

EARLEY TOWN COUNCIL
FINANCIAL REGULATIONS 2026

General	2
Accounts and audit (internal and external)	4
Budget and precept	5
Budgetary control and authority to spend	6
Banking arrangements and authorisation of payments	7
Instructions for the making of payments	8
Payment of salaries and allowances	9
Loans and investments	10
Income	11
Orders for work, goods and services	11
Contracts	12
Payments under contracts for building or other construction works	13
Stores and equipment	13
Assets, properties and estates	13
Insurance	14
Risk management	15
Suspension and revision of Financial Regulations	15

These Financial Regulations were adopted by the Council at its meeting held on xxxx 2026.

Items in **bold** are a legal requirement.

1. General

1.1. These financial regulations govern the conduct of financial management by the Council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the Council. They are one of the Council's governing documents and shall be observed in conjunction with the Council's Standing Orders.

1.2. The Council is responsible in law for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that the Council has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions, including arrangements for the management of risk.

1.3. The Council's accounting control systems must include measures to:

- **Ensure the risk is appropriately managed;**
- **Ensure the prompt, accurate recording of financial transactions;**
- **Prevent and detect inaccuracy and fraud;**
- **Allow the reconstitution of any lost records;**
- **identify the duties of officers dealing with transactions and**
- **ensure division of responsibilities**

1.4. These financial regulations demonstrate how the Council meets these responsibilities and requirements.

1.5. At least once a year, prior to approving the Annual Governance Statement, the Council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control which shall be in accordance with proper practices.

1.6. Deliberate or wilful breach of these Regulations by an employee may give rise to disciplinary proceedings.

1.7. Members of Council are expected to follow the instructions within these Regulations and not to entice employees to breach them. Failure to follow instructions within these Regulations brings the office of councillor into disrepute.

1.8. The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) holds a statutory office to be appointed by the Council. The Town Clerk has been appointed as RFO for this council and these regulations will apply accordingly.

1.9. The RFO:

- acts under the policy direction of the Policy & Resources Committee and the Council;
- administers the Council's financial affairs in accordance with all Acts, Regulations and proper practices;
- determines on behalf of the Council its accounting records and accounting control systems;
- ensures the accounting control systems are observed;
- ensures the accounting records of the Council are maintained and kept up to date in accordance with proper practices;

- assists the Council to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of its resources; and
- produces financial management information as required by the Council.

1.10. The accounting records determined by the RFO shall be sufficient to show and explain the Council's transactions and to enable the RFO to ensure that any income and expenditure account and statement of balances, or record of receipts and payments and additional information, as the case may be, or management information prepared for the Council from time to time comply with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

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

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

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

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

1.13. **The Council must not delegate any decision regarding:**

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

1.14. In addition, the Council shall:

- determine and regularly review the bank mandate for all council bank accounts;
- in respect of the annual salary for any employee have regard to recommendations about annual salaries of employees made by the relevant committee in accordance with its terms of reference.

1.15. In these financial regulations, references to the 'Accounts and Audit Regulations' or 'the regulations' means the regulations issued under Sections 32, 43(2) and 46 of the Local Audit

and Accountability Act 2014, or any superseding legislation, and then in force unless otherwise specified.

In these financial regulations the term 'proper practice' or 'proper practices' shall refer to guidance issued in *Governance and Accountability for Local Councils - a Practitioners' Guide (England)* issued by the Joint Practitioners Advisory Group (JPAG).

2. Accounts and audit (internal and external)

2.1. All accounting procedures and financial records of the Council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations, appropriate guidance and proper practices.

2.2. The accounting records determined by the RFO must be sufficient to explain the Council's transactions and to disclose its financial position with reasonable accuracy at any time. In particular, they must contain:

- **day-to-day entries of all sums of money received and expended by the Council and the matters to which they relate;**
- **a record of the assets and liabilities of the Council**

2.3. On a regular basis, at least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, bank reconciliations (for all accounts) shall be presented to the chairman at a Policy & Resources Committee meeting. The member shall sign the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of verification. This activity shall on conclusion be reported, including any exceptions, in the Committee minutes subsequently received by Council.

2.4. The RFO shall complete and certify the annual Accounting Statements of the Council contained in the Annual Return in accordance with proper practices as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year. Having certified the Accounting Statements, the RFO shall submit them (with any related documents) to the Council within the timescales set by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

2.5. The Council must ensure that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and internal control system in accordance with proper practices.

2.6. Any officer or member of the council must make available such documents and records as the internal or external auditor consider necessary for the purpose of the audit and shall, as directed by the Council, supply the RFO, internal auditor, or external auditor with such information and explanation as the Council considers necessary.

2.7. The internal auditor shall be appointed by and shall carry out their work to evaluate the effectiveness of the Council's risk management, control and governance processes in accordance with proper practices specified in the Practitioners' Guide.

2.8. The Council shall ensure that the internal auditor:

- is competent and independent of the financial operations of the Council;
- reports to Council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one written report during each financial year;

- can demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships; and has no involvement in the management or control of the Council

2.9. Internal or external auditors may not under any circumstances:

- perform any operational duties for the Council;
- initiate or approve accounting transactions;
- provide financial, legal or other advice including in relation to any future transactions; or
- direct the activities of any council employee, except to the extent that such employees have been appropriately assigned to assist the internal auditor.

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

2.11. The RFO shall make arrangements for the exercise of electors' rights in relation to the accounts, including the opportunity to inspect the accounts, books, and vouchers and display or publish any notices and documents required by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, or any superseding legislation, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

2.12. The RFO shall, without undue delay, bring to the attention of the Policy & Resources Committee and/or the Council any correspondence or report from internal or external auditors.

3. Budget and precept

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

3.2. Each committee shall formulate and submit to the Policy & Resources Committee a programme of income and expenditure for the following financial year not later than 30th November each year including any proposals for revising the forecast.

3.3. The RFO must prepare detailed estimates of all receipts and payments including the use of reserves and all sources of funding for the following financial year in the form of a draft budget to be considered by the Budget Working Party, to then be referred to the Policy & Resources Committee and subsequently approved by Council no later than 28th February each year.

3.4. The Policy & Resources Committee shall consider the use of reserves and all sources of funding and the aggregate effect of these programmes and estimates upon the Council's financial resources and shall submit them to the Council for approval with a recommendation of the precept to be levied for the ensuing financial year.

3.5. Any member with council tax unpaid for more than two months is prohibited from voting on the budget or precept by Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and must disclose at the start of the meeting that Section 106 applies to them.

3.6. The RFO **shall issue the precept to the billing authority no later than the end of February** and supply each Member with a copy of the agreed annual budget.

3.7. The agreed budget provides a basis for monitoring progress during the year by comparing actual spending and income against what was planned.

3.8. The Council shall consider the need for and shall have regard to a three year forecast of revenue and capital receipts and payments, including recommendations for the use of reserves and sources of funding and operational impact, and update such forecast accordingly.

3.9. Contingencies:

- provision for salary and wages pay awards – there shall be included in the budget such provision for salary and wages as may be considered necessary, as directed by the Staffing Sub Committee during its annual review of salaries and wages
- provision for inflation – there shall be included in the estimates a provision for inflation based on the best information available at the time

4. Budgetary control and authority to spend

4.1. Expenditure on revenue items may be authorised up to the amounts included for that class of expenditure in the approved budget.

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

4.2. No expenditure may be authorised that will exceed the amount provided in the revenue budget for that class of expenditure other than by resolution of the Council, or duly delegated committee. During the budget year and with the approval of Council having considered fully the implications for public services, unspent and available amounts may be moved to other budget headings or to an earmarked reserve as appropriate ('virement').

4.3. Unspent provisions in the revenue or capital budgets for completed projects shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year unless placed in an earmarked reserve by resolution of the Policy & Resources Committee.

4.4. The salary budgets are to be reviewed at least annually in October for the following financial year and such review shall be evidenced by a hard copy schedule signed by the Clerk and the Chairman of Council or relevant committee. The RFO will inform committees of any changes impacting on their budget requirement for the coming year in good time.

4.5. In cases of extreme risk to the delivery of council services, the Town Clerk may authorise revenue expenditure on behalf of the council which in the clerk's judgement it is necessary to carry out. Such expenditure includes repair, replacement or other work, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure. This is subject to a limit of £2,000 or up to £20,000 provided there is consultation and agreement with the Leader of the Council and the Town Mayor. The Town Clerk shall report such action to the Council as soon as practicable thereafter.

4.6. No expenditure shall be authorised in relation to any capital project and no contract entered into or tender accepted involving capital expenditure unless the Council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available and the requisite borrowing approval has been obtained.

4.7. All capital works shall be administered in accordance with the Council's standing orders and financial regulations relating to contracts.

4.8. The RFO shall regularly provide the budget holding committees and the Council with a statement of receipts and payments to date under each head of the budgets, comparing actual expenditure to the appropriate date against that planned as shown in the budget. These statements are to be prepared at least at the end of each financial quarter. Commentary on

income and expenditure shall be provided and Members' attention drawn to material variances in excess of 25% of the budget.

4.9. Changes in earmarked reserves shall be recommended by the Policy & Resources Committee for approval by Council as part of the budgetary control process.

5. Banking arrangements and authorisation of payments

5.1. The Council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the RFO and approved by the Council; banking arrangements may not be delegated to a committee. They shall be regularly reviewed for security and efficiency.

5.2. The Council will operate such bank or other accounts as it considers necessary and appropriate for the efficient conduct of its business.

5.3. The Finance Officer shall prepare a schedule of payments requiring authorisation. The Town Clerk and either the Deputy Town Clerk or Operations Manager, along with two authorised signatories shall review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied themselves shall authorise payment. The approved schedule shall be disclosed within or as an attachment to the agenda of the following Policy & Resources Committee or Full Council meeting.

5.4. All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the Town Clerk and either the Deputy Town Clerk or Operations Manager to confirm that the work, goods or services to which each invoice relates has been received, carried out, examined and represents expenditure previously approved by the council.

5.5. The Finance Officer shall examine invoices for arithmetical accuracy. The Finance Officer shall take all steps to settle all invoices submitted within 30 days.

5.6. The RFO shall have delegated authority to authorise the payment of items in the following circumstances:

5.6.1. payments of up to £2,000 excluding VAT in cases of serious risk to the delivery of council services or to public safety on council premises;

5.6.2. If a payment is necessary to avoid a charge under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998, and the due date for payment is before the next scheduled Meeting of council, where the Clerk and RFO certify that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of Council or Policy & Resources Committee;

5.6.3. An expenditure item authorised under continuing contracts and obligations provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of Council or Policy & Resources Committee; or

5.6.4. Fund transfers within the councils banking arrangements up to the sum of £10,000, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of Council or Policy & Resources Committee.

5.7. In respect of grants a duly authorised committee shall approve expenditure within any limits set by Council and in accordance with any policy statement approved by council.

5.8. Members are subject to the Code of Conduct that has been adopted by the Council and shall comply with the Code and Standing Orders when a decision to authorise or instruct payment is made in respect of a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary or other interest, unless a dispensation has been granted.

5.9. The council will aim to rotate the duties of members in these Regulations so that onerous duties are shared out as evenly as possible over time.

5.10. Bank reconciliations for all operating bank accounts shall be prepared by the Finance Officer as soon as practicable after the end of each month.

6. Instructions for the making of payments

6.1. All payments shall be effected by cheque, direct debit, BACS or other order drawn on the Council's bankers.

6.2. Following authorisation under Financial Regulation 5 above, the Council, a duly delegated committee or, if so delegated, the Clerk or RFO shall give instruction that a payment shall be made.

6.3. In the case of cheque payments, authorisation will be indicated by the signature of two authorised bank signatories on the face of the payment voucher(s). Cheques shall be signed by two of the bank signatories authorised by Council.

6.4. In the case of a schedule for BACS payments, authorisation will be indicated by the signature of two bank signatories authorised by the Council on the schedule.

6.5. Payments from the Imprest account, with the accompanying information about those payments, will be presented to two signatories authorised by the Council who will check the supporting documentation on payments made and anticipated expenditure before authorising a transfer of funds to the Imprest account from the current account.

6.6. If thought appropriate by the Council, payment for certain items may be made by internet banking transfer provided evidence is retained showing which authorised signatories approved the payment.

6.7. If thought appropriate by the Council, payment for utility supplies (energy, telephone and water) and any National Non-Domestic Rates may be made by variable direct debit provided that the instructions are signed by two authorised signatories and any payments are reported to Council as made.

6.8. Credit card payments shall only be made when it is not possible to pay by cheque or BACS, or where a saving to the Council can be made. Payments made by credit card must be approved by the Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk or Operations Manager. Any expenditure is to be supported by a purchase order and invoice/receipt. Any balance shall be paid in full each month.

6.9 Any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Clerk/RFO and the Deputy Clerk and will be restricted to a single transaction value of £500 unless authorised by the Council or Policy & Resources Committee in writing before any order is placed.

6.10. Any payments made under 6.3. to 6.8 are to be reported to the Policy & Resources Committee or Full Council.

6.11. A member who is a bank signatory, having a connection by virtue of family or business relationships with the beneficiary of a payment, should not, under normal circumstances, be a signatory to the payment in question.

6.12. Changes to account details for suppliers, which are used for internet banking shall be approved by the RFO.

6.13. The Finance Officer may provide petty cash to officers for the purpose of defraying operations and other expenses.

6.13.1. The Finance Officer shall maintain a petty cash float of up to £100 for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses. Vouchers for the payments made from petty cash shall be kept, to substantiate the payment.

6.13.2. Income received must not be paid into the petty cash float but must be separately banked, as provided elsewhere in these regulations.

6.13.3. Payments to maintain the petty cash shall be made from the Town's Council's Imprest account, signed by the Clerk/RFO or Deputy Clerk and a written record maintained.

6.14. No employee or councillor shall disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the working of the Council or its bank accounts, to any person not authorised in writing by the Council or a duly delegated committee.

6.15. Remembered password facilities should not be used on any computer used for Council banking.

6.16. Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the RFO shall be appointed as the Service Administrator. The bank mandate approved by the council shall identify a number of councillors who will be authorised to approve transactions on those accounts. The bank mandate will state clearly the amounts of payments that can be instructed by the use of the Service Administrator alone, or by the Service Administrator with a stated number of approvals.

7. Payment of salaries and allowances

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

7.2 Councillors allowances (where paid) are also liable to deduction of tax under PAYE rules and must be taxed correctly before payment.

7.3. Payment of salaries and payment of deductions from salary such as may be required to be made for tax, national insurance and pension contributions, or similar statutory or discretionary deductions, must be made in accordance with the payroll records and on the appropriate dates stipulated in employment contracts.

7.4. No changes shall be made to any employee's pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the Staffing sub-committee and/or Policy & Resources Committee (where applicable).

7.5. Each and every payment to employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall be recorded in a separate confidential record (confidential cash book). This confidential record is not open to inspection or review (under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or otherwise) other than:

- a) by any councillor who can demonstrate a need to know;
- b) by the internal auditor;
- c) by the external auditor; or
- d) by any person authorised under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, or any superseding legislation.

7.6. The total of such payments in each calendar month shall be reported with all other payments as made as may be required under these Financial Regulations, to ensure that only payments due for the period have actually been paid.

7.7. All time records or other pay documents shall be certified as to accuracy by the individual's line manager and the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk.

7.8. All claims for payment of car allowance, subsistence allowances, travelling and incidental expenses shall be submitted, duly certified by the line manager, Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk, in a form approved by the Town Clerk, except the Town Clerk's claims which shall be approved by the Leader of the Council or the Town Mayor.

7.9. Payments to Members, including co-opted Members of the Council or its committees, who are entitled to claim travelling or other allowances, will be made by the Town Clerk upon receipt of the prescribed form duly completed. All claims for the financial year are to be submitted not less frequently than quarterly.

7.10. Any termination payments shall be supported by a clear business case and reported to the Council. Termination payments shall only be authorised by Council.

7.11. Before employing interim staff, the Council must consider a full business case.

8. Loans and investments

8.1. All borrowings shall be effected in the name of the Council, after obtaining any necessary borrowing approval. Any application for borrowing approval shall be approved by Council as to terms and purpose. The application for borrowing approval, and subsequent arrangements for the loan shall only be approved by Full Council.

8.2. Any financial arrangement which does not require formal borrowing approval from the Secretary of State (such as Hire Purchase or Leasing of tangible assets) shall be subject to approval by the Full Council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to Council in respect of value for money for the proposed transaction.

8.3. All loans and investments shall be negotiated in the name of the Council and shall be for a set period in accordance with council policy.

8.4. The Council shall consider the need for an Investment Strategy and Policy which, if drawn up, shall be in accordance with relevant regulations, proper practices and guidance. Any Strategy and Policy shall be reviewed by the Council at least annually.

8.5. All investments of money under the control of the Council shall be in the name of the Council.

8.6. All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO.

8.7. Payments in respect of short term or long-term investments, including transfers between bank accounts held in the same bank, or branch, shall be made in accordance with Regulation 5 (Authorisation of payments) and Regulation 6 (Instructions for payments).

9. Income

9.1. The collection of all sums due to the Council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO.

9.2. Particulars of all charges to be made for work done, services rendered or goods supplied shall be agreed annually by the Council, notified to the RFO and the RFO shall be responsible for the collection of all accounts due to the Council.

9.3. The Council will review all fees and charges at least annually, following a report from the Town Clerk.

9.4. Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts shall be reported to the Policy & Resources Committee. Policy & Resources Committee may recommend that the Council write-off any amount due to be paid to the Council.

9.5. All sums received on behalf of the Council shall be banked intact as directed by the RFO. In all cases, all receipts shall be deposited with the council's bankers with such frequency as the RFO considers necessary.

9.6. The origin of each receipt shall be entered on the paying-in slip.

9.7. Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the Council.

9.8. The RFO shall ensure that VAT Returns are promptly submitted and that any repayment claims are made and received, in accordance with VAT Act 1994 section 33.

9.9. Where any significant sums of cash are regularly received by the council, more than one person will be present when the cash is counted in the first instance, and the RFO will ensure that appropriate care is taken in the security and safety of individuals banking such cash.

10. Orders for work, goods and services

10.1. A purchase order shall be issued for all work, goods and services unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate, eg for services provided under a contract agreement. Copies of orders shall be retained.

10.2. Order books shall be controlled by the RFO.

10.3. **All members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times.** An officer issuing an official order shall ensure as far as reasonable and practicable that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction, usually by obtaining three or more quotations or estimates from appropriate suppliers, subject to any de minimis provisions in

Regulation 11.1 below. Suppliers and services will be reviewed on a regular basis for cost efficiency.

10.4. A member may not issue an official order or make any contract on behalf of the council.

10.5. The Town Clerk is responsible for ensuring purchases made by the Council are lawful.

11. Contracts

11.1. Procedures as to contracts are laid down as follows:

a) Every contract shall comply with these financial regulations, and no exceptions shall be made otherwise than in an emergency provided that this regulation need not apply to contracts which relate to items (i) to (v) below:

i. for the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telephone services;

ii. for specialist services such as are provided by solicitors, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants;

iii. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which consist of repairs to or parts for existing machinery or equipment or plant;

iv. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the Council;

v. for goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and / or are only sold at a fixed price.

b) For a contract for the supply of goods, services or works where the estimated value will exceed the thresholds set by Parliament, the full requirements of The Procurement Act 2023 and The Procurement Regulations 2024 or any superseding legislation (the 'Legislation'), must be followed in respect of the tendering, award and notification of that contract.

c) Where the estimated value is below the Government threshold, the Council shall (with the exception of items listed in paragraph 11.1a) obtain prices as follows:

d) For contracts estimated to exceed £60,000 including VAT, the Town Clerk shall seek formal tenders from at least three suppliers.

e) For contracts estimated to be over £30,00 including VAT, the Council must comply with any requirements of the Legislation regarding the publications of invitations and notices.

f) For contacts greater than £4,000 excluding VAT the Town Clerk shall seek at least 3 fixed-price quotes.

g) where the value is between £750 and £4,00 excluding VAT, the Town Clerk shall try to obtain 3 estimates (which might include evidence of online prices or recent prices from regular suppliers.

h) for smaller purchases the Town Clerk shall seek to achieve value for money.

i) Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to Standing Orders and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.

j) When applications are made to waive financial regulations relating to contracts to enable a price to be negotiated without competition the reason shall be embodied in a recommendation to the Council or Policy & Resources Committee. Avoidance of competition is not a valid reason.

k) The Council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.

l) Should it occur that the Council, or duly delegated committee, does not accept any tender, quote or estimate, the work is not allocated and the Council requires further pricing, provided that the specification does not change, no person shall be permitted to submit a later tender, estimate or quote who was present when the original decision-making process was being undertaken.

m) no expenditure shall be authorised, no contract entered into or tender accepted in relation to any major project, unless the necessary funds are available and, where a loan is required, Government borrowing approval has been obtained first.

12. Payments under contracts for building or other construction works

12.1. Payments on account of the contract sum shall be made within the time specified in the contract by the RFO upon authorised certificates of the architect or other consultants engaged to supervise the contract (subject to any percentage withholding as may be agreed in the particular contract).

12.2. Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the RFO shall ensure that a record of all such payments is maintained. In any case where it is estimated that the total cost of work carried out under a contract, excluding agreed variations, will exceed the contract sum of 5% or more a report shall be submitted to the council.

12.3. Any variation to a contract or addition to or omission from a contract must be approved by the Council and Town Clerk to the contractor in writing, the Council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the financial provision.

13. Stores and equipment

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

13.2. Delivery notes shall be obtained in respect of all goods received into store or otherwise delivered and goods must be checked as to order and quality at the time delivery is made.

13.3. Stocks shall be kept at the minimum levels consistent with operational requirements.

13.4. The Deputy Town Clerk shall be responsible for arranging periodic checks of stocks and stores by persons other than those responsible at least annually and will report on these to the RFO.

14. Assets, properties and estates

14.1. The Town Clerk shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the Council. The RFO shall ensure a record is

maintained of all properties held by the council, recording the location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.

14.2. No tangible moveable property shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of the Council, together with any other consents required by law, save where the estimated value of any one item of tangible movable property does not exceed £750.

14.3. No real property (interests in land) shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the Council, together with any other consents required by law. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to the Policy & Resources Committee in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate) and any recommendations made to full Council.

14.4. No real property (interests in land) shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the full Council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to the Policy & Resources Committee in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate) and any recommendations made to full Council.

14.5. Subject to the limit set in Regulation 14.2 above or identification within the agreed budget, no tangible moveable property shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the full Council.

14.6. The RFO shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date. The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the Register shall be verified at least annually. Any losses shall be reported to the Policy & Resources Committee.

15. Insurance

15.1. The RFO shall effect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the council's insurers.

15.2. The Town Clerk shall give prompt notification to the RFO of all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.

15.3. The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the Council and the property and risks covered, reviewing these annually before the renewal date in conjunction with the Council's view of risk management.

15.4. The RFO shall be notified of any loss, liability, damage or event likely to lead to a claim and shall report these to the Policy & Resources Committee or Council at the next available meeting.

15.5. All appropriate members and employees of the Council shall be included in a suitable form of security or fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined by the Council, or duly delegated committee.

16. Risk management

16.1 The Council must ensure that it has a sound system of internal control, which delivers effective financial, operational and risk management.

16.2. The Town Clerk shall prepare, for approval by the Council, risk management policy statements in respect of all activities of the Council. Risk policy statements and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the Council at least annually.

16.3. When considering any new activity, the Town Clerk, with support from relevant officers, shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration by the Council.

16.4. At least once a year, the Council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control, before approving the Annual Governance Statement.

16.5. Risks will be prioritised and reviewed in line with government guidance.

17. Suspension and revision of Financial Regulations

17.1. It shall be the duty of the Policy & Resources Committee to review the Financial Regulations of the Council at least every two years, and following any change of Town Clerk or RFO, and to make such recommendations to the Council as the Committee considers are required. The Town Clerk shall monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and shall advise the Policy & Resources Committee/Council of any requirement for a consequential amendment to these Financial Regulations.

17.2. The Council may, by resolution of the Policy & Resources Committee or Council duly notified prior to the relevant meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee or Council, suspend any part of these Financial Regulations provided that reasons for the suspension are recorded and that an assessment of the risks arising has been presented to all members. Suspension does not disapply any legislation or permit the Council to act unlawfully.

17.3. The Council may temporarily amend these Financial Regulations by a duly notified resolution, to cope with periods of absence, local government reorganisation, national restrictions or other exceptional circumstances.

Document approved by Council at its meeting of 16th September 2026.

Review date: September 2028