



FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Revised July 2011

Draft for consideration by the
Performance & Audit Committee

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 These Financial Regulations are based upon CIPFA guidance with amendments to reflect the Council's requirements.
 - 1.2 Financial Regulations provide the framework for managing the Council's financial affairs. They apply to every Member and Officer of the Council and anyone acting on its behalf.
 - 1.3 All Members and Officers have a general responsibility to provide for the security of the assets under their control, and for ensuring that the use of resources is legal, properly authorized and achieves best value.
 - 1.4 Reference to the 'CFO' in this document means the Officer appointed to act as Section 151 Officer.
 - 1.5 Financial Regulations are to be used in conjunction with the Constitution and Scheme of Delegation and the CFO, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer, shall determine any matter on which conflict may arise.
 - 1.6 The CFO shall issue advice and guidance to underpin the financial regulations.
 - 1.7 The CFO shall review the Financial Regulations and submit any revisions necessary to the Council for approval. The CFO shall report, where appropriate, breaches of the Financial Regulations to the Council and/or other appropriate committees.
 - 1.8 The Regulations refer to the responsibilities of Chief Officers (COs) and Deputy Chief Officers (DCOs). In this context COs are the Chief Executive and Chief Officers as defined by the Local Government & Housing Act 1989. In practice this means the Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer (CFO) and Directors. DCOs are as defined in the LGHA 1989 and are those senior officers responsible for managing services and who report directly to a CO. The advantage of using this terminology is that future changes to structure or job title will not render the Regulations out of date.
 - 1.9 Any duties and responsibilities of COs & DCOs in these Financial Regulations may be delegated to another officer with the agreement of the CFO. The terms of any such delegation shall be documented in a form approved by the CFO. Any reference to COs & DCOs in these Regulations shall be deemed to be a reference to such authorised officers.
 - 1.10 Failure to observe these Regulations may be classified as misconduct justifying disciplinary action.
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2. Financial Management

Introduction

- 2.1 Financial management covers all financial accountabilities in relation to the running of the Council, including the policy framework and budget.

Full Council

- 2.2 The Full Council shall adopt the Council's constitution and Members' code of conduct and approve the policy framework and budget within which the Council operates. This includes responsibility for approving Financial Regulations, based upon recommendations by the Performance & Audit Committee.

Cabinet and Committees

- 2.3 The Cabinet shall prepare annual estimates of revenue and capital expenditure for recommendation to the Full Council as part of the annual budget setting process. The Cabinet shall monitor the use of approved budgets.
- 2.4 The Performance & Audit Committee shall discharge the functions of an audit committee including approval of the audited annual statement of accounts and receiving internal audit and external audit reports. The Committee shall monitor progress against improvement plans including those arising from the external audit and inspection programme.
- 2.5 The Scrutiny Committee shall review and scrutinize the policies and performance of the Council including the scrutiny of financial management arrangements and the examination of specific financial issues or areas of underperformance at the request of the Council or Committees.

Chief Finance Officer (CFO)

- 2.6 The CFO has statutory duties in relation to the financial administration and stewardship of the Council. This statutory responsibility cannot be overridden. The statutory duties arise from:
- Local Government Act 1972
 - Local Government Finance Act 1988
 - Local Government Act 2003
 - Accounts and Audit Regulations
- 2.7 Under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 the CFO is responsible for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs.
- 2.8 Section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 requires the CFO to report to the Full Council and external auditor if the Council or one of its officers:
- has made, or is about to make, a decision which involves incurring unlawful expenditure
 - has taken, or is about to take, an unlawful action which has resulted or would result in a loss or deficiency to the Council

- is about to make an unlawful entry in the Council's accounts.

2.9 Section 114 of the 1988 Act also requires:

- the CFO to nominate a properly qualified member of staff to deputize should he or she be unable to perform the duties under section 114 personally
- the Council to provide the CFO with sufficient staff, accommodation and other resources – including legal advice where this is necessary – to carry out the duties under section 114.

2.10 Under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, the CFO shall provide advice to the Council on the robustness of estimates and adequacy of reserves. The Council shall take account of this advice when determining its annual budget and council tax requirement.

2.11 The CFO shall advise the Cabinet or Full Council about whether a decision is likely to be considered contrary or not wholly in accordance with the budget. Actions that may be 'contrary to the budget' include:

- initiating a new policy without sufficient funding in place for its implementation
- committing expenditure in future years
- incurring internal transfers above virement limits.

2.12 The CFO shall establish accounting policies and ensure that they are applied consistently.

2.13 The CFO shall determine the accounting procedures and records for the Council.

2.14 The CFO shall ensure that the annual statement of accounts is prepared in accordance with the CIPFA *Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom: A Statement of Recommended Practice*. The CFO shall certify the draft statement of accounts prior to publication and audit. The Performance & Audit Committee shall approve the audited annual statement of accounts.

2.15 The CFO is generally responsible for determining financial procedures and for advising Members and Officers on financial administration and management.

Chief Officers (COs) and Deputy Chief Officers (DCOs)

2.16 COs & DCOs are defined in paragraph 1.8 above.

2.17 COs & DCOs shall ensure that appropriate Members are advised of the financial implications of all proposals and that the financial implications have been agreed by the CFO or his nominee.

2.18 COs & DCOs shall consult collectively and individually with the CFO and seek approval on any matter liable to affect the Council's finances before any commitments are incurred.

3. Financial Planning

Introduction

3.1 The Full Council shall agree the Council's policy framework and budget, the latter being coordinated and proposed by the Cabinet. In terms of financial planning, the key elements are:

- Corporate Plan
- Corporate Risk Register
- Medium Term Financial Strategy
- General Fund annual revenue budget and Council Tax resolution
- Housing Revenue Account annual revenue budget
- Capital Programme
- Treasury Management Strategy.

Policy framework

3.2 The Full Council shall approve procedures for agreeing variations to approved budgets. The Full Council shall set the level at which the Cabinet may reallocate budget funds from one service to another. The Cabinet shall take in-year decisions on resources and priorities in order to deliver the budget policy framework within the financial limits set by the Council. In practice, approval of these Financial Regulations by the Council includes *inter alia* approval of these items.

Budget preparation

3.3 The CFO shall develop and maintain a resource allocation process that ensures due consideration of Full Council's policy framework. This shall involve both revenue and capital expenditure projections together with ensuring that all funding opportunities are investigated.

3.4 The CFO shall ensure that a Council revenue budget requirement is prepared on an annual basis and a general revenue projection on a minimum three-yearly basis for consideration by the Cabinet, before submission to Full Council.

3.5 The CFO shall ensure that a capital programme is prepared on an annual basis for consideration by the Cabinet before submission to Full Council.

3.6 COs & DCOs shall ensure that budget estimates reflecting agreed service plans are submitted to the Cabinet and that these estimates are prepared in line with guidance issued by the CFO. Full Council may amend the budget or ask the Cabinet to reconsider it before approving it.

Budget monitoring and control

3.7 The CFO shall provide appropriate financial information to enable budgets to be monitored effectively. The CFO shall monitor expenditure against budget allocations and report to the Cabinet on the overall position on a regular basis, no less than four times during the year.

- 3.8 COs & DCOs shall control income and expenditure within their area and monitor performance, taking account of financial information provided by the CFO and advice provided by finance staff. They shall report on variances within their own areas. They shall take any action necessary to avoid exceeding their budget allocation and alert the CFO to any problems.

Maintenance of reserves

- 3.9 The CFO shall advise the Full Council on prudent levels of reserves for the Council and shall monitor that the target level of reserves is maintained.
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4. Risk Management

Introduction

- 4.1 It is essential that robust, integrated systems are developed and maintained for identifying and evaluating all significant operational risks to the Council. This should include the proactive participation of all those associated with planning and delivering services.

Risk management

- 4.2 The Performance & Audit Committee shall approve the Council's risk management policy statement and strategy and will review the effectiveness of risk management.
- 4.3 The Strategic Management Board (SMB) shall prepare the Council's risk management policy statement and promote it throughout the Council. The CFO shall advise the Cabinet on proper insurance cover where appropriate.

Internal control

- 4.4 Internal control refers to the systems of control devised by management to help ensure the Council's objectives are achieved in a manner that promotes economical, efficient and effective use of resources and that the Council's assets and interests are safeguarded.
- 4.5 The CFO shall advise on effective systems of internal control. These arrangements need to ensure compliance with all applicable statutes and regulations, and other relevant statements of best practice. They should ensure that public funds are properly safeguarded and used economically, efficiently, and in accordance with the statutory and other authorities that govern their use.
- 4.6 COs & DCOs shall establish sound arrangements for planning, appraising, authorizing and controlling their operations in order to achieve continuous improvement, economy, efficiency and effectiveness and for achieving their financial performance targets.

Audit requirements

- 4.7 The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 as subsequently amended require every local authority to maintain an adequate and effective internal audit. The Monitoring Officer shall ensure that this is achieved.
- 4.8 The Audit Commission is responsible for appointing external auditors to each local authority. The basic duties of the external auditor are governed by section 15 of the Local Government Finance Act 1982, as amended by section 5 of the Audit Commission Act 1998.
- 4.9 The Council may, from time to time, be subject to audit, inspection or investigation by external bodies such as HM Revenue and Customs, who have statutory rights of access.

Preventing fraud and corruption

- 4.10 The Monitoring Officer shall develop and maintain an anti-fraud and anti-corruption policy.
- 4.11 All Members and Officers shall report instances of suspected fraud and corruption in accordance with the Council's Whistleblowing Policy (PPN61).
- 4.12 The Monitoring Officer shall prepare and keep under a review a bribery risk assessment and shall carry out monitoring to ensure ongoing compliance with the Bribery Act 2010. All Members and Officers shall report instances of suspected bribery or attempted bribery in accordance with the Council's Whistleblowing Policy (PPN61).

Money Laundering

- 4.13 The Monitoring Officer shall ensure that proper procedures are in place to combat the possibility of the Council being used for money laundering purposes.

Treasury management

- 4.14 The Council has adopted CIPFA's Code of Practice for *Treasury Management in the Public Services*.
- 4.15 The Full Council shall approve the treasury management strategy setting out the matters detailed in CIPFA's Code of Practice, based upon recommendations of the Cabinet. The CFO shall implement and monitor the strategy.
- 4.16 The CFO shall report to the Cabinet not less than twice in each financial year on the activities of the treasury management operation and on the exercise of his delegated treasury management powers. One such report shall comprise an annual report on treasury management for presentation by 30 September of the succeeding financial year.
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5. Systems and Procedures

Introduction

- 5.1 Sound systems and procedures are essential to an effective framework of accountability and control.

Financial Systems

- 5.2 The CFO is responsible for the soundness of the Council's financial systems, the form of accounts and the supporting financial records. Any changes made by COs & DCOs to the existing financial systems or the establishment of new systems shall be approved by the CFO. This includes, but is not restricted to, financial systems and procedures relating to the following:

- Purchasing & procurement
- Supplier payments
- Payroll
- Treasury Management
- Council Tax
- NNDR
- Housing & Council Tax Benefits
- Income collection & revenues recovery

- 5.3 COs & DCOs shall ensure proper operation of financial processes in their own areas of operation.

- 5.4 COs & DCOs shall ensure that their staff receive relevant training on the use of financial systems that has been approved by the CFO.

Scheme of Delegation

- 5.5 COs & DCOs shall ensure that a proper scheme of delegation has been established within their area and is operating effectively. The scheme of delegation shall identify staff authorized to act on that person's behalf, or on behalf of the appropriate committee in respect of payments, income collection and placing orders, together with the limits of their authority.
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6. External Arrangements

Introduction

- 6.1 The Council provides a distinctive leadership role for the community and brings together the contributions of the various stakeholders. It may also act to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of its area.

Partnerships

- 6.2 The Council shall approve delegations, including frameworks for partnerships. The Council is a focus for forming partnerships with other local public, private, voluntary and community sector organizations to address local needs.

- 6.3 Members, the Chief Executive and other Officers as appropriate, represent the Council on partnership and external bodies, in accordance with the scheme of delegation.
- 6.4 The CFO shall promote and maintain the same high standards of conduct with regard to financial administration in partnerships that apply throughout the Council.
- 6.5 The CFO shall ensure that the accounting arrangements to be adopted relating to partnerships and any joint ventures are satisfactory. In consultation with the Monitoring Officer, the CFO shall consider the overall corporate governance arrangements and legal issues when arranging contracts with external bodies. The CFO shall ensure that the risks have been fully appraised before agreements are entered into with external bodies.
- 6.6 COs & DCOs shall ensure that appropriate approvals are obtained before any negotiations are concluded in relation to work with external bodies.

External funding

- 6.7 The Council will identify and keep under review potential sources of external grant funding, and seek to maximise the draw down of such funds subject to compatibility with the priorities and principles described in the Corporate Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 6.8 Before a grant funded scheme commences, COs & DCOs shall:
- a) Ensure that the proposed scheme is consistent with Corporate Priorities and objectives in the Divisional Plan.
 - b) Ensure that the funding body's requirements in relation to monitoring are understood and can be fulfilled.
 - c) Consult with their Finance Officer prior to submitting an application for grant funding.
 - d) Identify existing budget provision and/or use of earmarked reserves before committing to match funding.
 - e) Obtain CFO approval for the use of any earmarked reserves.
 - f) Follow the requirements of the Anti Money Laundering Policy, where applicable.
 - g) Ensure that applications for grant funding are signed off by a member of SMB.
 - h) Ensure that the application requests the funding body to clearly identify the relevant service area and/or grant scheme when making payments.

- 6.9 After a grant has been awarded, COs & DCOs shall:
- i) Supply monitoring information and claims to the awarding body in accordance with agreed deadlines.
 - j) Promptly notify the awarding body informed of any significant changes in circumstances or delays.
 - k) Only use grants for the purpose intended by the awarding body.
 - l) Not use grant monies of a one-off nature to support ongoing spending.
 - m) Keep supporting records in a form as may be required by the awarding body and/or external audit.
 - n) Consult with their Finance Officer prior to submitting a claim for grant monies.
 - o) Claim the maximum amount that the Council is entitled to under the grant scheme conditions.
 - p) Ensure that the awarding body is acknowledged in any scheme-related documentation or outcomes.
- 6.10 The CFO shall ensure that all funding notified by external bodies is received and properly recorded in the Council's accounts.

Work for third parties

- 6.11 The Cabinet shall approve the contractual arrangements for any work for third parties or external bodies.

Trading accounts

- 6.12 The CFO shall advise on the establishment and operation of trading accounts.
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7. VIREMENT, YEAR END BALANCES AND SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES

Scheme of virement

- 7.1 A virement is the transfer of money from one approved Service Budget to another and from one Subjective Code to another. A Service Budget is categorized by a separate entry in the Budget Book (e.g. Animal Warden). Budget Holder responsibility for each Service budget is also detailed in the Budget Book. A Subjective Code is a category of expenditure or income e.g. salaries, premises costs, fees & charges income.
- 7.2 Budget Holders are authorized to incur expenditure in accordance with the budget approved by Full Council. Inevitably, changes in the underlying assumptions that underpin the budget occur, necessitating budget adjustments. The scheme of virement provides flexibility to manage budgets within the overall policy framework determined by Full Council.

- 7.3 The Council shall operate a Rolling Budget. A Rolling Budget means that virements shall be enacted as and when changes in circumstances or assumptions underlying the budget occur, and ensures that actual transactions are reported and monitored against an up to date budget.
- 7.4 A virement does not create additional budget availability. Budget Holders shall manage their budgets responsibly and avoid supporting additional recurring expenditure from one off sources of income and avoid creating future commitments, including full-year effects of decisions made part way through a year, for which they have not identified future resources.

Virement rules

- 7.5 The following general restrictions on virements shall apply:
- A virement is only permissible if there has been a change in circumstances or assumptions that underpin the original budget approval. Virements for the purpose of masking variances from the approved budget shall not be allowed.
 - The net effect of any and all virements on the Council's net budget requirement shall always be neutral.
 - Virements from non-pay to pay Subjective Codes are not permitted.
 - Virements between the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account are not permitted.
 - Virements between revenue and capital budgets are not permitted.
 - No virement relating to a specific financial year should be made after 31 March in that year.
 - The minimum level for virements is £1,000.
 - Authorization of virements shall be in writing using a form determined by the CFO for the purpose.
- 7.6 Virements between Subjective Codes within a Service Budget may be authorized by the Budget Holder, without financial limit.
- 7.7 Budget Holders may authorize virements of up to £10,000 between Service Budgets they are responsible for as detailed in the budget book. Such virements require additional authorization by the CFO.
- 7.8 Virements of up to £10,000 between Service Budgets controlled by different Budget Holders may be made if approved by those Budget Holders. Such virements require additional authorization by the CFO.

- 7.9 Virements between Service Budgets exceeding £10,000 and up to £25,000 require the authorization of SMB based upon a report jointly authored by the Budget Holder(s) and CFO. Such virements to be reported for information to the Cabinet.
- 7.10 Virements between Service Budgets exceeding £25,000 require the authorization of Cabinet based upon a report jointly authored by the Budget Holder(s) and CFO.

Treatment of year-end balances

- 7.11 The rules below cover arrangements for the transfer of budgets between financial years, i.e. slippage.
- 7.12 Financial year end variances on Service Budgets shall not, as a matter of course, be carried forward to the following financial year. Such variances shall be managed corporately via transfers to and from reserves.
- 7.13 Requests for slippage of unspent budgets shall only be considered where the Service Budget shows an underspend of at least an equivalent amount to the slippage request. The request shall include specific details of the expenditure for which slippage is being sought.
- 7.14 Slippage requests shall relate to a specific activity or project with identifiable reasons why such activity did not take place within the financial year as originally envisaged.
- 7.15 The minimum amount for slippage is £1,000.
- 7.16 SMB shall determine individual slippage requests up to a maximum of £25,000. Amounts in excess of this shall be submitted to the Cabinet for approval. There is no upper limit on the individual amount of a slippage request.
- 7.17 Commitments shall not be entered into prior to approval.

Supplementary Estimates

- 7.18 Supplementary Estimates are requests for increases in total spending permission additional to those approved in the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme.
- 7.19 Wherever possible a Supplementary Estimate shall be managed by virement in accordance with the virement rules contained within these Financial Regulations.

7.20 Where a Supplementary Estimate cannot be managed by virement, approval by Cabinet is required based upon a report jointly authored by the responsible member of SMB and CFO. Authorization shall only be given in the following exceptional circumstances:

- Unavoidable expenditure which cannot be contained by virement
- To enable opportunistic purchase of land or the issue of planning revocations, or purchase notices under relevant Planning Acts.
- The use of general or earmarked reserves for specific purposes.
- To cover expenses incurred in dealing with emergencies and disasters.

7.21 Supplementary Estimates shall be funded by one or a combination of the following:

- Virement
- Additional income
- Transfer from reserves
- Transfer from Working Balance

7.22 Wherever practicable the approval of Cabinet shall be obtained before any commitment is entered into. If this is not possible the relevant Finance Portfolio Holder and Portfolio Holder responsible for the service (if different) shall be consulted. In the event of a genuine emergency requiring urgent unavoidable expenditure e.g. civil emergency any member of SMB shall authorize such expenditure and the CFO shall report the action taken to the next meeting of Cabinet.

8. Assets

8.1 The Councils assets include land, buildings & contents, plant, vehicles & equipment, IT assets & software, intellectual property, confidential data, cash and cheques.

8.2 COs & DCOs shall ensure that assets are properly maintained and securely held. They shall also ensure that contingency plans for the security of assets and continuity of service in the event of disaster or system failure are in place.

8.3 The CFO shall make arrangements for an Asset Management Strategy, consistent with the Corporate Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy, to be adopted, implemented and regularly reviewed.

8.4 The CFO shall maintain an asset register for all fixed assets with a value in excess of £10,000. The CFO shall ensure that assets are valued in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting, and the Council's accounting policies.

8.5 COs & DCOs shall:

- maintain a property database in a form approved by the CFO for all properties, plant and machinery and moveable assets currently owned or used by the Council above £1,000 in value.
- ensure the proper security of all buildings and other assets under their control.
- take action in any case where security is thought to be defective or where it is considered that special security arrangements may be needed.
- ensure that assets are identified, their location recorded and that they are appropriately marked and insured.
- ensure that no Council asset is subject to personal use by an employee without proper authority.
- where land or buildings are surplus to requirements, prepare a report for Cabinet, in consultation with the CFO, containing recommendations for disposal. The Cabinet has delegated authority to determine disposals of assets.
- ensure that all disposals of surplus plant, vehicles, furniture and equipment are managed in accordance with the Disposals policy.

Stocks and stores**8.6 COs & DCOs shall:**

- make arrangements for the care and custody of stocks and stores
- periodically verify the accuracy of stock & stores records by physical inspection
- investigate discrepancies and report these to the CFO who shall authorize write offs up to £5,000 in value. Cabinet approval is required to write off discrepancies above £5,000
- dispose of redundant stocks and equipment by a method determined in consultation with the CFO
- seek Cabinet approval to the write-off of redundant stocks and equipment in excess of £5,000 in value
- provide the CFO with a certificate of the value of stock held at 31 March each year.

Intellectual property

8.7 Intellectual property is a generic term that includes inventions and writing. If these are created by the employee during the course of employment, then, as a general rule, they belong to the employer, not the employee. Various acts of Parliament cover different types of intellectual property. Certain activities undertaken within the Council may give rise to items that may be patentable, for example, software development. These items are collectively known as intellectual property. SMB shall ensure that controls are in place to ensure that staff do not carry out private work in council time and that staff are aware of an employer's rights with regard to intellectual property.

Confidential data

- 8.8 COs & DCOs shall ensure that all confidential data, including personal data, whether held electronically or otherwise, is stored, transmitted and disposed of by secure means in accordance with the Council's Data Protection Policy and IT Acceptable Use Policy and other relevant guidance e.g. that necessary to fulfill the requirements of the Code of Compliance.
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9. BANK ACCOUNTS

- 9.1 All arrangements with the Council's bankers shall be made by the CFO who shall be authorized to operate such bank accounts as he may consider necessary.
- 9.2 Opening or closing any bank account shall require the approval of the CFO and an independent member of SMB. All Council bank accounts shall include "Uttlesford District Council" within the account name. All instructions relating to the Council's bank accounts shall be authorized by the CFO.
- 9.3 Payments may be made by electronic transmission subject to controls and safeguards approved by the CFO. BACS and CHAPS payments shall be authorized by officers approved by the CFO.
- 9.4 In circumstances approved by the CFO, pre-signed cheques may be used for payments. The facsimile signature of the CFO shall appear on all pre-signed cheques.
- 9.5 Cheques above £5,000 shall be countersigned by one of the officers approved by the CFO, in accordance with the mandate lodged with the Council's banker.
- 9.6 Non-pre-signed cheques for payments exceeding £5,000 shall be signed by any two of the officers approved by the CFO (one of the two may be the CFO). Non pre-signed cheques for payments not exceeding £5,000 shall be signed by either the CFO, or one of the officers approved by the CFO.
- 9.7 Amendments to cheques can be countersigned by the person or persons authorized to sign cheques in accordance with the bank mandate.
- 9.8 Cheques shall be ordered only on the authority of the CFO. All cheques shall be kept in safe custody by the CFO until issue.
- 9.9 The CFO shall manage the Council's bank balances and cashflow and manage borrowing and investments in accordance with the Treasury Management Strategy approved by the Council.
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10. Petty Cash

- 10.1 The CFO shall determine whether operational circumstances justify maintaining petty cash for the purpose of meeting minor expenditure on behalf of the Council.
- 10.2 Where petty cash is deemed necessary, the CFO shall provide a named officer with an agreed amount of cash and shall prescribe rules for operating the petty cash account.
- 10.3 The CFO shall maintain a record of all petty cash advances made, and periodically review the arrangements for the safe custody and control of cash. The CFO shall reimburse petty cash holders as often as necessary to restore the cash held to the agreed amount, but normally not more than monthly.
- 10.4 The named officer operating petty cash shall:
- wherever possible get prior authorization to support the requested payment.
 - obtain and retain vouchers to support each payment
 - where appropriate, obtain and retain an official receipted VAT invoice
 - make adequate arrangements for the safe custody of the cash
 - produce upon demand by the CFO cash and all vouchers to the total value of the petty cash account
 - record transactions promptly
 - reconcile and balance the account at least monthly; reconciliation sheets to be signed and retained
 - provide the CFO with a certificate of the value of the account held at 31 March each year
 - ensure that petty cash is never used to cash personal cheques or to make personal loans and that the only payments into the account are the reimbursement of the account made by the CFO.
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11. Income

- 11.1 The Council shall adopt policies for the setting of Fees & Charges and Debt Recovery and income collection shall be carried out in accordance with these policies.
- 11.2 The CFO shall determine the procedures, systems and documentation for the collection of all income due to the Council.

11.3 COs & DCOs shall:

- ensure that income is accounted for in full with no expenditure being funded from monies received.
- whenever possible ensure separation of duties between officers, so that responsibility for cash collection should be separated from that for identifying the amount due and reconciling the amount due to the amount received.
- ensure that at least two employees are present when post is opened so that money received by post is properly identified and recorded.
- issue official receipts or maintain other documentation for income collection.
- hold securely receipts, tickets and other records of income for the appropriate period.
- ensure income is not used to cash personal cheques or otherwise mixed with personal monies.
- establish and initiate appropriate recovery procedures, including legal action where necessary, for debts that are not paid promptly.
- notify the CFO of outstanding income relating to the previous financial year as soon as possible after 31 March in line with the timetable determined by the CFO.

11.4 Discretionary rate relief not exceeding a cost of £5,000 to the Council shall be determined by the CFO. Above this figure, the approval of the Cabinet shall be required.

Write Off Limits

11.5 Bad debts of up to £5,000 shall be written off by the CFO, having ascertained that all reasonable steps have been taken to recover the debt and that it would be uneconomical to pursue the debt further. Cabinet approval is required to write-off bad debts in excess of £5,000.

12. Ordering and Paying for Goods and Services

Introduction

- 12.1 Public money should be spent with demonstrable probity and in accordance with the Council's policies. Councils have a statutory duty to achieve best value in part through economy and efficiency. The Council's procedures should help to ensure that services obtain value for money from their purchasing arrangements.
- 12.2 These Regulations should be read in conjunction with the Council's Contracts Procedure Rules.
- 12.3 COs & DCOs shall ensure that sufficient budgetary provision exists before orders are placed or contractual commitments entered into.

- 12.4 Orders shall be placed by means of an official ordering process determined by the CFO, and authorized by the responsible Budget Holder or their nominee in accordance with a list of authorizing officers maintained by the Budget Holder.
- 12.5 For certain categories of purchase the CFO shall approve the issue of credit cards to officers which shall be used in accordance with rules determined by the CFO.
- 12.6 All leasing arrangements require the prior approval of the CFO.
- 12.7 Ex-gratia payments (e.g. goodwill gestures in settlement of a complaint) of up to £5,000 may be approved by the responsible member of SMB. Cabinet approval is required to make ex-gratia payments in excess of £5,000.
- 12.8 Where practicable, COs & DCOs shall ensure that there is adequate separation of duties between ordering and the certification of invoices for payment. Names of invoice authorizing officers together with specimen signatures and details of the limits of their authority shall be forwarded to the CFO.
- 12.9 Officers certifying an invoice for payment shall ensure that:
- goods or services have been received and are satisfactory
 - the invoice has not previously been paid
 - prices and arithmetic are correct and accord with quotations, tenders, contracts or catalogue prices
 - VAT is correctly accounted for
 - the invoice is coded to the correct accounting code
 - discounts have been taken where available.
- 12.10 Subject to appropriate safeguards including variance tolerance and adequate IT systems being in place, as determined by the CFO, suppliers may be paid by means of electronic invoices based upon Budget Holder certification that goods and services have been received and are satisfactory.
- 12.11 COs & DCOs shall notify the CFO of outstanding expenditure relating to the previous financial year as soon as possible after 31 March in line with the timetable determined by the CFO.
- 12.12 Suppliers shall not normally be paid in advance of goods or services being supplied, with the exception of subscriptions, publications, training/seminar attendance and other exceptions determined by the CFO.
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13. PAYMENTS TO EMPLOYEES AND MEMBERS

Staffing

- 13.1 The Chief Executive shall provide overall management to staff and ensure that there is proper use of the evaluation or other agreed systems for determining the remuneration of a job.

- 13.2 COs & DCOs shall ensure that appointments are made in accordance with the Council's policies and approved establishments, grades and scale of pay and that adequate budget provision is available. Non-recurring sources of funding shall not be used to appoint permanent members of staff.
- 13.3 The CFO shall be notified of all appointments, terminations or variations which may affect the pay or pension of an employee or former employee, in the form and to the timescale required by the CFO.

Salaries, wages and allowances

- 13.4 The CFO shall establish arrangements to make all payments of salaries and wages to all staff, including payments for overtime, and payment of allowances to members.
- 13.5 The CFO shall ensure that proper authorization procedures are in place and that there is adherence to corporate timetables in relation to starters, leavers, variations and enhancements.
- 13.6 The CFO shall ensure that where applicable, payments are made on the basis of properly authorized timesheets or claims. No member or employee shall certify their own claims for payment.
- 13.7 The CFO shall ensure that frequent reconciliations of payroll expenditure against approved budget and bank accounts are carried out.
- 13.8 The CFO shall ensure that all appropriate payroll documents are retained and stored for the defined period in accordance with Inland Revenue regulations.
- 13.9 The CFO shall arrange and control secure and reliable payment of salaries, wages, compensation or other emoluments to existing and former employees.
- 13.10 The CFO shall arrange for the accurate and timely payment of tax, superannuation and other deductions.
- 13.11 Salaries and wages may only be paid through the Council's payroll system. COs & DCOs shall give careful consideration to the employment status of individuals employed on a self-employed consultant or subcontract basis and take account of HM Revenue & Customs guidance. In cases of doubt advice shall be obtained from the CFO.

Reimbursement of expenses

- 13.12 Staff and Members are entitled to reclaim travel, out of pocket and subsistence schemes in accordance with the Council's policies and procedures.
- 13.13 Rail warrants or Council credit cards shall be used for the purpose of paying for rail travel, rather than using personal monies and reclaiming via expenses.
- 13.14 Members and officers shall submit claims for expenses on a monthly basis and, in any event, within one month of the financial year end.

- 13.15 COs & DCOs shall ensure that expense claims are properly authorized prior to payment. Authorizing officers shall ascertain that journeys were authorized and expenses properly and necessarily incurred, and that allowances are properly claimed.
- 13.16 Subject to appropriate safeguards and adequate IT systems being in place, as determined by the CFO, expenses may be claimed and authorized electronically.

Taxation

- 13.17 The CFO shall provide advice on all taxation issues that affect the Council.
- 13.18 The CFO shall maintain the Council's tax records, making all tax payments, receiving tax credits and submitting tax returns by their due date as appropriate.