

HEXHAM TOWN COUNCIL

I HEREBY GIVE YOU NOTICE that a meeting of the Council will be held in the Conference Room, Dene Park House, Corbridge Road, Hexham NE46 1HN on Monday 5 June 2017 at 6.45pm, when the following items will be discussed:

A G E N D A

1. Council to hear questions from Hexham residents regarding matters on the agenda or relating to Hexham.
2. Apologies for absence.
3. To agree minutes of the annual meeting of the Council held on 15 May 2017, enclosed.
4. Matters arising, if any.
5. Mayor's announcements.
6. Declarations of interest (see enclosed).
7. Proposal from Councillor J V R Hare: "That the invoice dated 16 May 2017 from Northumberland County Council for £30,000.00 for the Hexham Bandstand and fountain project work be paid: £20,000.00 from the bandstand reserve budget (reference 5110) and £10,000.00 from the contingency fund (reference 5100)".
8. To agree accounts for payment (list enclosed).
9. To approve the annual statement of accounts, governance statement and internal audit report (see enclosed).
10. To agree an Action Plan for 2017/18 (see enclosed).
11. To review and adopt the Public Participation Protocol (see enclosed).
12. To review and adopt the Standing Orders (see enclosed).
13. To review and adopt the Financial Regulations (see enclosed).
14. To nominate a Council representative to each of the following organisations:
 - a. Northumberland Association of Local Councils
 - b. Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership
 - c. Hexham Community Centre Management Committee
15. To consider any correspondence received.
16. Any urgent matters at the Chairman of the meeting's discretion.
(Matters to be raised under this item should be written out (if possible) and handed to the Chairman of the meeting or the Town Clerk before the meeting begins.)

Jane Kevan
Town Clerk
30 May 2017

Hexham Town Council
Council Office
St Andrew's Cemetery
West Road
Hexham
NE46 3RR
Tel: 01434 609575
Hagenda0617

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www.hexhamtowncouncil.gov.uk

HEXHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 15 MAY 2017

6895.	PRESENT: Councillor T Cessford, the Town Mayor opened the Council meeting. Also present were Councillors S Ball, Mrs D Bell, J Ord, T Pearson, J M Graham, E Green, Mrs C R Homer, R Hull, T Dodds, T G E Gillanders, J V R Hare and D Kennedy.
6896.	DECLARATIONS OF OFFICE: All Councillors present made and signed their Declarations of Office as Councillors in the presence of Jane Kevan, Town Clerk and Proper Officer of the Council.
6897.	TOWN MAYOR: It was AGREED Councillor T G E Gillanders be elected Town Mayor and Chairman of the Council.
6898.	DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE: Councillor Gillanders then took the Chair and made his Declaration of Acceptance as Town Mayor and Chairman of the Council. He welcomed the new Councillors and thanked the outgoing Mayor for his hard work and positive leadership.
6899.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Councillor Mrs C Hanley.
6900.	DEPUTY MAYOR: It was AGREED Councillor R Hull be elected Deputy Mayor and Deputy Chairman of the Council.
6901.	COMMITTEES: The following membership of the Standing Council Committees was AGREED: a. Finance and General Purposes: Councillors T G E Gillanders, T Cessford, J M Graham, Mrs C R Homer, J V R Hare, T Pearson, E Green, R Hull and J Ord b. Planning and Infrastructure: Councillors T G E Gillanders, J V R Hare, Mrs C Hanley, E Green, Mrs D Bell and J Ord c. Community Engagement: Councillors T G E Gillanders, T Cessford, Mrs C R Homer, Mrs C Hanley, S A Ball, T Pearson, T Dodds, Mrs D Bell and R Hull.
6902.	TOWN PLAN 2020 AND NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN COMMITTEES: It was AGREED that these Committees should continue and that membership will be as follows: a. Town Plan 2020: Councillors T G E Gillanders, T Cessford, J M Graham, Mrs C Hanley, T Dodds, S A Ball and T Pearson b. Neighbourhood Plan: Councillors T G E Gillanders, T Cessford, Mrs C R Homer, J M Graham, R Hull, J Ord and D Kennedy. It was further AGREED that the Town Plan 2020 Committee be authorised to agree any Committee expenditure up to but not exceeding the agreed 2017/18 budget of £20000.00 and the Neighbourhood Plan Committee be authorised to agree any

	Committee expenditure up to but not exceeding the agreed 2017/18 budget of £2000.00 together with £5700.00 not spent in 2016/17, so £7700.00.
6903.	MINUTES: The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 3 April 2017, having been circulated, were AGREED.
6904.	MATTERS ARISING: NOTICES IN THE HEXHAM COURANT (Minute 6883a refers). It was noted that Northumberland County Council has reinstated public notices in the Courant and that the paper is again on sale in leisure centres.
6905.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: There were no declarations of interest made.
6906.	ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT: It was AGREED to authorise payments in accordance with the list that had been circulated and attached to the agenda. The Clerk was asked to email Councillors with details of what the annual subscription to the Northumberland Association of Local Councils pays for.
6907.	CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED. <i>(Note: wherever possible, all communications addressed to the Council are circulated to Councillors for information as and when received.)</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. BOOK BANKS IN NORTHUMBERLAND: Councillors had been circulated information from Northumberland County Council on book banks in the County being reinstated. The one in Hexham is in the Wentworth car park. b. ROAD RESURFACING WORK: Councillors had been circulated information on work at Springfield Road, Radcliffe Road, White Cross and West Road (North). White Cross will be closed between 30 May and 2 June and West Road (North) is expected to be closed from 19 June to 23 June although access will be maintained for residents, pedestrians and cyclists. c. HEXHAM ART CLUB SPRING EXHIBITION: Councillors had been circulated an invitation to attend the preview of the exhibition in the basement gallery of the Moot Hall from 5.00pm to 7.00pm on 20 May. d. NALC TRAINING PROGRAMME: Councillors had been circulated information on the NALC training programme for 2017 and requested to advise the Clerk of events they wish to attend.
6908.	BANKERS: It was AGREED the account with HSBC Bank plc continue. It was NOTED that the bank is authorised to pay all cheques and other instructions for payment signed on behalf of the Council by any two Councillors and to accept the Town Clerk as fully empowered to act in any other transaction with the bank and who is authorised to supply the bank as and when necessary with a list of persons

	authorised to sign and give receipts and the bank may rely on such lists.
6909.	CHRISTMAS LIGHTS BUDGET: It was AGREED to carry forward the 2016/17 underspend of £3500.00 so that the 2017/18 budget for Christmas lights additional units is £13500.00.
6910.	COUNCIL MEETINGS: It was NOTED that the Council will meet on 5 June, 3 July, 7 August, 4 September, 2 October, 6 November and 4 December.
6911.	NORTHUMBERLAND ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS' COUNTY COMMITTEE: It was NOTED that no Councillor was nominated as a Council representative on this committee.
6912.	MAYOR: Councillor Hare thanked Councillor Cessford for his hard work and very successful two years as Mayor.
6913.	NEXT MEETING: The next meeting of the Council will be held on 5 June 2017 at 6.45pm at Dene Park House, Corbridge Road, Hexham.

Chairman

Signed as a correct record of the minutes of the Annual Town Council meeting held on 15 May 2017.

HEXHAM TOWN COUNCIL - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Under the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council on 3 September 2012 Councillors must declare if they have a disclosable interest in any matters under consideration.

To do so Councillors must use one of the following statements:-

- “I have a disclosable pecuniary interest
in..... (for example) Agenda item
3, Planning application number 14/1234”.
(NOTE: Code of Conduct paragraphs 11&15 apply).
- “I have a disclosable personal interest
in..... (for example) Agenda item
4, Grant aid application by Hexham Youth Initiative
(NOTE: Code of Conduct paragraph 13 applies).

Councillors should familiarise themselves with the Code of Conduct regarding the definitions of (A) pecuniary interest and (B) other personal interest and their obligations when declaring any such interests.

To ensure Councillors' interests are correctly minuted please use one of the above statements when declaring an interest.

(NB. Should a Councillor wish to take part in the consideration and voting on a matter or matters in which he/she has a disclosable interest then they may request a dispensation be granted to enable them to take part in the discussion and voting on it but at least 10 days' notice must be given for any dispensation request.)

HEXHAM TOWN COUNCIL
ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT 5 JUNE 2017

Payments are authorised by LGA 1972 s14, 144, 145, 214 or 215 or PCA 1957

Payee	Detail	Amount	VAT	Net	Cheque number	Ref.
Safe and Secure 24	Alarm systems 24 hour monitoring	15.60	2.60	13.00	DD	7380
HSBC	Bank charges (April)	33.85	0	33.85	DD	5060
HSBC	Annual safe fee	18.38	3.06	15.32	DD	5060
Malthurst Ltd	Diesel (May)	328.64	54.78	273.86	Visa	7310
EE & T Mobile	Accounts (May)	163.52	27.25	136.27	DD	5010
Extra Energy Limited	Cemetery account	522.96	87.16	435.80	DD	
Extra Energy Limited	Floodlights account	88.39	4.21	84.18	DD	7450
NCC (wages and PAYE)	May	2035.68	0	2035.68	108848	6020
NCC (pension fund)	May	11491.14	0	11491.14	108848	6030
NCC (payroll admin fee)	6 payslips @ £4.167	30.00	5.00	25.00	108848	6020
Homebase	Wallpaper, etc for Cemetery Lodge	350.42	58.40	292.02	Visa	7380
Hexham Courant	Annual town meeting notice	158.76	26.46	132.30	108841	5000
Hexham Abbey Heritage Trading Ltd	Town twinning reception (minus deposit paid)	198.00	33.00	165.00	108842	7870
Hexham Abbey Heritage Trading Ltd	Hire of Great Hall for N/Plan Forum 24/5/17	170.00	28.33	141.67	108842	5600
Ludman Planning	N/Plan charges to 30/4/17	1410.00	0	1410.00	108843	5600
Ecoffins	5 Bamboo coffins	1065.00	177.50	887.50	108844	7340
Robson Print	Spring reception invites	67.20	11.20	56.00	108845	7070
Down to Earth	Growmore	10.99	1.83	9.16	108846	7120
Hutchinson Environmental Solutions Ltd	Annual service of sewage system	211.20	35.20	176.00	108847	7380
CJL Fenwick	Bin liners	633.60	105.60	528.00	108849	7100

SLCC	Regional training seminar	82.80	13.80	69.00	Visa	6080
Homebase	Wallpaper, etc for Cemetery Lodge	17.41	2.90	14.51	Visa	7380
NCC	Hexham bandstand & fountain project	30000.00	0	30000.00	108850	5110 (20000) 5100 (10000)
A R Owen Insurance Services Ltd	Annual premium for Council insurance	6820.35	0	6820.35	108851	7420
A R Owen Insurance Services Ltd	Annual premium for Kubota tractor insurance	391.80	0	391.80	108851	7310
Philip Sewell	Milk account	70.72	0	70.72	108852	6010
Derek's Shoe Bar	Engraving plaques	32.00	5.33	26.67	108853	7330
Mole Country Stores	Rosate	31.98	5.33	26.65	108854	7330
Viking Payments	Coffee	19.99	0	19.99	108855	6010
Viking Payments	All purpose cleaning fluid	19.79	3.30	16.49	108855	7330
MGM Ltd	Retention re: Lodge windows work	355.68	59.28	296.40	108856	7380
J T Dove Ltd	Cement	37.08	6.18	30.90	108857	7380
WCB Building Services Ltd	Fix Chapel flooring and paint walls	1050.00	0	1050.00	108858	7380
David Dixon Garden Machinery	Repair recoil on strimmer	14.04	2.34	11.70	108859	7320
David Dixon Garden Machinery	Repair jammed pawl assembly on mower	25.85	4.31	21.54	108859	7320
David Dixon Garden Machinery	Replace broken throttle cable on strimmer	31.79	5.30	26.49	108859	7320
Hexham Tyre & Battery Co Ltd	Puncture repair on ride-on grass cutter	7.20	1.20	6.00	108860	7320
Hexham Machinery Centre	Brushcutter	438.00	73.00	365.00	108861	7315
Eventbrite	Councillor training	20.00	0	20.00	Visa	6080
TOTALS		58469.81	843.85	57625.96		

HEXHAM TOWN COUNCIL
MAYOR'S ALLOWANCE – ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT 5 JUNE 2017

Payee	Detail	Amount	VAT	Net	Cheque number	Ref.
Balance b/f		820.09		820.09		
Transfer of	2017/18 Mayor's Allowance	2100.00		2100.00		5080
Balance fwd				2920.09		

HEXHAM TOWN COUNCIL – INCOME – MARCH 2017

Credit from	Detail	Amount	Invoice reference	Date	Ref.
Various	Cemetery charges	7560.00	HD2017/33	020517	4010
Mr S M Ridd/ North Wood Monkey	Christmas Market fee	120.00		020517	4020
Various	Cemetery charges	3780.00	HD2017/34	050517	4010
Various	Cemetery charges	1890.00	HD2017/35	050517	4010
Various	Cemetery charges	301.00	HD2017/36	080517	4010
Dorothy Jenkins/ Magnetic Jewellery	Christmas Market fee	140.00		080517	4020
Various	Cemetery charges	1025.00	HD2017/38	090517	4010
Dr Hugh Penney	Christmas Market fee	171.00		090517	4020
Chrissy Dyer	Christmas Market fee	140.00		090517	4020
Various	Cemetery charges	2074.00	HD2017/39	150517	4010
Van der Veen/GJ & Slate and Nature	Christmas Market fee	165.00		160517	4020
Various	Cemetery charges	88.00	HD2017/37	170517	4010
Various	Cemetery charges	945.00	HD2017/40	180517	4010
Various	Cemetery charges	158.00	Memorial fixing saddle	180517	4010
Various	Cemetery charges	946.00	HDW2017/41	230517	4010
Various	Cemetery charges	151.00	HD2017/42	230517	4010
Various	Cemetery charges	1364.00	HD2017/43	260517	4010
HMRC	Vat refund	15343.77		260517	4020
TOTAL		36361.77			

Hexham Neighbourhood Plan 2017/18

(As at 30 May 2017)

Budget	Expense (net)	Detail	Date	Cheque No.	Balance
£7700.00					£7700.00
	£450.00	Sarah Dyer (Heritage Consultant advice)	6/4/17	108822	£7250.00
	£135.00	GIS work	4/17	108823	£7115.00
	£141.67	Hexham Abbey Heritage Trading Ltd (hire of Great Hall for Forum 9)	23/5/17	108842	£6973.33
	£1410.00	Planning Consultant fee	31/3-30/4/17	108843	£5563.33

HEXHAM TOWN COUNCIL

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2017

Although the Audit Commission was abolished by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 the Council must still approve annual governance and accounting statements for the year ending 31 March 2017 and then submit them to its external auditors, BDO LLP.

Annual Governance Statement 2016/17

We acknowledge as members of Hexham Town Council our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control including the preparation of accounting statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the accounting statements for year ended 310317 that:	The statements below mean the Council has:	
We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year and for preparation of the accounting statements.	Prepared the accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	Yes
We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	Made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding public money and resources in its charge.	Yes
We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential noncompliance with laws, regulations and proper practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this smaller authority to conduct its business or on its finances.	Has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with proper practices in doing so.	Yes
We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	During the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.	Yes
We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this smaller authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	Considered the financial and other risks it faces and has dealt with them properly.	Yes
We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	Arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.	Yes
We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	Responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.	Yes
We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during	Disclosed everything it should have about its	Yes

or after the year end have a financial impact on this smaller authority and where appropriate have included them in the accounting statements.	business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end, if relevant.	
Trust funds including charitable.	The Council is not a sole managing trustee of any local trust or trusts.	N/A

Annual Accounting Statement

	Y/E 31/03/16 (£)	Y/E 31/03/17 (£)]	
Balances B/F	137,276	126,772	Balance at year start
+ Annual precept	284,500	293,000	Precept received
+ Total other receipts	178,323	226,605	All income less precept
[-] Staff costs	172,773	172,057	All costs for staff
[-] Loan interest/capital repayments	15,248	17,020	Capital & Interest on loans
[-] All other payments	285,306	264,629	Payments less staff and loans
= Balance C/F	126,772	192,671	Balance at year end
Note: vat debtor	22,254		
Total cash/short term investments	104,518	177,304	Bank balances
Total fixed assets& long term investments	1,544,367	1,547,334	Fixed assets [Premises etc.]
Total borrowings	202,119	198,754	Total due PWLB loans
Trust funds	None	None	

The annual accounting statement is certified and signed: *“I, Jane Kevan, RFO, certify that for the year ending 31 March 2017 the accounting statement presents fairly the financial position of the Council and its income and expenditure.”*

Annual internal audit report for 2016/17

<p>This smaller authority’s internal audit, acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with relevant procedures and controls expected to be in operation during the year ending 31 March 2017.</p> <p>Internal audit has been carried out in accordance with this smaller authority’s needs and planned coverage. On the basis of findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in the table below. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this smaller authority.</p>	
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Internal control objective	Agreed?
Appropriate accounting records have been kept properly throughout the year.	Yes
This smaller authority met its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	Yes
This smaller authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	Yes
The precept requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	Yes
Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked, and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	Yes
Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	Yes
Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this smaller authority's approvals and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	Yes
Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	Yes
Periodic and year end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.	Yes
Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure) agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	Yes
Trust funds. The Council met its responsibilities as a trustee	Not applicable
Internal Audit carried out by Mark Bradley (Stokoe Rodger and Co.) Signed this 25 th day of May 2017	

It is **RECOMMENDED** the above governance statement, annual accounting statement and internal audit report be approved by the Council. No matters have been raised for the Council's attention by the internal auditor in his report.

Jane Kevan, Town Clerk and RFO.
25 May 2017

HEXHAM TOWN COUNCIL ACTION PLAN 2017/18

The Council is asked to agree the following Action Plan for 2017/18, as considered and recommended by the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 11 April 2017 (Committee minute 342 refers).

Action	Objective	Budget	Timescale
Complete the Hexham Neighbourhood Plan	The draft plan was considered at the public forum in May 2017, prior to assessment, consultation and the final referendum. Once adopted, the Hexham Neighbourhood Plan will contain planning policies and site allocations which will be used by County Council planning officers when making decisions on planning applications in Hexham.	2017/2018 £7700 (reference 5600)	Modification prior to the final referendum (date not yet known).
Arrange training for new Councillors	There will be a new Council following the May 2017 election. All new Councillors will require training, including a brief on existing Committees and what they do.	2017/2018 £500 (reference 6080)	The Town Clerk will do an introductory brief and issue documents including "The Good Councillor's Guide" and a copy of the budget to all new Councillors in May. Additional local training availability to be monitored.
Refurbish Sele Play Area	The aim is to enhance the safety of this play area as some patches of wear in the wetpour surface were identified in the summer 2016 RoSPA report. Some items of play equipment also need minor work or to be updated.	2017/2018 £1000 (reference 7190), plus s106 funding	To complete by 31st October.
Resurface the Skate Park	Identified as required in March 2017.		
Arrange Remembrancetide events in support of the RBL commemoration events	These are annual events.	2017/2018 £7500 (reference 7800)	Start planning in July.

Arrange Christmas Lights Switch-On event	This is an annual event to promote community engagement.	2017/2018 £1200 (reference 7065)	Start planning in August/September.
Enhance and improve Christmas lighting		2017/2018 £13500 (reference 7050)	
Start to arrange Armed Forces Day 2018 event	It was agreed in 2016 (Community Engagement Committee minute 174) to hold this every two years so the next event will be in June 2018. Maintain links with 3RHA.	No budget in 2017/2018 but to plan into 2018/2019 budget	To book local armed forces by June and contact Abbey and traders in October.
Maintain Council links with Hexham in Bloom by having a Council representative on the committee	Support where possible.	2017/2018 £2300 (reference 7850)	
Apply under Council Award Scheme	The Council aims to be awarded the Foundation Award this year and then work towards the Quality Award.	2017/2018 £500 (reference 6090)	On-going
Clean and repair the War Memorial	Started/being processed.	Up to 75% costs funded under the War Memorials Trust Grants Scheme	Completion by end of October.
Monitor and lobby Northumberland County Council regarding car parking facilities in Hexham	Present/expected loss of 500 long-term parking spaces in Hexham. Northumberland County Council need to provide 500 spaces asap. HTC actively engaged.		On-going
Apply for St Andrew's Cemetery to be given a Green	To write a management plan, including seasonal photos.		Application to be submitted in January.

Flag award			
Consider extension of current burial arrangements	Research land options		
Support tourism	A new budget dedicated to tourism has been agreed.	2017/2018 £10000 (reference tba)	
Support town wide events			
Promote the Council's Grant Aid scheme		2017/2018 £6750 (reference 6050) £65000 (s137) (reference 6060)	
Address public toilet provision in Hexham	An options report was considered by the P&I Committee on 10/3/17 and F&GP Committee on 11/4/17.		
Look after HTC planters in the town centre	Maintained by HTC staff.		
Consider Local Transport Plan priorities	Consider road safety schemes, footpaths, etc as part of the NCC LTP programme		
Review service levels	Consider reduced service from NCC e.g. weed spraying		

HEXHAM TOWN COUNCIL
5 JUNE 2017

REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROTOCOL
REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF STANDING ORDERS
REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The attached document on public participation was previously adopted in May 2013 and is recommended for adoption by the new Council.

All Local Councils have to keep their Standing Orders and Financial Regulations under review and should usually carry out a review at least every four years to coincide with normal election periods.

Standing Orders are to help the Council run its business smoothly and, apart from any rules laid down by legislation, are chosen by the Council. Financial Regulations are effectively Standing Orders which just cover financial matters.

External Auditors recommend Councils use the model Standing Orders issued by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) with amendments to fit local preferences. The current Hexham Town Council Standing Orders were adopted in 2013 and last revised in June 2016 for minor amendments because of the number of Councillors that Council had agreed would serve on Standing Committees. As Council agreed on 15 May 2017 to have six Councillors serving on the Planning and Infrastructure Committee paragraph 1B under Structure has been updated for the Standing Orders now placed before the Council for adoption.

Standing Orders **in bold** cannot be changed or deleted.

Please contact me before the meeting if any Councillor requires an explanation of any Standing Order.

Jane Kevan
Town Clerk
May 2017

HEXHAM TOWN COUNCIL

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mobile phones must be switched off during the meeting.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Council meets and makes its decisions in public and is committed to community engagement and therefore invites members of the public, the press, the Police and County Councillors to attend meetings and to contribute within the public participation period. A Council meeting is not a public meeting: it is a meeting held in public. There is no requirement in law to provide an opportunity for the public to question or speak to the Council, but the Council welcomes the opportunity to offer it.
- 1.2 **Chairman.** If present the Mayor will always act as Chairman of the meeting.
- 1.3 **Best Practice.** This protocol has been developed based on best practice and recommendations from other Councils and the Local Government Association.
- 1.4 **Reason for Protocol.** Reflecting the fact that public discussion can occur on topics about which people care strongly (which is why they attend), this protocol exists to ensure that any public participation is conducted politely and in a structured and unemotional way.

2 THE PROTOCOL

- 2.1 **Duration.** Public participation will be for a period of time at the sole discretion of the Chairman of the meeting.
- 2.2 **Form of Questions.** Written questions received in advance of the meeting are encouraged but not essential: if provided in advance it is easier for an answer to be prepared. If questions are not provided in advance then members of the public should be aware the Chairman may be unable to answer and will defer the answer to a future date or until he can provide a written answer.
- 2.3 **Period for public participation.** The agenda will indicate when the public participation will take place. It is usually preceding the Council meeting so that Councillors may take into account any views expressed by the public when reaching Council decisions.
- 2.4 **Topics for Questions.** Public participation is permitted regarding items on any topic within the remit of the Town Council. Members of the public should be aware that if questions are raised which relate to topics not on the agenda then the matter is more likely to be deferred for a subsequent response as investigation may be required. If members of the public are unsure whether a question is within the remit of the Town Council then the Town Clerk will be able to answer this.
- 2.5 **Provision of responses.** If a question relates to an item on the agenda the Chairman may decide to address it immediately or (s)he may carry it forward for a response at a later date.

- 2.6 Discussion of topics by Councillors.** Members of the public should note that the Council is only allowed to take decisions committing the Council on topics that are publicised on the agenda, except where a response has a deadline prior to the next scheduled meeting of the Council. The Council will therefore not enter into any discussion on a question raised if it is unable to answer a question directly.
- 2.7 Duration of each question.** A maximum of 3 minutes is permitted for a member of the public to ask a question. If members of the public wish for a more detailed dialogue than the 3 minutes allows on a question then they should contact the Chairman or any other Councillor for an individual discussion: the Town Council meeting is not the correct forum for conducting debates between Councillors and members of the public. Supplementary comments or questions are solely at the discretion of the Chairman.
- 2.8 Other Ways to ask Questions.** Members of the public should be aware that rather than bringing questions to the entire Council, questions may be addressed via the Clerk (01434 609575 or clerk@hexhamtowncouncil.gov.uk) or via any Town Councillor.
- 2.9 Role of Chairman.** All communication shall be through the Chairman. Councillors may not address questions raised by members of the public except through and with the permission of the Chairman. Members of the public may not address individual Councillors except through and with the permission of the Chairman. The Chairman's decision is final. Councillors and members of the public must respect the role of the Chairman and may be asked to leave if in the opinion of the Chairman they breach this protocol in any way that disrupts the orderly conduct of the meeting.
- 2.10 Time limit.** Members of the public are recommended to make the most of the 3 minutes by preparing notes carefully. If several people want to introduce the same question, it would be helpful where possible to get together in advance to pool ideas and choose the best person to speak for you all.
- 3. Disruption to Council Meetings.** Members of the public must respect the fact that this is a meeting to conduct Council business and interruptions during Council business are not permitted. If in the Chairman's opinion, the business of the meeting is disrupted in any way, the Chairman will ask the person(s) causing the disruption to be quiet and if they refuse the person(s) will be asked to leave.

Jane Kevan
Town Clerk
May 2017

HEXHAM TOWN COUNCIL
STANDING ORDERS
Adopted by the Council on X XXXX 2017

Throughout these Orders:

- a. The terms 'Chairman or Vice Chairman' are also a reference to 'Mayor or Deputy Mayor'.
- b. References to any statutory provision shall include any statutory modification or re-enactment of such provision.
- c. Words denoting the singular shall include the plural and vice-versa.
- d. Words denoting any gender shall include both the other genders.
- e. NB - Paragraphs in BOLD cannot be amended.

1. MEETINGS.

- A. Meetings shall not take place in premises, which at the time of the meeting, are used for the supply of alcohol unless no other premises are available free of charge or at a reasonable cost.
- B. When calculating the 3 clear days for notice of a meeting to Councillors and the public, the day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a day of the Christmas break, a day of the Easter break or of a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning shall not count.
- C. Meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. The public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion.
- D. Subject to standing order 1(c) above and in accordance with the Council's adopted Public Participation Protocol members of the public are permitted to make representations, answer questions and give evidence in respect of any item of business included in the agenda.
- E. The period of time (which is at the Chairman's discretion) designated for public participation in accordance with standing order 1(d) above shall not exceed 15 minutes.
- F. Subject to standing order 1(e) above, each member of the public is entitled to speak once only in respect of business itemised on the agenda and shall not speak for more than 3 minutes.
- G. In accordance with standing order 1(d) above, a question asked by a member of the public during a public participation session at a meeting shall not require a response or debate.
- H. In accordance with standing order 1(d) above, the Chairman may direct that a response to a question posed by a member of the public be referred to a Councillor for an oral response or to an employee for a written or oral response.
- I. A record of a public participation session at a meeting will normally be included in the minutes of that meeting but a public participation session shall not be deemed to be part of the meeting of the Council.
- J. A person shall raise his hand when requesting to speak and stand when speaking (except when a person has a disability or is likely to suffer discomfort). The Chairman may at any time permit an individual to be seated when speaking.
- K. Any person speaking at a meeting shall address his comments to the Chairman.
- L. Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wishes to speak, the Chairman shall direct the order of speaking.
- M. **The public may record and transmit electronically the proceedings of a meeting of the Council and of any of its committees. No recording may be made of the public who are in attendance at the meeting, or of matters that occur in the meeting-place immediately prior to or following the meeting, without the Council's prior consent.**

- N. In accordance with standing order 1(c) above, the press shall be provided reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present.
- O. Subject to Standing Orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chairman may in his absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chairman (if any).
- P. The Chairman, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chairman is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chairman, if present, shall preside. If both the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman are absent from a meeting a Councillor as chosen by the Councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.
- Q. Subject to standing order 1 (y) below, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the Councillors present and voting thereon.
- R. The Chairman may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise his casting vote whether or not he gave an original vote. (See also Standing Order 2 (i) and (j) below.)
- S. Unless Standing orders provide otherwise, voting on any question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a Councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each Councillor present and voting gave his vote for or against that question. Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.
- T. **The minutes of a meeting shall record the names of Councillors present.**
- U. If prior to a meeting, a Councillor has submitted reasons for his absence at the meeting which is then approved by a resolution, such resolution shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting at which the approval was given.
- V. **The code of conduct adopted by the Council shall apply to Councillors in respect of the entire meeting.**
- W. **An interest arising from the code of conduct adopted by the Council, the existence and nature of which is required to be disclosed by a Councillor at a meeting shall be recorded in the minutes.**
- X. **No business may be transacted at a meeting unless at least one third of the whole number of members of the Council are present and in no case shall the quorum of a meeting be less than three.**
- Y. **If a meeting is or becomes inquorate no business shall be transacted** and the meeting shall be adjourned. Any outstanding business of a meeting so adjourned shall be transacted at a following meeting.
- Z. Meetings normally shall not exceed a period of two hours.

2. MEETINGS

- A. **In an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the new Councillors elected take office.**
- B. **In a year which is not an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on such day in May as the Council shall direct.**
- C. **If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the Council shall take place at 6.45pm.**
- D. **In addition to the annual meeting of the Council, at least three other ordinary meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times as the Council directs.**
- E. **The election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman (if any) of the Council shall be the first business completed at the annual meeting of the Council.**
- F. **The Chairman of the Council, unless he has resigned or becomes disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until his successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the Council.**
- G. **The Vice-Chairman of the Council, if any, unless he resigns or becomes disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chairman of the Council at the next annual meeting of the Council.**

- H. In an election year, if the current Chairman of the Council has not been re-elected as a member of the Council, he shall preside at the meeting until a successor Chairman of the Council has been elected. The current Chairman of the Council shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chairman of the Council but must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**
- I. In an election year, if the current Chairman of the Council has been re-elected as a member of the Council, he shall preside at the meeting until a new Chairman of the Council has been elected. He may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chairman of the Council and must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**
- J. Following the election of the Chairman of the Council and Vice-Chairman (if any) of the Council at the annual meeting of the Council, the order of business shall be as follows.**
 - I. In an election year, delivery by Councillors of their declarations of acceptance of office.**
 - II. Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the Council and to receive and note minutes of and/or to determine recommendations made by Committees.**
 - III. Review of delegation arrangements to Committees, sub-Committees, employees and other local authorities.**
 - IV. Review of the terms of references for Committees.**
 - V. Receipt of nominations to existing Committees.**
 - VI. Appointment of any new Committees, confirmation of the terms of reference, the number of members and receipt of nominations to them.**
 - VII. Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations.**
 - VIII. Review of arrangements, including any charters, with other local authorities and review of contributions made to expenditure incurred by other local authorities.**
 - IX. Review of representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back.**
 - X. Review of inventory of land and assets including buildings and office equipment.**
 - XI. Review and confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insured risks.**
 - XII. Review of the Council's and/or employees' memberships of other bodies.**
 - XIII. Establishing or reviewing the Council's complaints procedure.**
 - XIV. Establishing or reviewing the Council's procedures for handling requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.**
 - XV. Establishing or reviewing the Council's policy for dealing with the press/media.**
 - XVI. Setting the dates, times and place of ordinary meetings of the full Council for the year ahead.**

- **STRUCTURE**

- A.** The following shall be standing committees of the Council and shall have the scope and delegated powers to act as set out below:-

- B. Planning & Infrastructure Committee.**

Membership will be 6 Councillors (including the Mayor).

The SCOPE of committee responsibilities will be:

'Hexham Cemetery'. Making all decisions and arrangements regarding the running of the Cemetery, its land, premises, infrastructure, burials, equipment and staff. Ensuring Cemetery is always available for funerals and that burial records required by law and for administrative purposes are created, updated as may be required and retained indefinitely. Making all decisions and arrangements for staff while they carry out any work for Council that may be the responsibility of other committees.

‘Allotments’. Making all decisions and arrangements regarding Allotment sites at Wydon Park, Dene Park and Quatre Bras to include management, maintenance and agreeing rentals. Making all decisions and arrangements regarding a Best Kept Allotment competition including agreeing judge(s), prizes and presentation ceremony.

‘Litter bins’. Making all decisions and arrangements regarding Litter Bins to include management, maintenance, replacements or additions.

‘Public seats & bus shelters’. Making all decisions and arrangements regarding seats & bus shelters to include management, maintenance, replacements or additions.

‘Street signage’. Making all decisions regarding street signage including management, maintenance, replacements or additions to Council owned signage and recommending, if requested, street names in new developments.

‘Play areas’. Making all decisions and arrangements regarding play areas at Priestlands Dene, Dene Park, Sele, Tyne Green, Bell Terrace and the Broadway and additional play areas as may be accepted to include management, maintenance, replacements or additions. Considering and commenting on any proposals for additional play areas within the Parish.

‘Parking’. Making all decisions and comments upon any matters relating to parking.

‘Local Transport Plan’. Making all decisions and arrangements regarding the annual (or other interval) review of LTP requests and making returns to NCC.

‘Flood lights and town clock’. Making all decisions and arrangements regarding floodlights and the town clock to include management, maintenance, replacement or additions.

‘Emergency planning’. Considering and discussing with NCC any pre-emptive action HTC should undertake. Considering and agreeing any requirements which may be recommended by NCC.

‘Planning matters’. Considering and making all decisions regarding pre-planning consultations and planning application consultations received from Northumberland County Council and agreeing any comments on them.

C. Finance and General Purposes Committee.

xvii. Membership will be 9 Councillors (including the Mayor).

xviii. The SCOPE of committee responsibilities will be:

‘Internal audit’ Making and carrying out all decisions and arrangements regarding internal audit and appointment of Internal Auditor.

‘Drafting Annual Budget’. On receiving the budgets required from all Council committees, drafting a Budget and recommending it for adoption by Council.

‘Employees and their welfare’. Making all decisions and arrangements regarding Employees and their welfare. Including interviewing and agreeing potential employees, contracts and terms of employment after due consideration of staff requirements of Council and Committees.

‘Freedom of Information’. Making all decisions and arrangements regarding requests received under the Freedom of Information Act. Reviewing Council policy as may be required by the Act.

‘Grant Aid’. Making all decisions regarding amounts of grants, donations or contributions to voluntary organisations, to include all arrangements regarding applications.

‘Risk Management’. Making all decisions and arrangements regarding assessment of Council risk. Periodically reviewing effectiveness of internal control including risk assessment and recommending adoption of any such review by Council.

‘Councillors and Employee training’. Making all decisions and arrangements regarding training that may be required by Councillors and Council employees.

‘Local Council Award Scheme’. Reviewing requirements and making any decisions and arrangements that enable the Council to qualify under this Scheme.

D. Community Engagement Committee

XIX. Membership will be 9 Councillors (including the Mayor).

XX. The SCOPE of committee responsibilities will be:

‘Remembrance Day’. Making and carrying out all decisions and arrangements for all Remembrance ceremonies

‘War Memorials’. Making all decisions and arrangements regarding War Memorials to include management and maintenance. (NB: War Memorials cannot be dealt with in any way without first consulting and taking advice from the War Graves Commission.)

‘Armed Forces Day’. Making and carrying out all decisions and arrangements for Armed Forces Day celebrations and for ongoing liaison with the Armed Forces.

‘Christmas displays’. Making all decisions and arrangements for Christmas lights and tree displays including any switch on ceremony.

‘Mayors receptions’. Making all decisions and arrangements for the Mayor’s Annual Reception including, after consultation with the Mayor - invitees, venue, catering and format.

‘Steward and Bailiff’. Making all decisions and arrangements for the annual award of the ‘Honorary Steward and Bailiff of Hexham’.

‘Young Employee’. Making all decisions and arrangements for the award of the ‘Town Council Young Employee of the Year’ (a trophy and cash prize) in consultation with the joint sponsor – the Rotary Club of Hexham.

‘Council website and newsletter’. Making all decisions and arrangements on content and format of the Council website and newsletter.

‘Flower displays’. Making all decisions and arrangements regarding flower beds and displays to include management, maintenance, replacements or additions.

‘Tree planting’. Considering any proposals received for additional tree planting within the Parish.

‘Hexham in Bloom Group; Hexham Youth Initiative; Hexham Community Partnership; Hexham Town Twinning Association’.

Liaising, by way of a Committee nominee or otherwise, with these non-statutory organisations. Reporting as and when for consideration by the Committee, any requests or suggestions that may be made by these non-statutory organisations.

‘Additional’. Liaising, by way of a Committee nominee or otherwise with any additional non-statutory or statutory organization(s) the Council or the Committee may consider desirable. Reporting as and when for consideration by the Council or the Committee any requests or suggestions that may be made by such organisations(s).

E. Each Committee shall deal with the functions set out under the heading of ‘Scope’.

F. Each Committee Chairman will be the Council’s spokesperson and lead

Councillor for the functions listed under Scope.

- G. Each Committee shall agree any expenditure required for committee responsibilities, but without exceeding any agreed committee budget.
- H. Each Committee may appoint sub-committees with members and terms of reference determined by Committee and ratified by Council.
- I. Only the Council can or will exercise the following functions:
 - XXI.** The Budget including allocation of financial resources to Committees, setting contingency funds, agreeing the precept and approving the Annual Return.
 - XXII.** Adopting or amending Standing Orders, Policies or Protocols.
 - XXIII.** Appointing the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and agreeing Committee Chairmen.
 - XXIV.** Appointing representatives to outside bodies unless delegated to committees.
 - XXV.** Agreeing terms of reference and composition of committees and committee appointments.
 - XXVI.** Dissolving committees.
 - XXVII.** Approving and or adopting minutes of committees.
 - XXVIII.** All matters not stated above and or in law reserved to the Council.
- J. The Council may authorise committees to appoint working groups, such groups to be time limited and to focus on a specific issue.
- K. The Council may appoint advisory committees comprising Councillors and non Councillors and may also appoint working groups, to be time limited and to focus on a specific issue.

3. PROPER OFFICER

- A. The Council's Proper Officer shall be either the Clerk or such other employee as may be nominated by the Council from time to time or such other employee appointed by the Council to undertake the role of the Proper Officer during the Proper Officer's absence. The Proper Officer and the employee appointed to act as such during the Proper Officer's absence shall fulfill the duties assigned to the Proper Officer in Standing orders.
- B. The Council's Proper Officer shall do the following
 - I. Sign and serve on Councillors by delivery or post at their residences a summons confirming the time, date, venue and the agenda of a meeting of the Council and a meeting of a Committee at least 3 clear days before the meeting OR**
 - II. Upon the Council having first resolved that service of summons on Councillors confirming the time, date , venue and the agenda for a meeting by delivery or post at their residences at least 3 clear days before a meeting is not expedient electronically serve on Councillors a summons confirming the time, date, venue and the agenda of a meeting of the Council and a meeting of a committee and a sub-committee at least 3 clear days before the meeting provided any such email contains the electronic signature and title of the Proper Officer.**
 - III. Give public notice of the time, date, venue and agenda at least 3 clear days before a meeting of the Council or a meeting of a Committee (provided that the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the Council convened by Councillors is signed by them).**
 - IV. Subject to Standing Order 5(a)–(e) below, include in the agenda all motions in the order received unless a Councillor has given written notice at least 8 days before the meeting confirming his withdrawal of it.
 - V. Convene a meeting of full Council for the election of a new Chairman of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in his office, in accordance with standing order 4(b)i above.**

- VI.* Make available for inspection the minutes of meetings.
- VII.* **Receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities.**
- VIII.* **Receive and retain declarations of acceptance of office from Councillors.**
- IX.* Retain a copy of every Councillor's register of interests and any changes to it and keep copies of the same available for inspection.
- X.* Keep proper records required before and after meetings;
- XI.* Process all requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Data Protection Act 1998, in accordance with and subject to the Council's procedures relating to the same.
- XII.* Receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the Council except where there is a resolution to the contrary.
- XIII.* Manage the organisation, storage of and access to information held by the Council in paper and electronic form.
- XIV.* Arrange for legal deeds to be signed by two Councillors and witnessed (see also Standing Order 15(a) and (b).)
- XV.* Arrange for the prompt authorisation, approval, and instruction regarding any payments to be made by the Council in accordance with the Council's financial regulations.
- XVI.* Record every planning application notified to the Council and the Council's response to the local planning authority in the minutes of the Council;
- XVII.* Refer a planning application received by the Council to the Chairman or in his absence the Vice-Chairman of the Council within two working days of receipt to facilitate an extraordinary meeting if the nature of a planning application requires consideration before the next ordinary meeting of the Council.
- XVIII.* Action or undertake activity or responsibilities instructed by resolution or contained in Standing Orders.

4. MOTIONS REQUIRING WRITTEN NOTICE.

- A.* In accordance with standing order 4(b)(iii) above, no motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is included in the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Council's Proper Officer at least 8 clear days before the next meeting.
- B.* The Proper Officer may, before including a motion in the agenda received in accordance with standing order 5(a) above, correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.
- C.* If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with standing order 5(a) above is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it in writing to the Proper Officer in clear and certain language at least 8 clear days before the meeting.
- D.* If the wording or nature of a proposed motion is considered unlawful or improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the Chairman of the forthcoming meeting or, as the case may be, the Councillors who have convened the meeting, to consider whether the motion shall be included or rejected in the agenda.
- E.* Having consulted the Chairman or Councillors pursuant to standing order 5(d) above, the decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion in the agenda shall be final.
- F.* Notice of every motion received in accordance with these Standing Orders shall be numbered in the order received and shall be entered in the minutes book, which shall be open to inspection by all Councillors.
- G.* Every motion rejected in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders shall be duly recorded with a note by the Proper Officer giving reasons for its rejection in the minute's book, which shall be open to inspection by all Councillors.
- H.* Every motion and resolution shall relate to the Council's statutory functions, powers and lawful obligations or shall relate to an issue which specifically affects the Council's area or its residents.

5. MOTIONS NOT REQUIRING WRITTEN NOTICE

- A. Motions in respect of the following matters may be moved without written notice.
- I. To appoint a person to preside at a meeting.
 - II. To approve the absences of Councillors.
 - III. To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the previous meeting.
 - IV. To correct an inaccuracy in the minutes of the previous meeting.
 - V. To dispose of business, if any, remaining from the last meeting.
 - VI. To alter the order of business on the agenda for reasons of urgency or expedience.
 - VII. To proceed to the next business on the agenda.
 - VIII. To close or adjourn debate.
 - IX. To refer by formal delegation a matter to a Committee or to a sub-Committee or an employee.
 - X. To appoint a Committee or sub-Committee or any Councillors thereto.
 - XI. To receive nominations to a Committee or sub-Committee.
 - XII. To dissolve a Committee or sub-Committee.
 - XIII. To note the minutes of a meeting of a Committee or sub-Committee.
 - XIV. To consider a report and/or recommendations made by a Committee or a sub-Committee or an employee.
 - XV. To consider a report and/or recommendations made by an employee, professional advisor, expert or consultant.
 - XVI. To authorise legal deeds to be signed by two Councillors and witnessed (see Standing Order 15(a) and (b) below).
 - XVII. To authorise the payment of monies up to £2,000,000.00.
 - XVIII. To amend a motion relevant to the original or substantive motion under consideration and which shall not have the effect of nullifying it.
 - XIX. To extend the time limit for speeches.
 - XX. To exclude the press and public for all or part of a meeting.
 - XXI. To silence or exclude from the meeting a Councillor or a member of the public for disorderly conduct.
 - XXII. To give the consent of the Council if such consent is required by Standing Orders.
 - XXIII. **To suspend any standing order except those which are mandatory by law.**
 - XXIV. To adjourn the meeting.
 - XXV. To appoint representatives to outside bodies and to make arrangements for those representatives to report back the activities of outside bodies.
 - XXVI. To answer questions from Councillors.
- B. If a motion falls within the terms of reference of a Committee or sub-Committee or within the delegated powers conferred on an employee, a referral of the same may be made to such Committee or sub-Committee or employee provided that the Chairman may direct for it to be dealt with at the present meeting for reasons of urgency or expedience

6. RULES OF DEBATE

- A. Motions included in an agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear on the agenda unless the order is changed at the Chairman's direction for reasons of expedience.
- B. Subject to Standing Order 5(a)–(e) above, a motion shall not be considered unless it has been proposed and seconded.
- C. Subject to Standing Order 4(b)(iii) above, a motion included in an agenda not moved by the Councillor who tabled it, may be treated as withdrawn.
- D. A motion to amend an original or substantive motion shall not be considered unless proper notice has been given after the original or substantive motion has been seconded and notice of such amendment, shall, if required by the Chairman, be reduced to writing and handed to the Chairman who shall determine the order in which they are considered.

- E.** A Councillor may move amendments to his own motion. If a motion has already been seconded, an amendment to it shall be with the consent of the seconder.
- F.** Any amendment to a motion shall be either:
 - I.** to leave out words;
 - II.** to add words;
 - III.** to leave out words and add other words.
- G.** A proposed or carried amendment to a motion shall not have the effect of rescinding the original or substantive motion under consideration.
- H.** Only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the Chairman. No further amendment to a motion shall be moved until the previous amendment has been disposed of.
- I.** Subject to Standing Order 7(h) above, one or more amendments may be discussed together if the Chairman considers this expedient but shall be voted upon separately.
- J.** Pursuant to Standing Order 7(h) above, the number of amendments to an original or substantive motion, which may be moved by a Councillor, is limited to one.
- K.** If an amendment is not carried, other amendments shall be moved in the order directed by the Chairman.
- L.** If an amendment is carried, the original motion, as amended, shall take the place of the original motion and shall become the substantive motion upon which any further amendment may be moved.
- M.** The mover of a motion or the mover of an amendment shall have a right of reply, not exceeding three minutes.
- N.** Where a series of amendments to an original motion are carried, the mover of the original motion shall have a right of reply in respect of the substantive motion at the very end of debate and immediately before it is put to the vote.
- O.** Subject to Standing Order 7(m) and (n) above, a Councillor may not speak further in respect of any one motion except to speak once on an amendment moved by another Councillor or to make a point of order or to give a personal explanation.
- P.** During the debate of a motion, a Councillor may interrupt only on a point of order or a personal explanation and the Councillor who was interrupted shall stop speaking. A Councillor raising a point of order shall identify the standing order which he considers has been breached or specify the irregularity in the meeting he is concerned by.
- Q.** A point of order shall be decided by the Chairman and his decision shall be final.
- R.** With the consent of the seconder and/or of the meeting, a motion or amendment may be withdrawn by the proposer. A Councillor shall not speak upon the said motion or amendment unless permission for the withdrawal of the motion or amendment has been refused.
- S.** Subject to Standing Order 7(o) above, when a Councillor's motion is under debate no other motion shall be moved except:
 - I.** to amend the motion;
 - II.** to proceed to the next business;
 - III.** to adjourn the debate;
 - IV.** to put the motion to a vote;
 - V.** to ask a person to be silent or for him to leave the meeting;
 - VI.** to refer a motion to a Committee or sub-Committee for consideration;
 - VII.** to exclude the public and press;
 - VIII.** to adjourn the meeting;
 - IX.** to suspend any standing order, except those which are mandatory.
- T.** In respect of standing order 7(s)(iv) above, the Chairman shall first be satisfied that the motion has been sufficiently debated before it is seconded and put to the vote. The Chairman shall call upon the mover of the motion under debate to exercise or waive his right of reply and shall put the motion to the vote after that right has been exercised or waived. The adjournment of a debate or of the meeting shall not prejudice the mover's right of reply at the resumption.

7. CODE OF CONDUCT. All Councillors shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the Council on 3 September 2012.

8. QUESTIONS.

- A. A Councillor may seek an answer to a question concerning any business of the Council provided three clear days' notice of the question has been given to the Proper Officer.
- B. Questions not related to items of business on the agenda for a meeting shall only be asked during the part of the meeting set aside for such questions.
- C. Every question shall be put and answered without discussion.

9. MINUTES

- A. If a copy of the draft minutes of a preceding meeting has been circulated to Councillors no later than the day of service of the summons to attend the scheduled meeting they shall be taken as read.
- B. No discussion of the draft minutes of a preceding meeting shall take place except in relation to their accuracy. A motion to correct an inaccuracy in the minutes shall be raised in accordance with Standing Order 6(a)(iv) above.
- C. Minutes, including any amendment to correct their accuracy, shall be confirmed by resolution and shall be signed by the Chairman of the meeting and stand as an accurate record of the meeting to which the minutes relate.
- D. If the Chairman of the meeting does not consider the minutes to be an accurate record of the meeting to which they relate, he shall sign the minutes and include a paragraph in the following terms or to the same effect: "The Chairman of this meeting does not believe that the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on (date) in respect of Minute number [] were a correct record but his view was not upheld by the majority of the Council and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings."
- E. Upon a resolution which confirms the accuracy of the minutes of a meeting, any previous draft minutes or recordings of the meeting shall be destroyed.

10. DISORDERLY CONDUCT.

- A. No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly.
- B. If, in the opinion of the Chairman, there has been a breach of standing order 11(a) above, the Chairman shall express that opinion and thereafter any Councillor (including the Chairman) may move that the person be silenced or excluded from the meeting, and the motion, if seconded, shall be put forth with and without discussion.
- C. If a resolution made in accordance with standing order 11(b) above, is disobeyed, the Chairman may take such further steps as may reasonably be necessary to enforce it and/or he may adjourn the meeting.

11. RESCISSION OF PREVIOUS RESOLUTION

- A. A resolution (whether affirmative or negative) of the Council shall not be reversed within 6 months except either by a special motion, the written notice whereof bears the names of at least seven Councillors of the Council, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the report or recommendation of a Committee.
- B. When a special motion or any other motion moved pursuant to standing order 12(a) has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved within a further 6 months.

12. VOTING ON APPOINTMENTS.

Where more than 2 persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the Council and none of those persons has received an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. Any tie may be settled by the Chairman's casting vote.

13. EXPENDITURE

- A. Any expenditure incurred by the Council shall be in accordance with the Council's financial regulations.

- B. The Council's financial regulations may make provision for the authorisation of the payment of money in exercise of any of the Council's functions to be delegated to a Committee, sub-Committee or to an employee.**

14. EXECUTION AND SEALING OF LEGAL DEEDS. *See also standing order 6(a)(xvi) above*

- A.** A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the Council unless the same has been authorised by a resolution.
- B. In accordance with a resolution made under standing order 15(a) above, any two members of the Council, may sign, on behalf of the Council, any deed required by law and the Proper Officer shall witness their signatures.**

15. COMMITTEES.

- A.** The Council may, at its annual meeting, appoint standing Committees and may at any other time appoint such other Committees as may be necessary, and
 - I.** shall determine their terms of reference;
 - II.** may permit Committees to determine the dates of their meetings;
 - III.** shall appoint and determine the term of office of Councillor or non-Councillor members of such a Committee (unless the appointment of non-Councillors is prohibited by law) so as to hold office no later than the next annual meeting;
 - IV.** may in accordance with Standing Orders, dissolve a Committee at any time.

16. SUB COMMITTEES

- A.** Unless there is a Council resolution to the contrary, every committee may appoint a sub-committee whose terms of reference and members shall be determined by resolution of the committee.

17. EXTRA ORDINARY MEETINGS.

- A. The Chairman of the Council may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council at any time.**
- B. If the Chairman of the Council does not or refuses to call an extraordinary meeting of the Council within 7 days of having been requested to do so by two Councillors, those two Councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council. The statutory public notice giving the time, venue and agenda for such a meeting must be signed by the two Councillors.**
- C.** The Chairman of a Committee (or a sub-Committee) may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Committee or sub-Committee at any time.
- D.** If the Chairman of a Committee (or a sub-Committee) does not or refuses to call an extraordinary meeting within seven days of having been requested by to do so by 2 Councillors, those 2 Councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of a Committee (or a sub-Committee). The statutory public notice giving the time, venue and agenda for such a meeting must be signed by the 2 Councillors.

18. ADVISORY COMMITTEES

- A.** The Council may appoint advisory Committees comprised of a number of Councillors and non-Councillors.
- B.** Advisory Committees and any sub-Committees may consist wholly of persons who are non-Councillors.

19. ACCOUNTS

- A.** All payments by the Council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the Council's financial regulations, which shall be reviewed at least annually.
- B.** The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to each Councillor as soon as practicable after 31 March, 30 June, 30 September and 31 December in each year a statement summarising the Council's receipts and payments for the each quarter and the balances held at the end of a quarter. This statement should include a comparison with the budget for the financial year. A Financial Statement prepared on the appropriate accounting basis (receipts and payments, or income and expenditure) for a year to 31 March shall be presented to each Councillor before the end of the following month of May. The Statement of Accounts of the Council (which is subject to

external audit), including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to Council for formal approval before 30 June.

20. ESTIMATES/BUDGETS.

- A. The Council shall approve written estimates** (its budget) **for the coming financial year** at its meeting before the end of January.
- B.** Any Committee desiring to incur expenditure shall give the Proper Officer a written estimate of the expenditure recommended for the coming year no later than November.

21. CANVASSING OF AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY COUNCILLORS.

- A.** Canvassing Councillors or the members of a Committee or sub-Committee, directly or indirectly, for appointment to or by the Council shall disqualify the candidate from such an appointment. The Proper Officer shall disclose the requirements of this standing order to every candidate.
- B.** A Councillor or a member of a Committee or sub-Committee shall not solicit a person for appointment to or by the Council or recommend a person for such appointment or for promotion; but, nevertheless, any such person may give a written testimonial of a candidate's ability, experience or character for submission to the Council with an application for appointment.
- C.** This standing order shall apply to tenders as if the person making the tender were a candidate for an appointment.

22. INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS

- A.** Subject to Standing Orders to the contrary or in respect of matters which are confidential, a Councillor may, for the purpose of his official duties (but not otherwise), inspect any document in the possession of the Council or a Committee or a sub-Committee, and request a copy for the same purpose. The minutes of meetings of the Council, its Committees or sub-Committees shall be available for inspection by Councillors.

23. UNAUTHORISED ACTIVITIES/CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS.

- A.** Unless authorised by a resolution, no individual Councillor shall in the name or on behalf of the Council, a Committee or a sub-Committee:
 - I.** inspect any land and/or premises which the Council has a right or duty to inspect; or
 - II.** issue orders, instructions or directions.
- B.** Councillors shall not disclose information given in confidence or which they believe, or ought to be aware is of a confidential nature.
- C.** A Councillor in breach of the provisions of standing order 24(b) above may be removed from a Committee or a sub-Committee by a resolution of the Council.

24. MATTERS AFFECTING COUNCIL EMPLOYEES

- A.** If a meeting considers any matter personal to a Council employee, it shall not be considered until the Council has decided whether or not the press and public shall be excluded pursuant to standing order 1(c) above.
- B.** Subject to the Council's policy regarding absences from work, the Council's most senior employee shall notify the Chairman of any absence occasioned by illness or urgency and that person shall report such absence to the Council at its next meeting.
- C.** The Chairman shall upon a resolution conduct a review of the performance and/or appraisal of(the employee's job title) and shall keep a written record of it. The review and/or appraisal shall be reported back and shall be subject to approval by resolution by the Council.
- D.** Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, the Council's most senior employee (or other employees) shall contact the Chairman in respect of an informal or formal grievance matter, and this matter shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the Council.
- E.** Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance and disciplinary matters, if an informal or formal grievance matter raised by an employee relates to the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Council this shall be communicated to another

member of the Council which shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the Council.

- F. Any persons responsible for all or part of the management of Council employees shall keep written records of all meetings relating to their performance, and capabilities, grievance and disciplinary matters.
- G. The Council shall keep written records relating to employees secure. All paper records shall be secured under lock and electronic records shall be password protected.
- H. Records documenting reasons for an employee's absence due to ill health or details of a medical condition shall be made available only to those persons with responsibility for the same.
- I. Only persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to employee records referred to in Standing Order 25(g) and (h) above if so justified.
- J. Access and means of access by keys and/or computer passwords to records of employment referred to in Standing Order 25(g) and (h) above shall be provided only to the Clerk or the Chairman of the Council.

25. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

- A. All requests for information held by the Council shall be processed in accordance with the Council's policy in respect of handling requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- B. Correspondence from, and notices served by, the Information Commissioner shall be referred by the Proper Officer to the Chairman. The Chairman shall have the power to do anything to facilitate compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 including exercising the powers of the Proper Officer in respect of Freedom of Information requests set out under Standing Order 4B(xi) above.

26. MEDIA RELATIONS

- A. All requests from the press or other media for an oral or written statement or comment from the Council shall be processed in accordance with the Council's policy in respect of dealing with the press and/or other media.
- B. In accordance with the Council's policy in respect to dealing with the press and/or other media, Councillors shall not, in their official capacity, provide oral or written statements or written articles to the press or other media.

27. LIAISON WITH COUNTY COUNCILLORS

- A. An invitation to attend a meeting of the Council shall be sent, together with the agenda, to the Councillor of the Northumberland County (Unitary) Council representing its electoral ward(s).
- B. Unless the Council otherwise orders and if requested by the relevant County Councillor, a copy of each letter sent to the County Council shall be sent to the County Councillor representing its electoral ward(s).

28. FINANCE

- A. The Council shall consider and approve financial regulations drawn up by the Responsible Financial Officer, which shall include detailed arrangements in respect of the following:
 - I. the accounting records and systems of internal control;
 - II. the assessment and management of financial risks faced by the Council;
 - III. the work of the Internal Auditor and the receipt of regular reports from the Internal Auditor, which shall be required at least annually;
 - IV. the inspection and copying by Councillors and local electors of the Council's accounts and/or orders of payments;
 - V. procurement policies (subject to standing order 29(b) below) including the setting of values for different procedures where the contract has an estimated value of less than £60,000.
- B. **Any proposed contract for the supply of goods, materials, services and the execution of works with an estimated value in excess of £60,000**

shall be procured on the basis of a formal tender as summarised in standing order 29(C) below.

- C. Any formal tender process shall comprise the following steps:
 - I. a public notice of intention to place a contract to be placed in a local newspaper;
 - II. a specification of the goods, materials, services and the execution of works shall be drawn up;
 - III. tenders are to be sent, in a sealed marked envelope, to the Proper Officer by a stated date and time;
 - IV. tenders submitted are to be opened, after the stated closing date and time, by the Proper Officer and at least one member of the Council;
 - V. tenders are then to be assessed and reported to the appropriate meeting of Council or Committee.
- D. Neither the Council, nor any Committee, is bound to accept the lowest tender, estimate or quote.
- E. **Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed £138,893 (or other threshold specified by the Office of Government Commerce from time to time) the Council must consider whether the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 (SI No.5, as amended) and the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2006 (SI No. 6, as amended) apply to the contract and, if either of those Regulations apply, the Council must comply with EU procurement rules.**

29. BREACHES OF CODE OF CONDUCT. As this requirement has recently been abolished by Government this paragraph will be included if only and as soon as any revised recommendations are received.

30. COMPLAINTS. This Standing Order covers routine complaints and those that could be described as habitual and vexatious. The majority of complaints generally fall under the first category and only occasionally move to the second option covered by paragraph 31(J) onwards.

- A. Habitual or vexatious complaints are defined as unreasonable complaints, enquiries or outcomes that are repeatedly or obsessively pursued.
- B. Some types of complaint will be handled outside this standing order:
 - I. Financial irregularity will be handled by the Council's own auditor/Audit Commission;
 - II. Criminal activity by the Police;
 - III. Member conduct by the standards committee of the relevant principal authority;
 - IV. Employees conduct by internal disciplinary procedure and see Standing order 25.
- C. Council will handle complaints in full Council or nominate Councillors who are authorised to deal with complaints but are not involved with the particular case.
- D. If the complaint is handled by the full Council then two nominated Councillors will not take part in the proceedings. They will then be available to handle any appeal, if required.
- E. The Clerk will normally represent the Council through the proceedings but a nominated Councillor may act instead.
- F. **Procedure (Before the Meeting)**
 - I. The complainant will complain in writing to the Clerk or to the Chairman of the Council. Assistance will be given to the claimant if necessary.
 - II. The complainant will be advised when the matter will be considered and whether it will be treated confidentially and/or heard by a committee. A copy of this standing order will also be given to the complainant.
 - III. The complainant will be invited to attend a meeting, with a representative if wished.
 - IV. Not later than seven clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant and the Council will exchange copies of any documentation or other evidence to be relied on.
- G. **At the Council or Committee Meeting**
 - I. The Chairman of the meeting will introduce everyone present and explain this standing order procedure.
 - II. The complainant (or representative) will outline the grounds for complaint before any

questions from the Clerk and then from members present.

- III. The Clerk will explain the Council's position before any questions from the complainant and from members present.
- IV. The complainant and the Clerk will then summarise their position; they will leave the meeting room while the members decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made.
- V. If the decision is unlikely to be finalised on the day an estimated date will be given.

H. After the Meeting

1. The decision will be confirmed in writing within seven working days together with details of any action to be taken.
2. The result of the proceedings will be reported at the next Council meeting after the appeal period has passed, ensuring that agreed confidential issues are appropriately respected.

I. Appeals

1. Should the complainant not agree with the decision they will be entitled to appeal the decision within fourteen days of receipt of the result of the proceedings.
2. The Councillors nominated to handle the appeal will, within twenty-one days of receiving the appeal, examine the way in which the Council dealt with the complaint.
3. If procedures were correctly handled by the Council then the appellant will be notified that the appeal has not been successful. If the complaint was not handled correctly it will be referred back for consideration as at 31g.
4. The appellant will be notified of the result of the appeals process within fourteen days.

• Habitual and Vexatious Complaints

- a. The Council will endeavour to deal with complaints in an efficient, equitable and effective manner.
- b. The Council may have to initiate further action, if the complainant behaves in ways which can: impede the investigation of the complaint; have significant resource implications; hinder the complaints service for others; be offensive, abusive or threatening.

• Aims

- a. The aim of the Council is to manage each case properly, consistently, fairly and respectfully and ensure that the complaint, not the complainant, is the issue during any procedure and decision making.
- b. It is important to establish guidelines for identifying habitual or vexatious complainants and that any decisions made follow agreed guidelines and procedures.

• Guidelines

- a. Councils will try to keep open the lines of communication with appropriate support e.g. clarifying the reason for the outcome; offering relevant support for a complainant with special needs; suggesting an independent representative to help present their case.
- b. Any action taken as a result of proven persistent and/or vexatious complaint will be proportionate to the degree of annoyance/aggravation caused.

• Procedure

- a. The possibility of there being an unreasonably persistent and/or vexatious complaint will be brought to the attention of the Chairman or vice Chairman to ensure that the complaint has been dealt with according to the Council's complaints procedure.
- b. The Chairman or vice Chairman will contact the complainant in an effort to resolve the situation.
- c. In the case of a meeting, if there is a personality issue, the complainant may nominate another Councillor who will be made aware of all the facts. A complainant may wish to bring a representative. The Council will give appropriate support (e.g.

- special needs) to the complainant in choosing a representative etc.
- d. The Chairman/vice Chairman will:
 - i. Listen to the grievance/complaint
 - ii. Assure the complainant of confidentiality with personal details
 - iii. Carefully explain what action the Council has taken within its remit to resolve the complaint
 - iv. Offer any relevant support about the complaints procedure to the complainant
 - v. Suggest complaint routes available if complaint is outside the Council's remit
 - vi. Explain how the complainant's actions are of concern but are hampering the complaints procedure
 - vii. Explain what actions the Council may take
 - viii. Seek an assurance that the persistent/unreasonable nature of complaint will be addressed
- e. The outcome and relevant details of the meeting will be noted.
- **Decision**
 - a. If the complainant continues to behave in unreasonable and/or vexatious way, the Chairman or vice Chairman will seek the approval of the Council to follow the policy and agree what action(s) to take, e.g. restrict or refuse any further contact.
 - b. The complainant will be advised by letter from the Clerk of this action, including any further actions the complainant may take with other bodies including their right to obtain independent advice.
 - c. The Council will record the decision and hold all relevant correspondence except all personal details about the complaint and the complainant, which will be stored appropriately in line with the Data Protection Act.
 - d. The Clerk will notify all Councillors and members of staff as appropriate.
 - e. Any new complaint from any person who has come under the policy must be treated on its merit.
- **Review**
 - a. The decision taken at paragraph N will be reviewed after 6 months. The complainant will be notified of the result if the decision to apply the policy has been reversed.

31. VARIATION, REVOCATION AND SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS.

- A.** Any or every part of the Standing Orders, except those which are mandatory by law, may be suspended by resolution in relation to any specific item of business.
- B.** A motion to permanently add to or to vary or to revoke one or more of the Council's Standing Orders not mandatory by law shall not be carried unless two-thirds of the Councillors at a meeting of the Council vote in favour of the same.

32. STANDING ORDERS.

- I.** The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the Council's Standing orders to a Councillor upon delivery of his declaration of acceptance of office.
- II.** The Chairman's decision as to the application of Standing orders at meetings shall be final.
- III.** A Councillor's failure to observe Standing orders more than three times in one meeting may result in him being excluded from the meeting in accordance with Standing orders.

Document ends

HEXHAM TOWN COUNCIL - FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

1. GENERAL

- 1.1 These regulations govern the conduct of financial management by the Council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the Council. Financial regulations are one of the Council's three governing policy documents providing procedural guidance for members and officers. Financial regulations must be observed in conjunction with the Council's standing orders and any individual financial regulations relating to contracts.
- 1.2 The Council is responsible in law for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that the Council has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions, including arrangements for the management of risk.
- 1.3 The Council's accounting control systems must include measures:
 - for the timely production of accounts;
 - that provide for the safe and efficient safeguarding of public money;
 - to prevent and detect inaccuracy and fraud; and
 - specifying the duties of officers.
- 1.4 These financial regulations demonstrate how the Council meets these responsibilities and requirements.
- 1.5 At least once a year, prior to approving the Annual Governance Statement, the Council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control which shall be in accordance with proper practices.
- 1.6 A breach of these Regulations by an employee is gross misconduct.
- 1.7 Members of Council are expected to follow the instructions within these Regulations and not to entice employees to breach them. Failure to follow instructions within these Regulations brings the office of Councillor into disrepute.
- 1.8 The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) holds a statutory office to be appointed by the Council. (The Clerk has been appointed as RFO for this Council and these regulations apply accordingly.)
- 1.9 The RFO:
 - acts under the policy direction of the Council;
 - administers the Council's financial affairs in accordance with all Acts, Regulations and proper practices;
 - determines on behalf of the Council its accounting records and accounting control systems;
 - ensures the accounting control systems are observed;
 - maintains the accounting records of the Council up to date in accordance with proper practices;
 - assists the Council to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of its resources; and
 - produces financial management information as required by the Council.
- 1.10 The accounting records determined by the RFO shall be sufficient to show and explain the Council's transactions and to enable the RFO to ensure that any income

and expenditure account and statement of balances, or record of receipts and payments and additional information, as the case may be, or management information as required for the Council comply with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

1.11 The accounting records determined by the RFO shall in particular contain:

- entries from day to day of all sums of money received and expended by the Council and the matters to which the income and expenditure or receipts and payments account relate;
- a record of the assets and liabilities of the Council; and
- wherever relevant, a record of the Council's income and expenditure in relation to claims made, or to be made, for any contribution, grant or subsidy.

1.12 The accounting control systems determined by the RFO shall include:

- procedures to ensure that the financial transactions of the Council are recorded as soon as reasonably practicable and as accurately as possible;
- procedures to enable the prevention and detection of inaccuracies and fraud and the ability to reconstruct any lost records;
- identification of the duties of officers dealing with financial transactions and division of responsibilities of those officers in relation to significant transactions;
- procedures to ensure that uncollectable amounts, including any bad debts are not submitted to the Council for approval to be written off except with the approval of the RFO and that the approvals are shown in the accounting records; and
- measures to ensure that risk is properly managed.

1.13 The Council is not empowered by these Regulations or otherwise to delegate certain specified decisions. In particular any decision regarding:

- setting the final budget or the precept (Council Tax Requirement);
- approving accounting statements;
- approving an annual governance statement;
- borrowing;
- writing off bad debts;
- declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence; and
- addressing recommendations in any report from the internal or external auditors,

shall be a matter for the full Council only.

1.14 In addition the Council must:

- determine and keep under regular review the bank mandate for all Council bank accounts;
- approve any grant or a single commitment in excess of £5,000; and
- in respect of the annual salary for any employee have regard to recommendations about annual salaries of employees made by the relevant Committee in accordance with its terms of reference.

- 1.15 In these financial regulations, references to the Accounts and Audit Regulations or 'the regulations' shall mean the regulations issued under the provisions of section 27 of the Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation, and then in force unless otherwise specified.
- 1.16 In these financial regulations the term 'proper practice' or 'proper practices' shall refer to guidance issued in *Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioners' Guide (England)* issued by the Joint Practitioners Advisory Group (JPAG), available from the websites of NALC and the Society for Local Council Clerks (SLCC) or *Governance and Accountability for Local Councils in Wales - A Practitioners' Guide*, available from the websites of One Voice Wales (OVW) and SLCC as appropriate.

2. ACCOUNTING AND AUDIT (INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL)

- 2.1 All accounting procedures and financial records of the Council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations, appropriate Guidance and proper practices.
- 2.2 On a regular basis, at least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, a member other than the Chairman 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.
- 2.3 The RFO shall complete the annual statement of accounts, annual report, and any related documents of the Council contained in the Annual Return (as specified in proper practices) as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and having certified the accounts shall submit them and report thereon to the Council within the timescales set by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 2.4 The Council shall ensure that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and of its system of internal control in accordance with proper practices. Any officer or member of the Council shall make available such documents and records as appear to the Council to be necessary for the purpose of the audit and shall, as directed by the Council, supply the RFO, internal auditor, or external auditor with such information and explanation as the Council considers necessary for that purpose.
- 2.5 The internal auditor shall be appointed by and shall carry out the work in relation to internal controls required by the Council in accordance with proper practices.
- 2.6 The internal auditor shall:
- be competent and independent of the financial operations of the Council;
 - report to Council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one annual written report during each financial year;
 - to demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, be free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships; and
 - have no involvement in the financial decision making, management or control of the Council.
- 2.7 Internal or external auditors may not under any circumstances:
- perform any operational duties for the Council;
 - initiate or approve accounting transactions; or

- direct the activities of any Council employee, except to the extent that such employees have been appropriately assigned to assist the internal auditor.
- 2.8 For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to internal audit the terms ‘independent’ and ‘independence’ shall have the same meaning as is described in proper practices.
- 2.9 The RFO shall make arrangements for the exercise of electors’ rights in relation to the accounts including the opportunity to inspect the accounts, books, and vouchers and display or publish any notices and statements of account required by Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 2.10 The RFO shall, without undue delay, bring to the attention of all Councillors any correspondence or report from internal or external auditors.

3. ANNUAL ESTIMATES (BUDGET) AND FORWARD PLANNING

- 3.1 Each committee (if any) shall review its 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 Council not later than the end of November each year including any proposals for revising the forecast.
- 3.2 The RFO must each year, by no later than December, prepare detailed estimates of all receipts and payments including the use of reserves and all sources of funding for the following financial year in the form of a budget to be considered by the relevant committee and the Council.
- 3.3 The Council shall fix the precept (Council tax requirement), and relevant basic amount of Council tax to be levied for the ensuing financial year not later than by the end of January each year. The RFO shall issue the precept to the billing authority and shall supply each member with a copy of the approved annual budget.
- 3.4 The approved annual budget shall form the basis of financial control for the ensuing year.

4. BUDGETARY CONTROL AND AUTHORITY TO SPEND

- 4.1 Expenditure on revenue items may be authorised up to the amounts included for that class of expenditure in the approved budget. This authority is to be determined by:
- the Clerk, in conjunction with Chairman of the Council or Chairman of the appropriate committee, for any items below £2000.
 - a duly delegated committee of the Council for items over £2000; and
 - the Council for all items over £5000;
- Such authority is to be evidenced by a Minute or by an authorisation slip duly signed by the Clerk, and where necessary also by the appropriate Chairman.
- Contracts may not be disaggregated to avoid controls imposed by these regulations.
- 4.2 No expenditure may be authorised that will exceed the amount provided in the revenue budget for that class of expenditure other than by resolution of the Council. During the budget year and with the approval of Council having considered fully the implications for public services, unspent and available amounts may be moved to other budget headings or to an earmarked reserve as appropriate (‘virement’).
- 4.3 Unspent provisions in the revenue or capital budgets for completed projects shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year.
- 4.4 The salary budgets are to be reviewed at least annually for the following financial year and such review shall be evidenced by a hard copy schedule signed by the Clerk and

the Chairman of Council or relevant committee. The RFO will inform committees of any changes impacting on their budget requirement for the coming year in good time.

- 4.5 In cases of extreme risk to the delivery of Council services, the clerk may authorise revenue expenditure on behalf of the Council which in the clerk's judgment 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 £1000. The Clerk shall report such action to the chairman as soon as possible and to the Council as soon as practicable thereafter.
- 4.6 No expenditure shall be authorised in relation to any capital project and no contract entered into or tender accepted involving capital expenditure unless the Council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available and the requisite borrowing approval has been obtained.
- 4.7 All capital works shall be administered in accordance with the Council's standing orders and financial regulations relating to contracts.
- 4.8 The RFO shall regularly (ie six monthly) provide the Council 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.

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. The Council shall seek credit references in respect of members or employees who act as signatories.
- 5.2 The RFO shall prepare a schedule of payments requiring authorisation, forming part of the Agenda for the Meeting and, together with the relevant invoices, present the schedule to Council. The Council shall review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied itself shall authorise payment by a resolution of the Council. The approved schedule shall be ruled off and initialed by the Chairman 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 previously 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 Meeting.
- 5.5 The Clerk and 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 and RFO certify that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of Council;
 - 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

- c) fund transfers within the Councils banking arrangements up to the sum of £10,000, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of Council.
- 5.6 For each financial year the Clerk and 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 may authorise payment for the year provided that the requirements of regulation 4.1 (Budgetary Controls) are adhered to, provided also that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of Council.
- 5.7 A record of regular payments made under 5.6 above shall be drawn up and be signed by two members on each and every occasion when payment is authorised - thus controlling the risk of duplicated payments being authorised and / or made.
- 5.8 In respect of grants a duly authorised committee (Finance and General Purposes) shall approve expenditure within any limits set by Council and in accordance with any Policy statement approved by Council. Any Revenue or Capital Grant in excess of £10,000 shall before payment, be subject to ratification by resolution of the Council.
- 5.9 Members are subject to the Code of Conduct that has been adopted by the Council and shall comply with the Code and Standing Orders when a decision to authorise or instruct payment is made in respect of a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary or other interest, unless a dispensation has been granted.
- 5.10 The Council will aim to rotate the duties of members in these Regulations so that onerous duties are shared out as evenly as possible over time.
- 5.11 Any changes in the recorded details of suppliers, such as bank account records, shall be approved in writing by a Member.

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, or, if so delegated, the Clerk or 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.
- 6.4 Cheques or orders for payment drawn on the bank account in accordance with the schedule as presented to Council shall be signed by two member(s) of Council in accordance with a resolution instructing that payment. If a member who is also a bank signatory has declared a disclosable pecuniary interest, or has any other interest, in the matter in respect of which the payment is being made, that Councillor shall be required to consider Standing Orders, and thereby determine whether it is appropriate and / or permissible to be a signatory to the transaction in question.
- 6.5 To indicate agreement of the details shown on the cheque or order for payment with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall each also initial the cheque counterfoil.
- 6.6 Cheques or orders for payment shall not normally be presented for signature other than at a Council meeting (including before or after such a meeting). Any signatures obtained away from such meetings shall be reported to the Council at the next convenient meeting.
- 6.7 If thought appropriate by the Council, payment for utility supplies (energy, telephone and water) and any National Non-Domestic Rates may be made by variable Direct

Debit provided that the instructions are signed by two members and any payments are reported to 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) may be made by Banker's Standing Order provided that the instructions are signed, or otherwise evidenced by two members are retained and any payments are reported to Council as made. The approval of the use of a Banker's Standing Order shall be renewed by resolution of the Council at least every two years.
- 6.9 If thought appropriate by the Council, payment for certain items may be made by BACS or CHAPS methods provided that the instructions for each payment are signed, or otherwise evidenced, by two authorised bank signatories are retained and any payments are reported to Council as made. 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 evidence is retained showing which members approved the payment.
- 6.11 Where a computer requires use of a personal identification number (PIN) or other password(s), for access to the Council's records on that computer, a note shall be made of the PIN and passwords and shall be handed to 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. After the envelope has been opened, in any circumstances, the PIN and / or passwords shall be changed as soon as practicable. The fact that the sealed envelope has been opened, in whatever circumstances, shall be reported to all members immediately and formally to the next available meeting of the 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.
- 6.13 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.
- 6.14 The Council, and any members using computers for the Council's financial business, shall ensure that anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall, software with automatic updates, together with a high level of security, is used.
- 6.15 Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the Clerk [RFO] shall be appointed as the Service Administrator. 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 gross misconduct 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 [the 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 [and the RFO] and will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £500 unless authorised by Council in writing before any order is placed.
- 6.19 A pre-paid debit card may be issued to employees with varying limits. These limits will be set by the Council. Transactions and purchases made will be reported to the Council and authority for topping-up shall be at the discretion of the Council.
- 6.20 Any corporate credit card or trade card account opened by the Council will be specifically restricted to use by the Clerk (and RFO) and shall be subject to automatic payment in full at each month-end. Personal credit or debit cards of members or staff shall not be used under any circumstances.
- 6.21 The Council will not maintain any form of cash float. All cash received must be banked intact. Any payments made in cash by the Clerk (or RFO) (for example for postage or minor stationery items) shall be refunded on a regular basis, at least quarterly.

7. PAYMENT OF SALARIES

- 7.1 As an employer, the Council shall make arrangements to meet fully the statutory requirements placed on all employers by PAYE and National Insurance legislation. The payment of all salaries shall be made in accordance with payroll records and the rules of PAYE and National Insurance currently operating, and salary rates shall be as agreed by Council, or the Finance and General Purposes Committee.
- 7.2 Payment of salaries and payment of deductions from salary such as may be required to be made for tax, national insurance and pension contributions, or similar statutory or discretionary deductions must be made in accordance with the payroll records and on the appropriate dates stipulated in employment contracts, provided that each payment is reported to the next available Council meeting, as set out in these regulations above.
- 7.3 No changes shall be made to any employee's pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the Council.
- 7.4 Each and every payment to employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall be recorded in a separate confidential record (confidential cash book). This confidential record is not open to inspection or review (under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or otherwise) other than:
- a) by any Councillor who can demonstrate a need to know;
 - b) by the internal auditor;
 - c) by the external auditor; or
 - d) by any person authorised under Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation.
- 7.5 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.
- 7.6 Any termination payments shall be supported by a clear business case and reported to the Council. Termination payments shall only be authorised by Council.
- 7.7 Before employing interim staff the Council must consider a full business case.

8. LOANS AND INVESTMENTS

- 8.1 All borrowings shall be effected in the name of the Council, after obtaining any necessary borrowing approval. Any application for borrowing approval shall be

approved by Council as to terms and purpose. The application for Borrowing Approval and subsequent arrangements for the Loan shall only be approved by full Council.

- 8.2 Any financial arrangement which does not require formal Borrowing Approval from the Secretary of State (such as Hire Purchase or Leasing of tangible assets) shall be subject to approval by the full Council. 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 Chairman of the Council at the same time as one is issued to the Clerk or 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 All investments of money under the control of the Council shall be in the name of the Council.
- 8.6 All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO.
- 8.7 Payments in respect of short term or long term investments, including transfers between bank accounts held in the same bank, or branch, shall be made in accordance with Regulation 5 (Authorisation of payments) and Regulation 6 (Instructions for payments).

9. INCOME

- 9.1 The collection of all sums due to the Council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO.
- 9.2 Particulars of all charges to be made for work done, services rendered or goods supplied shall be agreed annually by the Council, notified to the RFO and the RFO shall be responsible for the collection of all accounts due to the Council.
- 9.3 The Council will review all fees and charges at least annually, following a report of the Clerk.
- 9.4 Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts shall be reported to the Council and shall be written off in the year.
- 9.5 All sums received on behalf of the Council shall be banked intact as directed by the RFO. In all cases, all receipts shall be deposited with the Council's bankers with such frequency as the RFO considers necessary.
- 9.6 The origin of each receipt shall be entered on the paying-in slip.
- 9.7 Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the Council.
- 9.8 The RFO shall 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.
- 9.9 Where any significant sums of cash are regularly received by the Council, the RFO shall take such steps as are agreed by the Council to ensure that more than one person is present when the cash is counted in the first instance, that there is a reconciliation to some form of control such as ticket issues, and that appropriate care is taken in the security and safety of individuals banking such cash.

10. ORDERS FOR WORK, GOODS AND SERVICES

- 10.1 An official order or letter shall be issued for all work, goods and services unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate. Copies of orders shall be retained.
- 10.2 Order books shall be controlled by the 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 (I) below.
- 10.4 A member may not issue an official order or make any contract on behalf of the Council.
- 10.5 The RFO shall verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before the issue of any order, 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. 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 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;
 - iii. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the Council;
 - iv. for additional audit work of the external Auditor up to an estimated value of £500 (in excess of this sum the Clerk and RFO shall act after consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council); and
 - v. 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 £60,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Clerk shall invite tenders from at least three firms to be taken from an 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 in the ordinary course of post. Each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specifically marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract.

- e. All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the Clerk in the presence of at least one member of Council.
- f. If less than three tenders are received for contracts above £60,000 or if all the tenders are identical the Council may make such arrangements as it thinks fit for procuring the goods or materials or executing the works.
- g. Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to Standing Order 29 and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.
- h. When it is to enter into a contract of less than £60,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Clerk or RFO shall obtain 3 quotations (priced descriptions of the proposed supply); where the value is below £5,000 and above £500 the Clerk or RFO shall strive to obtain 3 estimates. Otherwise, Regulation 10 (3) above shall apply.
- i. The Council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.
- j. Should it occur that the Council, or duly delegated committee, does not accept any tender, quote or estimate, the work is not allocated and the Council requires further pricing, provided that the specification does not change, no person shall be permitted to submit a later tender, estimate or quote who was present when the original decision making process was being undertaken.
- k. The European Union Procurement Directive shall apply and the terms of the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 and the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2006 including thresholds shall be followed.

12. PAYMENTS UNDER CONTRACTS FOR BUILDING OR OTHER CONSTRUCTION WORKS

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

13. STORES AND EQUIPMENT

- 13.1 The officer in charge of each section shall be responsible for the care and custody of stores and equipment in that section.
- 13.2 Delivery Notes shall be obtained in respect of all goods received into store or otherwise delivered and goods must be checked as to order and quality at the time delivery is made.
- 13.3 Stocks shall be kept at the minimum levels consistent with operational requirements.
- 13.4 The RFO shall be responsible for periodic checks of stocks and stores 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 RFO shall ensure a record is maintained of all properties held by the Council, recording the location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 14.2 No tangible moveable property shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of the Council, together with any other consents required by law, save where the estimated value of any one item of tangible movable property does not exceed £250.
- 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 RFO shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date. The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the Register shall be verified at least annually, possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.

15. INSURANCE

- 15.1 Following the annual risk assessment (per Financial Regulation 17), the RFO shall effect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the Council's insurers.
- 15.2 The 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 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.

16. CHARITIES (This regulation is not (currently) applicable to Hexham Town Council)

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

17. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 17.1 The Council is responsible for putting in place arrangements for the management of risk. The Clerk 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 shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration and adoption by the Council.

18. SUSPENSION AND REVISION OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

- 18.1 It shall be the duty of the Council to review the Financial Regulations of the Council from time to time. The Clerk shall make arrangements to monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and shall advise the Council of any requirement for a consequential amendment to these financial regulations.
- 18.2 The Council may, by resolution of the Council duly notified prior to the relevant meeting of Council, suspend any part of these Financial Regulations provided that reasons for the suspension are recorded and that an assessment of the risks arising has been drawn up and presented in advance to all members of Council.

Document ends.

Jane Kevan, Clerk and RFO
May 2017