pre-paid debit card may be issued to employees with varying limits. These limits will be set by the Council or Finance & Policy Committee. Transactions and purchases made will be reported to the Council or relevant committee and authority for topping-up shall be at the discretion of the Council or relevant committee.
- 6.20.** Any corporate credit card or trade card account opened by the Council will be specifically restricted to use by the Clerk/RFO and shall be subject to automatic payment in full at each month-end. Personal credit or debit cards of members of staff shall not be used under any circumstances.
- 6.21.** The Clerk/RFO may provide petty cash to officers and members for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses. Vouchers for payments made shall be forwarded to the Clerk/RFO with a claim for reimbursement.
- a) The Clerk/RFO shall maintain a petty cash float of up to £250 and may provide petty cash to officers for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses. Vouchers for payments made from petty cash shall be kept to substantiate the payment.
  - 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.
  - d) Record must be kept of member signatory who cashes a cheque, and the cheque stub signed accordingly to maintain the petty cash float. If the Clerk/RFO/Officer obtains cash for this purpose by the use of the debit card at the cashpoint the cashpoint slip must be obtained and filed.

## **7. PAYMENT OF SALARIES**

- 7.1.** As an employer, the council shall make arrangements to comply with the statutory requirements of PAYE and legislation. The payment of all salaries shall be made in accordance with payroll records and the rules of PAYE and National Insurance currently operating, and salary rates shall be as agreed by Council, or duly delegated committee.

- 7.2.** Guidance issued by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales in relation to the taxation of councillor allowances must be fully adhered to.
- 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, provided that each payment is reported to the next available Council meeting, as set out in these regulations above.
- 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 Staffing 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 of payroll information. 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 Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004, 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 changing staffing levels and structures, the Finance & Policy Committee must consider a full business case and present its recommendations to Full Council, for approval.

## **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 Welsh Government (such as Hire Purchase or Leasing of tangible assets) shall be subject to approval by the full Council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to Council in respect of value for money for the proposed transaction.

- 8.3. The Council will arrange with the Council's banks and investment providers for the sending of a copy of each statement of account to the Chairperson of the Council at the same time as one is issued to the Clerk/RFO.
- 8.4. All loans and investments shall be negotiated in the name of the Council and shall be for a set period in accordance with Council policy.
- 8.5. The Council should keep under consideration the need for an Investment Strategy and Policy which, if drawn up, shall be in accordance with relevant regulations, proper practices and guidance. Any Strategy and Policy shall be reviewed by the Council at least annually.
- 8.6. All investments of money under the control of the Council shall be in the name of the Council.
- 8.7. All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the Clerk/RFO.
- 8.8. Payments in respect of short term or long term investments, including transfers between bank accounts held in the same bank, or branch, shall be made in accordance with Regulation 5 (Authorisation of payments) and Regulation 6 (Instructions for payments).

## **9. INCOME**

- 9.1. The collection of all sums due to the Council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the Clerk/RFO.
- 9.2. Particulars of all charges to be made for work done, services rendered or goods supplied shall be agreed annually by the Council, notified to the Clerk/RFO and the Clerk/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 Clerk/RFO. In all cases, all receipts shall be deposited with the Council's bankers as promptly as possible.
- 9.6. The origin of each receipt shall be entered on the paying-in slip.
- 9.7. Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the Council.
- 9.8. The Clerk/RFO shall promptly complete any VAT Return that is required. Any repayment claim under section 33 of the VAT Act 1994 shall be made at least annually coinciding with the financial year end.
- 9.9. Where any significant sums of cash are regularly received by the Council, the Clerk/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 capital in nature (ie from the sale of a capital asset) exceeding the value of £10,000 shall be treated as a capital receipt and ring fenced for future capital expenditure to be approved by Council. It may not be used to cover day to day expenditure.
- 9.11.** Any income arising which is the property of a charitable trust shall be paid into a charitable bank account. Instructions for the payment of funds due from the charitable trust to the Council (to meet expenditure already incurred by the authority) will be given by the Managing Trustees of the charity meeting separately from any Council meeting (see also Regulation 16 below)].
- 9.12.** A Mayor's Charity account may be held solely for the deposit of donations for the Mayors' Charities during the Mayor's term of office, and distribution of donations accordingly at the end of the term. This will be kept entirely separate from general Town Council funds, bank accounts and not subject to these Financial Regulations other than any 2 existing signatories shall be required to authorise release of funds.

## **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.** Official orders shall be controlled by the Clerk/RFO.
- 10.3.** All members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times. An officer issuing an official order shall ensure as far as reasonable and practicable that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction, usually by obtaining three or more quotations or estimates from appropriate suppliers, subject to any de minimis provisions in Regulation 11.1 below.
- 10.4.** A member may not issue an official order or make any contract on behalf of the Council.
- 10.5.** The Clerk/RFO shall verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before the issue of any order, and in the case of new or infrequent purchases or payments, the Clerk/RFO shall ensure that the statutory authority shall be reported to the meeting at which the order is approved so that the minutes can record the power being used.

## **11. CONTRACTS**

- 11.1.** Procedures as to contracts are laid down as follows:
- a. Every contract shall comply with these financial regulations, and no exceptions shall be made otherwise than in an emergency provided that this regulation need not apply to contracts which relate to items (i) to (v) 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, planning consultants, human resources and other professional 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 goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and / or are only sold at a fixed price.
- b. For a contract for the supply of goods, services or works where the estimated value will exceed the thresholds set by Parliament, The full requirements of The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (“the Legislation must be followed in respect of the tendering, award and notification of that contract (which may change from time to time)<sup>2</sup>.
  - 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 (or relevant committee).
  - d. Such invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Clerk/RFO shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases. The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be submitted via post or email and addressed to the Clerk/RFO.
  - e. Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to Standing Orders 18c and d, and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.
    - For contracts estimated to be over £30,000 including VAT, the council must comply with any requirements of the Legislation<sup>1</sup> regarding the advertising of contract opportunities and the publication of notices about the award of contracts.
    - When it is to enter into a contract of: less than £25,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Clerk/RFO shall obtain 3 quotations (priced descriptions of the proposed supply);
    - where the value is below £3,000 and above £500 the Clerk/RFO shall strive to obtain 3 estimates (which might include evidence of online prices, or recent prices from regular suppliers).

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<sup>1</sup> **The Regulations require councils to use the Sell2 Wales website if they advertise contract opportunities and also to publicise the award of contracts over £30,000 including VAT, regardless of whether they were advertised.**

<sup>2</sup> Thresholds currently applicable are:

- a. For public supply and public service contracts £214,904
- b. For public works contracts £5,372,609

- Otherwise, Regulation 10.3 above shall apply.
- f. Contracts must not be split into smaller lots to avoid compliance with these rules.
  - g. The Council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.
  - h. 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.

**11.2.** The Proper Officer shall maintain a register of personal interests, in respect of both members and senior staff.

- a. Members and senior staff should not, so far as is practicable, be involved in the award of orders and/or contracts with organisations or individuals in respect of which a personal interest exists, whether declared or not.
- b. Members and senior staff should not, so far as is practicable, be involved in the making or authorising payments in respect of orders and/or contracts with organisations or individuals in respect of which a personal interest exists, whether declared or not.

## **12. PAYMENTS UNDER CONTRACTS FOR BUILDING OR OTHER CONSTRUCTION WORKS**

**12.1.** Payments on account of the contract sum shall be made within the time specified in the contract by the Clerk/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 Clerk/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/RFO to the contractor in writing, the Council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the financial provision.]

## **13. STORES AND EQUIPMENT**

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

- 13.2. Delivery notes shall be obtained in respect of all goods received into store or otherwise delivered and goods must be checked as to order and quality at the time delivery is made.
- 13.3. Stocks shall be kept at the minimum levels consistent with operational requirements.
- 13.4. The Clerk/RFO shall be responsible for periodic checks of stocks and stores at least annually.]

## **14. ASSETS, PROPERTIES AND ESTATES**

- 14.1. The Clerk shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the Council. The Clerk/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 (Wales) Regulations.
- 14.2. No tangible moveable property to be included within the Council's asset list, 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.
- 14.3. No real property (interests in land) shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the Council, together with any other consents required by law, In each case a report in writing shall be provided to Council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).
- 14.4. No real property (interests in land) shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the full Council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to Council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).
- 14.5. Subject only to the limit set in Reg. 14.2 above, no tangible moveable property shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the full Council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to Council with a full business case.
- 14.6. The Clerk/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 Clerk/RFO shall effect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the Council's insurers.

- 15.2. The Clerk/RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the Council and the property and risks covered thereby and annually review it.
- 15.3. The Clerk/RFO shall be notified of any loss liability or damage or of any event likely to lead to a claim, and shall report these to Council at the next available meeting.
- 15.4. All appropriate members and employees of the Council shall be included in a suitable form of security or fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined [annually] by the Council, or duly delegated committee.

## **16. CHARITIES**

- 16.1. Where the Council is sole managing trustee of a charitable body the Clerk/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, or as determined by the Charity Commission. The Clerk /RFO shall arrange for any audit or independent examination as may be required by Charity Law or any Governing Document. The Council will review the level of resources required to maintain these arrangements, should they arise.

## **17. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 17.1. The Council is responsible for putting in place arrangements for the management of risk. The Clerk/RFO shall prepare, for approval by the Council, risk management policy statements in respect of all activities of the Council. Risk policy statements and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the Council at least annually.
- 17.2. When considering any new activity, the Clerk /RFO shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration and adoption by the Council.
- 17.3. Regular back-up copies of the records on any computer shall be made and shall be stored securely away from the computer in question, and preferably off site.

## **18. SUSPENSION AND REVISION OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

- 18.1. The Council will undertake an annual review of its Financial Regulations and will consider more substantial structural revision of these regulations every 18 months. The Clerk/RFO shall make arrangements to monitor changes in legislation or proper

practices and shall advise the Council of any requirement for a consequential amendment to these financial regulations.

- 18.2.** The Council may, if 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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## Version Control

Version No	Date	Revision By	What changes	Approval at:
1	13/2/17	SJ	<b>Finance &amp; Policy Committee recommendations</b>	
2		SJ	Full Review	<b>27/2/17 min 13 Full Council reviewed and adopted</b>
3		SJ	Full Review	<b>23/10/17 min 110c Full Council</b>
4	11/03/2019	SJ	<b>4.0 addition, 11 a numbering correction, 6.20d addition</b>	<b>11/03/2019 FC from F&amp;P recs. 4/3/19</b>
5	29/04/2019	SJ	<b>Additional bullet point re.Clerk's authority &amp; admin budget</b>	<b>29/04/2019 FC min144 4.1</b>
6	27/1/2020	SJ	<b>Full review including from August 2019 OVW model: Update model doc references to MTC document, 4.1 references to Chairman, to Chair, 4.5 council, 11g inclusion of bullet points &amp; update of thresholds</b>	<b>F&amp;P review at 13/1/20</b>
7	25/01/2021	DM	<b>FC annual review including option for use of debit/credit cards; revisions for Clerk/RFO as a single post.</b>	
8	22/03/2021	DM	<b>Committee Structure Review; 4.1 review of delegations to Clerk/RFO and Committees; 9.10 add section on treatment of capital receipts.</b>	
9	26.04.2021	DM	<b>Further revisions for combined Clerk/RFO role; 3. amendments to timings for budgeting; various amendments to reflect the new Scheme of Delegation;</b>	

			6.8 to include Banker's Standing Order; 6. to strengthen internal controls in particular 6.17 (debit card use) and 6.20 (petty cash).	
10	30.11.2 1	PH	Revised to enable adoption of the Legislative Reform (Payments by Parish Councils, Community Councils and Charter Trustees) Order 2014 to enable electronic payments to be made by the Clerk/RFO/Officer as well as Members. 1.10 to mirror model; 1.14 Approval limit for grant or single commitment changed to £5000; 5.1 removal of cheque signatories; 5.6 change F & P to duly authorized Cmtee; 5.11 Suppliers changes by authorized sig; 6.4 Payments to be authorized by one Member and Clerk or RFO; 6.13 Added in requirement for back ups; 6.17 Internet banking changes to be made by email and hard copy and signed by clerk RFO and member (as checked by bank when set up); 6.18 Debit card prior authorization removed as not in model; 6.20 Added in no use of personal credit or debit cards	Approved at FC 22/11/21 m 106/FC/21
11	04.07.2 2	CMW	It was resolved to adopt the Financial Regulations at the Full Council meeting on 04.07.22. No changes have been made.	Approved at FC 04.07.22 minute no 28/FC/21
12	15.05.2 3	CMM	Reviewed, amended and approved at FC 15.05.23 (Annual Meeting). Updated 11. Contracts, Section d,e & f.	Approved at FC 15.05.23 minute no 11/FC/23b
13	19.02.2 4	CMM	Added Section 4 4.10. Added per the Internal Auditor's recommendation regarding the need to employ the Accounting Best Practice 'Segregation of Duties' that the Financial Regulations will now need to be revised to allow all new suppliers to be set up on the MTC Accounting Systems by the Support Officer only.	Approved the addition at FC 19.02.24 minute no 195/FC/23
14	28.05.2 4	NJ/CM	2.2 Change wording to include Chairperson. 4.1 Change wording to include Chairperson and the RFO. 4.4 Change wording to include Chairperson. 5.2 Change wording to include Chairperson. 6.11 To amend and remove the following wording: 'a note shall be made of the PIN and Passwords and shall be stored in the Town Council Office in a locked cabinet, the key for which will be held by the Town Clerk or RFO. handed to and retained by the Chairman of Council in a sealed dated envelope. This envelope may not be opened other than in the presence of two other Councillors who should be approved signatories. After the envelope has been opened If access to the PIN and	Full Council 20.05.24 11/FC/24b

			<p>Passwords is required by Councillors, [in any circumstances,] it will only be permitted by the Chairperson of the Council in the presence of 2 other Councillors. If access is required, [the PIN and / or passwords shall be changed as soon as practicable. The fact that] <del>the sealed envelope has been opened</del> the PIN or password has been accessed by Councillors,'</p> <p>8.3 Change wording to include Chairperson.</p>	
15	20.01.2 025	CM	<p>Index 2. Risk Management and Internal Control added.</p> <p>The following sections updated per the IRPW Model:</p> <p>1. General 1.13, 2.Risk Management 2.1, 2.4 &amp; 2.5, 3. Accounting and Audit (Internal and External) 3.2, 3.6 &amp; 3.10, 4. Annual Estimates (Budget) and Forward Planning 4.1, 4.6 &amp; 4.7, 6. Instructions for the Making of Payments 6.21a, 7. Payments of Salaries 7.1 &amp; 7.2, 9. Income 9.8, 10. Orders for Work, Goods and Services 10.3 and 11. Contracts 11.1b, e, f &amp; footer.</p>	Full Council 173/FC/24