

PART 5
RULES OF PROCEDURE

COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

1. INTRODUCTION

- a. The Council has four types of Full Council meetings:-
 - i. **Ordinary Meetings** – these meetings run throughout the year to carry out the business of the Council;
 - ii. **the Annual Meeting** – Elects the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council who hold the posts until the annual meeting the following year selects Councillors for committees and other standing bodies and approves a program of meeting for the following year;
 - iii. **the Annual Budget Meeting** – To agree the Council's budget for the following financial year. This meeting only considers the budget reports;
 - iv. **Extraordinary Meetings** – meetings arranged outside of the schedule of ordinary meetings.
- b. These rules are designed to ensure meetings of the Full Council run smoothly and are conducted properly to enable sound decision-making in line with Wednesbury principles and to ensure that the business of the Council is undertaken effectively and efficiently.
- c. If any issues arise at a meeting in relation to interpretation of the procedure rules, the Chairs decision will be final.

2. ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

a. Timing and business

In a year when there is an ordinary election of Councillors, the annual meeting will take place within 21 days of the retirement of the outgoing Councillors. In any other year, the annual meeting will take place in May.

- b. At the Annual Meeting the Council will:
 - I. elect a person to preside if the Chair or Vice-Chair of Council are not present;
 - II. elect the Chair of Council;
 - III. elect the Vice Chair of Council;
 - IV. approve the minutes of the last meeting(s);
 - V. receive any communications from the Chair of the Council and/or Chief Executive;
 - VI. confirm the election of the Leader;
 - VII. Note the appointment to the role of Deputy Leader
 - VIII. appoint an Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Audit and Governance Committee and other such committees or standing bodies as the Council considers appropriate to deal with matters which are neither reserved to the Council nor are Cabinet functions;
 - IX. agree the scheme of delegation or such part of it as the Constitution determines it is for the Council to agree
 - X. approve a program of ordinary meetings of the Council for the year; and
 - XI. consider any business set out in the notice convening the meeting.
- c. At the Annual Meeting the Council will not include:
 - I. consideration of previous minutes of Council or Committees or other standing bodies or other business unless the agenda provides for their consideration.
 - II. Questions
 - III. Motions

d. Selection of Councillors on Committees and Other Standing Bodies

At the Annual Meeting, the Council will:

- I. decide which committees or other standing bodies to establish for the municipal year;
- II. decide the size and terms of references for those committees or other standing bodies;
- III. decide the allocation of seats and substitutes to political groups in accordance with the political balance rules;
- IV. receive nominations of Councillors to serve on each committee or other standing body; and
- V. appoint to those committees or other standing bodies except where appointment to those bodies has been delegated by the Council or is exercisable only by the Cabinet.

3. ORDINARY MEETINGS

3.1 Ordinary meetings of the Council will take place in accordance with a programme decided at the Council's annual meeting. Ordinary meetings will:

- I. elect a person to preside if the Chair and if the Chair and Vice Chair of the Council are not present;
- II. approve the minutes of the last meeting;
- III. receive any declarations of interests from members;
- IV. receive any announcements from the Chair of the Council, Leader, members of the Cabinet or Chief Executive;
- V. receive questions from, and provide answers to, the public in relation to matters which in the opinion of the person presiding at the meeting are relevant to the business of the meeting;
- VI. deal with business from the last Council meeting;
- VII. receive reports from the Cabinet and the Council's committees and other standing bodies and receive questions and answers on any of those report;
- VIII. receive reports about and receive questions and answers on the business of joint arrangements and external organisations;
- IX. consider motions; and
- X. consider any other business specific in the summons to the meeting, including consideration of proposals from the Cabinet in relation to the Council's budget and policy framework and reports of the scrutiny committees for debate.

3.2 In dealing with item (vii) above it will be permissible for a single motion to be moved and seconded in relation to some or all of the reports to be considered by the Council without individual sets of reports being moved and seconded separately, Members may still raise questions on any individual report before the combined motion is put.

4. EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS

4.1 Calling extraordinary meetings

Those listed below may request the Chief Executive to call Council meetings in addition to ordinary meetings in accordance with Schedule 12 to the Local Government Act 1972:

- I. the Council by resolution;
- II. the Chair of the Council;
- III. the Leader;
- IV. the Monitoring Officer; and
- V. any five members of the Council if they have signed a requisition presented to the Chair of the Council and they have refused to call a meeting or has failed to call

a meeting within seven days of the presentation of the requisition and shall provide to the Chief Executive a description of the business to be considered

4.2 **Business at Extraordinary Meetings**

The business of an extraordinary meeting shall be limited to consideration of the business contained within the requisition and will **not** include:

- I. consideration of previous minutes of Council or Committees or other standing bodies or other business unless the agenda provides for their consideration.
- II. Questions
- III. Motions

5. **ANNUAL BUDGET MEETING**

5.1 The Annual Budget Meeting will be held each year to review the Council's financial position, consider budget proposals for the forthcoming financial year. This meeting will take place during the annual budget-setting cycle and will include presentation of draft budgets, updates on funding, and any required savings or investment proposals.

5.2 The business of the Annual Budget Meeting shall be limited to the following:

- I. Approve the minutes of the last meeting;
- II. Receive any declarations of interest;
- III. Receive announcements from the Chair of the Council, the Chief Executive and Leader;
- IV. Receive and consider the Council plan, budget and associated financial reports; and
- V. Any other urgent business as agreed by the Chair of the Council.

6. **PROPOSAL OF AN ALTERNATIVE BUDGET**

6.1 Should minority groups wish to propose an alternative budget proposal, to revise or replace the proposal set out by the current administration they must be presented to the Authorities Section 151 Officer no later than 28 clear days prior to the scheduled date of the Annual Budget Meeting.

6.2 The alternative budget will be presented in a report which will form part of the published agenda for the budget meeting.

6.3 At the Annual Budget Meeting minority groups may then present alternative budgets. A period of 15 minutes is allowed for each alternative budget, extendable at the discretion of the Chair of the Council. The format and mode of the presentation is for the minority group to decide.

6.4 Any Alternative budget(s) shall be presented after the Executive report.

6.5 If there are multiple alternative budgets it shall be for the Chair of the Council to decide what order they shall be presented

6.6 Alternative budgets will be moved and seconded in turn as amendments to replace the Executive report. The reports will be debated in the usual way.

6.7 At the conclusion of each debate, a vote will be taken for and against the alternative budget.

6.8 If the alternative budget is voted down there shall be no further debate

6.9 Once all alternative budgets have been presented the Executive report will be debated in the usual way

7. APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE AND REPLACEMENT OF MEMBERS OF COMMITTEES, OTHER STANDING BODIES AND EXTERNAL APPOINTMENTS

7.1 The Local Government Act 2000 does not allow for substitute or co-opted members on the Cabinet. The provisions for substitutes in respect of other bodies is as set out in Part 3 of this Constitution.

7.2 Powers and duties

Substitute members will have all the powers and duties of any ordinary member of the committee but will not be able to exercise any special powers or duties exercisable by the person they are substituting.

7.3 Substitution

Substitute members may attend meetings in that capacity only:

- I. to take the place of the ordinary member for whom they are the designated substitute;
- II. where the ordinary member will be absent for the whole of the meeting; and
- III. after notifying the Chief Executive or their nominee on the day of the meeting of the intended substitution.

7.4 Replacement

Where a member is no longer able to undertake the duty of a member of a committee, standing body or external appointment the Monitoring Officer shall take a report to an Ordinary or Extraordinary meeting proposing the replacement of the original member

8. TIME AND PLACE OF MEETINGS

8.1 The time and place of meetings will be determined by the Chief Executive or their nominee after consultation with the Chair of the Council and notified in the summons.

9. NOTICE OF AND SUMMONS TO MEETINGS AND AGENDA, REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 The Chief Executive will give notice to the public of the time and place of any meeting in accordance with the Access to Information Rules. At least five clear days before a meeting, the Chief Executive will send a summons signed by them by post to every member of the Council or leave it at their usual place of residence. The summons will give the date, time and place of each meeting and specify the business to be transacted, and will be accompanied by such reports as are available.

9.2 Every report to a meeting will include a list of background papers relied upon in its preparation. Those background papers will be made available for public inspection at the Council's offices, and published where reasonably practicable, in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

9.3 Following any meeting of the Council that is open to the public, the Council will make available for public inspection, for a period of six years, the following documents as required by Section 100C of the Local Government Act 1972

- I. the minutes of the meeting (or a summary of proceedings where the public were excluded)
- II. the agenda,

III. every report relating to an item when the meeting was open to the public.

9.4 Where part of the meeting was held in private because confidential or exempt information would otherwise have been disclosed, the Council will publish a summary that does not itself disclose confidential or exempt information.

9.5 These rights apply in addition to any rights of access under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

10. CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR OF MEETING

10.1 The Chair of the Council, or in their absence the Vice Chair of the Council (who will have the same powers and duties as the Chair), will preside at meetings of the Council.

10.2 Where both the Chair and Vice Chair of the Council are absent, the Council will appoint another Councillor, other than a member of the Cabinet, to chair the meeting, who will have the same powers and duties as the Chair.

10.3 The person presiding at the meeting may exercise any power or duty of the Chair of the Council. Where these rules apply to committees and other standing bodies references to the Chair and Vice Chair of the Council also include the Chair and Vice Chair of committees and other standing bodies.

11. QUORUM

11.1 The quorum of a meeting will be one quarter (rounded up) of the whole number of members.

11.2 For any sub-committee with an appointed with a membership of three councillors, the quorum for that sub-committee shall be two members. No business may be transacted unless at least two members are physically present for the duration of the item under consideration

11.3 Having waited 5 minutes from the start time of the meeting, if the Chair of the Council or the Chief Executive concludes that an insufficient number of Councillors is present the meeting will not proceed and the meeting will be adjourned to a time fixed by the Chair

11.4 During any meeting if the Chair of the Council counts the number of members present and declares there is not a quorum present, then the meeting will adjourn for 15 minutes. After 15 minutes the meeting shall reconvene, if it remains inquorate the meeting will adjourn immediately. Remaining business will be considered at a time and date fixed by the Chair of the Council. If they do not fix a date, the remaining business will be considered at the next ordinary meeting.

11.5 Members are required to be physically present at any meeting of the Council or its Committees in order to be counted as attending, to participate in debate, or to vote.

11.6 Participation by remote means shall not constitute attendance for the purposes of quorum, decision-making, or compliance with statutory attendance requirements, except where permitted by legislation or regulations in force at the time. It is the responsibility of each Councillor to ensure they are present at the meeting venue at the appointed time and remain in attendance for the duration of the items in which they wish to participate.

11.7 For the purpose of this Rule a Councillor is considered "present" only when they are physically in attendance at the place where the meeting is being held Remote attendance by video, audio or any other electronic means does not constitute presence for quorum or voting purposes.

12. DURATION OF MEETING

- 12.1 Unless the majority of Members present vote for the meeting to continue, any meeting which commenced at 6.30 pm on reaching 9.00 pm will adjourn immediately (unless a thirty minute extension in accordance with Rule 30 (The Conclusion of Proceedings) has been approved). The remaining business will then be considered at a time and date to be fixed by the Chair of the Council. If they does not fix a date, the remaining business will be considered at the next ordinary meeting.

13. OTHER POINTS REGARDING THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND GENERAL BUSINESS

- 13.1 At any time during the meeting the Chair of the Council can adjourn the meeting.
- 13.2 The Chair of the Council will manage the agenda to enable the meeting to keep to time and has discretion to extend the time limit of a particular section of the agenda within the overall time limit of the meeting.
- 13.3 A Member may move, without notice, that the order of business be varied or to move to the next item of business. Such a motion shall be put to the meeting immediately and shall take precedence over the business then under consideration. The Chair may permit the motion to be moved only where, in their opinion, the efficient dispatch of business or the proper conduct of the meeting would be assisted by doing so.
- 13.4 Nothing in this rule shall prevent the Chair from exercising their inherent discretion to alter the running order of business where necessary for the orderly conduct of the meeting
- 13.5 The Council shall receive reports and consider recommendations submitted by its Committees, Sub-Committees, Cabinet, Joint Committees, or Officers. Upon receiving such reports, the Council may adopt, amend, refer back, or reject any recommendation contained within them. The Council may also make any resolution arising directly from the subject matter of the report, provided that the resolution remains relevant to, and within the scope of, the matters presented. In adopting recommendations or making related resolutions, the Council must ensure that decisions are lawful, within budgetary and policy frameworks, and consistent with the authority delegated to Committees and Officers. No report or recommendation shall be deemed adopted unless confirmed by a formal resolution of the Council.
- 13.6 The Council may resolve to refer any matter to another Committee, Sub-Committee, joint body, or authorised Officer where it considers that further examination, specialist input, or delegated decision-making is required. A referral may include instructions on the scope of consideration, any timescale for reporting back, and whether the receiving body or Officer is empowered to determine the matter or must return recommendations to the Council. Once a matter is referred, the receiving Committee, body, or Officer shall consider it in accordance with their delegated powers and report outcomes or recommendations as appropriate.

14. ABSENCES AND APOLOGIES

- 14.1 The minutes of the meeting may record any Councilors' absence from the Chamber of more than 10 minutes during a Full Council meeting and/or the late arrival of any Councillor more than 10 minutes after the commencement of the meeting.
- 14.2 If a Councillor submits an apology for absence for the meeting, any questions or motions they have proposed or seconded will be deemed to have fallen at the point the apology is given

14.3 If a Councillor is not in the room at the point on the agenda that any question that they would present is to be considered, the matter will be deemed to have fallen.

14.4 Both the mover and seconder must be in the room to propose a motion, otherwise it will be deemed to have fallen.

15. QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC

15.1 General

Members of the public may ask questions of members of the Cabinet and Chairs of the any Council committee and other standing bodies at ordinary meetings of the Council.

15.2 Where a question has been incorrectly directed, assigned, or addressed to the wrong person, it can be reallocated and responded to by the appropriate Member of Cabinet or Committee Chair. Such reallocation shall take effect immediately once identified and shall not invalidate any lawful proceedings already undertaken. The Proper Officer or Monitoring Officer may advise the meeting on the appropriate allocation to ensure continuity, clarity, and proper conduct of business.

15.3 Order of questions

Questions will be asked in the order determined by the Chair of the Council acting in conjunction with the Monitoring Officer and/or Chief Executive. Questions of a similar subject can be grouped together.

15.4 Time Limits

No question or answer may exceed 5 minutes without the permission of the Chair of the Council.

The totality of questions and answers may not extend beyond 15 minutes without the consent of the Chair of Council.

15.5 Notice of questions

A question may only be asked if notice has been given by delivering it in writing or by electronic mail to the Chief Executive no later than noon, 8 clear days before the day of the meeting.

15.6 Alteration of Questions

Any submitted question cannot be altered after the deadlines specified in this Rule 15

15.7 Number of questions

At any one meeting no person may submit more than 2 questions

No more than 2 such questions may be asked on behalf of one organisation.

A maximum of 4 questions in any local government year may be submitted by any person or on behalf of an organisation or business.

15.8 Duration of Question Time

The length of time for questions by members under this Rule 16, including the giving of answers shall be limited to 30 minutes unless the Chair of the Council agrees to an extension.

15.9 Scope of questions

The Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair of the Council may reject a question if it:

- I. is not about a matter for which the local authority has a responsibility or which affects the district;
- II. is a defamatory, frivolous or offensive;
- III. is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the past six months;
- IV. requires the disclosure of the confidential or except information;
- V. relates to judicial/ quasi-judicial items, planning and licensing applications or appeals;
- VI. names Officers or Members by name and/or alleges breaches of the Members' Code of Conduct which are subject or may be subject to investigations; or
- VII. relates to an ongoing complaint to the Council, either at Stage 1 or 2, or a complaint that is currently subject to investigation by the Local Government Ombudsman or a complaint which has been concluded either at Stage 1 or 2 or via the Local Government Ombudsman.
- VIII. It exceeds the maximum amount of questions are permitted by Rule 15.6

15.10 Record of questions

The Chief Executive will enter each question in a book open to public inspection and will immediately send a copy of the question to the member to whom it is to be put. Rejected questions will include the reasons for rejection.

Copies of all questions will be circulated to all members and will be made available to the public attending the meeting.

15.11 Asking the question at the meeting

The Chair of the Council will invite the questioner to put the question to the relevant cabinet member. If a questioner who has submitted a written question is unable to be present, they may ask the Chair of the Council to put the question on their behalf. The Chair of the Council may ask the question on the questioner's behalf, indicate that a written reply will give or decide, in the absence of the questioner, that the question will not be dealt with.

15.12 Written answers

Any question which cannot be dealt with during public question time, either because of lack of time or because of the non-attendance of the member to whom it was to be put, or because further time is required to collate the relevant information needed to provide an accurate response, will be dealt with by a written answer. A written answer to be sent within 10 clear days of the Council meeting and copy of the written answer will be provided to all members.

15.13 Reference of question to the Cabinet or a committee or other standing body

Unless the Chair of the Council decides otherwise, no discussion will take place on any question, but any member may move that a matter raised by a question be referred to the Cabinet or the appropriate committee or other standing body. Once seconded, such a motion will be voted on without discussion.

16. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

16.1 Questions on notice at Council Meetings

Where these rules permit and subject to this Rule 16, a member of the Council may ask any of the following a Question on notice:

- I. the Chair of the Council;
- II. The leader;
- III. The Deputy Leader
- IV. A member of the Cabinet (Portfolio Holder)
- V. the Chair of any committee or sub-committee or standing body

16.2 Where a question has been incorrectly directed, assigned, or addressed to the wrong person, it can be reallocated and responded to by the appropriate Member of Cabinet or Committee Chair. Such reallocation shall take effect immediately once identified and shall not invalidate any lawful proceedings already undertaken. The Proper Officer or Monitoring Officer may advise the meeting on the appropriate allocation to ensure continuity, clarity, and proper conduct of business.

16.3 **Validity of Questions**

Any question must:

- I. disclose a question;
- II. be limited to matters which fall within the remit of the relevant Portfolio or Committee;
- III. be a matter for which the local authority has a responsibility and direct control over;
- IV. not be defamatory, frivolous or offensive;
- V. not be substantially the same as a formal question or motion, which is under consideration by or has, in the past six months, been put at a meeting of the Council, Cabinet or a committee;
- VI. not relate to a planning application or any other quasi-judicial matter; and
- VII. not require disclosure of confidential or exempt information.

16.4 **Rejection of Questions**

The Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair of the Council and the Monitoring Officer may reject a question if it is defamatory, frivolous or offensive, or relates to a matter which the Council has no control, responsibility or influence. The Member asking the questions shall have the matter referred back to them with reasons for the rejection indicating that it will not be put at the meeting.

16.5 **Number of Questions**

For any one meeting, no Member may submit more than 1 question

16.6 **Questions at committees and sub-committees and standing bodies**

Subject to Rules 16.2 (Validity of Questions), 16.3 (Rejection of Questions), 16.4 (Number of Questions) and 16.7 (Notice of Questions), a member of a committee or a standing body may ask the Chair of it

16.7 **Questions on reports or recommendations to the Council**

At any Ordinary Meeting a Member of the Council may ask the Leader, relevant Cabinet member or Chair of a committee or any standing body one question without notice upon any item of report or recommendation when that item is being received or under consideration by the Council

16.8 **Notice of questions**

A Member may only ask a question under this Rule 16 if either:

- I. they have been received by the Chief Executive in writing or by e-mail by no later than noon 8 clear days prior to the meeting; or
- II. The question must make it clear about who the question is addressed to and who is asking it

16.9 Alteration of Questions

Any submitted question cannot be altered after the deadlines specified in this Rule 16

16.10 Response

Where a member to whom a question is addressed believes that a question may more conveniently be answered by another member to whom questions may be put, then that other member may answer the question.

An answer may take the form of:

- I. a direct oral answer;
- II. where the desired information is in a publication of the Council or other published work, a reference to that publication; or
- III. where the reply cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer circulated later to all members of the Council, to be sent within 10 clear days of the Council meeting by the member of whom the question was asked. A copy of the response shall be circulated to all Members.

16.11 Supplementary question

A member asking a question under this Rule 16 may ask one supplementary question without notice of the member to whom the first question was asked. The supplemental question must arise directly out of the original question or the reply.

16.12 Order of Questions

Questions will be asked in the order determined by the Chair of the Council, after consulting with the Monitoring Officer and/or Chief Executive. Questions of a similar subject can be grouped together.

16.13 Duration of Question Time

The length of time for questions by members under this Rule 16, including the giving of answers shall be limited to 30 minutes unless the Chair of the Council agrees to an extension.

16.14 Written Answers

Any question which cannot be dealt with during public question time, either because of lack of time or because of the non-attendance of the member to whom it was to be put, will be dealt with by a written answer.

A copy of the written answer will be provided to all members. A written answer to be sent within 10 clear days of the Council meeting.

17. MOTIONS ON NOTICE

17.1 Notice

This applies except for motions which can be moved without notice under Rule 18.

Written notice of every motion, signed by the Proposer and the Seconder, must be delivered to the Chief Executive not later than noon 8 clear days before the date of the meeting. These will be entered in a book open to public inspection.

The seconder must confirm their consent to seconding the motion before the motion is accepted as valid. A motion shall not be included on the agenda unless both the Proposer and Seconder have been clearly identified and have confirmed their agreement to support the motion. This must be completed before the relevant deadline for submission of Motions on Notice

Both the Proposer and Seconder will need to be present in at the meeting for the Motion to be valid.

17.2 Motions set out in agenda

Motions for which notice has been given will be listed on the agenda in the order in which notice was received, unless the member giving notice states, in writing or by e- mail, which they propose to move it at a later meeting or withdraw it.

17.3 Number of Motions

Each Group of the Council may submit a maximum of 1 motion for each Full Council meeting where motions can be submitted.

17.4 Scope of Motions on Notice

17.4.1 Motions must relate to matters that :

- I. fall within the Council's statutory functions or duties;
- II. relate to issues on which the Council has lawful decision-making powers or the ability to exercise influence consistent with its adopted policies; or
- III. affect residents, communities, businesses, or the wider District in a way that the Council can lawfully respond to through its powers, partnerships, or community leadership role.

17.4.2 For the avoidance of doubt, a matter may fall within the Council's responsibilities even where the Council does not have direct operational control (for example, matters involving partnership duties or areas where the Council has strategic influence rather than sole authority). In such cases a motion may still be valid if it relates to a lawful action the Council can take.

17.4.3 A motion will be considered improper or out of order where it:

- I. seeks action that the Council has no legal power to take;
- II. instructs the Council to act on a matter wholly outside its statutory remit;
- III. concerns an issue on which the Council has no lawful decision-making power, even if the Council has a community leadership or influencing role;
- IV. duplicates the subject matter of a motion submitted or decided within the previous six months;
- V. requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information; or
- VI. is defamatory, frivolous, offensive, or otherwise inconsistent with the law or these Council Procedure Rules.

17.5 Monitoring Officer Powers to Reject Motions

17.5.1 The Monitoring Officer shall reject a motion as invalid where, in their professional opinion, one or more of the following apply:

- I. the motion is unlawful, or if passed would require the Council to act unlawfully;
- II. the motion is outside the powers (ultra vires) of the Council or relates to a matter for which the Council has no statutory responsibility;
- III. the motion is financially improper, including where the Section 151 Officer advises that it would breach financial regulations, create an unfunded liability, or contravene the budget and policy framework;
- IV. the motion would require the disclosure of confidential or exempt information;
- V. the motion would breach any other statutory requirement, procedural rule, or legal obligation placed upon the Council.

17.5.2 The Monitoring Officer shall not reject a motion on the grounds of its political content, political disagreement, or because the motion expresses a view with which the Monitoring Officer or any officer disagrees.

17.5.3 Where a motion is rejected, the Monitoring Officer will provide the proposer and seconder with written reasons, clearly explaining the legal or procedural grounds for rejection.

17.5.4 A motion rejected under this Rule 17, may be resubmitted in amended form, provided the amendment remedies the defect identified by the Monitoring Officer and is submitted within the published deadlines for that meeting.

17.6 Rejected Motions

17.6.1 The Monitoring Officer will reject a proposed motion as invalid, giving reasons if it does not comply with the above provisions.

17.7 Motions which commit the Authority to new or additional expenditure

17.7.1 Members moving a Motion at Council the net effect of which, if accepted, is to commit the Authority to new or additional expenditure or cause loss of income must demonstrate that they have taken appropriate advice from the Section 151 Officer concerning:-

- I. Whether the current proposal is within current budgets;
- II. the implication of incurring the expenditure or loss of income;
- III. how any expenditure or loss of income is to be funded; and
- IV. any required changes in priorities arising from the proposal

17.7.2 The relevant information must be set out clearly in the Motion failure to include the required information, to the satisfaction of the Section 151 Officer will result in the Motion being rejected by the Monitoring Officer.

17.10 Alterations of Motions

17.10.1 An alteration is a change to the wording of a motion made by, or with the agreement of, both the mover and seconder of the motion.

17.10.2 An alteration may include any proposal by another Councillor to change the motion which the mover then accepts, meaning no vote on the proposed change is required.

17.10.3 Any alteration must be submitted in writing to the Chair. An alteration may only be made if it would be considered a valid amendment, as confirmed by the Monitoring Officer.

17.10.4 Alterations may be accepted:

- I. when the mover changes the motion at the point of moving it;
- II. during the debate in order to update the motion for accuracy;
- III. where the mover accepts a proposed amendment; or
- IV. where the alteration would make the motion more acceptable to Councillors

17.11 Amendments to Motions

- 17.11.1 An amendment is a proposal by any Councillor to change a motion which is not accepted by the mover of the original motion.
- 17.11.2 An amendment must be relevant to the motion and may seek to:
 - I. refer the matter to a body or individual for consideration or reconsideration;
 - II. leave out words;
 - III. leave out words and insert or add others; or
 - IV. insert or add words, provided the effect is not to negate the motion.
- 17.11.3 Notice of an amendment must be submitted in writing to the Chief Executive no later than 10am, two clear working days before the Full Council meeting.
- 17.11.4 Only one amendment may be moved and debated at any one time. No further amendment may be moved until the amendment under debate has been disposed of.
- 17.11.5 If an amendment is not carried, further amendments to the original motion may be moved.
- 17.11.6 If an amendment is carried, the motion as amended becomes the substantive motion, to which further amendments may be moved.
- 17.11.7 The Monitoring Officer may reject any amendment that does not comply with these Rules. The Chair may adjourn the meeting to seek advice on validity.
- 17.11.8 The Monitoring Officer may allow a minor amendment intended to correct a factual error or improve clarity without requiring prior notice. Such an amendment must be provided in writing at the point it is raised.
- 17.11.9 After any amendment is carried, the Chair will read out the amended motion before taking further amendments or, if none, putting it to the vote.

18 MOTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

- 18.1 The following motions may be moved without notice:
 - I. **To appoint a Chair for the meeting (See Rule 10)**
Used only at the start of the meeting if the Chair or Vice-Chair is absent.
 - II. **To confirm the accuracy of minutes.(See Rule 23)**
Used at the start of the meeting when minutes are presented for approval
 - III. **To change the order of business or move to next business(See Rule 13 and Rule 19 Closure Motions)**
May be moved at any time before the next agenda item begins.
Often used to bring forward urgent or time-sensitive items.
Used when the meeting wishes to stop debate and move on without reaching a decision.
May be moved during debate but not once the right of reply has begun.
 - IV. **To refer a matter to another committee, body, or officer (See Rule 13)**
May be moved during debate on the relevant item, before the vote on the motion.

- V. **To appoint a committee or other member body arising from an agenda item (Rule 7)**
Used when an agenda item requires an appointment to be made immediately.
- VI. **To receive reports or adopt recommendations and make related resolutions (See Rule 13)**
Used when committee or officer reports are presented for decision.
- VII. **To withdraw a motion (See Rule 19)**
May be moved at any point by the Proposer of the motion, before the vote is taken.
- VIII. **To amend or alter a motion (see Rule 18 and 19)**
May be moved during debate on that motion, before the right of reply and vote.
- IX. **That the question be now put (closure motion – Rule 19)**
Used to end debate immediately and proceed to the vote.
May only be moved after some debate has taken place.
- X. **To adjourn a debate (See Closure Motions Rule 19)**
Used when more time is needed or new information is awaited.
May be moved at any point during the debate.
- XI. **To adjourn the meeting (See Closure Motions Rule 19)**
Used when the meeting cannot continue, for example, due to time, disruption, or lack of quorum
- XII. **To suspend a Council Procedure Rule (Rule 29)**
Used when the meeting needs to set aside a specific standing order to allow business to proceed.
May be moved at any time except during a vote.
- XIII. **To exclude the public and press (Rule 25)**
Used when exempt or confidential information under Access to Information rules is to be considered.
- XIV. **To take action regarding a Member’s conduct under Rule 26**
Used immediately following disorderly conduct requiring the meeting’s decision.
- XV. **To give consent of the Council where required by the Constitution or law**
Moved at the point the consent is needed within the relevant item.

18.2 Procedure for Dealing With a Motion Without Notice

18.2.1 A Motion Without Notice may be moved at any time during the meeting when the Chair considers it appropriate to do so, except:

- I. during a vote, or
- II. immediately after the vote has been called.

18.2.2 Only motions listed in the Constitution as “motions without notice” may be moved under this rule.

18.2.3 The Member wishing to move the motion must indicate their intention to the Chair.

18.2.4 The Member must state clearly:

- I. the exact wording of the motion, and
- II. the purpose of the motion (e.g., to change the order of business, to adjourn, to proceed to next business).

18.2.5 The Chair, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer will determine whether the motion is in order.

18.2.6 Unless otherwise specified in the Constitution, a Motion Without Notice:

- I. must be seconded before it can be considered, and
- II. will fall if no seconder is provided.

18.2.7 A Motion Without Notice shall be put to the meeting without discussion, except:

- I. a motion to amend a motion,
- II. a motion to adjourn or suspend the meeting,
- III. a motion to vary the order of business, or
- IV. where the Chair considers brief explanation is necessary.

18.2.8 Where debate is permitted under the Constitution, only:

- I. the proposer,
- II. the seconder, and
- III. one speaker against

may speak, unless the Chair permits otherwise.

18.2.9 Once the Chair is satisfied that the motion is correctly before the meeting, it shall be put to the vote immediately.

18.2.10 If the motion is carried:

- II. its effect takes place immediately, and
- III. the meeting proceeds in accordance with the decision (e.g., debate ends, item is adjourned, order of business is altered).

18.3 Circumstances Where Debate Is Permitted

18.3.1 Debate on a Motion Without Notice is permitted only in the following circumstances:

- I. **Where the motion requires explanation** to clarify its purpose or effect, including:
 - a. a motion to vary the order of business;
 - b. a motion to refer an item to another committee, body, or officer. These types of motions typically receive limited debate in other councils where necessary to understand their effect.
- II. **Where the motion concerns the conduct or continuation of business**, including:
 - a. a motion to adjourn the debate;
 - b. a motion to adjourn the meeting;
 - c. a motion to extend time for an agenda item. Local authority practice commonly allows short debate on adjournment-related motions.
- III. **Where the motion amounts to an amendment**, and limited debate is required to understand the change proposed.
- IV. **Where the Chair determines that brief debate is necessary** for the proper and orderly conduct of the meeting.

18.4 Motions which can be moved in the Debate

18.4.1 When a motion is under debate, no other motion may be moved except the following procedural motions;

- I. to withdraw a motion;
- II. to amend a motion;
- III. to change the order of business;
- IV. to proceed to the next item of business
- V. to refer the matter to another body or individual
- VI. that the question be now put;
- VII. to adjourn a debate;
- VIII. to adjourn a meeting

- IX. to exclude the public and press in accordance with the Access to Information Rules; and
- X. to not hear further a member named or to exclude them from the meeting

18.5 **Decision on the Motion**

- 18.5.1 Once debate (if any) has concluded, the Chair shall put the Motion Without Notice to the vote immediately.
- 18.5.2 The motion shall be decided by a simple majority of those entitled to vote, with the Chair having a second or casting vote where required.

18.6 **Alterations to Motions (Without Notice)**

- 18.6.1 An alteration is a change to the wording of a motion made by, or with the agreement of, both the mover and seconder of the motion. An alteration may be made without notice.
- 18.6.2 An alteration may include any proposal by another Councillor to change the motion which the mover then accepts, meaning no vote on the proposed change is required.
- 18.6.3 Any alteration must be submitted in writing to the Chair at the point it is proposed. An alteration may only be made if it would be considered a valid amendment, as confirmed by the Monitoring Officer.
- 18.6.4 Alterations without notice may be accepted:
 - I. when the mover changes the motion at the point of moving it;
 - II. during the debate in order to update the motion for accuracy;
 - III. where the mover accepts a proposed amendment; or
 - IV. where the alteration would make the motion more acceptable to Councillors.

18.7 **Amendments to Motions (Without Notice unless otherwise stated)**

- 18.7.1 An amendment is a proposal by any Councillor to change a motion which is not accepted by the mover of the original motion.
- 18.7.2 An amendment must be relevant to the motion and may seek to:
 - I. refer the matter to a body or individual for consideration or reconsideration;
 - II. leave out words;
 - III. leave out words and insert or add others; or
 - IV. insert or add words, provided the effect is not to negate the motion.
- 18.7.3 Notice of an amendment **is** normally required, and must be submitted in writing to the Chief Executive no later than 10am, two clear days before the meeting, however, amendments may be moved without notice where permitted under Rule 18.12.8.
- 18.7.4 Only one amendment may be moved and debated at any one time. No further amendment may be moved until the amendment under debate has been disposed of.
- 18.7.5 If an amendment is not carried, further amendments to the original motion may be moved.

18.7.6 If an amendment is carried, the motion as amended becomes the substantive motion, to which further amendments may be moved.

18.7.7 The Monitoring Officer may reject any amendment that does not comply with these Rules. The Chair may adjourn the meeting to seek advice on validity.

18.7.8 The Monitoring Officer may allow a minor amendment without notice where it is intended to correct a factual error or improve clarity. Such an amendment must be provided in writing at the point it is raised.

18.7.9 After any amendment is carried, the Chair will read out the amended motion before taking further amendments or, if none, putting it to the vote.

19. RULES OF DEBATE

19.1 No speeches until motion seconded

No speeches may be made after the mover has moved a proposal and explained the purpose of it until the motion has been seconded.

19.2 Right to require motion in writing/electronic means

Unless notice of the motion has already been given, the Chair of the Council may require it to be written down and handed to them before it is discussed.

19.3 Secunder's speech

When seconding a motion or amendment, a member may reserve their speech until later in the debate.

19.4 Content and length of speeches

Speeches must be directed to the question under discussion or to a personal explanation or point of order. No speech may exceed 5 minutes without the consent of the Chair of the Council, except in moving the Council budget when there is no limitation on the length of the mover's speech.

The spokesperson on finance of the majority party in opposition shall be entitled to a maximum of 15 minutes to respond to that speech and 15 minutes to present an alternative budget.

It is not necessary to read any motion in full when moving the motion, provided the motion has been provided in writing to Full Council

19.5 When a member may speak again

A member who has spoken on the substantive motion cannot speak again except:

- I. Right to speak once on an amendment moved by another member
- II. Right to speak again if the motion has changed since they last spoke (i.e., after an amendment is carried)
- III. Right to speak on the main issue if their earlier speech was on an amendment, regardless of whether that amendment passed
- IV. Right of reply for the mover of the original motion
- V. Right to raise a point of order
- VI. Right to make a personal explanation

19.6 Withdrawal of motion

19.6.1 A mover may withdraw a motion they have proposed with the consent of both the meeting and the seconder.

19.6.2 Consent is given without discussion

19.6.3 No Member may speak on the motion once the mover has requested permission to withdraw it, unless permission is refused.

19.7 Right of reply on Amendments and Alterations to Motions

- I. The person who proposes a motion (“the Proper”) gets the final say. They can speak again at the very end of the debate, just before the matter goes to the vote.
- II. If someone proposes an amendment to a Motion, the Proposer may reply at the end of the debate on that amendment but cannot speak about it at any other time.
- III. The person proposing the amendment does not get a final reply.
- IV. If the amendment to the motion is carried or agreed, the amended motion becomes the main motion. This means the proposer of the amendment will get to speak again later if they are now the mover of the amended motion, before the final vote.

19.8 Closure motions

19.8.1 A member may move, without comment, the following motions at the end of a speech of another member;

- (i) to proceed to the next business;
- (ii) that the question be now put;
- (iii) to adjourn a debate; or
- (iv) to adjourn a meeting.

19.8.2 If a motion to proceed to next business is seconded and the Chair of the Council thinks the item has been sufficiently discussed, they will give the mover of the original motion a right of reply and then put the procedural motion to the vote.

19.8.3 If a motion that the question be now put is seconded and the Chair of the Council thinks the item has been sufficiently discussed, they will put the procedural motion to the vote. If it is passed they will give the mover of the original motion a right of reply before putting their motion to the vote.

19.8.4 If a motion to adjourn the debate or to adjourn the meeting is seconded and the Chair of the Council thinks the item has not been sufficiently discussed and cannot reasonably be so discussed on that occasion, they will put the procedural motion to the vote without given the mover of the original motion the right of reply.

19.9 BRINGING DEBATE TO EARLY CLOSURE

19.9.1 A Councillor who has not already spoken on the matter may orally move a motion that a vote should be taken immediately. This must be seconded.

19.9.2 If the Chair of the Council feels there has been sufficient discussion of the issue, they may put the oral motion to the vote.

19.9.3 If the vote is carried the motion or amendment will be put to the vote following closing remarks as set out in the rules of debate.

19.10 Point of order

A member may raise a point of order at any time. The Chair of the Council will hear them immediately. A point of order may only relate to an alleged breach of these Council Procedure Rules or the law. The member must indicate the Procedure Rule or law and the way in which they consider it has been broken. The ruling of the Chair of the Council on the matter will be final.

19.11 Personal explanation

A member may make a personal explanation at any time. A personal explanation may only relate to some material part of an earlier speech by the member which may appear to have been misunderstood in the present debate. The ruling of the Chair of the Council on the admissibility of a personal explanation will be final.

20. STATE OF THE DISTRICT DEBATE

20.1 Calling of debate

The Leader may call a state of the district debate annually on a date and in a form to be agreed with the Chair of the Council.

20.2 Form of debate

The Leader will decide the form of the debate with the aim of enabling the widest possible public involvement and publicity. This may include holding workshops and other events prior to or during the state of the district debate.

20.3 Chairing of debate

The debate will be chaired by the Chair of the Council or if the Chair of the Council is absent the Vice-Chair of the Council or in the absence of both a member will be elected to chair the meeting.

20.4 Results of debate

The results of the debate will be:

- I. disseminated as widely as possible within the community and to agencies and organisations in the area; and
- II. considered by the Leader in proposing the budget and policy framework to the Council for the coming year.

21. PREVIOUS DECISIONS AND MOTIONS

21.1 Motion to rescind a previous decision

A motion or amendment to rescind a decision made at a meeting of Council within the past six months cannot be moved unless the notice of motion is signed by at least 5 members.

21.2 Motion similar to one previously rejected

A motion or amendment in similar terms to one that has been rejected at a meeting of Council in the past six months cannot be moved unless the notice of motion or amendment is signed by at least 5 members. Once the motion or amendment is dealt with, no one can propose a similar motion or amendment for six months.

22. VOTING

22.1 Majority

Unless the Constitution or law provides otherwise, any matter will be decided by a simple majority of those members voting and present in the room at the time the question was put.

22.2 Voting Rights of the Chair and Vice-Chair

The Chair of the Council has the same voting rights as any other Member and may exercise an ordinary vote on all matters. In the event of an equality of votes, the Chair shall exercise a casting vote.

Where the Vice-Chair presides in the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair shall have the same voting rights for that meeting, including the casting vote.

22.3 Chair of the Council casting vote

If there are equal numbers of votes for and against, the Chair of the Council will have a second or casting vote. There will be no restriction on how the Chair of the Council chooses to exercise a casting vote.

22.4 Show of hands

Unless a recorded vote is demanded the Chair of the Council will take the vote by show of hands, or if there is no dissent, by the affirmation of the meeting.

22.5 Recorded vote

If 7 members present at the meeting demand it, the names for and against the motion or amendment or abstaining from voting will be taken down in writing/electronic means and entered into the minutes.

22.6 Right to require individual vote to be recorded

Where any member requests it immediately after the vote is taken, their vote will be so recorded in the minutes to show whether they voted for or against the motion or abstained from voting.

22.7 Voting on appointments

Where more than two candidates are nominated for any position to be filled and no candidate receives a majority of votes cast on the first round, the following procedure shall apply:

- I. A further vote shall be taken, but only among the candidates who received votes in the preceding round.
- II. The candidate receiving the fewest votes in that round shall be eliminated. If two or more candidates tie for the fewest votes, the Council shall resolve by vote which candidate is eliminated; if the tie persists, the Chair shall determine the elimination by lot.
- III. Voting shall then continue in successive rounds, with one candidate eliminated at each round, until one candidate receives a majority of votes cast by Members present and voting.
- IV. This elimination procedure applies only to votes for the appointment of individuals and does not apply to any procedural, substantive, or deadlocked motions.
- V. Abstentions do not count towards any candidate's total but do count towards the number of Members present and voting for the purpose of calculating a majority.

23. MINUTES

23.1 Signing the minutes

The Chair of the Council will sign the minutes of the proceedings at the next suitable meeting. The Chair of the Council will move that the minutes of the previous meeting be signed as a correct record. The only part of the minutes that can be discussed is their accuracy.

23.2 No requirement to sign minutes of previous meeting at extraordinary meeting

Where in relation to any meeting, the next meeting for the purpose of signing the minutes is a meeting called under paragraph 3 of schedule 12 to the Local Government Act 1972 (an Extraordinary Meeting), then the next following meeting (being a meeting called otherwise than under that paragraph) will be treated as a suitable meeting for the purposes of paragraph 41(1) and (2) of schedule 12 relating to signing of minutes.

23.3 Form of minutes

Minutes will contain all motions and amendments in the exact form and order the Chair of the Council put them.

24. RECORD OF ATTENDANCE

24.1 All members present during the whole or part of a meeting must sign their names on the attendance sheets before the conclusion of every meeting to assist with the record of attendance.

25. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

25.1 Members of the public and press may only be excluded by agreement of those Members of the Council present, either in accordance with the Access to Information Rules in Part 5 of this Constitution or Rule 28 (Disturbance by Public) or where Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 requires:

25.1.1 Mandatory exclusion where confidential information would be disclosed (no resolution needed).

25.1.2 Discretionary exclusion for exempt information, but only by passing a resolution which:

- I. identifies the item
- II. states the relevant Schedule 12A category

26. MEMBERS' CONDUCT

26.1 Standing to speak

- I. When a member speaks at Council they must address the meeting through the Chair of the Council.
- II. Members may stand to speak but are not required to do so.
- III. Other members must remain seated whilst a member is speaking unless they wish to make a point of order or a point of personal explanation.

26.2 Chair of the Council Standing

When the Chair of the Council stands during a debate, any member speaking at the time must stop and sit down. The meeting must be silent.

26.3 Order of Speech

The Chair of the Council will decide the order in which speakers will be heard. Any Councillor who wishes to speak will be given the opportunity to do so unless any of the exceptions contained in these procedure rules apply.

26.4 Standards of Behaviour and Graduated Approach

Councillors are expected to conduct themselves reasonably and professionally in accordance with the Code of Conduct and these Procedure Rules.

Where a Member's behaviour is, in the opinion of the Chair, impeding the proper conduct of the meeting, the Chair may take proportionate steps to restore order. In doing so, the Chair will normally follow a graduated approach:

I. First Step – Warning

The Chair will draw the Member's attention to the behaviour and give a clear warning that it must stop.

II. Second Step – Personal Explanation (Rule 19.12)

If the behaviour continues, the Chair will offer the Member a brief opportunity to explain or correct their conduct.

III. Third Step – Member Not to be Heard Further

If the behaviour persists, the Chair may move "that the Member named be not heard further" for the remainder of the item or meeting. If seconded, the motion shall be put to the vote without discussion.

IV. Fourth Step – Removal from the Meeting

If, following a decision that the Member be not heard further, the Member continues to act improperly, offensively or disruptively, the Chair may move "that the Member named leave the meeting" for a specified period or the remainder of the meeting. If seconded, the motion shall be put to the vote without discussion.

26.5 Proportionality

The Chair will exercise their powers under this Rule proportionately, taking into account:

- I. the severity and impact of the behaviour;
- II. the need to maintain effective, orderly decision-making;
- III. the Member's explanation (if any);
- IV. the rights of other Members to contribute fairly; and
- V. the duty to ensure democratic accountability and transparency.

Nothing in this Rule prevents the Chair from taking immediate action under paragraph 26.4(IV) where the behaviour poses a risk to safety or makes continuation of the meeting impossible.

26.6 General Disturbance

Where general disturbance (by Members or others) renders the orderly conduct of the meeting impossible, the Chair may adjourn the meeting for as long as necessary. The Chair's decision is final.

26.7 Speaking to the Matter Under Discussion

Councillors must speak strictly to the subject under discussion.

26.8 Adjournments

Any Councillor may at any time during a meeting request that the meeting be adjourned for a short period. The Chair of the Council has discretion to decide whether to agree the request and, if agreed, to determine the length of any such adjournment.

27. GENERAL CONDUCT AT MEETINGS

27.1 Placards, banners, advertising materials, props and similar items are not permitted in any Council meeting and must be covered or removed.

27.2 Members of the public should remain seated in the public gallery during any debate and not do anything to endanger the health and safety of any person

27.3 Any person may film, photograph, audio-record, or report on public proceedings without prior permission, provided this does not disrupt the meeting. Where the public are lawfully excluded under s.100A Local Government Act 1972, the Council may then prevent recording, live reporting or remote observation of those proceedings under s.100A(5A) Local Government Act 1972.

27.4 Where legislation requires that a meeting be open to the public, the Council will permit physical attendance by the public and provide reasonable seating, including overflow arrangements, if necessary, in accordance with the High Court's 2021 ruling

28. DISTURBANCE BY PUBLIC

28.1 Removal of member of the public

If a member of the public interrupts proceedings, the Chair of the Council will warn the person concerned. If they continue to interrupt, the Chair of the Council will order their removal from the meeting room.

28.2 Clearance of part of meeting room

If there is a general disturbance in any part of the meeting room open to the public, the Chair of the Council may call for that part to be cleared.

29. SUSPENSION AND AMENDMENT OF COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

29.1 Suspension

All of these Council Procedure Rules except Rule 22.6 and 22.2 may be suspended by motion on notice or without notice if at least one half of the whole number of members of the Council are present.

29.2 Amendment

Any motion to add to, vary or revoke these Council Procedure Rules will, when proposed and seconded, stand adjourned without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council unless previously considered by the Standards Committee.

30. CONCLUSION OF PROCEEDINGS

30.1 Any meeting called under these Rules which commences at 6.30 pm shall conclude no later than 9.00 pm; save that the conclusion may be extended to 9.30 pm if approved by a majority of Members present and voting prior to 8.55 pm. Any items of business not dealt with will stand adjourned to the next ordinary meeting unless the Chair of the Council agrees to convene an extraordinary meeting to deal with the outstanding business.

31. DEFINITIONS

31.1 Definition – Clear Day / Clear Days means

- I. the day on which the notice is given or published; and
- II. the day of the meeting or event to which the notice relates.

31.2 For the purpose of calculating clear days:

- I. Saturdays, Sundays, bank holidays, and any day of national mourning or national thanksgiving shall not be counted where legislation requires clear days to be given (Local Government Act 1972, s.243).
- II. A “clear day” runs for a full 24 hours from midnight to midnight.
- III. Where a notice period is expressed in clear days, the required number of full intervening days must elapse between the date of issue and the date of the meeting.

This definition applies to all notice periods required under these Council Procedure Rules, including the publication of agendas and reports required under Sections 100B–100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

31.3 A Proposer is a Member who formally puts forward a motion or amendment for consideration at the meeting. By proposing a member confirms their support for the wording and intent and requests that it be debated or decided upon.

31.4 A Secunder is a member who formally supports the motion or amendment proposed by the Proposer. By seconding it the member indicated that the matter should proceed to debate. The Secunder is not required to speak immediately but may do so later in the debate if they wish

32. APPLICATION TO COMMITTEES AND OTHER STANDING BODIES

32.1 All of the Council Rules of Procedure apply to meetings of full Council.

32.2 None of these rules apply to meetings of the Cabinet (see the Cabinet Procedure Rules)

32.3 Only the following Rules apply to meetings of committees and other standing bodies:

- 32.3.1 Rules 8-14
- 32.3.2 Rules 16-19
- 32.3.3 Rules 21-31

ACCESS TO INFORMATION PROCEDURE RULES

1. SCOPE

These rules apply to all meetings of the Council, the Cabinet, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Performance Improvement Scrutiny Committee, the Planning Committee, the Licensing Committee and the Standards Committee and any sub committees of the same bodies (together called meetings).

2. ADDITIONAL RIGHTS TO INFORMATION

These rules do not affect any more specific rights to information contained elsewhere in this Constitution or the law.

3. RIGHTS TO ATTEND MEETINGS

Members of the public may attend all meetings subject only to the exceptions in these rules.

4. NOTICES OF MEETINGS

The Council will give at least five clear working days notice of any meeting by posting details of the meeting at the Queen's Buildings offices of the Council. Where by reason of urgency a meeting of the Cabinet or a Committee or Sub-Committee is convened at less than 5 clear working days notice then notice of the meeting will be given as soon as the meeting is convened.

5. ACCESS TO AGENDA AND REPORTS BEFORE THE MEETING

The Council (subject to Rule 11) will make copies of the agenda and reports open to the public available for inspection at the Queen's Buildings offices of the Council at least five clear working days before the meeting. Where by reason of urgency a meeting of the Cabinet or a Committee or Sub Committee is convened at less than 5 clear working days notice, a copy of the agenda and associated reports will be made available for inspection at the time the meeting is convened.

If an item is added to the agenda after the summons has been sent out (and where a report is finalised after the summons has been sent out) a copy of the item or the report, if open to the public (see Rule 11), will be available for inspection from the time the item is added to the agenda or when the report is finalised and sent to Councillors.

6. SUPPLY OF COPIES

The Council will supply copies of:-

- (a) any agenda and reports which are open to public inspection;
- (b) any further statements or particulars necessary to indicate the nature of the items in the agenda; and
- (c) if the Monitoring Officer thinks fit, copies of any other documents supplied to councillors in connection with an item to any person on payment of a charge for postage and any other reasonable costs.

Except during any part of a public meeting during which the public are excluded, the Council will make available for the use of members of the public present at the meeting a reasonable number of copies of the agenda and of the reports for the meeting

7. ACCESS TO MINUTES ETC AFTER THE MEETING

The Council will make available copies of the following for six years after a meeting;

- a) The minutes of the meeting (including for Cabinet decisions a statement of reasons).
- b) a summary of any proceedings not open to the public where the minutes open to inspection would not provide a reasonably fair and coherent record;
- c) the agenda for the meeting; and
- d) reports relating to items when the meeting was open to the public.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 List of background papers

The author of a report will set out in every report a list of those documents (called background papers) relating to the subject matter of the report which in their opinion:

- a) disclose any facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the report is based; and
- b) which have been relied on to a material extent in preparing the report

but does not include published works or those which disclose exempt or confidential information (as defined in Rule 10) and in respect of Cabinet reports, the advice of a political advisor.

8.2 Public inspection of background papers

The Council will make available for public inspection for four years after the date of the meeting one copy of each of the documents on the list of background papers.

9. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC'S RIGHTS

A written summary of the public's rights to attend meetings and to inspect and copy documents must be kept and be available to the public at the Council's Retford, Worksop and Harworth offices.

10. EXCLUSION OF ACCESS BY THE PUBLIC TO MEETINGS

10.1 Confidential information – requirement to exclude public

The public must be excluded from meetings whenever it is likely in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that confidential information would be disclosed.

10.2 Meaning of confidential information

Confidential information means information given to the Council by a Government Department on terms which forbid its public disclosure or information the disclosure of which to the public is prohibited by or under any enactment or Court Order.

10.3 Exempt Information – discretion to exclude public

The public may by resolution of the meeting concerned be excluded from meetings whenever it is likely in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that exempt information would be disclosed.

Where the meeting will determine any person’s civil rights or obligations, or adversely affect their possessions, Article 6 of the Human Rights Act 1998 establishes a presumption that the meeting will be held in public unless a private hearing is necessary for one of the reasons specified in Article 6.

10.4 Meaning of exempt information

Exempt information means information falling within the following 10 categories (subject to the conditions stated):

1 Description of Exempt information	Qualification	Notes
1. Information relating to any individual	Exempt information if and so long, as in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information – see note on public interest at the end of table	Name, addresses or telephone numbers can identify individuals. Also consider the Council’s Data Protection Act responsibilities
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual	Exempt information if and so long, as in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information – see note on public interest at the end of table	Name, addresses or telephone numbers can identify individuals. Also consider the Council’s Data Protection Act responsibilities
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)	Exempt information if and so long, as in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the	The authority is a reference to the principal council or, as the case may be, the committee or sub-committee in relation to whose proceedings or documents the question whether

1 Description of Exempt information	Qualification	Notes
	public interest in disclosing the information – see note on public interest at the end of table	information is exempt or not falls to be determined (etc.)
	<p>Information falling within Paragraph 3 is not exempt information by virtue of that paragraph if it is required to be registered under –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the Companies Act 1985 b) the Friendly Societies Act 1974 c) the Friendly Societies Act 1974 d) the Industrial and Provident Societies Acts 1965 to 1978 e) the Building Societies Act 1986 f) the Charities Act 1993 	<p>Financial or business affairs includes contemplated, as well as past or current activities</p> <p>Registered in relation to information required to be registered under the Building Societies Act 1986, means recorded in the public file of any building society (within the meaning of that Act)</p>
<p>4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority</p>	<p>Exempt information if and so long, as in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information – see note on public interest at the end of table</p>	<p>The authority is a reference to the principal council or, as the case may be, the committee or sub-committee in relation to whose proceedings or documents the question whether information is exempt or not falls to be determined [etc.]</p> <p>Employee means a person employed under a contract of service.</p> <p>Labour relations matter means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) any of the matters specified in paragraphs a) to g) of Section 218 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 (matters which may be the subject of a trade dispute, within the meaning of that Act); or b) any dispute about a matter falling within paragraph a) above <p>(applies to trade disputes relating to office holders as well as employees).</p> <p>Office holder in relation to the authority, means the holder of any paid office appointments which are or may be made or confirmed by the authority or by any joint board on which the authority is represented or by any person who holds any such office or is an employee of the authority</p>

1 Description of Exempt information	Qualification	Notes
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings	Exempt information if and so long, as in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information – see note on public interest at the end of table	Privilege lies with the “client” which broadly is the council. Seek the view of the relevant Chief Officer whether they wish to waive privilege.
6. Information which reveals that the authority proposes – a) to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or b) to make an order	Exempt information if and so long, as in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information – see note on public interest at the end of table	The authority is a reference to the principal council or, as the case may be, the committee or sub-committee in relation to whose proceedings or documents the question whether information is exempt or not falls to be determined [etc.]
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.	Exempt information if and so long, as in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information – see note on public interest at the end of table	
8. Information which is subject to any obligation of confidentiality	Exempt information if and so long, as in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information – see note on public interest at the end of table	This will not apply to all the papers before a Standards Committee but is likely to need careful consideration in the circumstances of a Investigation or Determination.
9. Information which relates in any way to matters concerning national security	Exempt information if and so long, as in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information – see note on public interest at the end of table	

4.1 Public Interest

There is no legal definition of what the “public interest” in applying³ the public interest test to exemptions, Freedom of Information Act 2000” identifies the following as some of the relevant considerations:

- The public interest in disclosure is particularly strong where the information in question would assist public understanding of an issue that is subject to a current national debate
- The issue has generated public or parliamentary debate
- Proper debate cannot take place without wide availability of all the relevant information
- The issue affects a wide range of individuals or companies
- The public interest in a local interest group having sufficient information to represent effectively local interest on an issue
- Facts and analysis behind major policy decisions
- Known reasons for decisions
- Accountability for proceeds of sale of assets in public ownership
- Openness and accountability for tender processes and prices
- Public interest in public bodies obtaining value for money
- Public health
- Contingency plans in an emergency
- Damage to the environment

Information falling within any of paragraphs 1-10 above is not exempt by virtue of that paragraph if it relates to proposed development for which the local planning authority can grant itself planning permission under Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992.

11. EXCLUSION OF ACCESS BY THE PUBLIC TO REPORTS

If the Monitoring Officer thinks fit, the Council may exclude access by the public to reports which in their opinion relate to items during which, in accordance with Rule 10, the meeting is likely not to be open to the public. Such reports will be marked “Not for publication” together with the category of information likely to be disclosed.

12. APPLICATION OF RULES TO THE CABINET

Rules 13-14 apply to the Cabinet and its committees. If the Cabinet or its Committees meet to take a key decision then it must also comply with Rules 1-11 unless Rule 15 (general exception) or Rule 16 (special urgency) apply. A key decision is defined in Article 13.03 of this Constitution.

If the Cabinet or its committees meet to discuss a key decision to be taken collectively, with an officer other than a political assistant present, within 28 days of the date according to the forward plan by which it is to be decided, then it must also comply with Rules 1-11 unless Rule 15 (general exception) or Rule 16 (special urgency) apply. A key decision is defined in Article 13.3 of this Constitution. This requirement does not include meetings, whose sole purpose is for officers to brief members.

13. PROCEDURE BEFORE TAKING KEY DECISIONS

Subject to Rule 15 (general exception) and Rule 16 (special urgency) a key decision may not be taken unless:

- (a) a notice (called here a forward plan) has been published in connection with the matter in question;
- (b) at least 5 clear working days have elapsed since the publication of the forward plan; and
- (c) where the decision is to be taken at a meeting of the Cabinet, notice of the meeting has been given in accordance with Rule 4 (notice of meetings).

14. THE FORWARD PLAN

14.1 Period of forward plan

Forward plans will be prepared by the Leader to cover a period of four months, beginning with the first day of any month. They will be prepared on a monthly basis and subsequent plans will cover a period beginning with the first day of the second month covered in the preceding plan.

14.2 Contents of forward plan

The forward plan will contain matters which the Leader has reason to believe will be subject of a key decision (including those deemed to be confidential) to be taken by the Cabinet, , individual members of the Cabinet, Officers, or under joint arrangements in the course of the discharge of a Cabinet function during the period covered by the plan. The forward plan will also contain matters which the Leader has reason to believe are confidential but non-key. It will describe the following particulars in so far as the information is available or might reasonably be obtained.

- (i) the matter in respect of which a decision is to be made;
 - (ii) where the decision taker is an individual, their name and title, if any and where the decision taken is a body, its name and details of membership;
 - (iii) the date on which, or the period within which, the decisions will be taken;
 - (iv) the identity of the principal groups whom the decision taker proposes to consult before taking the decision;
 - (v) the means by which any such consultation is proposed to be undertaken;
 - (vi) the steps any person might take who wishes to make representations to the Cabinet or decision taker about the matter in respect of which the decision is to be made, and the date by which those steps must be taken;
- and

- (vii) a list of the documents submitted to the decision taker for consideration in relation to the matter.

14.3 Key decisions and confidential non-key decisions must be identified at least 2 months prior to a Cabinet meeting and published in the forward plan at least 28 days before the a Cabinet meeting is due to be held. The Monitoring Officer will publish once a year a notice in at least one newspaper circulating in the area, stating:

- (a) that key decisions are to be taken on behalf of the Council;
- (b) that a forward plan containing particulars of the matters on which decisions are to be taken will be prepared on a monthly basis;
- (c) that the plan will contain details of the key decisions to be made for the four month period following its publication;
- (d) that each plan will be available for inspection at reasonable hours free of charge at the Council's offices;
- (e) that each plan will contain a list of the documents submitted to the decision takers for consideration in relation to the key decisions on the plan;
- (f) the address from which, subject to any prohibition or restriction on their disclosure, copies of, or extracts from, any document listed in the forward plan is available;
- (g) that other documents may be submitted to decision takers;
- (h) the procedure for requesting details of documents (if any) as they become available; and
- (i) the dates on each month in the following year on which each forward plan will be published and available to the public at the Council's offices.

15. GENERAL EXCEPTION

If a matter which is likely to be a key decision has not been included in the forward plan, then subject to Rule 16 (special urgency), the decision may still be taken if:

- (a) the decision must be taken by such a date that it is impracticable to defer the decision until it has been included in the next forward plan;
- (b) the Monitoring Officer has informed the Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee or if there is no such person, each member of that committee in writing/electronic means, by notice, of the matter to which the decision is to be made;
- (c) the Monitoring Officer has made copies of that notice available to the public at the offices of the Council; and
- (d) at least 5 clear working days have elapsed since the Monitoring Officer complied with (a) and (b).

Where such a decision is taken collectively, it must be taken in public

16. SPECIAL URGENCY

If by virtue of the date by which a decision must be taken Rule 15 (general exception) cannot be followed, then the decision can only be taken if the decision taker (if an individual) or the Chair of the body making the decision, obtains the agreement of the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that the taking of the decision cannot be reasonably deferred. If there is not a Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or if the Chair is unavailable or unable to act, then the agreement of the Chair of the Council, or in their absence the Vice- Chair of the Council will suffice.

17. REPORT TO THE COUNCIL

17.1 When the Overview and Scrutiny Committee can require a report

If the Overview and Scrutiny Committee thinks that a key decision has been taken which was not:

- (a) included in the forward plan; or
- (b) the subject of the general exception procedure under Rule 15; or
- (c) the subject of an agreement with its Committee Chair, or the Chair /Vice Chair of the Council under Rule 16;

the Committee may require the Cabinet to submit a report to the Council within such reasonable time as the Committee specifies. The power to require a report rests with the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, but is also delegated to the Monitoring Officer, who shall require such a report on behalf of the Committee when so requested by the Chair or any 5 members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. Alternatively the requirement may be raised by resolution passed at a meeting of a relevant scrutiny committee.

17.2 Cabinet's report to Council

The Cabinet will prepare a report for submission to the next available meeting of the Council. However, if the next meeting of the Council is within 7 working days of receipt of the written notice, or the resolution of the committee, then the report may be submitted to the meeting after that. The report to Council will set out particulars of the decision, the individual or body making the decision, and if the leader is of the opinion that it was not a key decision the reasons for that opinion.

17.3 Quarterly reports on special urgency decisions

In any event the Leader will submit quarterly reports to the Council on the Cabinet decisions taken in the circumstances set out in Rule 16 (special urgency) in the preceding three months. The report will include the number of decisions so taken and a summary of the matters in respect of which those decisions were taken.

18. RECORD OF DECISIONS

After any meeting of the Cabinet or any of its committees, whether held in public or private, the Monitoring Officer or their nominee or, where no officer was present, the person presiding at the meeting, will produce a record of every decision taken at that

meeting as soon as practicable. The record will include a statement of the reasons for each decision and any alternative options considered and rejected at that meeting and details of any interests declared at the meeting (or a note of any dispensations granted by the Council's Standards Committee in relation to such interests).

19. INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS

The record of decisions referred to in Rule 18 together with any report and background papers which do not contain confidential or exempt information will be made available to the public and press and copies will be provided subject to payment of reasonable costs.

20. ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS OF THE CABINET

The Chief Executive, the Chief Financial Officer and the Monitoring Officer, and their nominees are entitled to attend any meeting of the Cabinet and its committees. The Cabinet may not meet unless the Chief Executive has been given reasonable notice that a meeting is to take place.

21. DECISIONS BY INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

21.1 Reports intended to be taken into account

Where an individual member of the Cabinet receives a report which they intend to take into account in making a key decision, then they will not make the decision until at least 5 clear working days after that report was made publicly available under paragraph 21.2 below or would have been made publicly available but for the fact that it contains confidential or exempt information.

21.2 Provision of Copies of report

Unless it contains confidential or exempt information the Councillor making the decision referred to in paragraph 21.1 shall ensure that the Monitoring Officer makes the report available for inspection by the public as soon as is reasonably practicable after that Councillor receives it.

21.1 Record of individual decision

As soon as is reasonably practicable after a Cabinet decision has been taken by an individual member of the Cabinet, they will prepare or instruct the Monitoring officer to prepare, a record of the decision which shall include a statement of the reasons for it, any alternative options considered and rejected, a record of any conflict of interest declared by any Cabinet member who is consulted by the decision maker and in respect of any declared conflict of interest a note of any dispensation granted by the Standards Committee.

The provisions of Rules 7 and 8 (inspection of documents after meetings) will also apply to the making of decisions by individual Cabinet members. This does not apply to the disclosure of exempt information or advice from a political assistant.

22. SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

22.1 Rights to copies

Subject to Rule 23.2 below, members of the Scrutiny Committees will be entitled to foresight of copies of any document which is in the possession or control of the Cabinet or its committees and which contain material relating to:

- (a) any business transacted be it a public or private meeting of the Cabinet or its committees; or
- (b) any decision taken by an individual member of the Cabinet.

22.2 Limit on rights

A scrutiny committee will not be entitled to:

- (a) any document that is in draft form;
- (b) any part of a document that contains exempt or confidential information, unless that information is relevant to an action or decision they are reviewing or scrutinising or intend to scrutinise; or
- (c) the advice of a political adviser.

23. ADDITIONAL RIGHTS OF ACCESS FOR MEMBERS

23.1 Material relating to previous business

All members will be entitled to inspect any document which is in the possession or under the control of the Cabinet or its committees unless either (a) or (b) below applies.

- a) it contains exempt information falling within paragraphs 1 to 6, 9, 11, 12 and 14 of the categories of exempt information; or
- b) it contains the advice of a political adviser.

23.2 Material relating to key decisions

All members of the Council will be entitled to inspect any document (except those available only in draft form) in the possession or under the control of the Cabinet or its committees which relates to any key decision unless paragraph (a) or (b) above applies.

23.3 Nature of rights

These rights of a member are additional to any other right they may have.

BUDGET POLICY FRAMEWORK PROCEDURE RULES

This Section contains particularly important rules regarding the Cabinet's decision making on budgetary and policy matters.

The budget and policy framework sets the context within which decision making by the Cabinet will take place.

1. The Framework for Cabinet Decisions

The Council will be responsible for the adoption of its budget and policy framework as set out in Article 4. Once a budget or a policy framework is in place, it will be the responsibility of the Cabinet to implement it.

2. Process for Developing the Framework

The process by which the budget and policy framework shall be developed is:

- a) The Cabinet will publicise a timetable for making proposals to the Council for the adoption of any plan, strategy or budget that forms part of the budget and policy framework, and its arrangements for consultation after publication of those initial proposals. This will be published on the Council's Forward Plan document.
- b) The draft detailed budget proposals will be developed under the guidance of the Section 151 Officer by the Council's officers in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Members.
- c) In accordance with the Financial Procedure Rules, the Council's Section 151 Officer and the Cabinet Member for Finance will present a report on the overall budget strategy to the Cabinet and the Scrutiny Committee(s).
- d) The Cabinet shall consider the draft detailed budget proposals for each service area of the Council's activities and shall refer them to the Scrutiny Committee(s) for consideration.
- e) The Cabinet Member for Finance and the Council's Section 151 Officer will take any responses from Scrutiny into account in drawing up firm proposals for submission to the Council, and the report to Council will reflect the comments made by consultees and the Cabinet's response.
- f) If the Council accepts the recommendation of Cabinet without amendment, the Council may make a decision which has immediate effect. Otherwise, it may only make an in-principle decision.
- g) Where the Council makes an in principle decision in relation to a budget, it must inform the Leader of any objections which it has to the draft budget and must give to their instructions requiring the Cabinet to reconsider, in the light of those objections, the draft budget submitted to it.
- h) Where the Council gives instructions in accordance with sub-paragraph (g), it must specify a period of at least five working days beginning on the day after

the date on which the Leader receives the instructions on behalf of the Cabinet within which the Leader may -

- (i) submit a revision of the draft budget as amended by the Cabinet with the Cabinet's reasons for any amendment made to the draft budget, to the Council for its consideration; or
 - (ii) inform the Council of any disagreement that the Cabinet has with any of the Council's objections and the Cabinet's reasons for any such disagreement.
- i) When the period specified by the Council, referred to in sub-paragraph (h), has expired, the Council must, when amending, approving or adopting the draft budget or, if there is one, a revised draft budget submitted to it by the Cabinet take into account any amendments made to the draft budget that are included in any revised draft budget submitted by the Cabinet, the Cabinet's reasons for those amendments, any disagreement that the Cabinet has with any of the Council's objections and the Cabinet reasons for that disagreement, which the Leader submitted to the Council, or informed the Council of, within the period specified.
 - j) The Council's final decision shall then be made public in accordance with Article 4, and shall be implemented immediately;
 - k) In approving the budget and policy framework, the Council will also specify the extent of virement within the budget and degree of in-year changes to the policy framework which may be undertaken by the Cabinet, in accordance with paragraphs 5 and 6 of these Rules (virement and in-year changes to policy framework). Any other changes to the budgetary and policy framework are reserved to the Council.

3. Decisions outside the budget or policy framework

- a) Subject to the provisions of paragraph 5 (virement) the Cabinet, individual members of the Cabinet, any officers or joint arrangements discharging Cabinet functions may only take decisions which are in line with the budget and policy framework. If any of these bodies or persons wishes to make a decision which is contrary to the policy framework, or contrary to or not wholly in accordance with the budget approved by full

Council, then that decision may only be taken by the Council, subject to paragraph 4 below.

- b) If the Cabinet, individual members of the Cabinet, any officers or joint arrangements discharging Cabinet functions want to make such a decision, they shall take advice from the Monitoring Officer and/or the Section 151 Officer as to whether the decision they want to make would be contrary to the policy framework, or contrary to or not wholly in accordance with the budget. If the advice of either of those officers is that the decision would not be in line with the existing budget and/or policy framework, then the decision must be referred by that body or person to the Council for decision, unless the decision is a matter of urgency, in which case the provisions in paragraph 4 (urgent decisions outside the budget and policy framework) shall apply.

4. Urgent decisions outside the budget or policy framework

The Cabinet, an individual member of the Cabinet or officers, or joint arrangements discharging Cabinet functions may take a decision which is contrary to the Council's policy framework or contrary to or not

wholly in accordance with the budget approved by full Council if the decision is a matter of urgency. However, the decision may only be taken:

- (i) if it is not practical to convene a quorate meeting of the full Council; and
- (ii) if the Chair of a relevant Scrutiny Committee agrees that the decision is a matter of urgency.

The reasons why it is not practical to convene a quorate meeting of full Council, and the Chair of the relevant Scrutiny Committee's consent to the decision being taken as a matter of urgency must be noted on the record of the decision. In the absence of the Chair of the relevant Scrutiny Committee the consent of the Deputy Chair will be sufficient.

Following the decision, the decision taker will provide a full report to the next available Council meeting explaining the decision, the reasons for it and why the decision was treated as a matter of urgency.

5. Virement

Virement between budget heads is an integral and important feature of budgetary control. It allows service providers to adapt to service changes within Council policy. The details of virement can be found in the section on Financial Procedure Rules in Part 4 of the Constitution.

6. In-year changes to policy framework

The responsibility for agreeing the budget and policy framework lies with the Council, and decisions by the Cabinet, an individual member of the Cabinet, officers or joint arrangements discharging Cabinet functions must be in line with it. Changes to any policy and strategy which make up the policy framework may be made within the general discretion of those bodies or individuals except those changes which relate to virements and supplementary estimates.

7. Call-in of decisions outside the budget or policy framework

- (a) Where a Scrutiny Committee is of the opinion that a Cabinet decision is, or if made would be, contrary to the policy framework, or contrary to or not wholly in accordance with the Council's budget, then it shall seek advice from the Monitoring Officer and/or Section 151 Officer.
- (b) In respect of functions which are the responsibility of the Cabinet, the Monitoring Officer's report and/or Section 151 Officer's report shall be to the Cabinet with a copy to every Member of the Council. Regardless of whether the decision is delegated or not, the Cabinet must meet to decide what action to take in respect of the Monitoring Officer's report and to prepare a report to Council in the event that the Monitoring Officer or the Section 151 Officer conclude that the decision was a departure, and to the Scrutiny Panel if the Monitoring Officer or the Section 151 Officer conclude that the decision was not a departure
- (c) If the decision has yet to be made, or has been made but not yet implemented, and the advice from the Monitoring Officer and/or the Section 151 Officer is that the decision is or would be contrary to the policy framework or contrary to or not wholly in accordance with the budget, the Scrutiny Committee may refer the matter to Council. In such cases, no further action will be taken in respect of the decision or its implementation until the Council has met and considered the matter. The Council shall meet within 10 working days of the request by the

Scrutiny Committee. At the meeting it will receive a report from the Cabinet of the decision or proposals and the advice of the Monitoring Officer and/or the Section 151 Officer. The Council may either:

- (i) endorse a decision or proposal of the Cabinet as falling within the existing budget and policy framework. In this case no further action is required, save that the decision of the Council be minuted and circulated to all Councillors in the normal way, and the decision implemented; or
- (ii) amend the Council's Financial Procedure Rules having regard to advice from the Council's Section 151 officer, or policy concerned to encompass the decision or proposal of the body or individual responsible for that Cabinet function and agree to the decision with immediate effect. In this case, no further action is required save that the decision of the Council be minuted and circulated to all Councillors in the normal way, and the decision be implemented; or
- (iii) where the Council accepts that the decision or proposal is contrary to the policy framework or contrary to or not wholly in accordance with the budget, and does not amend the existing framework to accommodate it, require the Cabinet to reconsider the matter in accordance with the advice of either the Monitoring Officer or Section 151 Officer.

8. Special Provisions regarding calculation of Budget and Precepts

- (a) Subject to sub-paragraph (e) below, where before 8th February in any financial year, the Cabinet submits to the Council for its consideration in relation to the following financial year:
 - (i) estimates of the amounts to be aggregated in making a calculation (whether originally or by way of substitute) in accordance with any of sections 32 to 37 or 43 to 49, of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended by the Localism Act 2011;
 - (ii) estimates of other amounts to be used for the purposes of such a calculation;
 - (iii) estimates of such a calculation; or
 - (iv) amounts required to be stated in a precept under Chapter IV of Part 1 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended by the Localism Act 2011,

and following consideration of those estimates or amounts the Council has any objections to them it must take the action set out in sub-paragraph (b) below.

- (b) Before the Council makes a calculation (whether originally or by way of substitute) in accordance with any of the sections referred to in paragraph (a)(i) above, or issues a precept under Chapter IV of Part 1 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended by the Localism Act 2011, it must inform the Leader of any objections which it has to the Cabinet's estimates or amounts and must give to him instructions requiring the Cabinet to reconsider, in the light of those objections, those estimates and amounts in accordance with the Council's requirements.
- (c) Where the Council gives instructions in accordance with sub-paragraph (b) above, it must specify a period of at least five working days beginning on the day

after the date on which the Leader receives the instructions on behalf of the Cabinet within which the Leader may -

- (i) Submit a revision of the estimates or amounts as amended by the Cabinet, which have been reconsidered in accordance with the Council's requirements, with the Cabinet's reasons for any amendments made to the estimates or amounts, to the Council for the Council's consideration; or
 - (ii) Inform the Council of any disagreement that the Cabinet has with any of the Council's objections and the Cabinet's reasons for any such disagreement.
- (d) When the period specified by the Council, referred to in paragraph (c) above, has expired, the Council must, when making calculations (whether originally or by way of substitute) in accordance with the sections referred to in sub-paragraph (a)(ii) above, or issuing a precept under Chapter IV of Part 1 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended by the Localism Act 2011, take into account:
 - (i) any amendments to the estimates or amounts that are included in any revised estimates or amounts;
 - (ii) the Cabinet's reasons for those amendments;
 - (iii) any disagreement that the Cabinet has with any of the Council's objections; and
 - (iv) the Cabinet's reasons for that disagreement,which the Leader submitted to the Council, or informed the Council of, within the period specified.
- (e) Paragraphs (a) to (d) above shall not apply in relation to –
 - (i) calculations or substitute calculations which an authority is required to make in accordance with section 52I, 52J, 52T or 52U of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended by the Localism Act 2011; and
 - (ii) amounts stated in a precept issued to give effect to calculations or substitute calculations made in accordance with section 52J or 52U of that Act.
- (f) The Council shall by the 11 March in each year, by simple majority, determine the council tax requirement and set the level of council tax for the ensuing financial year, having considered the proposals of the Cabinet.

CABINET PROCEDURE RULES

1. Who may make Cabinet decisions?

- 1.1 The Cabinet functions are set out in Part 3 of the Constitution and may be discharged by:
- I. the Leader and Cabinet Members as appointed by the Leader;
 - II. a committee appointed by the Cabinet (which must only include Cabinet Members);
 - III. an individual member of the Cabinet where the Leader of the Council has delegated powers to that Cabinet Member within their portfolio remit, as set out in Part 3 of the Constitution;
- 1.2 Where the Cabinet, or an individual member of the Cabinet is responsible for a Cabinet function and has been given appropriate delegated powers by the Leader, they may delegate further to an, joint arrangements or an officer. Even where Cabinet functions have been delegated, that fact does not prevent the discharge of delegated functions by the person or body who delegated.

2. Cabinet meetings – when and where?

- 2.1 The Cabinet will meet at least 10 times per year at times to be agreed by the Leader. The Cabinet shall meet at the Council's main offices or another location to be agreed by the Leader. Notice of meetings will be publicised.

3. Annual Budget Meeting of Cabinet

- 3.1 Prior to the Annual Budget Meeting of Council there shall be an Annual Budget Meeting of the Cabinet. This will be held each year to review the Council's financial position, consider budget proposals for the forthcoming financial year and agree recommendations to Full Council. This meeting will take place during the annual budget-setting cycle and will include presentation of draft budgets, updates on funding, and any required savings or investment proposals. Cabinet Members will have the opportunity to discuss, amend and approve the draft budget before it is formally submitted for consideration.
- 3.2 The business of the Annual Budget Meeting shall be limited to the following:
- I. Approve the minutes of the last meeting;
 - II. Receive any declarations of interest;
 - III. Receive and consider the Council plan, budget and associated financial based reports; and
 - IV. Any other urgent business as agreed by the Leader.

4. Questions By the Public

- 4.1 Members of the public may ask questions of members of the Cabinet, which are relevant to their portfolios. Where a question has been incorrectly directed, assigned, or addressed to the wrong person, the error may be corrected and the responsibility reallocated to the appropriate Cabinet Member. Such reallocation shall take effect immediately once identified and shall not invalidate any lawful proceedings already undertaken. The Proper Officer or Monitoring Officer may advise the meeting on the appropriate allocation to ensure continuity, clarity, and proper conduct of business.
- 4.2 Questions will be asked in the order determined by the Chair and questions of a similar subject can be grouped together.
- 4.3 No question or answer may exceed 5 minutes without the permission of the Chair

- 4.4 The totality of questions and answers may not extend beyond 15 minutes without the consent of the Chair
- 4.5 A question may only be asked if notice has been given by delivering it in writing or by electronic mail to the Chief Executive no later than noon, 8 clear days before the day of the meeting.
- 4.6 The person who submits the question is hereinafter referred to as the Questioner.
- 4.7 Number of questions**
- I. At anyone meeting no person may submit more than 2 questions
 - II. No more than 2 such questions may be asked on behalf of one organisation.
 - III. A maximum of 4 questions in any local government year may be submitted by any person or on behalf of an organisation or business.

4.8 Scope of questions

4.8.1 The Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair of Cabinet may reject a question if it:

- I. is not about a matter for which the local authority has a responsibility or which affects the district;
- II. is a defamatory, frivolous or offensive;
- III. is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Cabinet or Council in the past six months;
- IV. requires the disclosure of the confidential or except information;
- V. relates to judicial/ quasi-judicial items, planning and licensing applications or appeals;
- VI. names Officers or Members by name and/or alleges breaches of the Members' Code of Conduct which are subject or may be subject to investigations; or
- VII. relates to an ongoing complaint to the Council, either at Stage 1 or 2, or a complaint that is currently subject to investigation by the Local Government Ombudsman or a complaint which has been concluded by the Local Government Ombudsman.
- VIII. It exceeds the maximum number of questions permitted under Rule 4.6

4.9 The Chair will invite the Questioner to put the question to the relevant cabinet member.

4.10 A Questioner must be present at the meeting to ask the question

4.11 Any question which cannot be dealt with during public question time, either because of lack of time or because of the non-attendance of the member to whom it was to be put, will be dealt with by a written answer.

5. Questions by Members

5.1 A Member of the Council may ask a Question on notice of any Member of the Cabinet which are relevant to their portfolio. Where a question has been incorrectly directed, assigned, or addressed to the wrong person, the error may be corrected, and the responsibility reallocated to the appropriate Cabinet Member. Such reallocation shall take effect immediately once identified and shall not invalidate any lawful proceedings already undertaken. The Proper Officer or Monitoring Officer may advise the meeting on the appropriate allocation to ensure continuity, clarity, and proper conduct of business.

5.2 Liaison (Non-voting) Cabinet Members may not ask questions during the Questions by Members section.

5.3 Questions must:

- I. disclose a question;

- II. be limited to matters which fall within the remit of the relevant Cabinet Members portfolio
- III. be a matter for which the local authority has a responsibility and direct control over;
- IV. not be defamatory, frivolous or offensive;
- V. not be substantially the same as a formal question or motion, which is under consideration by or has, in the past six months, been put at a meeting of the Council or Cabinet;
- VI. not relate to a planning application or any other quasi-judicial matter; and
- VII. not require disclosure of confidential or exempt information.

5.4 The Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair may reject a question if it is defamatory, frivolous or offensive, or relates to a matter which the Council has no control, responsibility or influence. The Member asking the questions shall have the matter referred back to them with reasons for the rejection indicating that it will not be put at the meeting.

5.5 For any, one meeting, no Member may submit more than 1 question

5.6 A Member may only ask a question if:

- I. they have been received by the Chief Executive in writing or by e-mail by no later than noon 8 clear days prior to the meeting; or
- II. The question must clearly state who is asking it and to whom it is addressed

5.7 Any submitted question cannot be altered after the deadlines specified in Rule 5.6

5.8 Where a Cabinet Member to whom a question is addressed believes that a question may more conveniently be answered by another Cabinet Member to whom questions may be put, then that other member may answer the question.

5.9 An answer may take the form of:

- I. a direct oral answer;
- II. where the desired information is in a publication of the Council or other published work, a reference to that publication; or
- III. where the reply cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer circulated later to all members of the Council, to be sent within 10 clear days of the Council meeting by the member of whom the question was asked

5.10 A member asking a question may ask one supplementary question without notice of the member to whom the first question was asked. The supplemental question must arise directly out of the original question or the reply.

5.11 Questions will be asked in the order determined by the Chair. Questions of a similar subject can be grouped together.

5.12 The length of time for questions by members under this Rule, including the giving of answers shall be limited to 15 minutes unless the Chair agrees to an extension.

5.13 Any question which cannot be dealt with during the allocated question time, because of lack of time should be dealt with via written response that shall be sent within 10 clear days of the Cabinet meeting. A copy will be provided to all members.

6. Clear Days Definition

6.1 Clear Day(s) Days means:

- I. the day on which the notice is given or published; and
- II. the day of the meeting or event to which the notice relates.

6.2 For the purpose of calculating clear days:

- I. Saturdays, Sundays, bank holidays, and any day of national mourning or national thanksgiving shall not be counted where legislation requires clear days to be given (Local Government Act 1972, s.243).
- II. A "clear day" runs for a full 24 hours from midnight to midnight.
- III. Where a notice period is expressed in clear days, the required number of full intervening days must elapse between the date of issue and the date of the meeting.

6.3 This definition applies to all notice periods required under these Cabinet Procedure Rules.

7. Public or private meetings

7.1 Meetings of the Cabinet will be in public except for those items which include confidential or exempt information.

7.2 Members of the public and press may only be excluded by agreement of those Members of the Council present, either in accordance with the Access to Information Rules in Part 5 of this Constitution or Rule 28 (Disturbance by Public) or where Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 requires:

- 7.2.1 Mandatory exclusion where confidential information would be disclosed (no resolution needed).
- 7.2.2 Discretionary exclusion for exempt information, but only by passing a resolution which:
 - III. identifies the item
 - IV. states the relevant Schedule 12A category

7.3 The Access of Information Procedure Rules contained in this part of the Constitution applies to Cabinet Meetings.

7.4 Members of the Council may remain throughout the meeting, (including when the public and press have been excluded) provided they do not have an interest to declare which excludes them, in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct.

8. Quorum

8.1 The quorum for a meeting of the Cabinet, or a sub-committee of it, shall be one quarter of the total number of members of the Cabinet (including the leader) or 3 including the Chair whichever is the larger.

8.2 For any committee or sub-committee with an appointed with a membership of three councillors, the quorum for that sub-committee shall be two members. No business may be transacted unless at least two members are physically present for the duration of the item under consideration

9. How decisions to be taken by the Cabinet

9.1 Decisions will be made on the basis of majority voting (with only Cabinet members entitled to a vote) with the Chair having a second or casting vote.

10. How Cabinet meetings are conducted

10.1 At a Cabinet meeting if the Leader is present they will chair the meeting. In their absence, the person appointed as Deputy Leader will chair the meeting. If both are absent the Cabinet will appoint a person from among those present to chair that meeting.

- 10.2 The Rules of Procedure applicable to Council meetings do not apply to Cabinet meetings. The Procedure is determined this procedure and thereafter by the Cabinet itself under the control of the Chair.

11. The Business of Cabinet Meetings

- 11.1 At each meeting of the Cabinet the following business will be conducted:

- I. apologies for absence;
- II. consideration of the minutes of the last meeting;
- III. declarations of interest, if any;
- IV. matters referred to the Cabinet (whether by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or by the Council) for reconsideration by the Cabinet in accordance with the provisions contained in the Scrutiny Procedure Rules or the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules set out in Part 5 of this Constitution;
- V. consideration of reports from scrutiny committees;
- VI. matters set out in the agenda for the meeting, and which shall indicate which are key decisions and which are not in accordance with the Access to Information Procedure rules set out in Part 5 of this Constitution; and
- VII. any other business which the Chair considers to be urgent.

12. Consultation

- 12.1 All reports to the Cabinet from any member of the Cabinet or an officer on proposals relating to the budget and policy framework must contain details of the nature and extent of consultation with stakeholders and relevant scrutiny committees, and the outcome of that consultation. Reports about other matters will set out the details and outcome of consultation as appropriate. The level of consultation required will be proportionate to the nature of the matter under consideration.

13. Who can put items on the Cabinet agenda?

- 13.1 The Leader will decide upon the schedule for the meetings of the Cabinet. They may require the Chief Executive to put on the agenda of any Cabinet meetings any matter which he considers appropriate.
- 13.2 Any member of the Cabinet may require the Chief Executive to make sure that an item is placed on the agenda of the next available meeting of the Cabinet for consideration in relation to matters within that particular members' area of responsibility.
- 13.3 The Chief Executive will make sure that an item is placed on the agenda of the next available meeting of the Cabinet where the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or Performance Improvement Scrutiny Committee or the full Council have resolved that an item be considered by the Cabinet. However, there may only be up to 3 such items on any one agenda.
- 13.4 Any member of the Council may ask the Leader to put an item on the agenda of a Cabinet meeting for consideration, and if the Leader agrees the item will be considered at the next available meeting of the Cabinet. The notice of the meeting will give the name of the Councillor who asked for the item to be considered. The individual member will be invited to attend the meeting and with the approval of the Cabinet may speak on the item.
- 13.5 The Monitoring Officer and/or the Chief Financial Officer may include an item for consideration on the agenda of a Cabinet meeting and may require the Chief Executive to call such a meeting in pursuance of their statutory duties. In other circumstances, where any two of the Chief Executive, Chief Financial Officer and Monitoring Officer are of the opinion that a meeting of the Cabinet needs to be called to consider a matter that requires a decision, they may jointly include an item on the agenda of a Cabinet meeting. If there is no meeting of the Cabinet soon enough to deal with the issue in question, then the person(s) entitled to include

an item on the agenda may also require that a meeting be convened at which the matter will be considered

14. Recoding of Meetings

14.1 Meetings of the Cabinet held in public may be recorded, filmed, photographed, or broadcast by any person, provided that such activities:

- I. do not disrupt the meeting;
- II. do not obstruct views or access; and
- III. comply with any reasonable directions given by the Chair.

14.2 The Council may make audio or video recordings of Cabinet meetings for the purposes of record-keeping, transparency, or publication on the Council's website.

14.3 The Chair may give guidance at the start of a meeting about the location of cameras, microphones, or other equipment to ensure proceedings are not disrupted. Where necessary, the Chair may require recording to cease temporarily or permanently.

14.4 No recording may take place during consideration of confidential or exempt items under the Access to Information Procedure Rules.

15. Use of Electronic Communications during meetings

15.1 Cabinet Members and officers may use laptops, tablets, and other electronic devices during meetings for purposes connected with the conduct of the meeting, including accessing electronic agendas, reports, or relevant information.

15.2 Devices must be used silently and in a manner that does not cause disruption or give the appearance of disengagement.

15.3 Personal messaging or communications unrelated to the meeting should not take place while the meeting is in session.

15.4 Members of the public may use electronic devices for note-taking or recording in accordance with the Recording of Meetings rules, provided such use does not interfere with the meeting.

16. Rules of Debate

16.1 The Chair is responsible for maintaining order and ensuring that debate is conducted fairly and efficiently. Their ruling on any matter of procedure or conduct shall be final.

16.2 Speaking Order

- I. Cabinet Members wishing to speak should indicate to the Chair.
- II. The Chair will call speakers in turn.
- III. Cabinet Liaison Members will be invited to ask their questions at the discretion of the Chair after Cabinet Members have finished speaking on the point.
- IV. Officers may be invited, at any point, to provide advice or clarification at any point.

16.3 The Chair may set reasonable time limits for speeches to ensure effective conduct of business.

16.4 Speakers must confine their remarks to the matter under consideration. The Chair may require a speaker to return to the subject or, if necessary, conclude their remarks.

16.5 A Cabinet Member may, with the permission of the Chair, raise a point of clarification relating to the matter under debate. Points of clarification must not be used to introduce new debate.

16.6 Interruptions

- I. Interruptions are not permitted except for points of order or clarification.
- II. The Chair may ask any Member interrupting or speaking out of turn to cease.
- III. Persistent disruption may result in the Member being excluded from the meeting.

16.7 Closure of Debate

- I. The Chair may close the debate and move directly to a decision where they consider the matter has been sufficiently discussed.
- II. This mirrors common practice at other authorities, where the Chair has discretion to end debate in Cabinet meetings.

16.8 Before taking the vote, the Chair may summarise the debate or invite the presenting Cabinet Member to do so.

SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULES

1. What will be the number and arrangements for scrutiny committees?

- 1.1 The Council will have an Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and as set out in Article 6 of this Constitution.
- 1.2 The Overview & Scrutiny Committee will act as a co-ordinating committee to ensure there is no overlap or omission in the workload of all the scrutiny committees. It will have the power to call in decisions of the Cabinet Committee or an individual Cabinet member under section 21(3) of the Local Government Act 2000. The Terms of Reference of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are set out in Part 3 of this Constitution.

2. Who may sit on scrutiny committees?

All Councillors except members of the Cabinet and assistants may be members of a scrutiny committee. However, no member may be involved in scrutinising a decision which they have been directly involved.

3. Co-optees

Overview and Scrutiny committees can choose to appoint additional non-statutory co-opted members to be members of committees, and sub-committees.

Co-opted members should bring relevant skills and experience in the area covered by the remit of the committee and, in-keeping with the politically impartial role of the committees, should not represent a political or lobbying organisation.

Overview and Scrutiny committees shall be entitled to recommend to Council the appointment of a number of people as non-voting co-optees provided that the number of Councillors on the Committee shall be greater than the number of co-optees.

4. Meetings of the scrutiny committees

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall meet monthly with the exception of August and January. In addition, extraordinary meetings may be called from time to time as and when appropriate. A scrutiny committee meeting may be called by the Chair of the relevant scrutiny committee, by any 5 members of the committee or by the Chief Executive if they consider it necessary or appropriate.

The Housing Sub-Committee will meet four times per year. In addition, extraordinary meetings may be called from time to time as and when appropriate.

5. Quorum

The quorum for a scrutiny committee shall be as set out for committees in the Council Procedure Rules in Part 5 of this Constitution and as further noted in Part 3

6. Who Chairs scrutiny committee meetings?

The Council will appoint the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (12 members).

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall determine who shall be Chair and Vice Chair of any Scrutiny Sub-Committee(s)

7. Work programme

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will have overall responsibility for the scrutiny work programme established at the its first meeting. In the event that other issues arise during the Council year and which require more immediate scrutiny these will

be delegated by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to the appropriate scrutiny committee or sub-committee.

8. Agenda items

Any member of a scrutiny committee or select panel shall be entitled to give notice in writing or by electronic mail to the Chief Executive or their nominee and the Chair of Committee that they wish an item relevant to the functions of the committee to be included on the agenda for the next available meeting of the committee or panel. On receipt of such a request the Chief Executive or their nominee and the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee will ensure that it is included on the next available agenda.

The scrutiny committees shall also respond, as soon as their work programme permits, to requests from the Council and if it considers it appropriate the Cabinet to review particular areas of Council activity. Where they do so, the scrutiny committee shall report their findings and any recommendations back to the Cabinet and/or Council. The Council and/or the Cabinet shall consider the report of the scrutiny committee within one month of receiving it.

9. Policy review and development

- (a) The role of the scrutiny committees in relation to the development of the Council's budget and policy framework is set out in detail in the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules.
- (b) In relation to the development of the Council's approach to other matters not forming part of its policy and budget framework, scrutiny committee or panels may make proposals to the Cabinet for developments in so far as they relate to matters within their terms of reference.
- (c) Scrutiny committees may hold enquiries and investigate the available options for future direction in policy development and may appoint advisers and assessors to assist them in this process. They may go on site visits, conduct public surveys, hold public meetings, commission research and do all other things that they reasonably consider necessary to inform their deliberations. They may ask witnesses to attend to address them on any matter under consideration and may pay to any advisers, assessors and witnesses a reasonable fee and expenses for doing so.

10. Reports from scrutiny committees

- (a) Once it has formed recommendations on proposals for development, the Overview and Scrutiny committee will prepare a formal report and submit it to the relevant Heads of Service for comment and send it to the Chief Executive who will chose one of the following options:
 - if the recommendations are consistent with the existing budgetary and policy framework, the report and the comments from the Heads of Service will be submitted to the next available Cabinet meeting
 - If the recommendations are not consistent with the existing budgetary and policy framework, the report and the comments from Heads of Service will be submitted to the next available Council meeting

- (b) If a scrutiny committee cannot agree on one single final report to the Council or Cabinet as appropriate, then one minority report may be prepared and submitted for consideration by the Council or Cabinet with the majority report.
- (c) After the report has been considered by either the Cabinet or Council, as appropriate, their response shall be reported to the next available Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

11. Making sure that scrutiny reports are considered by the Cabinet or Council

- (a) If the Cabinet is due to consider a report on the same topic as the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's report within a period of 8 weeks of it being adopted by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Cabinet may consider the two reports together. If for any reason the Cabinet does not consider the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's report within 12 weeks then unless an extension of time for consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is agreed the scrutiny report will be referred to the next meeting of the Council.
- (b) Scrutiny committees will in any event have access to the Cabinet's forward plan and timetable for decisions and intentions for consultation. They will be able to respond at any point in the course of the Cabinet's consultation process in relation to any key decision.
- (c) Where the Overview and Scrutiny committee prepares a report or consideration by the Cabinet in relation to a matter in respect of which an individual Cabinet member has been given powers to act on behalf of the Cabinet, then the Overview and Scrutiny committee will submit a copy of their report to them for consideration. At the time of doing so, the scrutiny committee shall send a copy to the Chief Executive. The member with delegated decision making power must consider the report and respond in writing to the Overview and Scrutiny committee within two weeks of receiving it. A copy of their written response to it shall be sent to the Chief Executive and the Leader. The member will also be required to attend the next available meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to present their response.
- (d) If the member with delegated decision making power does not accept the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee then the report will be referred to Cabinet as set out in Rule 10.

12. Rights of scrutiny committee members to documents

- (a) In addition to their rights as councillors, members of scrutiny committees have the additional right to documents, and to notice of meetings as set out in the Access to Information Procedure Rules in Part 5 of this Constitution.
- (b) Nothing in these Scrutiny Procedure Rules prevents more detailed liaison between the Cabinet and scrutiny committees as appropriate depending on the particular matter under consideration.

13. Members and officers giving account

- (a) Any scrutiny committee may scrutinise and review decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any Council functions. As well as reviewing documentation, in fulfilling the scrutiny role, it may require any member of the Cabinet, the Chair of a Committee, Chief Executive and/or any Executive Director or Head of Service to attend before it to explain in relation to matters within their remit:

- (i) any particular decision or series of decisions;
- (ii) the extent to which the actions taken implement Council policy; and/or
- (iii) their performance

and it is the duty of those persons to attend if so required.

- (b) Where any member or officer is required to attend a scrutiny committee under this provision, the Chair of the scrutiny committee will inform the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive shall inform the member or officer in writing giving at least 10 working days' notice of the meeting at which they are required to attend. The notice will state the nature of the item on which they are required to attend to give account and whether any papers are required to be produced for the committee. Where the account to be given to the committee will require the production of a report, then the member or officer concerned will be given sufficient notice to allow for preparation of that documentation.
- (c) Members of a scrutiny committee will limit their enquiries of officers to questions of fact and questions relating to the financial, legal, professional and technical aspects of the matter under consideration; political questions will be reserved for members.
- (d) Where, in exceptional circumstances, the member or officer is unable to attend on the required date, then the scrutiny committee shall in consultation with the member or officer arrange an alternative date for attendance a maximum of 28 days from the date of the original request.

14. Attendance by others

A scrutiny committee may invite people other than those people referred to in Scrutiny Procedure Rule 13 above to address it, discuss issues of local concern and/or answer questions. It may for example wish to hear from residents, stakeholders and members and officers in other parts of the public sector and shall invite such people to attend.

Attendance is of course entirely optional.

15. Call-in

15.1 Generally

Call-in should only be used in exceptional circumstances. It is the process for requiring reconsideration of decisions made by the Cabinet or by individual Cabinet members of the Cabinet such as where there is evidence which suggests that decisions have not been made in accordance with the principles set out in Article 13 (Decision Making) – this may include failure to consult effectively on key decisions, absence of any evidence on which to take the decision, failure to take into account all relevant information or reliance upon irrelevant considerations.

Specifically

The Call-in Procedure cannot be exercised on more than once occasion in respect of the same decision The Council has decided upon a system whereby only the Overview & Scrutiny Committee can require the call in of a decision.

The process and procedure for doing this is as follows:

15.2 Key decisions

- (a) When a key decision is made by the Cabinet, an individual member of the Cabinet, or a key decision is made by an officer with delegated authority from the Cabinet, or under joint arrangements, the decision shall be published, including where possible by electronic means, and shall be available at the Queen's Buildings of the Council normally within 5 working days of being made. Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be sent copies of the records of all such decision within the same timescale, by the person responsible for publishing the decision.
- (b) That notice will bear the date on which it is published and will specify that the decision will come into force (unless the Monitoring Officer certifies that the decision is outside the policy and/or budgetary framework agreed by the Council in which case the matter will be referred to the Council), and may then be implemented, on the expiry of 10 working days after the publication of the decision, unless Overview and Scrutiny Committee objects to it and calls it in.
- (c) The Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall consider all such key decisions within 10 working days of the decision being made.
- (d) If, having considered the decision, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is still concerned about it, then it may refer it back to the decision making person or body for reconsideration, setting out in writing the nature of its concerns or refer the matter to full Council or another scrutiny committee for further review.
- (e) If the Overview and Scrutiny Committee does not meet in the period set out above, or does meet but does not refer the matter back to the decision making person or body, the decision shall take effect on the date of the Overview and Scrutiny meeting, or the expiry of the 10 working day period, whichever is the earlier (unless the Monitoring Officer certifies that the decision is outside the policy and/or budgetary framework agreed by the Council in which case the matter will be referred to the Council).
- (f) If the matter was referred to full Council then the Council will meet within 15 working days to consider the matter and if the Council does not object to a decision which has been made, then no further action is necessary and the decision will be effective in accordance with the provision below. However, if the Council does object, it has no locus to make decisions in respect of a Cabinet decision unless it is contrary to the policy framework, or contrary to or not wholly consistent with the budget. Unless that is the case, the Council will refer any decision to which it objects back to the decision making person or body, together with the Council's views on the decision. That decision making body or person shall choose whether to amend the decision or not before reaching a final decision and implementing it. Where the decision was taken by the Cabinet as a whole or a committee of it a meeting will be convened to reconsider within 10 working days of the Council request. Where the decision was made by an individual, the individual will reconsider within 10 working days of the Council request or such other period as is agreed.
- (g) If the Council does not meet, or if it does but does not refer the decision back to the decision making body or person, the decision will become effective on the date of the Council meeting or expiry of the period in which the Council meeting should have been held, whichever is the earlier.

15.3 Non Key decisions

- (i) When a non-key decision is made by the Cabinet, an individual member of the Cabinet or a committee of the Cabinet or by an officer with delegated authority from the Cabinet or under joint arrangements the decision shall be published,

including where possible by electronic means, and shall be available at the Queen's Buildings officers of the Council normally within 5 working days of being made. All Members of the Council will be sent by first class post copies of the records of all such decisions within the same timescale, by the person responsible for publishing the decision.

- (ii) The notice will state that the decision will come into effect at noon on "a specified day" (which will be the fifth working day from the date of sending such notice) unless at least 4 members then give notice (in writing or by e-mail) that they require a particular decision to be considered for call-in, and outline proposals for alternative action. Such notice must be received by the Monitoring Officer or their nominee before noon on the "specified day". The notice requiring consideration for call in must contain sufficient information to identify the decision and the reason for the request.
- (iii) If due notice from at least 4 members is not received in accordance with (b) the decision will come into force and may then be implemented unless the Monitoring Officer certifies that the decision is outside the policy and/or budgetary framework agreed by the Council in which case the matter will be referred to the Council.
- (iv) If due notice from at least 4 members is received in accordance with (b) then the decision will be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee which will consider the decision at its next ordinary meeting or within 28 days, whichever is the shorter period.
- (v) If the Overview and Scrutiny Committee does not meet within 28 days or does meet but does not refer the matter back to the decision making body or person, the decision shall take effect on the date of the Overview and Scrutiny meeting or the expiry of the 28 days whichever is the earlier.
- (vi) If, having considered the decision, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is still concerned about it, then it may refer it back to the decision making person or body for reconsideration, setting out in writing nature of its concerns or refer the matter to full Council or another scrutiny committee for further review.
- (vii) If the matter was referred to full Council then the Council will meet within 15 working days to consider the matter and if the Council does not object to a decision which has been made, then no further action is necessary and the decision will be effective in accordance with the provision below. However, if the Council does object, it has no locus to make decisions in respect of a Cabinet decision unless it is contrary to the policy framework, or contrary to or not wholly consistent with the budget. Unless that is the case, the Council will refer any decision to which it objects back to the decision making person or body, together with the Council's views on the decision. That decision making body or person shall choose whether to amend the decision or not before reaching a final decision and implementing it. Where the decision was taken by the Cabinet as a whole or a committee of it a meeting will be convened to reconsider within 10 working days of the Council request. Where the decision was made by an individual, the individual will reconsider within 10 working days of the Council request or such other period as is agreed.
- (viii) If the Council does not meet, or if it does but does not refer the decision back to the decision making body or person, the decision will become effective on the date of the Council meeting or expiry of the period in which the Council meeting should have been held, whichever is the earlier.

15.4 Call-in and urgency

- (a) The call-in procedure set out above shall not apply where the decision being taken is urgent. A decision will be urgent if any delay likely to be caused by the call in process would seriously prejudice the Council's or the public's interests. The record of the decision, and notice by which it is made public shall state whether in the opinion of the decision making person or body, the decision is an urgent one, and therefore not subject to call-in. The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee must agree both that the decision proposed is reasonable in all the circumstances and to it being treated as a matter of urgency. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair's consent shall be required. Decisions taken as a matter of urgency must be reported to the next available meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, together with the reasons for urgency.
- (b) The operation of the provisions relating to call-in and urgency shall be monitored annually, and a report submitted to Council with proposals for review if necessary.

16. The party whip

The Party Whip means "Any instruction given by or on behalf of a political group to any Councillor who is a member of that group as to how that Councillor shall speak or vote on any matter before the Council or any committee or sub-committee, or the application or threat to apply any sanction by the group in respect of that Councillor should they speak or vote in any particular manner".

When considering any matter in respect of which a member of a scrutiny committee is subject to a party whip the member must declare the existence of the whip, and the nature of it before the commencement of the committee's deliberations on the matter. The declaration, and the detail of the whipping arrangements, shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

17. Procedure at scrutiny committee meetings

- (a) Scrutiny committees shall consider the following business:
 - (i) apologies;
 - (ii) minutes of the last meeting;
 - (iii) declarations of interest (including whipping declarations);
 - (iv) work plan and progress against it;
 - (v) consideration of any matter referred to the committee for a decision in relation to any matter referred to it for consideration by the Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee or Cabinet Committee;
 - (vi) responses of the Cabinet to reports of the scrutiny committee; and
 - (vii) the business otherwise set out on the agenda for the meeting.
- (b) Where the scrutiny committee conducts investigations (e.g. with a view to policy development), the committee may also ask people to attend to give evidence at committee meetings which are to be conducted in accordance with the following principles:

- (h) that the investigation be conducted fairly and all members of the committee be given the opportunity to ask questions of attendees, and to contribute and speak;
 - (i) that those assisting the committee by giving evidence be treated with respect and courtesy; and
 - (j) that the investigation be conducted so as to maximise the efficiency of the investigation or analysis.
- (c) Following any investigation or review, the committee/sub-committee shall prepare a report, for submission to the Cabinet and/or Council as appropriate and shall make its report and findings public unless the subject matter is mostly concerned with confidential or exempt information in which case it will make as much of it public as is possible without discussion such information.

18. Matters within the remit of more than one scrutiny committee

Where a matter for consideration by a scrutiny committee also falls within the remit of one or more other scrutiny committees, the decision as to which scrutiny committee will consider it will be resolved by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

19. Proceedings of Scrutiny Committee Meetings

Meetings of a scrutiny committee will be conducted in accordance with the Council Procedure Rules insofar as is practicable, except that where the Scrutiny Procedure Rules differ from the Council Procedure Rules, the Scrutiny Procedure Rules shall take precedence.

Scheme of voting rights for co-opted members of overview and scrutiny committees

In accordance with Paragraph 12 of Schedule 1 to the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended by section 115 of the Local Government Act 2003) Bassetlaw District Council has agreed that non-statutory co-opted members of Overview and Scrutiny committees may be given voting rights at the discretion of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

1. The Scheme

The Council would like to draw on the experience and knowledge of people within Bassetlaw when undertaking its scrutiny function. While there will be occasions where non-voting co-opted members will add value to the Overview and Scrutiny process, there are benefits to giving the co-opted members voting rights, including:

- giving a more active voice on behalf of citizens in Overview and Scrutiny
- improving the quality of decision making by including broader based views
- giving co-opted members the same status as the rest of Committee and therefore encouraging an equal sense of ownership and involvement
- promoting a partnership approach to Overview and Scrutiny.

This scheme enables the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to give voting rights to non-statutory co-opted members of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee, if it so wishes. It does not mean that all non-statutory co-opted members will automatically be given voting rights.

2. Appointments

The Committee will agree the process for selecting and appointing the non-statutory co-opted members.

3. When a Co-optee may vote

Where co-optees have been appointed as voting co-optees they may exercise a vote in considering items of business on agendas for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to which they have been appointed.

In respect of the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee co-opted tenant and leaseholder members are voting members in respect of matters concerning the management of the Council's housing stock to be discussed at Part 1 of the agenda.

Co-opted Tenant and leaseholder members may contribute to discussion of other matters to be discussed in Part 2 of the agenda, but shall not have a vote.

4. General Principles

This Scheme and arrangements made in accordance with its terms shall be subject to review by Council, including upon recommendation from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Co-opted members will be subject to the Councillors Code of Conduct and must sign a declaration of office and complete a form registering their interests.

FINANCIAL PROCEDURE RULES

- 1.1 The Financial Procedure Rules establish the system of control for financial decisions. They are an integral part of the Council's Constitution. The rules reflect the responsibilities arising from being entrusted with public money.
- 1.2 The Financial Procedure Rules consist of 2 parts:
 - The first part defines the roles of Councillor and Officers and sets the framework within which the Rules operate;
 - The second part contains the overarching regulations, and provides the detailed 'Rules' on how those regulations are implemented.
- 1.3 A series of detailed guidance notes and practice support the Financial Procedure Rules. Whilst the detailed guidance is regularly updated, where there is any difference between the Financial Procedure Rules and the detailed guidance, the Finance Procedure Rules have precedence in all cases.

2 STATUS OF FINANCIAL PROCEDURE RULES

- 2.1 The Council must conduct its business efficiently and ensure it has sound financial management policies in place, including arrangements to monitor compliance. The Council's statutory Section 151 Officer (Head of Finance & Property) is also charged with ensuring that proper financial management processes are in place.
- 2.2 The Financial Procedure Rules, together with the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules, provide the basis for managing the Council's financial affairs and are part of the Council's Constitution. They apply to every Councillor and Officer of the Council and to anyone acting on its behalf. The Council's Scheme of Delegation will be taken account of in all matters relevant to these procedure rules.

PART ONE – CONTEXT, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- 1.1 Financial management covers all financial accountabilities in relation to the running of the Council, including the budget and policy framework.
- 1.2 The processes of financial management involve:
- complying with statutory requirements;
 - ensuring that the Council receives value for money;
 - development and approval of protocols, standards and financial plans (including the revenue and capital budgets);
 - implementing policies, protocols and standards;
 - monitoring compliance;
 - maintaining records;
 - reporting and providing advice;
 - specific financial techniques and functions e.g. virement, year end balances, statements of account.
- 1.3 All Councillors and Officers must abide by the highest standards of probity in dealing with financial issues. This is achieved by ensuring everyone is clear about the standards to which they must work and the controls in place to check that the standards are met. The Financial Procedure Rules must be kept up to date and consistently applied by all Councillors and Officers.

2. FINANCIAL ADVICE

- 2.1 Sound financial advice is fundamental to ensuring the maintenance of basic standards of financial management. Persons qualified to do so should only provide such advice.
- 2.2 Persons giving financial advice must have been authorised to do so by the Section 151 Officer.
- 2.3 The Section 151 Officer has the right to attend all meetings of the Council, committees and sub-committees, working groups, boards or other forums where decisions or recommendations potentially having financial implications may be taken. This is often discharged through Officers within the Finance function.
- 2.4 All reports contain risk management (including financial risks) and financial implications sections, the contents of which must be agreed with the Section 151 Officer, prior to submission to the Management Team, Cabinet, or other forums where decisions will be made.

3 ACCOUNTING POLICIES

- 3.1 'The Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the "Code") requires the Council to declare, in the form of accounting policies, how they treat specific items within the annual accounts. These policies take account of current accounting concepts and standards. The Statement of Accounting Policies can be found in the Annual Statement of Accounts.
- 3.2 Key elements of accounting policies are that:

- systems of internal control must be in place that ensure that financial transactions are lawful;
- accounting policies must be applied consistently;
- proper accounting records must be maintained;
- financial statements must present fairly the financial position of the Council and its expenditure and income.

4 INTERNAL CONTROL

- 4.1 Internal control refers to the systems of control devised by management to help ensure the Council's objectives are achieved in a manner that promotes economical, efficient and effective use of resources and that the Council's assets and interests are safeguarded.
- 4.2 The Section 151 Officer is responsible for advising on effective systems of internal control, an essential part of which is the Internal Audit function. These arrangements ensure compliance with all applicable statutes and regulations, and other relevant statements of best practice. They ensure that public funds are properly safeguarded and used economically, efficiently, and in accordance with the statutory and other authorities that govern their use.
- 4.3 Directors/Heads of Service must establish sound arrangements for planning, appraising, authorising and controlling their operations in order to achieve continuous improvement, economy, efficiency and effectiveness and for achieving their financial performance targets.
- 4.4 Key controls must be reviewed annually and the outcome reported in an Annual Governance Statement commenting on the effectiveness of the systems of internal control and corporate governance.

5 AUDIT REQUIREMENTS

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (Regulation 4) require that "A relevant authority must undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, control and governance processes, taking into account public sector internal auditing standards and guidance".

- 5.1 The Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd appoints external auditors to each local Council. The basic duties of the external auditor are governed by section 15 of the Local Government Finance Act 1982, as amended by section 5 of the Audit Commission Act 1998.
- 5.2 The Council may, from time to time, be subject to audit, inspection or investigation by other external bodies such as HM Revenues and Customs, who have statutory rights of access.
- 5.3 The Section 151 Officer has overall responsibility for Internal Audit throughout the Council, whilst the Audit and Risk Scrutiny Committee oversees the performance and effectiveness of Internal Audit.
- 5.4 Both internal and external audit have the right of access to all records, assets and personnel and premises of the Council.

6 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 Role of the Council

The Council's functions include the following:

- Adopting and changing the Constitution;
- Approving or adopting the policy framework (including the Corporate Plan);
- Approving the budget;

- Approving the Treasury Management Strategy (including the Borrowing, Investment and MRP Strategy, and Prudential Indicators);
- Setting the Council Tax.

6.2 **Cabinet**

The Cabinet makes key day to day decisions and recommendations on policy and budgetary matters.

6.3 The role of the **Overview & Scrutiny Committee** is to:

- Scrutinise Cabinet decisions before or after they have been implemented, and to hold the Cabinet to account;
- Make recommendations on future policy options;
- Review the general policy and service delivery of the Council.

6.4 The role of the **Audit and Risk Scrutiny Committee** is to:

- Consider the Council's Statement of Accounts;
- Approve the Council's internal audit strategy;
- Review internal audit reports and recommend appropriate actions in response to issues raised;
- Consider the reports of external audit and inspections agencies;
- Monitor and review the Council's risk management arrangements;
- Monitor and review the Council's assurance statements;
- Be responsible for ensuring the effective scrutiny of the Treasury Management strategy and policies.

6.5 **Section 151 Officer (the Head of Finance & Property and/or Director of Resources)**

The Section 151 Officer has statutory duties in relation to the financial administration and stewardship of the Council. The statutory duties arise from:

- Local Government Act 1972 (Section 151);
- Local Government Finance Act 1988 (Section 113-114);
- Local Government and Housing Act 1989;
- Local Government Act 2000,2003;

Accounts and Audit Regulations 1996, 2003, 2011, 2015.

These statutory responsibilities cannot be overridden or subject to direction by the Council.

The Section 151 Officer is responsible for:

- Ensuring the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs;
- Setting the financial management standards and monitoring compliance with them;
- Ensuring proper professional practice is adhered to and acting as head of profession in relation to the standards, performance and development of finance Officers throughout the Council;
- Advising on the key strategic controls necessary to secure sound financial management;
- Ensuring that appropriate financial management information is available;
- Maintaining strong financial management underpinned by effective financial controls;
- Contributing to corporate management and leadership;
- Supporting and advising democratically elected representatives;
- Supporting and advising Officers in their operational roles;
- Leading and managing an effective and responsive financial service.

Section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 requires the Section 151 Officer to inform the Cabinet and External Auditor if the Council or one of its Officers:

- Has made, or is about to make, a decision which involves incurring unlawful expenditure;
- Has taken, or is about to take, an unlawful action which has resulted or would result in a loss or deficiency to the Council;
- Is about to make an unlawful entry in the Council's accounts.

Section 114 of the 1988 Act also requires:

- The Section 151 Officer to nominate a properly qualified Officer to deputise should they be unable to perform the duties under Section 114 personally;
- The Council to provide the Section 151 Officer with sufficient staff, accommodation and other resources - including legal advice where this is necessary - to carry out the duties under Section 114.

The Section 151 Officer is responsible for maintaining a continuous review of the Financial Procedure Rules and submitting to the Council any additions or changes. They are responsible for issuing advice and guidance to underpin the Rules that Councillors, Officers and others acting on behalf of the Authority are required to follow, and must approve the content of all such guidance and any amendments, prior to their adoption. The Section 151 Officer must be consulted in respect of all reports to elected members.

6.6 The Monitoring Officer (Director of Corporate Resources)

The Monitoring Officer is responsible for promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct, including conduct in relation to financial issues, by both Councillors and Officers. In conjunction with the Section 151 Officer they are responsible for advising the Cabinet or the full Council about whether a decision, or intended decision, is likely to be considered contrary to, or not wholly in accordance with, the Council's budget. Such decisions might include:

- Initiating a new policy without specific budget approval;
- Committing expenditure in future years above the approved budget level;
- Incurring expenditure in future years without proper approval of virement;
- Causing total expenditure to increase beyond a specified level.

The Monitoring Officer must be consulted in respect of all reports to elected members.

6.7 Head of Internal Audit (RSM, formerly Baker Tilly)

The Head of Internal Audit manages the internal audit function in the Council. CIPFA's Code of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government in the United Kingdom describes internal audit as:

“An assurance function that provides an independent and objective opinion to the organisation on risk management, control and governance by evaluating its effectiveness in achieving the organisation's objectives. It objectively examines, evaluates and reports on the adequacy of the control environment as a contribution to the proper, economic, efficient and effective use of resources.”

The Head of Internal Audit also has a role in advising managers in relation to risk and control issues such as appropriate controls in new projects/development.

6.8 **Directors/Heads of Service** are responsible for ensuring that all Officers in their Service areas are aware of the existence of, and have access to, the content of these Rules and other internal regulatory documents and that they comply with them. In particular they shall:

- Ensure that a Scheme of Delegation has been established in their Service Area. The Scheme of Delegation should identify Officers authorised to act on the Director/Head of Service behalf in respect of payments, income collection and the requisitioning of goods and services.
- Promote the financial management standards set by the Section 151 Officer in their Directorate/Service area and monitor adherence to them, liaising as necessary with them;
- Promote sound financial practices in relation to the standards, performance and development of Officers in their Directorate/Service area;
- Ensure, within their Directorate/Service area, compliance with the Financial Procedure Rules and associated manuals;
- Ensure that all Service Financial Procedure Manuals, and amendments thereto, are approved by the Section 151 Officer before adoption;
-
- Ensure Officers in their Directorate/Service area are aware of their responsibilities for devising and implementing systems of internal control;
- Maintain a written record where decisions have been delegated or devolved to other responsible Officers;
- Ensure appropriate training of Officers with financial or budget responsibilities.

6.9 **All Councillors and Officers** have a general responsibility for taking reasonable action to provide for the security of the assets under their control, and for ensuring that the use of these resources is legal, properly authorised, provides value for money and is correctly recorded in line with Council policies.

7 FAILURE TO COMPLY

7.1 Failure to comply with the Financial Procedure Rules:

- is a breach of the Code of Conduct for Councillors and may result in referral to the Standards Sub-Committee;
- is a breach of the Code of Conduct for Officers that is covered by the Council's Disciplinary Procedures and Rules in the Human Resources Handbook.

7.2 Councillors must report any apparent breach of the Financial Procedure Rules to the Chief Executive. Officers must report apparent breaches to an appropriate Head of Service or the Head of Internal Audit. The Head of Service or Head of Internal Audit should report breaches of these Rules to the Section 151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer.

PART TWO – FINANCIAL PROCEDURE RULES

REGULATION 1 – FINANCIAL PLANNING

- 1.1 Financial Planning Policy Framework
- 1.2 Preparation of the Corporate Plan
- 1.3 The Financial Strategy and Medium Term Financial Plan
- 1.4 The Capital Investment Strategy and Asset Management Plan (AMP)
- 1.5 The Treasury Management Strategy
- 1.6 The Revenue Budget and the Capital Programme
- 1.7 Directorate Service Delivery Plans

REGULATION 2 – CAPITAL

- 2.1 The Capital Programme
- 2.2 Determining the Capital Programme
- 2.3 Amendments to the Capital Programme
- 2.4 Capital Monitoring

REGULATION 3 – REVENUE

- 3.1 The Revenue Budget
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- 3.5 Amendments to the Revenue Budget - Virements
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- Appendix 1 – Summary of Financial Responsibilities
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- Appendix 3 – Main Accounting Systems
- Appendix 4 – Definitions

1 REGULATION 1 - FINANCIAL PLANNING

1.1 FINANCIAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

1.1.1 The full Council is responsible for agreeing the Council's policy framework and budget, which will be proposed by the Cabinet.

1.1.2 The Council's Policy Framework includes various service and corporate plans and strategies. All such plans and strategies must be consistent with the Council's Financial Strategy and Medium Term Financial Plan, or indicate their reliance on resources not yet approved or secured by the Council.

1.1.3 The key elements of the financial planning process are:

- Corporate Plan;
- The Financial Strategy and Medium Term Financial Plan;
- The Capital Investment Strategy and Asset Management Plan;
- The Treasury Management Strategy;
- The Revenue Budget and the Capital Programme;
- Directorate Service Delivery Plans.

1.2 PREPARATION OF THE CORPORATE PLAN

1.2.1 The Chief Executive is responsible for proposing the Corporate Plan to Cabinet for consideration before submission to the full Council for approval. It will contain a statement of the priorities of the Council.

1.2.2 The Council require that each planned item of expenditure, whether revenue or capital, is intended to further one or more of the Council's stated priorities or, if that is not the case, is required to discharge a specific statutory obligation on the Council.

1.3 THE FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

1.3.1 The Section 151 Officer is responsible for recommending the Financial Strategy to the Council and for preparing a Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), covering at least three years and updated at least annually for consideration by the Cabinet and approval by the Council. The Strategy and the MTFP will be consistent with, and designed to further the achievement of, the Council's priorities.

1.3.2 The Financial Strategy sets out the Council's objectives for, and principles adopted in, the management of its financial position. It includes Council Tax levels, the overall position for the Council's reserves and balances, and funding, investment and risk considerations.

1.3.3 The MTFP:

- sets out how the Council's performance plans can be resourced in both capital and revenue terms;
- identifies how resources are to be re-allocated over time and what the Council's priorities are for resource allocation;
- Other aspects of financial management may also be included in the MTFP e.g. levels of balances, reserves and provisions.

1.3.4 The MTFP that turns the Strategy into practice must be prepared for at least a three year period plus the current financial year. This is updated throughout the year as events and the budget timetable dictate.

1.3.5 Key Controls

The key controls are:

- It covers a number of forward years and is approved annually;
- It is monitored and updates are reported to Cabinet during the year;
- It is clearly linked and aligned to the Corporate Plan;
- It is based on a sustainable financial position and approved policies.

1.4 THE CAPITAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY AND ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN (AMP)

1.4.1 The Section 151 Officer is responsible for ensuring that a Capital Investment Strategy and Asset Management Plan are prepared and integrated into the Medium Term Financial Plan. They will be updated annually for consideration by the Cabinet and approval by the Council.

1.4.2 The strategy:

- defines how the capital programme is to be formulated and designed;
- identifies the issues and options that influence capital spending;
- sets out how the resources and capital programme will be managed.

1.4.3 Key Controls

The key controls are:

- They are clearly linked and aligned to the Corporate Plan;
- They provide a framework for the review and management of existing and future assets (the AMP);
- They provide a medium-term investment programme linked to the medium-term financial strategy;
- They are reviewed at least annually and reported to Cabinet.

1.5 THE TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

1.5.1 The Section 151 Officer is responsible for ensuring that the requirements of the Local Government Act 2003 are met, and the Council has regard to the Prudential Code. This requires that Prudential Indicators are set for the following three years to ensure that the Council's capital investment plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable. It also requires that the Council's policies for managing its investments give due priority to the security of those investments over liquidity and yield. This will be updated annually for consideration by the Cabinet and approval by the Council.

1.5.2 Key Controls

The key controls are:

- Approval by full Council of the Treasury Management Strategy (including Borrowing and Investment Strategies, Prudential Indicators for the following three years, and the existence of an Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary to ensure affordable borrowing);
- Regular monitoring of Prudential Indicators;
- The operation of Treasury Management Practices (TMP's) and Treasury Management Practice Schedules.

1.6 THE REVENUE BUDGET AND THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME

1.6.1 These are considered in depth under Regulations 2 and 3.

1.7 DIRECTORATE SERVICE DELIVERY PLANS

1.7.1 Directors are responsible for the preparation of these plans that reflect the Council's priorities as shown in the Corporate Plan. They must be produced in conjunction with the Capital and Revenue Budgets and each of these plans must support the others.

1.7.2 Key Controls

The key controls are:

- all relevant plans are produced and that they are consistent;
- plans are produced in accordance with statutory requirements;
- all plans reflect the Council's Financial Strategies and vice-versa;
- timetables are met;
- all performance information is accurate, complete and up to date;
- improvement targets are meaningful, realistic and challenging;
- Corporate, Directorate and Service Delivery Plans and the budget are all produced from an integrated timetable and an agreed base position.

2 REGULATION 2 – CAPITAL

2.1 THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME

2.1.1 The Section 151 Officer is responsible for preparing a capital programme covering at least 3 years that is integrated within the MTFP and reporting expenditure and funding implications of the programme to Cabinet for consideration. The Cabinet will make recommendations to the Council, who will approve the capital programme.

2.2 DETERMINING THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME

2.2.1 The Section 151 Officer is responsible for the initial consideration of capital spending proposals and the comparative ranking by priority of these proposals.

2.2.2 The ranking process is based on the completion of Outline Capital Bid Forms (outline business cases) and guidance as approved by the Section 151 Officer from time to time.

2.2.3 Heads of Service/Senior Managers are responsible for submitting the Outline Capital Bid Forms and complying with the guidance issued by the Section 151 Officer.

2.2.4 The Capital Programme shall include the gross cost of, and sources of funding for, schemes where the Council assembles the finance on behalf of a third party and so incurs no potential liability in respect of funding or project delivery. Such schemes may not result in any asset retained by the Council. Directors must ensure that these arrangements are reported to the Cabinet stating the nature of the arrangements, the participants in the process, and the sources of finance. The report must clearly state the projected expenditure and income for each financial year.

2.2.5 The Section 151 Officer will recommend to Cabinet the Capital Budget and funding in accordance with the Council's prudential indicators and CIPFA's Prudential Code.

2.3 AMENDMENTS TO THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME

- 2.3.1 Any mid-year amendment to the Capital Programme as last approved by the Council must be approved by the Cabinet in any cases where:
- a new scheme is proposed to be added to the programme, including those funded entirely by external grants and contributions;
 - a scheme is to be deleted from the capital programme;
 - the total cost of an existing scheme is to be amended;
 - a reprofiling of capital resources is proposed.
- 2.3.2 The Section 151 Officer, must approve any mid-year amendment to the approved Capital Programme before a report is submitted to Cabinet. This also applies to reprofiling requests i.e. where the amendment involves a change in the timing of the spending over the life of the project, but there is no change in the total cost or funding.
- 2.3.3 The Chief Executive may take decisions in an emergency, subject to the delegation and budget framework provisions of the Constitution, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer.
- 2.3.4 With the exception of emergency decisions, expenditure must not be incurred or committed on any capital scheme until the Cabinet or Council has given approval. For clarity, capital schemes of £250,000 or less will be deemed to have received approval to spend once full Council have approved the budget for the following year (usually end of February/early March). Any amendments to the capital programme made in year will only require the approval of the Cabinet.
- 2.3.5 For capital schemes in excess of £250,000, a separate report must be presented to Cabinet requesting approval to spend.
- 2.3.6 In either event, expenditure should not be incurred until funding is in place. For external funding, this means that a formal approval of funding has been received rather than a conditional offer or a bid that has been given provisional approval.
- 2.4 CAPITAL MONITORING**
- 2.4.1 Budget monitoring will be carried out in accordance with guidance issued by the Section 151 Officer. This guidance will lay down the Council's requirements in respect of:
- Frequency of reporting;
 - The format and content of reports (including the degree of detail, risk analysis undertaken and any corrective actions taken or proposed);
 - The recipients of budget monitoring reports (such as the Management Team or Cabinet);
 - The linkages with approved outputs.
- 2.4.2 For each scheme that is approved, the relevant Director will appoint a Project Manager, who will be responsible for the scheme, including budget accountability. This includes monitoring progress (financial and otherwise) of the scheme, and managing the scheme in accordance with the Council's guidance on Project Management.
- 2.4.3 If there is any anticipated reprofiling or "slippage" of a scheme that will affect the allocation of resources over future financial years the procedures outlined under Regulation 2.3 must be followed. Any loss of external funding arising from slippage must be reported to Cabinet and approval sought for the alternative funding required or other corrective action.
- 2.4.4 Where in-year spending is likely to exceed the profiled budget and this has an impact on the financial year, this must be reported to the Section 151 Officer who will then review the overall capital financing arrangements for that year.

2.4.5 Where the total cost of a scheme exceeds, or is expected to exceed the budget approved in the Capital Programme, this must be reported to the Section 151 Officer by the Director/Head of Service as soon as possible. In the first instance, overspends will fall on the relevant Directorate/Service area revenue budget, unless alternative funding is identified. In respect of any anticipated overspending in excess of £10,000 or 20% whichever is the lesser, the approval of Cabinet must be sought under 2.3.1 above.

2.4.6 Directors/Heads of Service must notify the Section 151 Officer upon the offer of or receipt of grant awards or any other offer of support of any type for capital expenditure. Capital receipts will be regarded as corporate resources and may only be ringfenced to schemes on the express approval of the Cabinet.

2.4.7 Key Controls

The key controls are:

- Approval by the full Council for the Capital Programme;
- An Outline Capital Bid Form is completed for all schemes to be included in the capital programme;
- A prioritisation process in accordance with the Capital Investment Strategy and corporate priorities;
- A project manager is responsible for each capital project (delivery and budget);
- Appropriate project management techniques are used and project managers are trained to carry out their responsibilities;
- Contract Procedure Rules are adhered to at all times;
- The requirements imposed by funding bodies are followed;
- Monitoring and reporting requirements on schemes are implemented.

3 REGULATION 3 - REVENUE

3.1 THE REVENUE BUDGET

3.1.1 The Council will agree the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), to be updated annually. The MTFP will include the Revenue Budget for the coming year plus forecasts for at least the next two subsequent years. Revenue resources must be aligned to the corporate objectives of the Council. The budget will be published in the Council's annual Budget Book. The approved Revenue Budget may be amended during the year in compliance with these FPRs.

3.2 REVENUE RESOURCES

3.2.1 Funding for revenue will come from government grants, fees and charges, calls on revenue reserves and balances, and local taxation. **Capital resources cannot be used to fund revenue expenditure.**

3.2.2 Key Controls

The key controls are:

- resources are acquired in accordance with the law and using an approved authorisation process (i.e. the budget setting process);
- resources are used only for the purpose intended, to achieve the approved policies and objectives, and are properly accounted for;
- professional guidance in relation to the adequacy of reserves and minimum level of balances is followed;

- the budget, which sets out how the Council is resourced, is approved annually by the Council;
- The MTFP ensures year on year sustainability of resources are considered in setting spending plans.

3.3 DETERMINING THE REVENUE BUDGET

3.3.1 The Section 151 Officer is responsible for ensuring that the MTFP and Budget are prepared and submitted for approval by the Council, upon the recommendation of the Cabinet, on or before the statutory date for such approval (currently 11 March). The adoption of the budget by the Council shall be accompanied by a Resolution as to the level of Council Tax required for the coming financial year in order to sustain the budget. The MTFP should set out forward projections of council tax increases for at least the next two subsequent years.

3.3.2 The Section 151 Officer recommends the overall quantum of revenue resources available to the Council, based on potential increases in the Council Tax, affordable calls on reserves, and best estimates of grant income. The Section 151 Officer shall advise as to what would constitute a prudent and necessary minimum level of uncommitted balances/reserves for the Council to retain, and also as to whether the budget being proposed is consistent with such a requirement. In forming such a judgement, the Section 151 Officer shall have regard to available guidance.

3.3.3 The Council agrees an overall MTFP and budget that matches its available resources with corporate priorities and statutory requirements.

3.3.4 The revenue budget agreed by Council will as a minimum allocate spending to:

- Each Portfolio/Service Area showing the gross spending and income and net budget;
- Each levy;
- The net cost of borrowing.

3.3.5 Directors/Heads of Service must ensure that all fees and charges are reviewed as part of the annual budget process in line with the Corporate Charging Policy (see Regulation 3.7).

3.3.6 The level of reserves is reviewed annually in line with the financial strategy and Medium Term Financial Plan, and must be decided before the budget and the Council Tax can be fixed. Reserves are amounts set aside by the Council as a result of surpluses, deferred expenditure or policy decisions to 'save' towards future expenditure. Reserves can be either specific (earmarked) or general. The General Fund Reserve will be maintained at a minimum level agreed by Cabinet having regard to the advice of the Section 151 Officer. The budget report to the Council will include a statement showing the estimated opening reserve balances for the year ahead, the addition to/withdrawal from balances, and the estimated year-end balance. Reference should be made as to the extent to which such reserves are to be used to finance recurrent expenditure.

3.3.7 The Council's approved budget is published in a "Budget Book", which breaks down Directorate budgets into a budget for each Service area within the Directorate. Each service budget has a named responsible Officer.

3.3.8 Key Controls

The key controls are:

- Adoption of project management techniques;
- Clear and timely guidance from the Section 151 Officer;
- Consistent format used across all service areas that reflects the relevant level of accountability of service delivery and enables consistency of comparison over time and with other local authorities;

- Effective timetable;
- Reflect the content of the Financial Strategy and Medium Term Financial Plan for the appropriate year;
- Be balanced, affordable and sustainable;
- Prudent risk assessment of the possible implications in terms of both affordability and service delivery.

3.4 BUDGET MONITORING

3.4.1 Budget monitoring will be carried out in accordance with guidance issued by the Section 151 Officer. This guidance will lay down the Council's requirements in respect of:

- Frequency of reporting;
- The format and content of reports (including the degree of detail, risk analysis undertaken and any corrective actions taken or proposed);
- The recipients of budget monitoring reports (such as the Management Team or Cabinet);
- The linkages with service performance monitoring.

3.4.2 The Section 151 Officer will ensure that appropriate financial information is available to Directors/Heads of Service so as to enable them to monitor their budgets and financial aspects of their Service Delivery Plans effectively.

3.4.3 When monitoring their budgets, Directors/Heads of Service should understand that delivering the outturn within budget is an important service objective. Where it appears that a variation on a service budget will exceed £10,000, the Head of Service will immediately advise the Section 151 Officer and Management Team of the situation, together with their proposed action to recover the position. The Section 151 Officer will then compile and submit regular budget monitoring reports together with recommendations to Cabinet and Scrutiny.

3.4.4 The approved budget is the financial extent of the Council's commitment to a service each year. Any breach of that limit is therefore an ultra vires act. Depending upon the severity and circumstances of any overspend, it may lead to disciplinary action, as Officers have exceeded their delegated authority.

3.4.5 Key Controls

The key controls are:

- there is a named budget holder who is responsible for each budget service in the annual Budget Book;
- each Head of Service nominates a responsible budget holder for each cost centre within their Service Area's revenue estimates and ensures that mechanisms are in place to provide early warnings of anticipated under or overspending;
- all budget holders, including cost centre managers, are accountable for their budgets and the level of service to be delivered, and understand their financial responsibilities;
- services are delivered within the net budget allocated in the annual Budget Book and in line with the Service Delivery Plan;
- income and expenditure are properly recorded and accounted for on a timely basis within the Council's General Ledger;
- the budget and Service Delivery Plan are monitored together and necessary action is taken to align service outputs and budget;
- budget managers are appropriately trained to carry out their budgetary control and financial management responsibilities.

3.5 AMENDMENTS TO THE REVENUE BUDGET - VIREMENTS

- 3.5.1 The overall revenue budget that reflects the Corporate Plan is drawn up by the Cabinet and approved by the full Council. Heads of Service are authorised to incur expenditure in accordance with the estimates and service levels that make up the budget and Directorate/Service Delivery Plans.
- 3.5.2 Expenditure and income for any Service Budget may be incurred up to the amounts included in the approved Budget. The management of services within Business Plans and Budgets allows resources to be transferred between services within limits. For example, where a potential overspend in one Service Budget has been identified through Budget Monitoring this overspend could be funded by transferring budget from a Service Budget where an underspend has been identified. Future monitoring will be against these adjusted budgets.
- 3.5.3 Within the parameters set out below, Directors/Heads of Service have the ability to vire monies both within and between Service Budgets. This provides flexibility for the Council and its Officers to manage overall service delivery within budgets.
- 3.5.4 Directors/Heads of Service are authorised to approve virements, which, in total, transfer no more than £25,000, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer.
- 3.5.5 Directors are authorised to approve virement exceeding £25,000 and up to £250,000 in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and the relevant Portfolio Holder.
- 3.5.6 Virements over £250,000 are a Key Decision and can only be approved by Cabinet. They will be reported by the Director, in such format as the Section 151 Officer may prescribe.
- 3.5.7 Virement to or from the budgets for Recharges and Asset Rentals is not permitted unless approved by the Section 151 Officer.
- 3.5.8 All other budgets can be vired but subject to any other Council policies. No virement may commit future additional expenditure above MTFP provision without Cabinet approval.
- 3.5.9 If the same budget head is used for virement on more than one occasion, the application of the above rules will relate to the accumulated figure.
- 3.5.10 Any virement between an employee budget and a non employee budget, or between an income budget and a non-income budget, must be approved by the Section 151 Officer, in accordance with the above determined limits, who may request a report to Cabinet for approval.
- 3.5.11 The securing of additional revenue resources (grants, etc.) must be reported to the Section 151 Officer. The Section 151 Officer may authorise the use of those resources to finance additional revenue expenditure where the grant conditions require such. Where there are no such requirements the Section 151 Officer may require the use of these resources to be approved by Cabinet and will do so in all cases where the sum is £250,000 or more.
- 3.5.12 The Section 151 Officer will determine whether a change to budgets is a virement (i.e. the budget is reallocated to a purpose other than originally intended) or a re-presentation or restructure where there is no change to the purpose of the spending. The virement rules set out above shall not apply to restructure or re-presentational changes.
- 3.5.13 Key Controls

Key controls are:

- Virement of resources between one head of account and another, whether within or between Service Areas is subject to approval;
- Virement does not create additional overall budget liability. Directors/Heads of Service are expected to manage their budgets responsibly, prudently, and within approved service levels. They should not support recurring revenue expenditure from

one-off sources of savings or additional income, or create future commitments, including full-year effects of decisions made part way through a year, for which they have not identified future resources. Directors/Heads of Service must plan to fund such commitments from within their own budgets;

- Virement to provide a fundamentally different service level to that approved in Directorate/Service Delivery Plans can only be approved by Cabinet.

3.6 CONTRACT AND WINDFALL SAVINGS

3.6.1 Unless specific agreement with the Section 151 Officer is obtained, contract savings and windfall savings (i.e. unanticipated income or unanticipated savings on expenditure including any figure relating to previous years) will revert to General Balances.

3.7 FEES AND CHARGES

3.7.1 The Corporate Charging Policy forms the basis of all fees and charges set within the Council. The Policy establishes clear principles for charging, integrates charging into service management linking with corporate objectives, and sets clear objectives and targets. The Policy shall be reviewed by the Section 151 Officer and reported to Cabinet as a minimum every three years.

3.7.2 Charges should be reviewed and reported as part of the revenue budget and business plan setting process.

3.7.3 Fees and charges fall into two categories:

- Statutory;
- Discretionary.

3.7.4 Statutory Charges

Statutory charges are those determined by organisations external to the Council, and over which the Council has no discretion.

3.7.5 Discretionary Charges

- Where charges are not prescribed, the Director/Head of Service is able to set the charge by reference to a number of factors e.g. cost of service provision, demand trends, local competition etc;
- Some constraints may exist whereby the charge should be set to only cover the cost of the service, e.g. Public Entertainment Licences, Local Search Fees;
- Directors/Heads of Service must have appropriate systems in place to support the fee-setting process, including the allocation of overheads;
- Where decisions on increases in fees and charges are taken outside the budget process for administrative reasons (e.g. where there is a statutory regulation or a duty of consultation, for example, car parking where notices have to be served) due regard must be given to the financial strategy;
- Directors/Heads of Service will have local discretion to offer concessions and discounts.

3.7.6 Key Controls

The key controls are:

- Clear and consistent fees and charges strategy;
- Annual review of strategy and levels of charges;
- All fees should be considered as part of the Service Planning process;
- Approval of all fees and charges by the Cabinet.

3.8 INTERNAL CHARGING

- 3.8.1 Internal charges are made between services within the Council. Whilst they do not directly generate external income, they do affect the total cost of individual services.
- 3.8.2 Internal charges should be set in accordance with the principles set out in CIPFA's Service Reporting Code of Practice. There must be a clear rationale for any residual sum not recovered from services and charged to the Corporate and Democratic Core.
- 3.8.3 Where internal charges are made they should be fixed to recover the full cost of services, and may be set at a unit/volume based amount linked to demand, or as a reallocation of costs.
- 3.8.4 For most services, the service manager responsible for making the charge will develop a service agreement that outlines the service provided and establish the basis of the allocation of costs. The service standard should be agreed with the Council's Management Team.
- 3.8.5 Some services operate as a fully traded service. In these cases, charges will be made on the basis of a Service Level Agreement (SLA). The SLA will specify the service to be provided and the charge to be levied, and will generally be a volume based charge. SLAs must be published well in advance of the start of each financial year to enable customers to negotiate with providers if they wish. All charges with A1 Housing (Bassetlaw) Ltd. must be made on the basis of an SLA.
- 3.8.6 Directors/Heads of Service must have appropriate systems in place to support the charge-setting process, including the allocation of overheads.
- 3.8.7 Regard shall be had to the frequency and basis of charge to minimise the administrative costs involved in recharging.

3.8.8 Key Controls

The key controls are:

- Clear and consistent internal charging strategy;
- Annual review of strategy and basis, and level of charges with specific reference to Value for Money;
- Clear guidance on forming SLAs and service agreements;
- All charges should be considered as part of the Service Planning process.

3.9 RESERVES

- 3.9.1 Reserves are amounts set aside by the Council as a result of surpluses, deferred expenditure or policy decisions to 'save' towards future expenditure. Reserves can be either specific (earmarked) or general. For each reserve established, the amount, purpose and origin of funding must be clearly identified.
- 3.9.2 The levels and requirements for reserves are reviewed annually in setting the budget and in the context of the MTFP.
- 3.9.3 The establishment of new earmarked reserves is subject to approval on a case by case basis except where such a reserve (e.g. pension's reserve) is specifically required by statute or by CIPFA's Accounting Code of Practice.

- 3.9.4 New reserves will generally be approved by Cabinet as part of the budget setting process or budget monitoring process and exceptionally by the Cabinet as part of the accounts closure process on the recommendation of the Section 151 Officer.
- 3.9.5 Contributions to reserves will be managed as a budgeted call on resources, which could otherwise have been spent on services or taken to the General Reserve or used to reduce Council Tax. The timing and size of contributions will be considered in the context of the Council's MTFP and reviewed when each years accounts are closed.
- 3.9.6 Earmarked reserves will generally fall into four categories:
- Trading account balances;
 - Time limited programmes and projects;
 - To meet specific risks of a non insurable nature or self insured risks;
 - To carry forward under spending (or overspending) as a ring fenced amount.
- 3.9.7 **Trading account balances** will be allowed where real or quasi trading accounts are used to manage costs. Balances will be maintained to allow flexible response to changes to demand and/or to meet defined future capital expenditure needs. Generally such balances should not exceed 20% of the annual turnover. Balances in excess of this limit should be returned to the General Reserve.
- 3.9.8 **Time limited programmes** may be pre-funded by the establishment of reserves. Reserves will be useful where the pace of spending is difficult to predict and where the spend will run over a number of budget years. However, the creation of reserves causes an earlier call on the taxpayer than when the benefits of the programme are derived by the taxpayer. So pre-funding requires careful consideration of the benefits of the use of a reserve as against annual revenue budgets. It would be unusual for a time-limited programme running for more than 3 years to be pre-funded. Longer programmes might be managed by a reserve to which a consistent level of contribution was made annually but where spend fluctuated from year to year. In all cases the purpose of the reserve must be clearly established at the outset and the scope and cost of the programme defined to ensure the adequacy of the reserve.
- 3.9.9 **Reserves to meet specific risks or contingencies** should have regard to a reasonable estimate of the potential costs involved, and should continue to be held only while the risk remains, and should be reviewed at least annually. The Insurance Reserve falls within this category being support for the Council's self insurance programme and a contingency in respect of any past insurance claims yet to be settled.
- 3.9.10 **At each year-end the Council may determine that an under-spending (or overspending) is carried forward for use by the Directorate in which it arose in the subsequent year.** This may be because of a delay in implementing a revenue programme or because a commitment to a future payment exists but which does not meet the test of an accrual as a creditor, or establishment of a Balance Sheet provision. In each case the relevant Director/Head of Service, together with the Section 151 Officer will establish the reasonable estimate of the under-spending and the amount to be carried forward.
- 3.9.11 The Council may determine that a Service may retain part of a general under-spending if the Council's financial situation does not require the sum to be returned to the General Reserve. The sum retained must be identified to a programme and for a one off purpose that does not give rise to any ongoing commitment. The Section 151 Officer will consider each case and advise whether the purpose meets the test of being spending of a one-off nature.
- 3.9.12 In all circumstances, a carry forward request must not be spent without the prior approval of Cabinet.
- 3.9.13 Approval to use earmarked reserves will be subject to formal release by the Section 151 Officer who will confirm that planned spending remains affordable when considering any

mixed funding including call on reserves, current budgets and/or external funding packages. Monitoring of spending against reserves must be subject to periodic budget monitoring arrangements. Projected variances should form part of the periodic corporate budget monitoring arrangements.

3.9.14 The Council may close an earmarked reserve (except where there is a statutory requirement to maintain it) at any time and appropriate any remaining balance to the General Reserve.

3.9.15 Key Controls

The key controls are:

- The establishment and use of reserves must be authorised by the Section 151 officer;
- Reserves will only be established to meet a defined purpose;
- The level and requirement of each reserve is reviewed annually.

4 REGULATION 4 - ACCOUNTING RECORDS

4.1 ACCOUNTING RECORDS

4.1.1 To enable reliance to be placed on financial management information all the Council's transactions, commitments, contracts and other essential accounting information must be recorded completely, accurately, on a timely basis and in corporately approved systems.

4.1.2 Any financial systems and records used within Directorates/Service areas that do not interface with the corporate financial ledger must be in a form agreed by the Section 151 Officer, and must be regularly reconciled to the corporate financial ledger by the relevant service manager.

4.1.3 Directors/Heads of Service shall ensure supporting documentation is available as required by the Section 151 Officer.

4.1.4 Key Controls

The key controls are:

- The primary record
- of accounting entries and approved budget is the financial ledger;
- Reconciliation procedures are carried out to the financial ledger to ensure transactions are correctly recorded;
- Original documents are retained in accordance with legislative and other requirements including compliance with the Council's Document Retention Policy.

4.2 ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

4.2.1 The Council has a statutory responsibility to prepare accounts that present accurately and fairly its operations during the year. This must be done in accordance with The Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the Code).

4.2.2 The Accounts will be produced within the statutory timescales.

4.2.3 Annually the Section 151 Officer draws up a detailed timetable, guidance and instructions for final accounts preparation, approval and audit.

4.2.4 The timetable and guidance covers all areas relating to the closure of accounts, the deadlines by which each task should be completed, and the format in which key information should be submitted. Directors/Heads of Service shall ensure compliance with the timetable and guidance.

4.2.5 Key Controls

The key controls are:

- The Council's Statement of Accounts is prepared in accordance with proper practices as set out in the relevant codes of practice on local authority accounting in the United Kingdom;
- Clear and consistent advice and instructions are issued for dealing with all year-end processes, such as accruals, prepayments, treatment of year-end balances, and analytical review;
- Accounts are kept up to date during the year, reconciliations are carried out on a regular basis, the revenue and capital budgets are compiled and monitored effectively, and year-end processes are completed in accordance with the timetable issued;
- Year end variances and balances are reported on within the parameters agreed with the external auditor;
- There is a clear policy for the setting up and maintenance of reserves;
- Comprehensive working papers are compiled and maintained.

4.3 RETENTION OF ACCOUNTING AND FINANCIAL DOCUMENTS

4.3.1 *The Retention Periods shown in Appendix 2 represent the minimum number of complete financial years, i.e. excluding the current financial year.*

4.3.2 *This guidance refers to retention of hard copy. Retention in electronic format (e.g. document imaging) may be acceptable, subject to the agreement of appropriate authorities, such as External Audit, HMRC.*

4.3.3 *No documents or records should be disposed of until notification has been received from the External Auditor of the completion of the audit of accounts for the year to which the records relate.*

4.3.4 If in doubt, contact Information Services Manager for advice on specific cases.

5 REGULATION 5 - RISK MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCE CONTROL

5.1 RISK MANAGEMENT AND INSURANCE

Introduction

5.1.1 It is essential that robust systems are developed and maintained for identifying, evaluating and controlling all of the operational risks to the Council on an integrated basis in accordance with the Council's Risk Management Strategy.

Risk Management

5.1.2 The Audit and Risk Scrutiny Committee is responsible for approving the authority's Risk Management Strategy and for reviewing the effectiveness of risk management. It is also responsible for approving the Council's Strategic Risk Assessment and for ensuring that proper insurance exists where appropriate.

5.1.3 The Management Team will produce an annual corporate risk assessment. The Section 151 Officer is responsible for preparing the Council's Risk Management Strategy statement and for promoting it throughout the authority. The S151 Officer is also responsible for ensuring

that proper insurance cover exists where appropriate. Copies of the Council's formal Risk Management Strategy and Corporate Risk Register are available from the Section 151 Officer and on the Internet, upon request.

- 5.1.4 Directors/Heads of Service shall ensure the regular identification, review and management of risk within their Service areas having regard to advice and instructions from the Section 151 Officer and other specialist officers. Within each Directorate a risk champion shall be nominated to ensure these issues are progressed.
- 5.1.5 The Council's approach to Risk Management is that it should be embedded throughout the organisation at both a strategic and an operational level, through integration into existing systems and processes.

Insurance

- 5.1.6 The Section 151 Officer shall ensure that appropriate insurance is in place for all items identified as falling within the framework of insurable risks agreed by the Council and shall deal with all claims, in consultation with other Directors/Heads of Service where necessary. The Council will determine which risks must be covered by external insurances or internal insurance provision. Other risks may be covered by insurance or carried by the Directorate/Service area involved at the discretion of the relevant Director/Head of Service, having regard to advice from the Section 151 Officer.
- 5.1.7 Each Director/Head of Service shall immediately notify the Section 151 Officer of all new risks, properties, vehicles and other assets or potential liabilities for which insurance may be required; and of any changes affecting existing risks or insurance cover required.
- 5.1.8 Directors/Heads of Service shall notify the Section 151 Officer in writing without delay of any loss, liability or damage or any event likely to lead to a claim, and shall provide such information and explanations required by the Section 151 Officer or the Council's insurers.
- 5.1.9 Directors/Heads of Service shall consult the Section 151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer concerning the terms of any indemnity which they are requested to give on behalf of the Council.
- 5.1.10 Before entering into any arrangement involving a legal relationship, the Director/Head of Service involved must ensure that the Council has adequate legal powers and where appropriate that there is adequate professional indemnity insurance to cover and minimise any risk to the Council and to those individuals involved (advice should be obtained from the Section 151 Officer and /or the Monitoring Officer where necessary before proceeding).
- 5.1.11 The Section 151 Officer shall review insurance requirements at each annual renewal date and as part of the re-tendering process at the end of the overall insurance contract period.

Self Insurance

- 5.1.12 For some risks not covered by external insurance policies, and as determined by the Council, the Section 151 Officer will operate an internal insurance account and is authorised to charge the various Council service budgets with the cost of contributions to this account.
- 5.1.13 Risk Management is the responsibility of every Director/Head of Service having regard to advice from the Section 151 Officer and other specialist officers. In general, costs and losses not insured externally and not covered by the Council Fund will fall as a charge upon the budget of the Directorate/Service area to which the item relates. Also, claims for insured risks could result in increased levels of future premiums, and this emphasises the need for effective preventive measures against all risks.

Business Risk Management

5.1.14 Each Director/Head of Service must assess all risks annually and to record them in their Departmental/Service risk register. All corporate strategy targets should be evaluated and appropriate performance measures should be set for monitoring.

5.1.15 All strategic and high level/impact risks should be recorded in the Corporate Risk Register via the Section 151 Officer, together with an action plan to show how the risks are being monitored.

5.1.16 The management of risks at a Directorate level should be reported upon at least quarterly to the Corporate Risk Management Group and the appropriate Directorate meeting.

5.1.17 Key Controls

The key controls are:

- Procedures are in place to identify, assess, prevent or contain known risks, and these procedures are operating effectively throughout the authority;
- The Council has adopted Corporate Risk Templates and processes to record all identified risks;
- A monitoring process is in place to review regularly the effectiveness of risk reduction strategies and the operation of these controls. The risk management process should be conducted on a continuing basis;
- Managers know that they are responsible for managing relevant risks and are provided with relevant information on risk management initiatives;
- Provision is made in the accounts for losses that might result from the risks that remain;
- The Council has identified business continuity plans for implementation in the event of disaster that results in significant loss or damage to its resources;
- Acceptable levels of risk are determined and insured against where appropriate.

5.2 PREVENTING FRAUD AND CORRUPTION

5.2.1 The Section 151 Officer is responsible for the development and maintenance of an Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption strategy and policy.

5.2.2 The Council operates an Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption strategy and policy, incorporating a 'Whistle blowing' policy. These, in conjunction with Councillor and Officer Codes of Conduct and registers of interest, determine the overall policy of the Council with regard to the prevention of fraud and corruption.

5.2.3 Any suspected irregularities should be reported to internal audit and, if necessary, the Section 151 Officer, the Monitoring Officer, or the Chief Executive.

5.2.4 Key Controls

The key controls are:

- the Council has an effective Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption strategy and policy and maintains a culture that will not tolerate fraud or corruption;
- codes of conduct exist for Councillors and Officers and are regularly reviewed by the Corporate Governance Working Group;
- a Register of Interests is maintained to enable Councillors and Officers to record any financial or non-financial interests that may bring about conflict with the Council's interests;
- a register of Gifts & Hospitality is maintained to enable Councillors and Officers to record gifts and hospitality either received, or offered and declined, from the Council's contractors and suppliers;
- "whistle blowing" procedures are in place and operate effectively;

- the Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption strategy and policy, and the “whistle blowing” policy can be found on the intranet and internet.
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5.3 GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY

5.3.1 Part 6 of The Constitution sets out the Council’s Codes of Conduct for Councillors and for Employees on Gifts and Hospitality. These must be adhered to at all times.

5.3.2 A Register of Gifts & Hospitality is maintained by the Legal Department to enable Officers to record gifts and hospitality either received, or offered and declined, from the Council’s existing or potential contractors and suppliers.

5.3.3 Key Controls

The key controls are:

- Relevant Codes of Conduct must be adhered to at all times;
- Registers of gifts and hospitality must be maintained and kept up to date.

5.4 ASSETS

Assets – Security

5.4.1 The Section 151 Officer maintains an up-to-date asset register. The Section 151 Officer should be notified in any case where security is thought to be defective or where it is considered that special security arrangements may be needed.

5.4.2 The Council’s Solicitor shall have the custody of all title deeds and be responsible for ensuring their safety.

5.4.3 The Section 151 Officer shall be responsible for ensuring that a full revaluation of all Council properties is undertaken at least every five years.

5.4.4 Key Controls

The key controls are:

- assets and resources are used only for the purposes of the Council and are properly accounted for;
- assets and resources are available for use when required;
- assets and resources no longer required are disposed of in accordance with the law and the regulations of the Council so as to maximise benefits;
- an asset register is maintained for the Council - assets are recorded when they are acquired by the Council and this record is updated as changes occur with respect to the location and condition of the asset;
- all Officers are aware of their responsibilities with regard to safeguarding the Council’s assets and information, including the requirements of the Data Protection Act and software copyright legislation;
- all Officers are aware of their responsibilities with regard to safeguarding the security of the Council’s computer systems, including maintaining restricted access to the information held on them and compliance with the Council’s information security and internet security policies;
- Proper security arrangements are in place for all buildings and other assets belonging to the Council.

Assets – Inventories

- 5.4.5 Each Directorate will nominate an Officer with responsibility to maintain an inventory for all assets with a life expectancy of more than one year whose single replacement value exceeds £500 including furniture, fittings and equipment. This must record descriptions, values, relevant dates, expected life, and location.
- 5.4.6 All electrical equipment must be recorded on the inventory list to enable suitable PAT testing regimes to be established.
- 5.4.7 All attractive/portable items must be security marked as belonging to the Council and wherever possible kept securely.
- 5.4.8 No item shall be removed from the Council premises without the written authorisation of the Director/Head of Service concerned.
- 5.4.9 Inventories must be checked at least annually to verify the details.
- 5.4.10 Any variations to inventory records must be reported to the relevant Director, and all variations over £2,000 must be reported to the Section 151 Officer.
- 5.4.11 The Head of Corporate Services shall be responsible for maintaining an inventory of all computer hardware and software held by the Council, a copy of which must be provided to the Section 151 Officer.

Assets – Stocks and Stores

- 5.4.12 All Directors/Heads of Service must ensure that they maintain adequate records and controls over stock movements.
- 5.4.13 Stocks and stores comprise the following categories:
- Goods or other assets purchased for resale;
 - Consumable stores;
 - Raw materials and components purchased for incorporation into products for sale;
 - Products and services in intermediate stages of completion;
 - Long-term contract balances;
 - Finished goods.
- 5.4.14 Independent stock checks must be undertaken periodically and at least annually at year-end. All discrepancies should be investigated and pursued to a satisfactory conclusion.
- 5.4.15 Any variations must be reported to the relevant Director/Head of Service, and all variations over £2,000 must be reported to the Section 151 Officer for investigation prior to write-off.
- 5.4.16 A certificate of stock must be issued to the Section 151 Officer as at 31 March in each year. Stocks must be valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value.
- 5.4.17 The Section 151 Officer is entitled to check stocks, if necessary requiring closure, after consultation and agreement with the Director/Head of Service concerned.
- 5.4.18 All receipts and issues of stock must be properly recorded and accounted for in the Council's financial records.

Assets – Intellectual Property

- 5.4.19 Intellectual property is a generic term that includes inventions and writing. If these are created by the Officer during the course of employment then they are the property of the Council. Examples include software and product development. These items are collectively known as intellectual property.

5.4.20 Key Controls

The key controls are:

- In the event that the Council decides to become involved in the commercial exploitation of inventions, the matter should proceed in accordance with the Council's approved intellectual property procedures.

Assets – Disposal by Sale

5.4.21 Surplus or obsolete goods, materials, and stocks shall be disposed of by public tender, except when, in the opinion of the Director/Head of Service concerned, the financial interest of the Council is better served by disposal by other means. This may include a public auction, offering the asset in part exchange or Council wide invitations for personal bids. Wherever possible, a reserve price will be set. The Director/Head of Service concerned shall prepare and certify a list of all items disposed of, showing the amount received. This will be reflected in the inventory, the asset register, and/or the stock account. The disposal of the asset should be fully documented.

5.4.22 If sale by this means is not available or has failed, then disposals may be made to schools or registered charities based within Bassetlaw.

5.4.23 The disposal of all ICT equipment must be co-ordinated through the ICT unit.

5.4.24 Disposals of land and property are subject to the Asset Management process.

5.4.25 The Property Manager will identify the initial value of the Land/Property asset and whether there is any alternative use before disposal takes place. Running costs for property declared surplus to requirement will also transfer to the Estates budget.

5.4.26 The proceeds of all sales of surplus or obsolete assets must be reported to the relevant Director/Head of Service, and all sales over £2,000 must be reported to the Section 151 Officer, who will then decide if a report to Cabinet is necessary.

5.4.27 Key Controls

The key controls are:

- Land/Property assets are disposed of in accordance with the Asset Management Plan;
- Disposal of assets is fully documented;
- Annual stock valuation identifies obsolete stock;
- Other disposals are made in accordance with the Office Furniture and Equipment Inventory and Disposal Policy.

Assets – Disposal By Write Off

5.4.28 Write-offs may only take place as a last resort after all other economic/social solutions have been exhausted.

5.4.29 Following investigation, the relevant Director/Head of Service in consultation with the Section 151 Officer may write off Income, Stocks and Inventory deficiencies of up to £2,000.

5.4.30 Following investigation, the relevant Director/Head of Service in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and the Portfolio Holder, may write off items over £2,000 and under £25,000.

5.4.31 Following investigation, write offs of amounts over £25,000 may only be written off by the Cabinet after receiving a report from the Section 151 Officer.

5.4.32 A report must be submitted at least annually by the relevant Director/Head of Service to the Section 151 Officer, who will report annually on the overall level of write-offs in year.

5.4.33 Key Controls

The key controls are:

- Specific write-off limits;
- Disposal of assets is fully documented;
- Annual stock valuation identifies obsolete stock.

5.5 TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND LEASING

5.5.1 The Council has adopted CIPFA's Treasury Management in the Public Services Code of Practice 2001 as updated from time to time.

5.5.2 The Section 151 Officer will create and maintain, as the cornerstone for effective Treasury Management:

- A Treasury Management Policy Statement (TMPS) stating the policies, objectives and approach to risk management of its treasury management activities;
- Suitable Treasury Management Practices (TMP) setting out the manner in which the organisation will seek to achieve those policies and objectives and prescribing how it will manage and control those activities.

5.5.3 The Section 151 Officer will produce reports on its treasury management policies, practices and activities including, as a minimum, a report to Council on an annual strategy and plan in advance of the forthcoming year, a mid-year review and an annual report after its close, in the form prescribed in its TMPs.

5.5.4 The Council delegates responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of its treasury management policies and practices to the Cabinet, and for the execution and administration of treasury management decisions to the Section 151 Officer, who will act in accordance with the Council's policy statement and TMPs, and the CIPFA Standard of Professional Practice on Treasury Management.

5.5.5 The Council nominates the Audit and Risk Scrutiny Committee to be responsible for ensuring the effective scrutiny of the Treasury Management strategy and policies.

5.5.6 All executive decisions on borrowing, investment or financing (including leasing) are delegated to the Section 151 Officer who will act in accordance with the Council's agreed "Treasury Management Strategy".

5.5.7 The Section 151 Officer must report any decisions on borrowing strategy to Cabinet at the next available opportunity.

5.5.8 The Section 151 Officer must report any debt rescheduling activity to Cabinet at the next available opportunity.

5.5.9 The Section 151 Officer is responsible for acting as the Council's registrar of stocks, bonds, mortgages (where applicable), and to maintain records of all borrowing by the Council.

5.5.10 Directors/Heads of Service are responsible for ensuring the prior approval of the Section 151 Officer before leasing any assets.

5.5.11 Directors/Heads of Service are responsible for ensuring that no loans are made to third parties or interests acquired in companies, joint ventures, or other enterprises without consulting the Section 151 Officer and obtaining approval from Cabinet.

5.5.12 Directors/Heads of Service are responsible for ensuring that any potential under-writing of events are consulted with the Section 151 Officer, seeking Cabinet approval if deemed necessary.

5.5.13 Key Controls

The key controls are:

- Adopted CIPFA's Treasury Management in the Public Services Code;
- Created and maintained Treasury Management Policy Statement (TMPS) and Treasury Management Practices (TMP);
- Agreed Treasury Management Strategy for forthcoming year;
- Mid-year Treasury Management Update report;
- Reported performance within six months of the end of the year;
- An annually agreed Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy;
- The role of the Audit and Risk Scrutiny Committee.

5.6 STAFFING

5.6.1 The HR Business Manager, in consultation with the Chief Executive, is responsible for determining how Officer support for executive and non-executive roles within the Council will be organised.

5.6.2 The Chief Executive is responsible for providing overall management to Officers. They are also responsible for ensuring that there is proper use of the evaluation or other agreed systems for determining the remuneration of a job.

5.6.3 Directors/Heads of Service should ensure that Officers are aware of their management responsibilities under the Financial Procedure Rules, Contract Procedure Rules, Declaration of Interests, Gifts and Hospitality, Whistleblowing Policy etc.

5.6.4 All Officers are responsible for complying with the Council's Human Resources Policies to protect the Council against losses and minimise risk exposure.

5.6.5 The HR Business Manager is responsible for maintaining an approved list of Officer posts (known as the Establishment List), which have been approved by or on behalf of the Council as being required to provide the Council with the services and advice, which it requires from time to time. Additions, amendments and deletions in relation to this list shall be kept up to date at all times.

5.6.6 Regular meetings shall take place between the HR Business Manager, the Payroll Officer, and the Management Accounts Finance Manager to ensure that all records in relation to this Establishment List reconcile.

5.6.7 No appointments of permanent Officers shall be made unless there is a post on the Establishment List for which current budgetary provision has been made.

5.6.8 The Establishment List shall not preclude the appointment of temporary or agency staff, or direct works employees in respect of which special budgetary provision is available.

5.6.9 Directors/Heads of Service are responsible for controlling total staff numbers by:

- advising the Cabinet (via the Section 151 Officer) on the budget necessary in any given year to cover estimated staffing levels;
- adjusting the staffing to a level that can be funded within approved budget provision, varying the provision as necessary within that constraint in order to meet changing operational needs.

5.6.10 Key Controls

The key controls are:

- an appropriate staffing strategy and policy exists, in which staffing requirements and budget allocation are matched;
- procedures are in place for forecasting staffing requirements and cost;
- There is a process of performance review and identification of development needs;
- Training budgets are adequate to support agreed development needs.

5.7 UNOFFICIAL NON-COUNCIL FUNDS

5.7.1 An unofficial fund is one where the income and expenditure does not form part of the Council's accounts, but which is controlled wholly or in part by an Officer employed by the Council or a semi-autonomous body. Examples may include charity accounts or Trust Funds.

5.7.2 Unofficial funds may only be established by the Section 151 Officer who will issue and update accounting instructions for them where necessary.

5.7.3 All Unofficial funds must be properly accounted for, and be subject to an independent annual audit (Council or other provider).

5.7.4 Key Controls

The key controls are:

- they must be subject to an audit;
- they must be identified and recorded centrally;
- normal accounting rules will apply.

5.8 INTERNAL AUDIT

5.8.1 The requirement for an internal audit function for local authorities is implied by section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, which requires that authorities "make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs". The Accounts and Audit regulations 2015 (SI2015/234), Regulation 5, more specifically require that a "relevant authority must undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, control and governance processes, taking into account public sector internal auditing standards or guidance".

5.8.2 Accordingly, Internal Audit is an independent and objective appraisal function established by the Council for reviewing the system of internal control. It examines, evaluates and reports on the adequacy of internal control as a contribution to the proper, economic, efficient and effective use of resources.

5.8.3 The provision of a full Internal Audit service requires total accessibility to records and staff employed either by, or on behalf of, the Council.

5.8.4 Notwithstanding the Section 151 Officer's responsibility for the review of the Council's systems, the actual responsibility for their correct form and operation lies solely and totally with service management. Internal Audit will review and comment on the operation of

systems, but this does not constitute a control function and must not be relied upon as such. Conversely, the lack of an Internal Audit review or the failure by Internal Audit to identify a weakness or irregularity does not in any way act as an excuse or defence for its occurrence or non-detection by service managers.

5.8.5 Key Controls

The key controls are:

- It is independent in its planning and operation;
- The Head of Internal Audit has direct access to the Chief Executive, all levels of management, and directly to elected members;
- Internal Auditors comply with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS).

6 REGULATION 6 – ACCOUNTING SYSTEMS AND PROCEDURES

6.1 ACCOUNTING SYSTEMS AND PROCEDURES

- 6.1.1 The Section 151 Officer is responsible for the operation of the Council's accounting systems, the form of accounts and the supporting financial records. The main accounting systems used by the Council are listed at Appendix 3. No changes shall be made to the existing financial systems or new systems shall be established without the prior approval of the Section 151 Officer.
- 6.1.2 A complete audit trail, allowing financial transactions to be traced from the accounting records to the original document, and vice versa, must be maintained.
- 6.1.3 Directors/Heads of Service are responsible for the proper operation of financial processes in their own Directorates/Service areas and for ensuring that their Officers receive relevant financial training, approved by the Section 151 Officer.
- 6.1.4 Lists of Authorised Officers, with specimen signatures and delegated limits will be provided to the Section 151 Officer, together with any subsequent variations on a periodic basis. This includes all areas of the Council, including the outlying areas such as depots, sports facilities and Museums.
- 6.1.5 Directors/Heads of Service must ensure that, where appropriate, computer and other systems are registered in accordance with Data Protection legislation, and that Officers are aware of their responsibilities under Freedom of Information legislation.
- 6.1.6 The development, purchase, and implementation of all ICT systems must conform to the Council's ICT Development Plan, managed by the Head of Corporate Services.
- 6.1.7 All passwords must remain confidential.
- 6.1.8 The Head of Corporate Services will be able to identify, and hold copies of, all relevant software licences employed by the Council. No software may be loaded onto the Council's computer equipment without the prior permission of that Officer.
- 6.1.9 Contingency arrangements, including back-up procedures, must be maintained for computer systems by the Officers responsible for the systems. Wherever possible, back-up information should be securely retained in a fireproof location, preferably off site or at an alternative location within the building.
- 6.1.10 Any income or expenditure allocated to an incorrect cost centre or detail code must be corrected in the General Ledger by a journal. Limits are set against Officers capable of

posting journals and where necessary are authorised by a Senior Accountant (or equivalent) or higher.

6.1.11 Any service specific procedures should be followed by the service in question; any changes made to agreed procedures by Officers to meet specific service needs should be agreed with the Section 151 Officer. These procedures will incorporate appropriate controls to ensure that, where relevant:

- All input is genuine, complete, accurate, timely and not previously processed;
- All processing is carried out in an accurate, complete and timely manner;
- Output from the system is complete, accurate and timely;
- There is an appropriate segregation of duties providing for adequate internal controls and to minimise the risk of fraud or other malpractice.

6.1.12 Key Controls

The key controls are:

- basic data exists to enable the Council's objectives, targets, budgets and plans to be formulated;
- performance is communicated to the appropriate managers on an accurate, complete and timely basis;
- early warning is provided of deviations from target, plans and budgets that require management attention;
- operating systems and procedures are secure;
- data is backed up on a regular basis;
- Scheme of delegation in relation to journal authorisation.

6.2 BANKING ARRANGEMENTS

6.2.1 The Council operates a number of bank accounts for the collection and payment of money. All receipts and payments of the Council are made through these accounts. The Section 151 Officer is responsible for the opening of all bank accounts in the name of, and on behalf of, the Council. No Officer of the Council shall open any bank (or equivalent) account without the explicit agreement of the Section 151 Officer.

6.2.2 The Section 151 Officer will ensure that sound, adequate arrangements are in place for the safe and efficient operation of all the Council's bank accounts, and will effect, or cause to be effected, proper and timely reconciliations.

6.2.3 All bank accounts shall bear an official title and in no circumstances shall an account be opened in the name of an individual, with the exception of the Returning Officers Account for election expenses.

6.2.4 Only the Section 151 Officer can make arrangements concerning the Council's bank accounts. No overdraft arrangements will be permitted with the exception of corporate arrangements under the Treasury Management policy.

6.2.5 Cheques on the Council's main banking accounts, including Girobank accounts, shall bear the facsimile signature of the Chief Executive or be manually signed by the Section 151 Officer or other Officers authorised to do so by them. All cheques in excess of £10,000 must be manually signed by an authorised Officer.

6.2.6 All stocks of cheques must be held securely and stock records maintained to identify both issued and spoilt cheques.

6.2.7 Bank accounts shall be reconciled with financial records and cashbooks at least once in each month and any discrepancies identified and appropriate action undertaken.

6.2.8 The following duties, as far as possible, will be the responsibility of at least 2 separate Officers;

- The checking of creditor accounts;
- The control of cheque forms;
- The preparation of cheques;
- The signature of cheques;
- The entry of cash accounts;
- The reconciliation of bank balances.

6.2.9 Key Controls

The key controls are:

- All cheques must be signed, either manually or by facsimile, by the Chief Executive;
- Bank Accounts can only be opened by the Section 151 Officer.

6.3 SALARIES, WAGES, PENSIONS AND OTHER EMOLUMENTS

6.3.1 The Section 151 Officer is responsible for all payments of remuneration and expenses to all Officers, including payments for overtime, and for payments of allowances to Councillors.

Payroll

6.3.2 Effective controls are needed to ensure that payments are accurate, made only when they are due and, comply with relevant conditions of service. The Council's payroll system must be reconciled regularly.

6.3.3 All procedures dealing with starters, leavers, variations and enhancements must be rigorously adhered to.

6.3.4 All Officers must only be paid through the Council's or an authorised contractor's payroll system.

6.3.5 The Officers' Code of Conduct is set out in Part 6 of the Council's Constitution.

6.3.6 Key Controls

The key controls are:

- proper authorisation procedures are in place and that there is adherence to corporate timetables in relation to: starters, leavers, variations and enhancements;
- payments are made on the basis of appropriately authorised timesheets or claims;
- frequent reconciliation of payroll expenditure against approved budgets and bank accounts;
- all appropriate payroll documents are retained and stored for the defined period, in accordance with guidance issued by the Section 151 Officer;
- all expenditure, including VAT, is accurately recorded against the correct directorate and any exceptions are corrected;
- HMRC regulations are complied with.

Human Resources Arrangements

6.3.7 The HR Service Manager must ensure that adequate arrangements have been made to notify the Payroll Officer of all the information required in terms of starters and leavers, amendments to working hours, pension arrangements and any other factor that can compromise the integrity of the Payroll service.

6.3.8 Key Controls

The key controls are:

- Payments are only made when there is a valid entitlement which can be proved if necessary;
- Conditions and contracts of employment must be correctly applied;
- Employees' names listed on the payroll are checked at regular intervals to verify accuracy and completeness;
- Appointments, resignations, dismissals, suspensions, secondments and transfers should be recorded and reported in line with Human Resource Policies.
- Records supporting absences from duty for sickness or any other reason, apart from approved leave must be supplied monthly to the Payroll Section.
- Changes in remuneration, other than normal increments and pay awards and agreements of general application, must be notified to the Payroll Section promptly.
- The Section 151 Officer must maintain records for pension, income tax, and national insurance.

6.4 CREDITORS AND DEBTORS

6.4.1 The Section 151 Officer is responsible for ensuring the operation and maintenance of effective systems for the payment of creditors and the collection of monies from debtors across the range of Council services.

6.4.2 No creditor shall be paid or debtor be invoiced other than through systems operated by the Section 151 Officer or otherwise specifically approved by him/her.

Ordering

6.4.3 All orders/purchases of goods and services must comply with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and Procurement Policy and Strategy.

6.4.4 Official orders shall be issued for all work, goods or services to be supplied to the Council except for supplies from public utility services, for periodical payments such as rent or rates, for petty cash purchases or such other exceptions as the Section 151 Officer may approve. In cases of emergency, orders may be given orally and confirmed in writing. Official orders for work, goods and services shall be in a form approved by the Section 151 Officer.

6.4.5 Electronic orders can only be authorised by Officers delegated by the Director/Head of Service concerned who is responsible for official orders issued from his Directorate/Service area. For emergency situations only, dedicated order numbers can be obtained from the Section 151 Officer. An up-to-date list of authorised Officers, including specimen signatures identifying in each case the limits of their authorisation must be maintained by the Director/Head of Service and be readily available.

6.4.6 No order for work, goods or services can be given which will commit the Council to expenditure unless a budget exists to incur that expenditure.

6.4.7 Official orders must not be raised for any personal or private purchases, nor should personal or private use be made of Council contracts.

6.4.8 Any purchase of IT software or hardware (except consumables) must be made through the ICT Service.

- 6.4.9 A Director/Head of Service may order goods to be supplied or work to be done by requisition on another Directorate/Service area on any occasion where more favourable terms are obtainable by this method than would be the case by direct ordering.
- 6.4.10 Where it appears to be advantageous for supplies to more than one Service area to be ordered from one source, the Lead Service Procurement Manager shall be responsible for co-ordinating the arrangements.
- 6.4.11 The authoriser of the electronic requisition must be satisfied that the goods and services ordered are appropriate and needed, that there is adequate budgetary provision and that quotations or tenders have been obtained if necessary. Value For Money should always be obtained.
- 6.4.12 Goods and services must be checked on receipt to ensure they are in accordance with the official order. This check should, where practicable, be carried out by a different Officer to the Officer who signed the original order.
- 6.4.13 On receipt of goods/services, entries must be made in inventories or stocks records as appropriate and delivered on the Council's electronic ordering system.
- 6.4.14 Separation of duties at different stages of ordering and paying for goods should be in place.
- 6.4.15 All orders must be recorded, along with delivery and receipt of invoice.
- 6.4.16 No orders should be placed that will commit the Council to a loan, leasing or rental arrangement without the prior approval of the Section 151 Officer and a Director/Head of Service.
- 6.4.17 Open orders should only be used where unavoidable, and with the permission of the Section 151 Officer. In the situation where an open order has been issued e.g. for a call-off contract, the order must have a clear end date, which may be no later than 31st March following the date of issue.
- 6.4.18 Verbal orders lessen the control of the Council over expenditure and must be avoided wherever possible. Even should a supplier state that they do not require or want an electronic/written order, one should be produced and dispatched as standard. Unless there is a genuine reason e.g. for a standard utility supply, an order must always be issued.

Paying for Goods

- 6.4.19 Payment must not be made on a photocopied or faxed invoice (unless the original invoice has been mislaid), a statement or other document other than the formal invoice.
- 6.4.20 Where payment is to be made on anything other than an original VAT invoice, the copy must be endorsed "*I certify that this invoice has not previously been paid*".
- 6.4.21 Payments to suppliers should be by the most economical means for the Council. Direct Debit or Standing Orders may be used with the agreement of the Section 151 Officer.
- 6.4.22 Certification of interim and final contract payments, checking, recording and authorising these payments, the system for monitoring and controlling capital schemes and the procedures for validation of sub-contractors' tax status must be documented and agreed with the Section 151 Officer.
- 6.4.23 Payment must not be made unless a proper VAT invoice has been received, checked, coded and certified for payment confirming:

- Receipt of goods or services;
- That the invoice has not previously been paid;
- That expenditure has been properly incurred and is within budget provision;
- That prices and arithmetic are correct and accord with quotations, tender, contracts or catalogue prices;
- Correct accounting treatment of tax;
- The invoice is correctly coded;
- Discounts have been taken where available;
- That appropriate entries are made in the accounting records.

6.4.24 No loan, leasing or rental arrangements may be entered into without prior agreement from the Section 151 Officer and the Legal section. The agreement must also be authorised by a Director/Head of Service.

6.4.25 No payment shall be made to any organisation in advance of goods or services being rendered to the Council except in instances of subscriptions, memberships, training courses etc.

6.4.26 Key Controls

The key controls are:

- all goods and services are requisitioned only by appropriate persons and are correctly recorded;
- requisitions shall only be issued where budgetary provision exists to pay for the goods and services to be supplied;
- all goods and services shall be requisitioned in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and Procurement Policy and Strategy unless they are purchased from sources within the Council;
- goods and services received are checked to ensure they are in accordance with the requisition. Goods should not be receipted by the person who authorised the order;
- payments are not made unless goods have been received by the Council, to the correct price, quantity and quality standards;
- all payments are made to the correct person/supplier, for the correct amount and are properly recorded, regardless of the payment method;
- all appropriate evidence of the transaction and payment documents are retained and stored for the defined period, in accordance with guidance issued by the Section 151 Officer;
- all expenditure is accurately recorded against the right budget, any exceptions are corrected and VAT is recorded against the relevant VAT code;
- in addition, the use of e-commerce and electronic purchasing requires that processes are in place to maintain the security and integrity of data for transacting business electronically.

Debtors

6.4.27 Wherever possible, charges for the use of Council services should be collected in advance of service delivery, reducing the need for debtor invoices to be raised. See Contract Procedure Rule 6.7

6.5 CLAIMS FOR EXPENSES

6.5.1 Councillors and Officers may incur expenses in the course of their Council duties. Approved expenses will be reimbursed to the individual. Normally the need to incur expenses will be approved in advance, and shall be incurred in the most cost-effective way.

6.5.2 All expense claims are paid through the Council's creditors or payroll systems.

- 6.5.3 Expense claims will only be paid on approved forms. For Officers, these must be authorised by the claimant's line manager. For Councillors, these must be authorised by the Senior Democratic Services Officer or other nominated Officer.
- 6.5.4 All Councillors and Officers submitting claims for expenses shall confirm that the claim is in respect of legitimate and authorised expenditure that has been incurred on Council business.
- 6.5.5 Certification by a line manager shall be taken to mean that the certifying Officer is satisfied that those journeys were authorised, the expenses properly and necessarily incurred, and that the allowances are properly payable by the Council.
- 6.5.6 All car allowances will be paid through the Council's Payroll System. The use of the Council's corporate travel contract should be encouraged whenever rail travel is contemplated.
- 6.5.7 Each claim must be promptly submitted for payment and must be presented on a form clearly detailing the expenditure incurred, supported by VAT receipts where applicable, dated, coded, and signed by the claimant and counter signed by the appropriate authorising Officer. Promptly is defined as monthly for large transactional or high value claims, or quarterly for small transactional or low value claims. In either case, all claims relating to a previous financial year must be presented to payroll for payment by the 10th April each year.

6.5.8 Key Controls

The key controls are:

- Claims will only be paid in accordance with approved schemes;
- Claims must be made on official forms and correctly authorised.

6.6 PETTY CASH/IMPREST ACCOUNTS

- 6.6.1 Petty cash/imprest accounts facilitate minor, routine transactions, where raising an official order and processing an invoice through the Creditor system would be neither realistic nor cost effective.
- 6.6.2 All petty cash/imprest accounts are arranged through the Section 151 Officer.
- 6.6.3 Payments relating to the following headings must not be made from petty cash/imprest accounts:
- Salaries or Wages;
 - Sub-contractors;
 - Officers' Travelling and Subsistence;
 - Fees to Individuals.
- 6.6.4 Items of a value of £50 or more must be purchased through the Council's procurement system, unless the Director/Head of Service has agreed a different limit in consultation with the Section 151 Officer.
- 6.6.5 Only the original advance and reimbursements will be credited to the account – no other income can be credited to a petty cash/imprest account. All income must be banked in accordance with Financial Procedure Rule 6.7.
- 6.6.6 Each Director/Head of Service will compile and maintain a schedule of all Officers who have been authorised to operate a petty cash/imprest account.
- 6.6.7 Officers operating a petty cash/imprest account must:

- Obtain and retain petty cash vouchers, showing full details of the payment vouchers to support each payment from the petty cash/imprest account;
- Make adequate arrangements in their office for the safe custody of the account;
- Produce, upon demand of the Section 151 Officer and/or internal audit, cash and all vouchers to the total value of the petty cash/imprest account;
- Record transactions properly;
- Reconcile and balance the account at least monthly; reconciliation sheets to be signed and retained by the petty cash/imprest holder;
- Provide the Section 151 Officer with a certificate of the value of the account held at 31 March in accordance with the timetable to be issued by the Section 151 Officer;
- Ensure that the account is never used to cash personal cheques or to make personal loans and that payments into the account are the reimbursement of the float and change relating to purchases where an advance has been made;
- On leaving the Council's employment or otherwise ceasing to be entitled to hold a petty cash/imprest advance, an Officer shall account to the Director/Head of Service for the amount advanced to them.

6.6.8 Vouchers must be:

- Authorised by the budget holder, or nominated representative, in advance of the purchase wherever possible;
- Signed by the person making the purchase or payment to acknowledge that they have received the amount shown on the voucher;
- Accompanied by an invoice/receipt, other than in exceptional circumstances. Where appropriate, this should be a valid VAT invoice/receipt.

6.6.9 A claim form must accompany every claim for reimbursement. In preparing the claim, it is important to ensure that:

- Properly certified vouchers and VAT invoices/receipts must be provided in support of every item included in the claim;
- Full details of the net cost, the VAT and the total paid are completed for every entry on the claim;
- Expenditure is accurately coded and all recoverable VAT has been taken;
- The total value, including bank account where applicable, is reconciled to the nominal amount of the petty cash/imprest account;
- All certifications are properly completed on the claim form by authorised signatories.

6.6.10 All non-computerised records relating to petty cash/imprest accounts shall be maintained in ink.

6.6.11 If circumstances arise where the amount of a petty cash/imprest account becomes excessive, the responsible Officer shall make appropriate arrangements to pay the excess amount back to the Section 151 Officer.

6.6.12 Every temporary or permanent transfer of a petty cash/imprest account from one Officer to another shall be evidenced by the signature of the receiving Officer. This will be either through a formal receipt or a document maintained for that purpose.

6.6.13 Key Controls

The key controls are:

- Imprest accounts can only be established with the approval of the Section 151 Officer;
- An individual must be responsible for the operation, maintenance and accounting of each imprest account.

6.7 INCOME

- 6.7.1 The Section 151 Officer is responsible for ensuring that adequate systems are available, and are maintained, for the recording of all income by the Council.
- 6.7.2 It is the responsibility of every Officer of the Council to ensure that all sums of money due to the Council are promptly invoiced or otherwise demanded and that all sums of money received are promptly paid into the Council's accounts.
- 6.7.3 All income due to the Council must be processed accurately and securely through one of the primary income systems (e.g. NNDR, Council Tax, Debtors, Housing Rents).
- 6.7.4 Official receipts, signed by an authorised Officer, must be given on receipt of income.
- 6.7.5 All receipt forms, books, tickets etc. shall be in an official form. Income stationery should be stored securely. The security of stationery is subject to Internal Audit inspection.
- 6.7.6 The Section 151 Officer must be provided with details relating to work done, goods supplied or services rendered or other amounts, to enable the sums due to the Council to be recorded correctly and to ensure accounts are sent out promptly.
- 6.7.7 Directorates/Service areas must assist the Section 151 Officer in collecting debts that they have originated, by providing any further information requested by the debtor, and in pursuing the matter on the Council's behalf, including providing evidence in legal proceedings.
- 6.7.8 All income must be paid fully and promptly into the appropriate bank account in the form in which it is received. Income documents must be detailed enough to provide a complete audit trail to the Council's General Ledger.
- 6.7.9 All cash taken must be reconciled to till or manual receipts, and all deposited cash/cheques should be counted and verified.
- 6.7.10 At least two Officers must be present when post is opened in the Council's Mail Room to ensure that where income is received all money received by post is properly identified and recorded.
- 6.7.11 Adequate security arrangements must be in operation to safeguard all income against loss or theft, and to ensure the security of cash handling.
- 6.7.12 The value and quantity of outstanding debts will be regularly reviewed. Write-offs will only take place as a last resort after all other economic/social solutions have been exhausted. These are detailed under "Assets – Disposal by Write-off" under Financial Procedure Rule 5.4.
- 6.7.13 Key Controls

The key controls are:

- An approved charging policy, which is regularly reviewed;
- Correct procedures and the appropriate stationery ensure that income is collected from the correct person at the right time;
- Separation of duties within the income process;
- Effective action is taken to pursue non-payment within defined timescales;
- Formal approval process for debt write-off;
- All appropriate income documents are retained and stored for the defined period in accordance with guidance issued by the Section 151 Officer;

- Money collected and deposited is reconciled to the bank account by a person who is not involved in the collection or banking process;
- Payment in advance, wherever possible

6.8 TAXATION

- 6.8.1 The Section 151 Officer is responsible for ensuring that adequate procedures are in place and adequate advice available to Directorates so as to ensure that the Council is at all times compliant with the specific requirements of the various tax regimes which affect its operations and delivery of services.
- 6.8.2 The Section 151 Officer is responsible for maintaining the Council's tax records, making all tax payments, receiving tax credits and submitting tax returns by their due date as appropriate. In appropriate circumstances (e.g. where part of this function may have been devolved to a partner organisation) the Section 151 Officer will ensure compliance with the requirements of the particular tax regimes.
- 6.8.3 Each Director/Head of Service will at all times conduct the financial arrangements of their services, with regard to taxation issues, in accordance with advice or instructions issued by the Section 151 Officer, and shall provide any related information or documents upon request.
- 6.8.4 All returns must comply with the relevant formats and timetables for submission.
- 6.8.5 All taxable transactions shall be identified, properly carried out and accounted for within stipulated timescales.
- 6.8.6 Officers shall be nominated by the Section 151 Officer to take responsibility for taxation issues and liaison with agencies such as the HMRC.
- 6.8.7 Key Controls

The key controls are:

- budget managers are provided with relevant information and kept up to date on tax issues;
- budget managers are instructed on required record keeping;
- all taxable transactions are identified, properly carried out and accounted for within stipulated timescales;
- records are maintained in accordance with instructions;
- returns are made to the appropriate authorities within the stipulated timescale.

6.9 TRADING ACCOUNTS

- 6.9.1 It is the responsibility of the Section 151 Officer to advise on the establishment and operation of trading accounts throughout the Council.
- 6.9.2 Under the Service Reporting Code of Practice, authorities are required to keep trading accounts for services provided on a basis other than straightforward recharge of cost. Accounts that merely recharge cost are referred to as holding accounts and are not subject to this part of the Financial Procedure Rules.
- 6.9.3 Trading Accounts are only established after seeking advice from the Section 151 Officer.
- 6.9.4 Trading Accounts are only applicable where the charge out of the account is not on the basis of cost.

- 6.9.5 A separate revenue account must be maintained for each Trading Account. This will show all relevant income and expenditure, including overhead costs. A financial report supporting the final accounts will be produced (if required).
- 6.9.6 The same accounting principles will be applied to Trading Accounts as to other services.
- 6.9.7 Trading account balances will be allowed where real or quasi trading accounts are used to manage costs. Balances will be maintained to allow flexible response to changes to demand and/or to meet defined future capital expenditure needs. Generally such balances should not exceed 20% of the annual turnover of the Trading account. Balances in excess of this limit should be returned to the General Reserve.

6.9.8 Key Controls

The key controls are:

- They must be maintained in accordance with proper accounting practices;
- They must appear separately in the Annual Statement of Accounts.

6.10 CREDIT/PURCHASING CARDS

- 6.10.1 The Section 151 Officer is responsible for the issue of Credit/Purchasing cards to Senior Officers of the Council, including setting merchant categories and card limits.
- 6.10.2 All Credit/Purchasing cards must be held securely. Card details and PIN numbers must not be disclosed other than for the purposes of using the card for payments. Cardholders will be held personally liable for any expenditure they cannot account for.
- 6.10.3 On a monthly basis, a record of card purchases shall be maintained by individual cardholders and reconciled to the card statement provided by the card issuer. This record should be passed to Finance for processing.
- 6.10.4 Credit/Purchasing cards shall only be used for authorised purchases. Under no circumstances shall they be used for personal expenditure, or periodic/direct debit payments.
- 6.10.5 No cash withdrawals are allowed, and the card will block any attempts to do so.
- 6.10.6 In all circumstances, every purchase with VAT will require a VAT receipt in order for the Visa statement to be accounted for correctly.

6.10.7 Key Controls

The key controls are:

- The Credit/Purchasing cards have a monthly and individual transaction limit;
- The categories of spend are limited to the officers professional duties;
- They are reconciled each month by the cardholder and Finance.

6.11 CHANGE FLOATS

- 6.11.1 The Section 151 Officer shall provide such change floats as they consider appropriate to Officers of the Council to undertake their official duties.
- 6.11.2 Payments of any kind must not, under any circumstances, be made out of change floats. Any breach of this regulation may result in disciplinary proceedings taking place against the Officer concerned.

6.11.3 If circumstances arise where the amount of a change float becomes excessive, the responsible Officer shall make appropriate arrangements to pay the excess amount back to the Section 151 Officer.

6.11.4 Every temporary or permanent transfer of a change float from one Officer to another shall be evidenced by the signature of the receiving Officer. This will be either through a formal receipt or a document maintained for that purpose.

6.11.5 Key Controls

The key controls are:

- Change floats can only be established with the approval of the Section 151 Officer;
- An individual must be responsible for the operation, maintenance and accounting of each change float;
- No payments should go either in or out of the change float.

6.12 CONTROLLED FINANCIAL STATIONERY

6.12.1 The term Controlled Financial Stationery refers to stationery which is sequentially pre-numbered to provide a sound audit trail, usually to record and process items of a financial nature, the use of which has to be regulated in order to ensure it is restricted to authorised Officers only.

6.12.2 Within the Council this primarily relates to cheques, income collection sheets, income receipts, petty cash books, and car park tickets.

6.12.3 The Section 151 Officer shall determine which stationery is appropriate to be classed as Controlled Financial Stationery.

6.12.4 Sufficient working levels of unused Controlled Financial Stationery should be kept in a locked, secure, fireproof cabinet.

6.12.5 A register must be kept by the finance department for all items of Controlled Financial Stationery, to ensure that a proper sequence control is maintained, showing:

- Items on order, including serial numbers, supplier and expected delivery date;
- Items received, including serial numbers, date received and signature/date of person responsible for safe keeping;
- Items issued, including serial numbers, date issued, and signature/date of person to whom issued.

6.12.6 Responsible Officers are required to periodically check the level of stock in hand, and alert the appropriate Officer of the need to re-order.

6.12.7 Replacement stocks should be ordered in good time, especially during holiday time.

6.12.8 Any loss or shortfall of an item of Controlled Financial Stationery must be reported immediately to the Section 151 Officer.

6.12.9 Key Controls

The key controls are:

- Controlled Financial Stationery can only be established with the approval of the Section 151 Officer;
- Sequential serial numbers are identified and reconciled periodically;
- Formal approval is required for issue.

7 REGULATION 7 - EXTERNAL ARRANGEMENTS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

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

7.2 PARTNERSHIPS

General

7.2.1 Partnerships are likely to play a key role in delivering community strategies and in helping to promote and improve the well-being of the area. The Council is working in partnership with others – public agencies, private companies, community groups and voluntary organisations, and its distinctive leadership role is to bring together the contributions of the various stakeholders to deliver a shared vision of services based on user wishes.

7.2.2 The Council will mobilise investment, bid for funds, champion the needs of the area and harness the energies of local people and community organisations. The Council will be measured by what it achieves in partnership with others.

7.2.3 The main reasons for entering into a partnership are:

- the desire to find new ways to share risk;
- the ability to access new resources;
- to provide new and better ways of delivering services; and
- to forge new relationships.

7.2.4 A partner is defined as either:

- an organisation (private or public) undertaking, part funding or participating as a beneficiary in a project; or
- a body whose nature or status give it a right or obligation to support the project.

7.2.5 Partners participate in projects by:

- acting as a project deliverer or sponsor, solely or in concert with others;
- acting as a project funder or part funder; and
- being the beneficiary group of the activity undertaken in a project.

7.2.6 Partners have common responsibilities:

- to be willing to take on a role in the broader programme appropriate to the skills and resources of the partner organisation;
- to act in good faith at all times and in the best interests of the partnership's aims and objectives;
- be open about any conflict of interests that might arise;
- to encourage joint working and promote the sharing of information, resources and skills between public, private and community sectors;
- to hold confidentially any information received as a result of partnership activities or duties that is of a confidential or commercially sensitive nature; and
- to act wherever possible as ambassadors for the project.

7.2.7 The Council has the Bassetlaw Public & Third Sector Community Partnership in place that brings together at a local level the different parts of the public, private, business, community and voluntary sectors so that different initiatives and services support each other and work

together. The Bassetlaw Public & Third Sector Community Partnership is intended to help local service providers' co-ordinate their actions. However, it is still the individual partners that remain responsible and accountable for decisions on their own services and use of their own resources.

Roles and Responsibilities

7.2.8 The Cabinet is responsible for overseeing an effective partnership approach throughout the Council. The Cabinet is responsible for approving protocols, delegations, including frameworks to inform decisions around partnership engagement. The Cabinet is the focus for forming partnerships with other local public, private, voluntary and community sector organisations to address local needs.

7.2.9 The Cabinet can delegate functions, including those relating to partnerships, to Officers. These are set out in the Scheme of Delegation that forms part of the Council's Constitution. Where functions are delegated, the Cabinet remains accountable for them to the full Council.

7.2.10 The Cabinet nominates the Audit and Risk Scrutiny committee to be responsible for ensuring the effective scrutiny of the Partnership register.

7.2.11 Members and Officers will represent the authority on partnership and external bodies in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation.

7.2.12 The Section 151 Officer:

- is responsible for promoting and maintaining the same high standards of conduct with regard to financial administration in partnerships that apply throughout the Council;
- must ensure that the accounting arrangements to be adopted relating to partnerships and joint ventures are satisfactory;
- must ensure that the risks have been fully appraised before agreements are entered into with external bodies.

7.2.13 Directors/Heads of Service:

- are responsible for ensuring that appropriate approvals are obtained before any negotiations are concluded in relation to work with external bodies;
- must also consider the overall corporate governance arrangements and legal issues when arranging contracts with external bodies.

7.2.14 Key controls

The key controls are:

- if appropriate, to be aware of their responsibilities under the Council's Financial Procedure Rules and the Contract Procedure Rules;
- to ensure that risk management processes are in place to identify and assess all known risks;
- to ensure that project appraisal processes are in place to assess the viability of the project in terms of resources, staffing and expertise;
- to agree and accept formally the roles and responsibilities of each of the partners involved in the project before the project commences; and
- to communicate regularly with other partners throughout the project so that problems can be identified and shared to achieve their successful resolution;
- declarations of interest from Members and Officers.

7.3 EXTERNAL FUNDING / GRANTS

General

- 7.3.1 External funding is potentially a very important source of income, but funding conditions need to be carefully considered to ensure that they are compatible with the aims and objectives of the Council. Funds from external agencies provide additional resources to enable the Council to deliver services to the local community. However, in some instances, although the scope for external funding has increased, such funding is linked to tight specifications and may not be flexible enough to link to the Council's overall plan.

Bids for external funding

- 7.3.2 Bids must be comprehensive and comply with relevant Council policies. If bids are successful then the grant works and administration must be properly undertaken to ensure no penalties are incurred.
- 7.3.3 All bids and claims must be signed by the Section 151 officer, through the use of a certification process.
- 7.3.4 All bids for grants must be in accordance with the approved Service Improvement Bid process (if applicable).
- 7.3.5 Directors/Heads of Service must obtain, Management Team and Cabinet approval, if appropriate, for any bids for new monies detailing the service and financial implications before grant applications are made.
- 7.3.6 Comprehensive business cases must identify associated risks, internal budget provisions including matched funding, and any resource implications.
- 7.3.7 Accountancy must be involved in the preparation of all grant applications.

Grant Claims

- 7.3.8 Records supporting any claim, including interim and final claims, must be maintained and available, and reconcile back to the Council's General Ledger.
- 7.3.9 All claims must be submitted in accordance with the Council's 'Grant Claim Guidance Manual' as directed by the Section 151 Officer.

Roles and Responsibilities

- 7.3.10 The Section 151 Officer is responsible for ensuring that all funding notified by external bodies is received and properly recorded in the Council's accounts.
- 7.3.11 Directors/Heads of Service are responsible for providing the Section 151 Officer with all necessary information to enable the proper recording to be achieved. They have the responsibility for submitting any proposed grant funded projects to the Section 151 Officer, and they must also ensure that any conditions of grant funding are met and all the statutory requirements are complied with.

7.3.12 Key Controls

The key controls are:

- Before any arrangements for external funding are entered into, the project must be submitted to the Section 151 Officer for approval;
- to ensure that any match-funding requirements are given due consideration prior to entering into long-term agreements and that future revenue budgets reflect these requirements;

- to ensure that funds are acquired only to meet the priorities approved in the policy framework by the full Council;
- to ensure that key conditions of funding and any statutory requirements are complied with and that the responsibilities of the accountable body are clearly understood;
- The adoption and use by Officers of the 'Grant Claim Guidance Manual'.

7.4 WORK FOR THIRD PARTIES

7.4.1 The Cabinet is responsible for approving the contractual arrangements for any work for third parties or external bodies.

7.4.2 Current legislation enables the authority to provide a range of services to other bodies. Such work may enable a service team to maintain economies of scale and existing expertise. Arrangements should be in place to ensure that any risks associated with this work is minimised and that such work is intra vires.

7.4.3 Key Controls

The key controls are:

- to ensure that proposals are costed properly in accordance with guidance provided by the Section 151 Officer;
- to ensure that contracts are drawn up using guidance provided by the Section 151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer, and that the formal approvals process is adhered to;
- to issue guidance with regard to the financial aspects of third party contracts and the maintenance of the contract register.

SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

	Council/Cabinet	Chief Executive	Portfolio Holder	Section 151 officer	Director/Head of Service
Financial Planning	a) Approve policy framework and budget	a) Propose Corporate Plan to Cabinet		a) Prepare three year Financial Strategy b) Prepare Capital Investment Strategy and Asset Management Plan	a) Preparation of Directorate and Service Delivery Plans
Capital Programme	a) Approve three year capital programme b) Approve amendments to the capital programme c) Approve capital schemes in excess of £250k before commencement of work	a) Emergency decisions in consultation with Section 151 Officer	a) Approve amendments to capital programme over £100k with Director/Head of Service and Section 151 Officer	a) Prepare three year capital programme b) Approve amendments to capital programme up to £100k with Director/Head of Service. c) Approve amendments over £100k with Director/Head of Service and Portfolio Holder d) Report all changes to capital programme to Cabinet	a) Complete outline capital bid forms b) Approve amendments to capital programme up to £100k with Section 151 Officer
Capital Monitoring	a) Approve amendments of £10k or 20% of total project cost b) Note quarterly budget monitoring reports			a) Issue guidance on monitoring	a) Appoint Project Manager b) Notify Section 151 Officer of expected slippage c) Notify Section 151 Officer of overspends d) Report to Cabinet on overspends of £10k or 20% of total project cost

	Council/Cabinet	Chief Executive	Portfolio Holder	Section 151 officer	Director/Head of Service
Revenue Budget	a) Approve three year revenue budget			a) Prepare overall budget	a) Prepare Directorate budget b) Review all fees and charges
Revenue Monitoring	a) Note quarterly budget monitoring reports			a) Provide guidance on budget monitoring b) Provide financial information	a) Monitor budget
Virement	a) Approve virements over £100k		a) Approve virements over £25k and up to £100k with Director/Head of Service and Section 151 Officer	a) Approve virements up to £25k with Director/Head of Service. b) Approve virements over £25k and up to £100k with Director/Head of Service and Portfolio Holder	a) Up to £25k with Section 151 Officer
Write-Offs	a) Approve write-offs over £25k		a) Approve write-offs over £2k and up to £25k with Director/Head of Service and Section 151 Officer	a) Approve write-offs up to £2k with Director/Head of Service. b) Approve write-offs over £2k and up to £25k with Director/Head of Service and Portfolio Holder	a) Up to £2k with Section 151 Officer

RETENTION OF ACCOUNTING AND FINANCIAL DOCUMENTS

Title	Retention Period – Complete Years
Budget Working Papers	2
Final Accounts Working Papers	Offer to Archivist
Financial Ledger:	
- Final Summary	Indefinite
- Cumulative Year End Detail	Indefinite
- Other	2
Grant Claim Records	<u>6 or as specified by the awarding body</u>
Journals	6
Leasing Records – vehicles, plant, equipment	7 (after termination)
Loans – Contractual documentation	7
Statement of Accounts	Indefinite
VAT:	
- Assessments	12
- Claims	6
- Records	6
Voluntary Fund Accounts	6
Other Documents e.g. official orders, receipts, paying in slips etc.	6
Treasury Management daily record document	3

MAIN ACCOUNTING SYSTEMS

General Ledger/Accounts Payable	–	Advanced Business Solutions e-Financials
Accounts Receivable	–	Advanced Business Solutions e-Financials/Northgate
Purchase Order Processing	–	Advanced Business Solutions e-Financials
Payroll System	–	Midland i-Trent
Benefits/Council Tax/NNDR	–	Northgate
Asset Management	–	Real Asset Management
Loans/Investments/Cash Flow	–	Logotech
Cash Receipting	–	Capita Axis Income Management

DEFINITIONS

APPOINTED AUDITORS - external auditors of local authorities appointed by the Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd. They will be from the major accountancy firms.

BUDGET - a plan that matches spending with available resources. The budget is an authorisation for future expenditure and a base for controlling expenditure and income.

BUDGET HOLDER - the postholder named on the relevant page of the Annual Budget Book.

BUDGET MANAGER - is whoever a Responsible Budget Holder delegates as being responsible for a budget within a service.

BUDGET PAGE - the page in the Annual Budget Book that sets out the budget for a Service.

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE - Section 40 of the *Local Government and Housing Act 1989* defines 'expenditure for capital purposes'. This includes spending on the acquisition of assets either directly by the local authority or indirectly in the form of grants to other persons or bodies. Expenditure that does not fall within this definition must be charged to a revenue account. Capital Expenditure includes:

- Acquisition or disposal of land, buildings and major items of plant, apparatus and vehicles;
- Construction of roads and buildings;
- Enhancement of land, roads and buildings.

In addition the Council usually regards any item below £10,000 as revenue.

CIPFA is one of the leading professional accountancy bodies in the UK and has responsibility for setting accounting standards for local government.

CONTINGENCY - money set aside in the budget to meet the cost of unforeseen items of expenditure, or shortfalls in income, and to provide for inflation where this is not included in individual budgets.

COST CENTRE - any unit to which costs are assigned or allocated. A cost centre is the lowest level to which the Council's budget monitoring procedures currently apply.

ESTIMATES - the amounts expected to be spent, or received as income, during an accounting period. The term is also used to describe detailed budgets, which are either being prepared for the following years, or have been approved for the current year.

FEES AND CHARGES - income raised by charging users of services for the facilities. For example, local authorities usually make charges for the use of car parks, the collection of trade refuse, etc. The Council levies fees and charges in accordance with the Corporate Charging Policy.

GENERAL LEDGER - the core of the Council's financial records. These constitute the central "books" of the system, and every financial transaction flows through the general ledger.

NET EXPENDITURE - Total expenditure less specific service income.

OFFICER - an employee of the Council or other person contracted to carry out functions where these Financial Procedure Rules apply.

PROVISIONS AND RESERVES - amounts set aside in one year to cover expenditure in the future.

Provisions are for liabilities or losses that are likely or certain to be incurred, but the amounts or the dates on which they will arise are uncertain. Reserves are amounts set aside which do not fall within

the definition of provisions and include general reserves (or 'balances'), which every authority must maintain as a matter of prudence.

SERVICE - a cost centre or group of cost centres delivering a common function. The Service is the lowest level of budget detail set out in the Budget Book.

SLIPPAGE - where actual expenditure on a project is less than the planned spend in a financial year.

VALUE FOR MONEY (VFM) - a term used to assess whether or not an organisation has obtained the maximum benefit from the goods and services it both acquires and provides, within the resources available to it. It not only measures the cost of goods and services, but also takes account of the mix of quality, cost, resource, use, fitness for purpose, timeliness, and convenience to judge whether or not, together, they constitute good value.

VIREMENT - the permission to spend more on one budget head when this is matched by a corresponding reduction on some other budget head, i.e. a switch of resources between budget heads. Virement must be properly authorised by the appropriate committee or by Officers under delegated powers.

Contract Procedure Rules – February 2026

Bassetlaw District Council

Introduction

1 Background

- 1.1 These Contract Procedure Rules (Rules) set out the rules that apply to all Officers, Members and Agents acting on behalf of the Council, involved in procurement and contract management for and on behalf of the Council and are established in compliance with S135 of the Local Government Act (1972) and S1-29 of Local Government Act (1999). The Rules must be read in conjunction with relevant laws, regulations and policies/procedures including the Council's Financial Procedure Rules, the Officer Scheme of Delegation, English law and Supplementary Procurement Guidance.
- 1.2 The Rules apply to contracts or agreements with external organisations where the Council pays for:
 - 1.2.1 Goods and/or services
 - 1.2.2 Works of any kind
 - 1.2.3 Hire, rental or lease of equipment, material and/or plant.
- 1.3 All Officers involved in procurement and contract management activities as well as making procurement and contract management decisions must be fully aware of and comply with the Rules as they form part of the Council's Constitution.
- 1.4 All procurement activities and contracts must seek to realise value for money, which means optimising the use of public funds by balancing effectiveness, efficiency and economy over the life cycle of a product, service or works to achieve the intended outcomes of the procurement. This includes non-financial factors such as wider socio-economic or environmental benefits and impacts.
- 1.5 The Rules seek to protect the Council's reputation by minimising the risk of allegations of corruption, dishonesty, and failure to meet legal obligations. As these Rules are required by law, failure to comply with them could lead to disciplinary action. If in doubt and / or if advice on compliance with legislative requirements is required, this may be obtained from Procurement* (Bassetlaw Procurement Team for activities under £50,000 and the Council's External Procurement Service Provider for activities of £50,000 upwards) and Legal teams.
- 1.6 The Supplementary Procurement Guidance will provide further operational guidance to support any procurement activity and the correct application of these rules.
- 1.7 These Rules, in particular the internal thresholds set out, govern the Council's internal procurement and approval processes. They do not replace or override the statutory Public Procurement Thresholds. Where the estimated contract value meets or exceeds a Public Procurement Threshold, the procurement must comply with the requirements of the Procurement Act 2023 irrespective of the internal threshold that would otherwise apply.
- 1.8 In order to apply these Rules, it is necessary to estimate the value of the contract. Further guidance is available in the Supplementary Procurement Guidance but in summary, the estimate must include all proposed expenditure under the contract over its maximum term including any extension periods. All thresholds referred to in these Rules are exclusive of VAT (unless otherwise specified). Where the estimated value cannot be determined, the procurement must be managed as though it was over the relevant UK Procurement Threshold (set out in the [Procurement Policy Note 023 as of January 2026](#)). Requirements should not be split to avoid thresholds in these Rules.

- 1.9 The Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Section 151 Officer have delegated powers to make incidental amendments from time to time to these Rules where changes comply with changes in legislation or changes to job titles/roles.
- 1.10 Members have a key role in providing oversight to the Rules set out below, in making key decisions on major projects considering the recommendations of Officers. Full details of the role that Members play in procurement activity can be found in the LGA's A Councillor's Guide to Procurement, 2019 edition (local.gov.uk).
- 1.11 In the case of a breach to these Rules, the Responsible Officer must make an **immediate** report to the Section 151 Officer detailing the nature of the breach and any management action taken to address the issues arising from the breach. The Section 151 Officer will maintain a record of all such breaches which will be reported to the relevant Committee periodically.

2 Governing Legislation

- 2.1 With effect from 24 February 2025, the Council's procurement activities will be regulated by the Procurement Act 2023 and the Procurement Regulations 2024 and where applicable (for certain health services) the Provider Selection Regime.
- 2.2 There is also a wider legislative framework that may be appropriate including the Social Value Act 2012, Transparency Code 2015, Bribery Act 2010 which Officers must have regard to.
- 2.3 Where a procurement was started under the Public Contract Regulations (2015), governance for that procurement or contract continues to be those Regulations rather than the Procurement Act (2023). In the case of procurement activities/contracts started under the Public Contract Regulations (2015) they are governed by those Regulations until either:
 - 2.3.1 The end of the contract in question.
 - 2.3.2 For a framework / Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS), the end of the last call off contract.

3 Objectives

- 3.1 The Procurement Act (2023) sets out a series of objectives which procurement activities must have regard to, they are:
 - 3.1.1 Delivering value for money
 - 3.1.2 Maximising public benefit
 - 3.1.3 Sharing information for the purposes of allowing suppliers and others to understand the Council's policies and decisions.
 - 3.1.4 Acting, and being seen to act, with integrity.
- 3.2 Procurement activities must also have regard to the National Procurement Policy Statement which sets out national priorities for procurement.
- 3.3 It is important that procurement activities support the delivery of the Council's ambitions.

4 Exempted Contracts

- 4.1 Procurement activities or contracts for the areas listed below are exempt from the application of these Rules.
 - 4.1.1 When procuring as part of a joint procurement where another Contracting Authority is acting as the procurement lead. The Responsible Officer must satisfy themselves that the procurement complies with all applicable laws. The Lead Authority's Rules will take precedence.
 - 4.1.2 Any contract between the Council and an entity controlled by the Council where more than 80% of the activities are carried out on behalf of the Council.

- 4.1.3 Any contract between the Council and another Contracting Authority where the contract has the aim of achieving public function related objectives and is solely in the public interest and where no more than 20% of the activities are intended to be carried out for other reasons.
- 4.1.4 The acquisition of land or buildings.
- 4.1.5 The acquisition, development, production or co-production of material intended for broadcast and a contract for the broadcast to the public of material.
- 4.1.6 A contract to facilitate the provision of an electronic communications service or network.
- 4.1.7 A contract for the provision of arbitration, mediation or conciliation services.
- 4.1.8 A contract for any of the certain exempt legal services (including those relating to judicial or other dispute resolution proceedings).
- 4.1.9 A contract for the lending of money or for carrying out of investment services by an investment firm or a qualifying credit institution.
- 4.1.10 A contract of employment and other contracts with individuals appointed to a public office.
- 4.1.11 Services relating to the promotion of fire safety.
- 4.1.12 A contract for the provision of research and development services where the services are intended to be for the benefit of the public and the contract does not also include for the provision of goods or works or production of tools or industrial processes for manufacture.
- 4.1.13 Expenditure incurred directly as a result of an insurer led arrangement.
- 4.1.14 Membership/Subscriptions (not applicable to software licensing) where the Council makes an arrangement to receive goods or services regularly by paying in advance and competition is absent for technical reasons.
- 4.1.15 Any award of grants of money but such awards must be made in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules and wider Constitution.

5 Responsibilities

- 5.1 The Responsible Officer will be the officer named in the Procurement Plan or by the relevant Head of Service / Director, or in the absence of the above, the officer responsible for that budget subject to the adequate delegated authority. Supporting information about the role of the Responsible Officer may be found in the Supplementary Procurement Guidance. The key responsibilities are outlined below:
 - 5.1.1 Ensuring they fully understand and comply with all aspects of the Rules, failure to do so may result in disciplinary action or removal of access to the eProcurement system.
 - 5.1.2 Ensuring sufficient budget / funding will be available to commence procurement and award the contract.
 - 5.1.3 Considering whether a suitable corporate contract or other publicly available contract/framework agreement is available and appropriate before seeking to procure another contract (the respective contract may require modification therefore Legal or Procurement* must be consulted before proceeding).
 - 5.1.4 Ensuring they have the correct authorisation to procure and award the contract before progressing.
 - 5.1.5 Providing information requested by the Procurement Team for the publishing of contracts valued £5,000 or over (including VAT) to the Council's Contract Register to ensure compliance with the Local Government Transparency Requirements.
 - 5.1.6 Ensuring that the contracts for which they are responsible are effectively managed and monitored to ensure they deliver the requirement as intended and to address any performance issues as soon as possible.
 - 5.1.7 Keeping a record of decisions made in connection with the procurement, this should include minutes from any meetings held.
 - 5.1.8 Considering whether the procurement constitutes a key decision. If so, they must ensure they have authorisation to spend from the relevant committee before commencing the procurement. Advice must be sought from Democratic Services if there is any uncertainty.

- 5.1.9 Ensuring that a copy of the signed or sealed contract is forwarded to the Procurement Team.
 - 5.1.10 Providing information requested by the Procurement Team for the publishing of relevant contract and transparency notices.
 - 5.1.11 Responsible Officers must not under any circumstances, sign any contracts without written authority from the Monitoring Officer.
 - 5.1.12 Responsible Officers are reminded that they must, at all times, act in accordance with Council policies, including the Code of Conduct, which are enforceable through disciplinary procedures.
- 5.2 The role of the Corporate Management Team:
- 5.2.1 To ensure compliance with these Rules at all times.
 - 5.2.2 To promote the delivery of value for money in all procurement activity.
 - 5.2.3 To ensure all Responsible Officers are clearly identified and notify the Procurement* and Legal teams of any changes.
 - 5.2.4 To report non-compliance to the Procurement* and Legal teams.
- 5.3 The role of Procurement* and Legal teams:
- 5.3.1 To ensure all Responsible Officers have access to relevant training and guidance.
 - 5.3.2 To facilitate the planning and procurement process for contracts valued £50,000 or over.
 - 5.3.3 To report non-compliance to the Council's Audit and Governance Committee.

6 Conflicts of Interest

- 6.1 Responsible Officers must take all reasonable steps to identify and keep under review any conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest.
- 6.2 Any person who influences a decision must be included in the conflict-of-interest review.
- 6.3 Responsible Officers must take all reasonable steps to ensure that a conflict of interest does not put a supplier at an unfair advantage or disadvantage. If the officer deems that the advantage or disadvantage cannot be avoided, they should contact the Procurement Team before progressing further with the procurement. This obligation starts when the need for the procurement is first identified and continues until the termination of the contract.
- 6.4 Responsible Officers must prepare a conflicts assessment as part of the procurement planning process and, for contracts valued £50,000 or over, submit this to the Procurement Team for review before the procurement is published. This should include details of all conflicts or potential conflicts of interest and any steps that the Council has taken or will take to mitigate that conflict of interest. This may include any steps taken to demonstrate that there is no conflict of interest where one might be perceived.
- 6.5 This conflicts assessment must be kept under review and revised as necessary during the procurement and contract term.
- 6.6 Any officer or Member who fails to declare a conflict of interest may be subject to disciplinary proceedings and risks being prosecuted under the Bribery Act 2010.
- 6.7 Officers and Members involved in a procurement will, at all times, act in a way that is consistent with their Code of Conduct.

7 Risk Management

- 7.1 Responsible Officers must prepare a robust risk assessment as part of the procurement planning process and, for contracts valued £50,000 or over, submit this to the Procurement Team for review before the procurement is published. This should include details of anything that is deemed to be non-standard in the procurement and any steps that the Council has taken or will take to mitigate known or potential risks.

- 7.2 This risk assessment must be reviewed and updated regularly during the procurement process and through the contract term.
- 7.3 Where key risks are identified which may lead to a contract modification, those risks must be stated clearly in the tender notice and in relevant procurement documentation.

8 Market Engagement

- 8.1 Market engagement is permitted for the purposes of:
 - 8.1.1 Developing the Council's requirements and approach to the procurement
 - 8.1.2 Designing a procedure, conditions of participation or award criteria
 - 8.1.3 Preparing the tender notice and associated tender documents
 - 8.1.4 Identifying suppliers that may be able to supply the requirement (understanding the market).
 - 8.1.5 Identifying likely contractual terms
 - 8.1.6 Building capacity amongst suppliers in relation to the contract.
- 8.2 Market engagement must not have the effect that suppliers participating are put at an unfair advantage or that competition is otherwise distorted. If an officer deems that a supplier has been put at an unfair advantage, they must contact the Procurement* and Legal teams before progressing further with the procurement.
- 8.3 For procurement activities being advertised publically, a preliminary market engagement notice must be published on the government's Central Digital Platform / Find a Tender Service if market engagement planned or undertaken prior to procurement commencing.

9 Concession (Income Generating Contracts)

- 9.1 The Responsible Officer must seek legal, financial and procurement advice for any contracts which will generate income for the Council, including to determine if the Procurement Act (2023) will apply.

10 Provider Selection Regime (PSR)

- 10.1 The PSR (see more details [here](#)) applies to relevant authorities commissioning or subcontracting services which satisfy the following three criteria:
 - 10.1.1 is provided as part of the health service, whether NHS or public health;
 - 10.1.2 consists of the provision of health care to individuals or groups of individuals;
 - 10.1.3 falls within one or more of the specified CPV codes.
- 10.2 As a District Council the PSR is not expected to be relevant to Bassetlaw, however Responsible Officers should contact the Procurement Team for advice if they consider their contract may be relevant.

11 Light Touch Contracts

- 11.1 Light Touch contracts cover certain social, health, education or other public services provided directly to individuals or groups of individuals and therefore warrant special treatment and greater flexibility. The threshold for Light Touch Contracts as of January 2026 is set out in the Procurement Policy Note 023. Procurement activities with a value below that threshold are subject to the remainder of these Rules.
- 11.2 Responsible Officers should contact the Procurement Team for advice if they consider their contract may be a Light Touch Contract.

12 Using Frameworks

- 12.1 The Responsible Officer must ensure that there is no existing Council contract, framework, DPS or Dynamic Market available before undertaking an alternative procurement.
- 12.2 A contract of any value can be procured through a framework, if the proposed contract value is £50,000 or over, the Procurement Team must be consulted before the procurement is started.
- 12.3 A framework is considered a compliant procurement route when:
 - 12.3.1 It has been entered into by the Council in compliance with these Rules, or
 - 12.3.2 Another contracting authority, purchasing consortium or central government has tendered the framework in compliance with national procurement law and the Council is named as a potential user of the arrangement.
- 12.4 Where frameworks offer a further competition process, best practice would be to follow this wherever possible, however where expressly permitted under the terms of the relevant framework and where the conditions or award criteria for making such are fully met and subject to consulting the Procurement Team*:
 - 12.4.1 Below threshold contracts may be awarded directly to the top ranked supplier
 - 12.4.2 Above-threshold contracts may be awarded via mini-competition
 - 12.4.3 The justification for this decision must be set out in the Legal Instruction Form
- 12.5 The Responsible Officer must carry out due diligence checks at contract award to evidence fulfilment of any conditions of participation and that there are no grounds for exclusion.
- 12.6 Approval to procure and award must be sought in compliance with the Authority and Approvals Matrix at Appendix 1.
- 12.7 The contract must be signed or sealed in accordance with the Authority and Approvals Matrix at Appendix 1. If the contract is valued £30,000 or over (including VAT), a signed PDF copy must be made available to the Procurement Team*.
- 12.8 Where a contract is valued £30,000 or over (including VAT), a Contract Details Notice must be published on the Central Digital Platform.
- 12.9 If the procurement is valued over the relevant UK Procurement Threshold, assessment summaries must be produced and issued to all bidders and a standstill period of eight (8) working days must be observed. A Contract Details Notice must be published within thirty (30) days of the contract being entered into.
- 12.10 Where the contract is valued £5m or over, a redacted copy of the contract must be published within ninety (90) days.
- 12.11 Where the Council is using an external framework and the total value of the contract is £5,000 or over (including VAT), the must provide information requested by the Procurement Team for publishing to the Council's Contract Register, to ensure compliance with the Local Government Transparency Requirements. This must be done before raising a PO.

13 Using Dynamic Markets

- 13.1 The Responsible Officer must ensure that there is no existing Council contract, framework, DPS or Dynamic Market available before undertaking an alternative procurement.
- 13.2 Only procurement activities valued over the relevant UK Procurement Threshold may be procured via a Dynamic Market.

- 13.3 A Dynamic Market is considered a compliant procurement route when:
- 13.3.1 It has been entered into by the Council in compliance with these Rules, or
 - 13.3.2 Another contracting authority, purchasing consortium or central government has tendered the Dynamic Market in compliance with national procurement law and the Council is named as a potential user of the arrangement.
- 13.4 Dynamic Markets may only be used via a Competitive Flexible Procedure, for the avoidance of doubt there is no possibility of making a Direct Award from a Dynamic Market.
- 13.5 Responsible Officers should seek advice and support from the Procurement Team whenever they wish to either establish or use a Dynamic Market.
- 13.6 Approval to procure and award must be sought in compliance with the Authority and Approvals Matrix at Appendix 1.
- 13.7 All contracts must be signed or sealed in accordance with the Councils scheme of delegation in Part 4 of the Constitution. Contracts with a total value exceeding £50,000 must have the Common Seal of the Council affixed. A signed copy of all completed contracts must be made available to the Procurement Team*.
- 13.8 Existing Dynamic Purchasing Systems, established under Public Contract Regulations (2015) may still be used providing they remain operational. Contracts procured via existing Dynamic Purchasing Systems must be managed in accordance with Public Contract Regulations (2015).
- 13.9 Where the Council is using an external Dynamic Market, the Responsible Officer must provide information requested by the Procurement Team for publishing to the Council's Contract Register to ensure compliance with the Local Government Transparency Requirements. This must be done before raising a PO.

14 Procurement activities with a Value under £25,000

- 14.1 Obtaining value for money is the primary objective of all procurement activities, however multiple quotations at this value are not essential.
- 14.2 The Responsible Officer must first ensure sufficient budget / funding will be available to commence procurement and award the contract.
- 14.3 The Responsible Officer must ensure there is no existing Council contract, framework or Dynamic Market before commencing procurement.
- 14.4 The Responsible Officer must raise a Purchase Order. The terms of this Purchase Order should suffice for a contract, unless the officer believes the complexity of the requirement requires more bespoke terms to be obtained from the Legal Team. The Purchase Order must clearly state what the Council requires from the supplier.

15 Procurement activities with a Value of £25,000 or over

- 15.1 The Responsible Officer must first ensure sufficient budget / funding will be available to commence procurement and award the contract.
- 15.2 The Responsible Officer must first ensure there is no existing Council contract, framework, Dynamic Market or Dynamic Purchasing System before procuring the requirement.
- 15.3 Approval to procure and award must be sought in compliance with the Authority and Approvals Matrix at **Appendix 1**.

- 15.4 For procurement activities with an estimated value under £50,000, the Responsible Officer must seek a minimum of three (3) comparable written quotations, wherever possible at least one (1) of the quotations must be from an SME or local supplier.
- 15.5 The Responsible Officer must use the template Request for Quotation Documents available on the procurement pages of the intranet unless otherwise agreed by the Procurement Team*.
- 15.6 In any case, quotations may be submitted in written or electronic format (e.g. email) and must include the following information as a minimum:
 - 15.6.1 Details of the goods, services or works to be supplied
 - 15.6.2 Where and when delivery is to take place;
 - 15.6.3 The total value of the contract; and
 - 15.6.4 The terms and conditions to apply including the price and payment terms.
- 15.7 Where advertising a procurement opportunity or tender, a tender notice must be published on the Central Digital Platform as a means of inviting quotations or bids (along with relevant documents). The Responsible Officer must notify the Procurement Team when they are planning to advertise an opportunity and provide any relevant details.
- 15.8 For procurement activities with an estimated value of £50,000 or over, the Procurement Team must be consulted prior to commencement and notified at the earliest opportunity in order to update the Procurement Plan.
- 15.9 The Procurement Team will provide advice to the Responsible Officer as to the most appropriate procurement process to use.
- 15.10 Where preliminary market engagement is used to inform the procurement process, a preliminary market engagement notice must be published on the Central Digital Platform.
- 15.11 Except where a Framework is being used, an open tender process must be followed; for the avoidance of doubt it is not possible to restrict the submission of tenders by reference to an assessment of suppliers' suitability to perform the contract.
- 15.12 All relevant procurement documentation, including evaluation criteria, will be developed by the Responsible Officer in consultation with the Procurement Team*.
- 15.13 The Council has a duty to have regard to the fact that SMEs may face particular barriers in competing for a contract and consider whether such barriers can be removed or reduced, before commencing the procurement.
- 15.14 The Responsible Officer should consider the inclusion of social value criteria in the evaluation methodology in discussion with the Procurement Team*.

16 Tender Evaluation

- 16.1 Tenders received after the fixed closing date and time or tenders which are not submitted in accordance with these Rules and any criteria set out in the procurement documentation will be disqualified unless otherwise agreed by the Monitoring Officer.
- 16.2 If there is an obvious ambiguity or error in the tender and that ambiguity or error appears to have a simple explanation, bidders may be invited to correct their tender. Advice should be sought from the Procurement Team before further action is taken.
- 16.3 Bidders may seek clarifications throughout the procurement process, such clarification requests must be recorded in writing and where the response may be of value to potential bidders, the anonymised response must be circulated to all those potential bidders. Under no circumstances can clarification processes be used as an opportunity to conduct negotiations.

- 16.4 Evaluation must be conducted in accordance with the published criteria and where the contract is valued at £50,000 or over must involve individual evaluation followed by moderation to reach an agreed tender score.
- 16.5 The Procurement Act 2023 places an obligation on the Council to notify a bidder if it considers a price to be abnormally low and give the bidder reasonable opportunity to demonstrate that it will be able to perform the contract for the price offered. If the bidder is unable to demonstrate that, its tender may be disregarded, advice should be sought from the Procurement* and Legal Teams before taking this action.
- 16.6 The bidder with the highest evaluation score will normally be awarded the contract, if this is not the case further advice must be sought from the Procurement* and Legal Team.
- 16.7 Relevant documentation from the procurement process, particularly the quotations or tenders received, evaluation process, communications with bidders and the signed contract must be retained by the Responsible Officer in compliance with the Council's Retention Policy.

17 Contract Award

- 17.1 Any contract award must be approved in accordance with the Authority and Approvals Matrix available in **Appendix 1**.
- 17.2 All bidders must be notified of the award decision simultaneously using the templates / assessment summaries provided by the Procurement Team*. If an unsuccessful bidder makes a written request to the Council for a further debrief, the Responsible Officer must provide appropriate feedback as soon as practically possible (ideally within fifteen (15) calendar days) of receipt of the written request. The confidentiality of the quotes received and the identity of other bidders must be preserved at all times and information about one bidder's response must not be disclosed to other bidders. The Responsible Officer should not provide verbal feedback to an unsuccessful bidder.
- 17.3 For above-threshold contracts, a Contract Award Notice must be published on the Central Digital Platform as soon as reasonably practical after contract award. The publication of the Contract Award Notice starts the mandatory eight (8) working days standstill period. If, during the standstill period, a challenge or request for feedback is received from an unsuccessful bidder, the standstill period must be paused until the matter is successfully resolved. No contract award can take place in the intervening period. The officer in receipt of this communication must contact the Procurement Team for advice before any response is made.
- 17.4 Contracts must be signed or sealed in accordance paragraph 13.7. The contract must be signed by both parties before contract delivery starts. The use of an e-signing tool is acceptable unless the contract requires sealing. Responsible Officers must ensure that a copy of the signed contract is made available to the Procurement Team*. For advice on whether a formal contract is required, the Responsible Officer should seek advice from the Legal Team.
- 17.5 Where a bond or guarantee is required to ensure satisfactory contract performance and/or to protect the Council, the requirement must be notified to bidders in the procurement documentation and must be in place as soon as practically possible (ideally no later than four (4) weeks) after contract signature.
- 17.6 The Responsible Officer should consult with the relevant Head of Service / Director and Legal Team as to whether such a bond or guarantee is required where:
 - 17.6.1 The total value of the contract is £250,000 or over; or
 - 17.6.2 It is proposed to make stage or other payments in advance of receiving the whole of the subject matter of the contract; or
 - 17.6.3 There is concern about the stability of the supplier no matter what the value.

The Council must never give a bond or guarantee.

- 17.7 The Responsible Officer must provide information requested by the Procurement Team for publishing to the Council's Contract Register to ensure compliance with the Local Transparency Requirements. This must be done before raising a PO.
- 17.8 The Responsible Officer must raise a purchase order and ensure the Council's standard terms and conditions (located on the procurement pages of the intranet) are used unless the Responsible Officer believes that the complexity of the procurement requires the amendment of those terms by the Legal Team. The Purchase Order must include the information provided by the supplier as detailed in section 15.4 above.
- 17.9 For contracts valued £30,000 or over (including VAT), a Contract Details Notice must be published within thirty (30) days of the contract being entered into. Where the value of the contract is £5m or over, a redacted copy of the contract must be published within ninety (90) days of the contract being entered into and the Notice must contain details of the KPIs (at least three (3)) that will be used to monitor the contract.
- 17.10 The Officer named in the Contract Register will act as the Contract Manager and will be responsible for ensuring the obligations of these Rules and any relevant legislation are fulfilled. Further guidance is available in the Supplementary Procurement Guidance and the Contract Management Toolkit.

18 Contract Modifications

18.1 Legal advice must be sought before assignments or novations are entered into.

18.2 Contracts may be extended where:

18.2.1 There is provision in the original contract for such an extension (Contract Managers should familiarise themselves with any notification period that exists to terminate contract at its expiry date); and

18.2.2 There is budgetary provision; and

18.2.3 Value for money can be clearly demonstrated; and

For the avoidance of doubt, extensions are not permitted where they are not provided for in the original contract.

18.3 Where a contract extension would take the value of the contract over the relevant UK Procurement Threshold, advice must be sought from the Procurement Team before any action is taken.

18.4 If the contract is valued over the relevant UK Procurement Threshold, advice from the Procurement* and Legal teams should be sought before a substantial modification is made. A substantial modification is one which would:

18.4.1 Increase or decrease the term of the contract by more than 10% of the maximum term provided for,

18.4.2 Materially change the scope of the contract, or

18.4.3 Materially change the economic value of the contract in favour of the supplier.

18.5 Before modifying a contract valued over the relevant UK procurement threshold or when a modification takes the value over the relevant UK procurement threshold, the Contract Manager must publish a Contract Change Notice on the Central Digital Platform, except where:

18.5.1 The modification increases or decreases the estimated value of the contract in the case of goods/services by less than 10% or in the case of works by less than 15%, or

18.5.2 The modification increases or decreases the term of the contract by less than 10%.

18.6 If the value of the contract is £5m or over a redacted copy of the modified contract must be published via an updated Contract Details Notice on the Central Digital Platform.

19 Contract Performance

19.1 The Contract Manager must monitor the overall performance of the contract in line with the specification, agreed service levels and contract terms.

19.2 If the value of the contract is £5m or over, at least once every twelve (12) months during the term of the contract and on termination of the contract, the Contract Manager must assess performance using the standard rating system against the published KPIs and publish a Contract Performance Notice on the Central Digital Platform.

19.3 If the supplier has breached the contract and the breach results in:

19.3.1 Termination (or partial termination of the contract),

19.3.2 The award of damages, or

19.3.3 A settlement agreement between the supplier and the Council

a Contract Performance Notice must be published within thirty (30) days of the relevant breach on the Central Digital Platform.

19.4 Whether a contract expires or is terminated, the Contract Manager must publish a Contract Termination notice within thirty (30) days of that expiry/termination.

20 Exceptions to these Rules

20.1 These Rules apply to every procurement carried out by or on behalf of the Council, except for those listed in section 20.8 below.

20.2 Exceptions will only be valid via completion and approval of an exception request (waiver) prior to the contract start date.

20.3 Retrospective waivers are only permitted where it has been necessary to act urgently because of an unforeseen emergency which involves immediate risk of injury or damage or to prevent serious disruption to services. In any case, waivers should be sought as early as possible to ensure that there is time to process the waiver and take alternative action should it be rejected.

20.4 Should a waiver valued over the Council's Key Decision Threshold or relevant UK procurement threshold be required, legal advice as to the applicability of section 41 of the Procurement Act (2023). Cabinet member approval will be required for these above threshold exceptions.

20.5 In instances where a repeat waiver is requested, the value will be determined by the cumulative value including any previous exceptions and the appropriate rule applied. Repeat waivers or contract modifications are only permitted where the cumulative value of amendments does not exceed the relevant threshold.

20.6 Where the total value of the ensuing contract is £5,000 or over (including VAT), it must be added to the Council's Contract Register to ensure compliance with the Local Government Transparency Requirements.

20.7 Where the total value of the ensuing contract is above-threshold, a Transparency Notice must be published on the Central Digital Platform.

20.8 Valid exceptions are (please note the full waiver description, only waivers valid with the entire description can be approved):

- 20.8.1 Genuine emergencies: critical preventative or remedial work where there is a real and imminent risk to the life and/or safety of people or property arising from hitherto unforeseen 'catastrophic' events or incidents. For example, flood, fire or pandemic.
- 20.8.2 Value for money: for proprietary or patented goods or services; or where the requirement is of such a specialist nature that it can genuinely only be fulfilled by one supplier; or the compatibility with existing goods or services is required and/or where those existing goods or services can only be sourced from the same supplier.
- 20.8.3 Urgent situations not of the Council's own making: the urgency must have been reasonably unforeseeable (e.g. an existing supplier going out of business) and genuinely be a case of time is of the essence. Urgency arising from the Council's own making (e.g. lack of planning) shall not justify an exception. Where this exception is used, a compliant procurement process must be implemented as soon as possible.
- 20.8.4 Process delays: where an existing contract is being re-procured and there are delays to that procurement process which means that the new contract cannot start at the expiry of the existing contract, an exception may be requested to extend the current contract to cover the gap. The delays must have been reasonably unforeseeable (e.g. extensions required to standstill) and the exception may be for no longer than six (6) months. Where the contract is valued over the UK Procurement Threshold, the extension may not be valued more than 10% of the estimated contract value.
- 20.8.5 Grant allocations: where the Council has been allocated a grant and there has been no time to procure the supplier during the grant application process or because the grant conditions required spend of the grant in too short a time period. Evidence of the grant application process will be required in the exception application. If the spend of the grant is not required within a twelve (12) month period, the exception may not be used.
- 20.8.6 Prototypes and development: the contract involves the production of a prototype or other novel goods or services for testing the suitability or researching the viability of producing or supplying the goods or services at scale and developing them for that purpose or for other research, experiment, study or development (prototypes and development).
- 20.8.7 Single supplier: where the goods, services or works can only be supplied by a particular supplier i.e. where competition is absent for technical reasons or due to the supplier having intellectual property or other exclusive rights and only a particular supplier can supply the goods, services or works and there is no reasonable alternative. It can also be used where the contract is for the creation or acquisition of a unique work of art or artistic performance.
- 20.8.8 Direct award can also be used for additional or repeat goods, services or works from the same supplier where the original contract was awarded under a competitive tendering procedure. The original contract must have been competitively tendered within the last five (5) years AND the intention to rely on a direct award for subsequent procurement activities must have been set out in the tender notice and associated tender documents.
- 20.8.9 Commodities: where the contract concerns good purchased on the commodity market.
- 20.8.10 Advantageous terms on insolvency: where awarding a contract to a particular supplier will ensure particularly advantageous terms due to the supplier undergoing insolvency proceedings.

21 Exceptions for Care Placements

- 21.1 As a District Council the exceptions for Care Placements are not expected to be relevant to Bassetlaw, however Responsible Officers should contact the Procurement Team for advice if they consider their contract may be relevant.

Appendix 1 - Authority and Approvals Approval Matrix

Activity	Below £25,000	£25,000 - £249,999*	£250,000* or over
Authority to proceed with procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant Budget / Service Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant Budget / Service Manager 	Additional approvals from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant Head of Service / Director or Chief Executive Monitoring Officer Section 151 Officer
Approval to award** contract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant Budget / Service Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant Budget / Service Manager 	Additional approvals from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant Head of Service / Director or Chief Executive Monitoring Officer Section 151 Officer
Approval of purchase orders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant Budget / Service Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant Budget / Service Manager 	Additional approvals from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant Head of Service / Director or Chief Executive
Approval of waivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A 	Additional approvals from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant Head of Service / Director or Chief Executive Section 151 Officer Monitoring Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional approval from relevant Portfolio Holder (except for urgent works which should be reported to Cabinet retrospectively)

** Or relevant Public Procurement Threshold, if less than £250,000*

*** Officers must not under any circumstances, sign any contracts without written authority from the Monitoring Officer.*

OFFICER EMPLOYMENT PROCEDURE RULES

1. Statutory Rules

1.1 In these rules–

“the 1989 Act “ means the Local Government and Housing Act 1989;

“disciplinary action” has the same meaning as in the Local Authorities (Standing) Orders (England) Regulations 2001;

“member of staff” means a person appointed to or holding a paid office or employment under the authority; and

“proper officer” means an officer appointed by the authority for the purposes of the provisions in this Part, which shall be the Chief Executive.

1.2 Subject to paragraphs 1.3 and 1.8, the function of appointment and dismissal of, and taking disciplinary action against, a member of staff of the authority must be discharged, on behalf of the authority, by the officer designated under section 4(1) of the 1989 Act as the head of the authority’s paid service or by an officer nominated by him.

1.3 Paragraph 1.2 shall not apply to the appointment or dismissal of, or disciplinary action against –

(a) the officer designated as the head of the authority’s paid service;

(b) a statutory chief officer within the meaning of section 2(6) of the 1989 Act (politically restricted posts);

(c) a non-statutory chief officer within the meaning of section 2(7) of the 1989 Act;

(d) a deputy chief officer within the meaning of section 2(8) of the 1989 Act; or

(e) a person appointed in pursuance of section 9 of the 1989 Act (assistants for political groups).

1.4 Where a committee, sub-committee or officer is discharging, on behalf of the authority, the function of the appointment or dismissal of an officer designated as the head of the authority’s paid service, the authority must approve that appointment before an offer of appointment is made or, as the case may be, must approve that dismissal.

Where a committee or a sub-committee of the authority is discharging, on behalf of the authority, the function of the appointment or dismissal of any officer referred to in sub-paragraph (a), (b), (c), or (d) of paragraph 1.3, at least one member of the Cabinet must be a member of that committee or sub-committee.

1.5 In this paragraph, “appointor” means, in relation to the appointment of a person as an officer of the authority, the authority or, where a committee, sub-committee or officer is discharging the function of appointment on behalf of the authority, that committee, sub-committee or officer, as the case may be.

An offer of an appointment as an officer referred to in sub-paragraph (a), (b), (c) or (d) of paragraph 3 must not be made by the appointor until –

(a) the appointor has notified the proper officer of the name of the person to whom the appointor wishes to make the offer and any other particulars which the appointor considers are relevant to the appointment

(b) the proper officer has notified every member of the Cabinet of the authority of–

(i) the name of the person to whom the appointor wishes to make the offer;

(ii) any other particulars relevant to the appointment which the appointor has

notified to the proper officer; and

- (iii) the period within which any objection to the making of the offer is to be made by the Leader on behalf of the Cabinet to the proper officer; and

(c) either –

- (i) the Leader has, within the period specified in the notice under sub-paragraph (b)(iii), notified the appointor that neither he nor any other member of the cabinet has any objection to the making of the offer;
- (ii) the proper officer has notified the appointor that no objection was received by him within that period from the Leader; or
- (iii) the appointor is satisfied that any objection received from the Cabinet Leader within that period is not material or is not well-founded.

1.6 In this paragraph, “dismissor” means, in relation to the dismissal of an officer of the authority, the authority or, where a committee, sub-committee or another officer is discharging the function of dismissal on behalf of the authority, that committee, sub-committee or other officer, as the case may be.

Notice of the dismissal of an officer referred to in sub-paragraph (a), (b), (c) or (d) or paragraph 1.3 must not be given by the dismissor until –

- (a) the dismissor has notified the proper officer of the name of the person who the dismissor wishes to dismiss and any other particulars which the dismissor considers are relevant to the dismissal;
- (b) the proper officer has notified every member of the Cabinet of the authority of–
 - (i) the name of the person who the dismissor wishes to dismiss;
 - (ii) any other particulars relevant to the dismissal which the dismissor has notified to the proper officer; and
 - (iii) the period within which any objection to the dismissal is to be made by the Leader on behalf of the Cabinet to the proper officer; and
- (c) either –
 - (i) the Leader has, within the period specified in the notice under sub-paragraph (b)(iii), notified the dismissor that neither he nor any other member of the Cabinet has any objection to the dismissal;
 - (ii) the proper officer has notified the dismissor that no objection was received

by him within that period from the Leader; or

- (iii) the dismissor is satisfied that any objection received from the Cabinet Leader within that period is not material or is not well founded.

1.7. No disciplinary action in respect of the head of the authority's paid service, its Monitoring Officer or its Chief Finance Officer, except action described in paragraph 1.7.1, may be taken by the authority, or by a committee, a sub-committee, on which the authority is represented or any other person acting on behalf of the authority, other than in accordance with a recommendation in a report made by a designated independent person under regulation 7 of the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001 (investigation of alleged misconduct).

1.7.1 The action mentioned in paragraph 1.7 is suspension of the officer for the purpose of investigating the alleged misconduct occasioning the action; and any such suspension must be on full pay and terminate no later than the expiry of two months beginning on the day on which the suspension takes effect.

1.7.2 Councillors will not be involved in the dismissal of any officer below heads of service level except where such involvement is necessary for any investigation or inquiry into alleged misconduct, though the Council's disciplinary, capability and related procedures, as adopted from time to time may allow a right of appeal to members in respect of dismissals.

1.8 Nothing in paragraph 1.2 shall prevent a person from serving as a member of any committee or sub-committee established by the authority to consider an appeal by –

- (a) another person against any decision relating to the appointment of that other person as a member of staff of the authority; or
- (b) a member of staff of the authority against any decision relating to the dismissal of, or taking disciplinary action against, that member of staff.

2 Local Rules

2.1 Discussion in Public

If any question arises at a meeting as to the appointment, promotion, dismissal, salary, pension or conditions of service, or as to the conduct of any person employed by the Council, such questions shall not be the subject of discussion until the meeting has decided whether to exercise the power to exclude the public under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972.

2.2 Recruitment and appointment

- (a) Declarations
 - (i) The Council will draw up a statement requiring any candidate for appointment as an officer to state in writing whether they are the parent, grandparent, partner, child, stepchild, adopted child, grandchild, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, nephew or niece of an existing councillor or officer of the Council; or of the partner of such persons.
 - (ii) No candidate so related to a councillor or an officer will be appointed

without the authority of the relevant Head of Service or an officer nominated by them.

- (b) Seeking support for appointment.
 - (i) Subject to paragraph (iii), the Council will disqualify any applicant who directly or indirectly seeks the support of any councillor for any appointment with the Council. The content of this paragraph will be included in any recruitment information.
 - (ii) Subject to paragraph (iii), no councillor will seek support for any person for any appointment with the Council.
 - (iii) Nothing in paragraphs (i) and (ii) above will preclude a councillor from giving a written reference for a candidate for submission with an application for appointment.

2.3 **Recruitment of Head of Paid Service and Directors and Heads of Service**

Where the Council proposes to appoint a head of paid service, a director or a head of service and it is not proposed that the appointment be made exclusively from among their existing officers, the Council will:

- (a) draw up a statement specifying:
 - (i) the duties of the officer concerned; and
 - (ii) any qualifications or qualities to be sought in the person to be appointed;
- (b) make arrangements for the post to be advertised in such a way as is likely to bring it to the attention of persons who are qualified to apply for it; and
- (c) make arrangements for a copy of the statement mentioned in paragraph (a) to be sent to any person on request.

2.4 **Other appointments**

a) **Officers below heads of service.**

Appointment of officers below heads of service, (other than assistants to political groups) is the responsibility of the Head of Paid Service or their nominee and may not be made by Councillors.

b) **Assistants to political groups**

Appointment of an assistant to a political group shall be made in accordance with the wishes of that political group.