

These Financial Regulations were adopted by the Council at its Meeting held on 19th February 2020 and revised at the meeting held 16th February 2022.

1. GENERAL

- 1.1 These financial regulations govern the conduct of the financial transactions of the Council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the Council.
- 1.2 The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), under the policy direction of the Council, shall be responsible for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs.
- 1.3 The RFO shall be responsible for the production of financial and management information.

2. ANNUAL ESTIMATES

- 2.1 Each Committee (if any) shall formulate and submit proposals to the Council in respect of revenue and capital costs for the following financial year not later than the end of November each year.
- 2.2 Detailed estimates of all receipts and payments for the year shall be prepared for the beginning of January each year by the RFO.
- 2.3 The Council shall review the estimates and shall fix the Precept to be levied for the ensuing financial year not later than the end of January each year. The RFO shall supply each member with a copy of the approved estimates.
- 2.4 The annual budgets shall form the basis of financial control for the ensuing year.

3. BUDGETARY CONTROL

- 3.1 Expenditure on revenue items may be incurred up to the amounts included in the approved budget.
- 3.2 Council must endeavour to maintain expenditure incurred within the amount provided in the revenue budget. In the exception of unforeseen and necessary works, Council must approve the additional expenditure prior to the commencement of the works.
- 3.3 The RFO shall provide the Council with a quarterly statement of receipts and payments to date under each head of the budgets, comparing actual expenditure against that planned.
- 3.4 The Clerk may incur expenditure on behalf of the Council which is necessary to carry out any repair replacement or other work which is of such extreme urgency that it must be done at once, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £500. The Clerk will seek approval prior to action from the Leader and Deputy Leader, in their absence it would be the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. The Clerk shall report the action to the Council as soon as practicable thereafter.

- 3.5 Unspent provisions in the revenue budget shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year.
- 3.6 No expenditure shall be incurred 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, or the requisite borrowing approval has been obtained.
- 3.7 All capital works shall be administered in accordance with the Council's standing orders and financial regulations relating to contracts.

4. ACCOUNTING AND AUDIT

- 4.1 All accounting procedures and financial records of the Council shall be determined by the RFO as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 1996 as amended.
- 4.2 The RFO shall be responsible for completing the annual financial statements of the Council as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and shall submit them and report thereon to the Council.
- 4.3 The RFO shall be responsible for completing the Accounts of the Council contained in the Annual Return (as supplied by the Auditor appointed from time to time by the Audit Commission) and for submitting the Annual Return for approval and authorisation by the Council within the timescales set by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 1996 as amended, or set by the Auditor.
- 4.4 The RFO and Senior Members shall be responsible for ensuring that there is adequate and effective system of internal audit of the Council's accounting, financial and other operations in accordance with Regulation 5 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 1996 as amended. Any officer or member of the Council shall, if the RFO or Internal Auditor requires, make available such documents of the Council which appear to the RFO or Internal Auditor to be necessary for the purpose of the internal audit and shall supply the RFO or Internal Auditor with such information and explanation as the RFO or Internal Auditor considers necessary for that purpose.
- 4.5 The Internal Auditor shall carry out the work required by Council with a view to satisfactory completion of the Internal Auditor's Report section of the Annual Return as compiled annually by the Audit Commission. The Internal Auditor, who shall be competent and independent of the operations of the Council, shall report to the Council in writing on a regular basis with a minimum of one annual report in respect of each financial year.
- 4.6 The RFO shall make arrangements for the opportunity for inspection of the accounts, books, and vouchers required by Audit Commission Act 1998 section 15 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 1996 as amended.
- 4.7 The RFO shall, as soon as practicable, bring to the attention of all councillors any correspondence or report from the Internal or External Auditor, unless the correspondence is of a purely administrative matter.

5. BANKING ARRANGEMENTS AND CHEQUES

- 5.1 The Council's banking arrangements shall be made by the RFO and approved by the Council. They shall be regularly reviewed for efficiency.
- 5.2 A schedule of the payments required, forming part of the Agenda for the Meeting, shall be prepared by the RFO and, together with the relevant invoices, be presented to Council. If the schedule is in order it shall be authorised by a resolution of the Council and shall be initialled by the Chairman of the Meeting. If more appropriate the detail may be shown in the Minutes of the Meeting.
- 5.3 Cheques drawn on the bank account in accordance with the schedule referred to in paragraph 5.2 or in accordance with paragraph 6.4, shall be signed by two members of Council and not normally by an Officer of the Council. An Officer may be permitted to sign along with an authorised member of Council, with prior approval of the Leader and Mayor of Council, where it is not possible to obtain the signature of a second authorised member of Council.
Exceptions when the two Officers of Council can be the sole two signatories: When a replacement cheque needs to be issued or an urgent payment is required. Prior approval **by two out of the other four Senior signatories (Leader, Deputy Leader, Mayor and Deputy Mayor)**, preferably by email, is required and payment is brought to the attention of Council at the next available meeting for ratification, **with an urgent payment reason specified**.
- 5.4 To indicate agreement of the details shown on the cheque or order for payment with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall each also initial the cheque counterfoil.
- 5.5 To indicate agreement of the details shown on the cheque or order for payment with the invoice or similar documentation, the Clerk, Leader or Mayor shall initial the invoice or similar documentation.
- 5.6 Transfer of monies between Town Council accounts – This transaction is to take place in the office – during office hours - following the meeting (usually the Ordinary) at which the Schedule of Payments for that month were approved. The amount will correspond with the approved total expenditure for that month unless receipts have been paid in to the current account which will reduce the amount needed to be transferred. The transfer is to be done by the RFO, witnessed by any two of the following:-
- Leader
 - Deputy Leader
 - Mayor
 - Deputy Mayor
 - Chair of Finance
 - Town Clerk.

The witnesses are to check that the bank account details onscreen correspond with the Council's bank statements; the transaction is being done flowing in the right direction from one account to the next (i.e. **Tracker Premium** to Current); and the amount is as per the approved expenditure. A form confirming all these details will be presented for signing by the RFO and both witnesses confirming the correct transaction as taken place.

The Internal Financial Controls policy details Emergency Variation in steps taken during situations where the functionality of Council has been reduced/restricted; the steps relate to the presentation of the Schedule of Payments to Council and online transfers. These steps will only be followed provided Council has already approved the change in process at an appropriate meeting and rescinded in part/full as soon as is practically possible i.e. Council meetings fully resumed.

6. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

- 6.1 All payments shall be effected by cheque or other order drawn on the Council's bankers.
- 6.2 All invoices for payment shall be examined and verified by the RFO. The RFO shall satisfy him/herself that the work, goods or services to which the invoice relates shall have been received, carried out, examined and approved.
- 6.3 The RFO shall examine invoices in relation to arithmetic accuracy and shall analyse them to the appropriate expenditure heading. The RFO shall take all steps to settle all invoices submitted, and which are in order, at the next available Council Meeting.
- 6.4 If a payment is necessary to avoid a charge to interest under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998, and the due date for payment is before the next scheduled Meeting of Council, where the Clerk and RFO certify that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, the RFO may (notwithstanding para 6.3) take all steps necessary to settle such invoices provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of Council. **When an urgent payment is required, prior approval by two out of the senior four Members – preferably by email – is required and payment is brought to the attention of Council at the next available meeting for ratification, with the urgent payment reason specified.**
- 6.5 The RFO may provide petty cash to officers for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses. Vouchers for payments made shall be forwarded to the RFO with a claim for reimbursement:
- a) The RFO shall maintain as petty cash float of £100 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 and besides being recorded in the nominal ledger the information is to be recorded in the separate petty cash journal ledger.

7. PAYMENTS OF SALARIES

- 7.1 The payment of all salaries shall be made in accordance with payroll records and the rules of PAYE and National Insurance currently operating, and salaries shall be as agreed by Council.
- 7.2 Payment of salaries and payment of deductions from salary such as may be made for tax, national insurance and pension contributions, may be made in accordance with the payroll records and on the appropriate dates, provided that each payment is reported to and ratified by the next available Council Meeting.
- 7.3 All salary calculations will be undertaken by the payroll company following instruction from the RFO with regards to payscale/pension changes, overtime or sickness entitlement. The instructions supplied by the RFO will have been approved by either the Leader for overtime payments and Council for all other pay matters.
- 7.4 All salary payments including PAYE, NI and Pensions will be made by BACS.

8 PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

- 8.1 Council's agreed course of action for any emergency repair works is:
- Maximum spend per repair capped at £500.00p.
 - Plumbing contractor is – Contractor removed at meeting 17.2.2021
 - Electrical contractor is – Contractor removed at meeting 17.2.2021
 - Contractors are to be appointed at the first meeting following the AM of Council.
- 8.2 The Town Clerk/RFO/Cllrs Smith and Willis have authorisation to contact contractors for emergency callouts and have been given devolved powers to seek alternative contractors if either of the named contractors are not available for the emergency work.
- 8.3 For any refurbishment or updating of facilities Council is to revert back to Financial Regulations following necessary quotation requirements.

9 LOANS AND INVESTMENTS

- 9.1 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.
- 9.2 The Council's Investment Policy, shall be in accordance with the Trustee Act 2000, and shall be reviewed on a regular basis (at least annually).
- 9.3 All investments of money under the control of the Council shall be in the name of the Council.

- 9.4 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.
- 9.5 All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained on custody of the RFO.
- 9.6 Smart Cymru Credit Union: Council have agreed to defer a maximum deposit of £10,000.00 for a fixed term of 3 years which is to be reviewed again at that date for a decision on future provision. The accounts of Smart Cymru are to be reviewed annually to assess the security of the deposit with concerns being reported to Council for appropriate action to be taken.

10. INCOME

- 10.1 The collection of all sums due to the Council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO.
- 10.2 Particulars of all charges to be made for work done, services rendered or goods supplied shall be agreed annually by the Council, notified to the RFO and the RFO shall be responsible for the collection of all accounts due to the Council.
- 10.3 The Council will review all fees and charges annually, following a report of the RFO.
- 10.4 Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts shall be reported to the Council and shall be written off in the year.
- 10.5 All sums received on behalf of the Council shall be banked intact as directed by the RFO. In all cases, all receipts shall be deposited with the Council's bankers with such frequency as the RFO considers necessary.
- 10.6 The origin of each receipt shall be entered on the paying-in slip.
- 10.7 Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the Council.
- 10.8 The RFO shall promptly complete any VAT Return that is required. Any repayment claim due in accordance with VAT Act 1994 section 33 shall be made at least annually coinciding with the financial year end.
- 10.9 Where any significant sums of cash are regularly received by the Council, the RFO shall take such steps as are agreed by the Council to ensure that more than one person is present when the cash is counted in the first instance, that there is a reconciliation to some form of control such as ticket issues, and that appropriate care is taken in the security and safety of individuals banking such cash. The persons present when the cash is counted are to sign the reconciliation to confirm they match.

11. ORDERS FOR WORK, GOODS AND SERVICES

- 11.1 An official order, letter or email shall be issued for all work, goods and services unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate. Copies of orders shall be retained.
- 11.2 The issue of Order Numbers shall be controlled by the RFO.
- 11.3 All members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times. An officer issuing an official order is to 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.
- 11.4 The RFO shall verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before the issue of any order, and in the case of new or infrequent purchases or payments, the RFO shall ensure that the statutory authority shall be reported to the meeting at which the order is approved so that the Minutes can record the power being used.
- 11.5 Approved Supplier List: Due to easy/prompt delivery, excellent service and fair value for money – whilst adhering to 12.1 (h) below - the Heads of the Valley Stationers, Tredegar are being proposed as an approved supplier for the supplies of office/cleaning sundries. – **N.B. This business, under current ownership, may cease during 2022 and it will be necessary to review this Point as/when aware of this change.**

12. CONTRACTS

- 12.1 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 these regulations shall not apply to contracts which relate to items (i) to (vi) below:
- (i) for the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telephone services;
 - (ii) for specialist services such as are provided by solicitors, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants;
 - (iii) for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which consist of repairs to or parts for existing machinery or equipment or plant;
 - (iv) for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the Council;
 - (v) for additional audit work of the External Auditor up to an estimated value of £250 (in excess of this sum the Clerk and RFO shall act after consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council);

- (vi) for goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and/or are only sold at a fixed price.
- (b) Where it is intended to enter into a contract exceeding £50,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Clerk or RFO shall invite tenders from at least three firms to be taken from the appropriate approved list.
- (c) When applications are made to waive financial regulations relating to contracts to enable a price to be negotiated without competition the reason shall be embodied in a recommendation to the Council.
- (d) Such invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases. The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the Clerk or RFO in the ordinary course of post or email. Each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specifically marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract.
- (e) All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the Clerk in the presence of the RFO or at least one member of Council.
- (f) If less than three tenders are received for the contracts above £50,000 or if all the tenders are identical the Council may make such arrangements as it thinks fit for procuring the goods or materials or executing the works.
- (g) Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall contain a statement to the effect of Standing Orders 64 and 73.
- (h) When it is to enter into a contract less than £50,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Clerk or RFO shall obtain three quotations (priced descriptions of the proposed supply); where the value is below £1,500 and above £500 the Clerk or RFO shall strive to obtain three estimates. Otherwise, Regulation 10 (3) above shall apply. *Below £500 the Clerk or RFO are to seek, where possible locally, best value for money and evidence this search; with delegated powers given to the Clerk or R.F.O. to action the purchase of day to day running items such as stationary, gifts and public convenience requirements – provided below £500 and duly reported to Council at appropriate meeting.*
- (i) The Council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.

13. PAYMENTS UNDER CONTRACTS FOR BUILDING OR OTHER CONSTRUCTION WORKS

- 13.1 Payments on account of the contract sum shall be made within the time specified in the contract by the RFO upon authorised certificates of the architect or other consultants engaged to supervise the contract (subject to any percentage withholding as may be agreed in the particular contract).
- 13.2 Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the RFO shall maintain a record of all such payments. In any case where it is estimated that the total cost of work carried out under a contract, excluding agreed variations, will exceed the contract sum of 5% or more a report shall be submitted to the Council.
- 13.3 Any variation to a contract or addition to or omission from a contract must be approved by the Council and Clerk to the Contractor in writing, the Council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the financial provision.

14. STORES AND EQUIPMENT

- 14.1 The officer in charge of each section shall be responsible for the care and custody of stores and equipment in that section.
- 14.2 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.
- 14.3 Stocks shall be kept at the minimum levels consistent with operational requirements.
- 14.4 The RFO shall be responsible for periodic checks of stocks and stores at least annually.

15. PROPERTIES AND ESTATES

- 15.1 The Clerk shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds of properties owned by the Council. The RFO shall ensure a record is maintained of all properties owned 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 Regulation 4(3)(b) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 1996 as amended.
- 15.2 No property shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the Council, together with any other consents required by law, save where the estimated value of any one item of tangible movable property does not exceed £50.

16. INSURANCE

- 16.1 Following an annual risk assessment (per Financial Regulation 18), the RFO shall effect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the Council's insurers.
- 16.2 The Clerk shall give prompt notification to the RFO of all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.
- 16.3 The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the Council and the property and risks covered thereby and annually review it.
- 16.4 The RFO shall be notified of any loss liability or damage or of any event likely to lead to a claim, and shall report these to Council at the next available meeting.
- 16.5 All appropriate employees of the Council shall be included in a suitable fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined by the Council.

17. CHARITIES

- 17.1 Where the Council is sole trustee of a Charitable body the Clerk and RFO shall ensure that separate accounts are kept of the funds held on charitable trusts and separate financial reports made in such form as shall be appropriate, in accordance with Charity Law and Legislation as determined by the Charity Commission. The Clerk and RFO shall arrange for any Audit or Independent Examination as may be required by Charity Law or any Governing Document.

18. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 18.1 The Council is responsible for putting in place arrangements for the management of risk. The Clerk with the RFO shall prepare, for approval by the Council, and promote Risk Management policy statements in respect of all activities of the Council. The Risk Management policy shall be reviewed by the Council at least annually.
- 18.2 When considering any new activity the Clerk shall prepare a draft Risk Management policy for the activity and shall bring a draft addressing the legal and financial liabilities and Risk Management issues that arise to Council for consideration and, if thought appropriate, adoption.

19. REVISION OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

- 19.1 It shall be the duty of the Council to review the Financial Regulations of the Council annually.
