PETERSFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held at the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Petersfield, on 15th April 2019 at 6.30pm

PRESENT: Cllr J Deane (Chairman), Cllr Mrs L Farrow, Cllr J Palmer, Cllr G Watkinson, Cllr A. Glendinning, Cllr P. Humphries.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Mr N Hitch (Town Clerk & RFO), Mrs M Snow (Finance Officer) Mrs S Fisher (Committee Administrator), 1 member of the public present and no press.

F 0851 **CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS**

The Chairman welcomed members to the last meeting of this Council session and thanked them for all of their help and support and also thanked the Council staff for all of their hard work.

F 0852 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence were received.

F 0853 **GRANTING OF DISPENSATION UNDER SECTION 33 OF THE LOCALISM ACT**

No requests for dispensation had been received.

F 0854 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made.

F 0855 **PUBLIC REPRESENTATION**

No requests for public representation were received.

F 0856 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

RESOLVED: **that the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 18th March 2019 were approved**

F 0857 **FINANCIAL AND OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES**

TOWN DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

T0810 **REVIEW OF THE PRESENTATIONS GIVEN TO THE TOURISM SUB-GROUP BY TOURISM SOUTH EAST AND THE DESTINATION MARKETING GROUP FOR THE PREPARATION OF A TOURISM STRATEGY FOR THE TOWN:**

Cllr J Palmer and the Town Clerk gave some background to this recommendation, as there was a question from the Committee

as to why this was a recommendation and not a resolution by the Town Development Committee. It was explained that the Town Development Committee had been tasked with putting a tourism strategy together so that the Council was in a position to make a decision regarding the future of the Town Visitor Centre and that it had failed to do so at this time. The Town Development Committee had been unconvinced by the value of either presentation for the preparation of a tourism strategy by an outside firm; instead the Town Development Committee had chosen to appoint Cllr J Deane and Ms Louise Bevan to prepare a tourism strategy. It was agreed to leave this as a recommendation for Council to make a decision on at its next meeting.

RECOMMENDED: **Members felt unable to engage either consultant (Tourism South East or the Destination Marketing Group) to prepare a tourism strategy but accept that a tourism strategy is required in order to make a decision on the future of the Town Visitor Centre and the future of tourism for the Town.**

T0813 TO REVIEW PROGRESS ON RESOLUTIONS AND ACTIONS FROM OTHER MEETINGS

RECOMMENDED: **that the new Town Development Committee be invited to form a working group to discuss cycling in the Town.**

GROUNDS

G0840 GROUNDS REPORT

Concerns regarding drug dealing and the lack of police action- as this matter was listed later on the agenda for this meeting it was agreed to discuss this issue at that point.

G0843 TENDER SPECIFICATION FOR THE STABILISATION OF THE PETERSFIELD POND BANKS

RECOMMENDED: **that the Tender Specification for the Petersfield Pond Banks be amended as follows:**

1) **In 1.3 the date should be changed to 31/5/19;**
2) **In 1.6 this should refer to the documents at the back of the specification and link to the Pond Briefing Document and the High Level Specification**

G0844 GROUNDS COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

RECOMMENDED: **that the Grounds Committee Terms of Reference be amended:**

1) **to include in point 6 that the areas of land include**

Causeway Field/Sussex Meadows;

2) **in point 13 that the apostrophes be removed in 'Committees' and 'Chairman' be amended to 'Chairmen'.**

G0850 BRINGING GROUNDS MAINTENANCE IN-HOUSE

RESOLVED: that with effect from 1st April 2020 the Town Council will bring all grounds maintenance work in-house.

PUBLIC HALLS

PH0823 INTRODUCTION OF A TILL FOR THE TOWN COUNCIL RECEPTION DESK IN THE TOWN HALL REQUEST BY FINANCE OFFICER

Members were advised that the Public Halls Committee was in favour of the purchase of a till for the reception desk but it had requested further information. The Finance Officer gave an update and explained that, having spoken to the proposed supplier, she was able to answer the outstanding questions: 1. Card terminal for the new till: the proposed new till does not have an in-built card swipe function and the only provider which the till supplier uses is PaySense. 2. The till would not be compatible with the current card services provider (Cardnet) but card payments could be processed separately using the Cardnet terminal. 3. Introduction of a new till for the Box Office: it would be possible to install additional till units and these could be networked provided they are on the same internet connection; however the Halls Manager has some concerns about installing a new till in the Box Office at the current time due to the multiple users who have access to the Box Office. 4. Dimensions of the desk: the proposed new till would fit on the reception desk and it was noted that in any event the desk requires adjusting so that it is at the correct height for wheelchair users. It was agreed that the proposed till was a simple solution which would save the finance department a significant amount of time with reconciliations and that under the financial regulations members considered that it represents good value for money.

RESOLVED: that the purchase of a Casio VR200 Electronic Point of Sale till for the Town Hall Reception Desk at a cost of approximately £825 plus VAT be approved, to be funded out of the Stationery and Office Costs budget.

PH0824 TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE PUBLIC HALLS COMMITTEE

RECOMMENDED: **that the Terms of Reference for the Public Halls Committee be amended as follows:**
1. To remove the word 'separate' from point 10 and
2. To add in a footnote indicating when the document was reviewed.

F0858 TOWN CLERKS FINANCE REPORT

The Town Clerk's Finance report dated the 8th April 2019 was noted and received; the Chairman thanked the Town Clerk and the Finance Officer for ensuring that the Council is in such a good financial position *(attached at appendix a)*.

F 0859 BANK RECONCILIATIONS FOR MARCH 2019

The March 2019 bank reconciliation statements for cashbook accounts were received and approved *(attached at appendix b)*.

RESOLVED: **that the bank reconciliations from March 2019 cashbook accounts be received and approved.**

F 0860 TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Members agreed that the Terms of Reference for the Finance and General Purposes Committee should remain unchanged *(attached at appendix c)*.

RECOMMENDED: **that the Terms of Reference for the Finance and General Purposes Committee be approved**

F 0861 VIREMENT POLICY

Members considered the Virement Policy dated 2003 and agreed that the policy had been reviewed more recently but recognised that this policy appears to reflect current practice. A more recent version of the policy will be located for review by Council and the policy will be reviewed in 4 years time, in 2023 *(attached at appendix d)*.

RECOMMENDED: **that the Virement Policy be approved and reviewed again in 2023.**

F 0862 STANDING ORDERS

Members reviewed and considered the Standing Orders and noted that they had been significantly overhauled in 2014 and updated in 2018 (*attached at appendix e).* Members agreed that no changes were required and that the document should be reviewed annually.

RECOMMENDED: **that the Standing Orders are approved and be reviewed in 2020.**

F 0863 CONTRACT STANDING ORDERS

Members noted that a few minor changes were required to the numbering of paragraphs in the Contract Standing Orders but that otherwise no changes were required (*attached at appendix f).* It was noted that the Financial Regulations take over from the Contract Standing Orders for the rules around the acceptance of tenders. The document should be reviewed annually.

RECOMMENDED: **that the numbering of the Contract Standing Orders be amended as clauses 10.2 and 10.4 are repeated twice and that the document be reviewed in 2020.**

F 0864 FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Members reviewed the Financial Regulations and noted that numbering in section 20 on page 18 required amendment and that the document should be reviewed annually (*attached at appendix g).*

RECOMMENDED: **that the numbering in section 20 of the Financial Regulations be amended as agreed and reviewed in 2020**

F 0865 POLICING LEVELS IN THE TOWN

Members discussed concerns raised regarding drug dealing and the lack of police action to address the issue which had been raised in the April Grounds Committee. Members considered the comment raised at the Annual Town Meeting in the Open Forum by a member of the public expressing concern about the decrease in the number of Police Officers in the Town (minute C0793 refers). Members agreed that the Town Council should take action and agreed to send a letter requesting information regarding police levels in the Town.

RESOLVED: **that the Town Clerk will write to the Divisional Commander with operational responsibility for the**

Town and express the Town Council's concern regarding police levels and request information regarding: 1) the number of police officers in Petersfield and the historic number of police officers in the Town and 2) current crime numbers and historic crime numbers and 3) the amount of time that Police Officers currently spend in the Town. Copies of the letter are to be sent to the Police and Crime Commissioner and to Damien Hinds MP.

F 0866 MEDIA POLICY

Members reviewed the amended Media Policy which Cllr P Humphries had re-drafted to merge the Social Media and Media Policies (minute F 0689 refers) (*attached at appendix h).* Members thanked Cllr P Humphries for his good work on this and agreed that the policy be approved and reviewed again in a year's time.

RESOLVED: **that the amended Media Policy be received and approved and reviewed in 2020.**

F 0867 HAMPSHIRE PENSION FUNDS CONSULTATION ON THEIR RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENT POLICY

Members were pleased to see that the Hampshire Pension Fund was considering ethical and environmental issues and agreed to support the proposed changes (*attached at appendix i).*

RESOLVED: **that a response be sent to Hampshire Pension Funds supporting their proposed actions.**

In view of the confidential nature of the business about to be discussed it was

RESOLVED: **that the public be asked to leave the meeting**

CONFIDENTIAL

F 0868 PUBLIC HALLS- HEADS OF TERMS FOR NEW LEASE FOR GYM AND TONIC IN THE FESTIVAL HALL

Members agreed the Heads of Terms for the lease renewal and that, given that the lease is due to expire at the beginning of

May, the Town Clerk be granted authority to sign the lease documentation.

RESOLVED:	**that the Heads of Terms for the lease renewal for Gym and Tonic in the Festival Hall be approved: rent of £10,500 per annum without a car parking space on a 3 year lease with a 6 month notice period**
RECOMMENDED:	**that the Town Clerk be granted authority to sign the necessary documentation for the Gym and Tonic lease renewal**

F 0869 **STAFF MATTERS**

Members were advised that the Staff Panel had met on 12th April and agreed that a new Sales Ledger Clerk with a financial background and qualifications should be appointed and that, looking to the future, the impact on staffing needs of taking grounds maintenance in-house should be considered.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.59 p.m.

APPENDIX A

FINANCE REPORT

As with the Clerk's Report to Council, this report is not an item of debate, but seeks to inform councillors of all matters financial, including income and expenditure against budget, the level of balances held, proposed movements of deposits, future plans as well as seasonal issues, such as the Audit and Budget setting processes. If councillors consider a matter included in the report is in need of debate, the subject can be added to a future meeting's agenda for this purpose. I will always endeavour to answer any questions raised from the content of the report, but please bear in mind that if further investigation is necessary, answers will need to be given outside the meeting.

Bank Accounts

	£	Rate	
Lloyds Current Account	25,000.00		
Lloyds 30 Day Account	137,231.41	0.05%	
Lloyds Ticketsource	5.70		
Cambridge & Counties 30 Day Account	1,580,619.19	1.39%	
Public Sector Deposit Fund	111,108.41	varies	
Total	**1,853 964.71**		

Investments

Local Authorities Property Fund	2,077,819.13	varies	678,406 units
Rathbones Investment Management Ltd	3,050,000.00		
Total	**5,127,819.13**		

Town Mayor's Charity Account 110.47

The sum held in the Public Sector Deposit Fund includes the Developer Contributions already received in respect of the new play area to be constructed at Borough Road recreation ground.

Finance & General Purposes Committee

	£	Budget	% Budget
Income	84,050	40,000	210.13
Expenditure	469,242	470,425	99.75

Income reflects the interest received from the bank deposits plus the first payments of funds due under the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), totaling £9,642. These funds will be placed within a separate Community Infrastructure Levy Reserve. Expenditure includes the payment for the Petersfield Museum Capital Grant and for the operation of the Town Visitor Centre that has not been budgeted for. Following the transfer of funds to Earmarked Reserves for expenditure not yet incurred, it will mean that there will be an overspend this year. Members need to be aware that the newsletter budget heading will be exceeded this financial year because of the additional issue being produced regarding the Festival Hall development consultation.

Public Halls Committee

	£	Budget	% Budget
Income	198,331	206,779	95.91
Expenditure	198,837	257,714	77.15

The Festival Hall complex year to date income is 96.8% (2018:89.3%) and Avenue Pavilion income is at 90.7% (2018:85.8%) reflecting a reasonable performance. The departure of Sutton Winson has affected the level of re-charge income and tenant rental income for this financial year which is lower than budgeted. Expenditure includes all the regular expenditure items. One code that has exceeded its budget this year is cleaning supplies. Initial investigation suggests that costs have increased higher than expected because volumes ordered have remained fairly constant. There is no concern with the budget as a whole where the underspend prior to transfer of some unused budgets to Earmarked Reserves can almost exclusively be explained by the reduced need to repair our buildings.

Grounds Committee

	£	Budget	% Budget
Income	82,644	80,052	103.24
Expenditure	242,548	282,638	85.82

Income is mostly attributable to the invoicing of premises on The Heath and for the outside services being undertaken by the grounds team. Expenditure remains healthily within overall budget and the annual budget will be achieved. Equipment purchases will exceed its budgeted sum as a result of purchasing the second ride-on mower that was approved by Council earlier in the summer, as will the tree budget on The Heath with the pollarding of a larger than anticipated area of willows around the Pond although this is partly offset by the reduced need to spend funds on the Heath Management Plan tree works. Equipment Repairs and Maintenance may also exceed the expected budget but this is a result of the additional work undertaken by the grounds team as well as the increased amount of equipment that it has been necessary to obtain.

Overall

	£	Budget	% Budget
Income	365,025	326,832	111.69
Expenditure	910,627	1,010,778	90.09

If everything was on track the year to date figures would show a 100.00% spend. Income shows a comfortable position (2018:102.08%) although it should be borne in mind that

the projected budget outturn when setting the Precept for next year anticipated end of year income at £369,346. If this is not achieved there could be some impact on the level of reserves at the year end. Expenditure is a little higher than the level expected, (2018:94.80%) with the end of year outturn being projected at £949,863. This figure does though include projected transfers to Earmarked Reserves totaling £63,700. Members are aware of the sanctioned overspend in respect of the Town Visitor Centre and additional ride-on mower purchased. The above figures are estimates at this stage and should not be taken literally.

This report aims to provide an overall summary of the position of the Council financially with any significant anomalies or variances being reported for your attention and potentially, action. It also demonstrates that councillors are fulfilling their role in monitoring the Council's finances and ensuring that good governance is being followed.

Neil Hitch,
Town Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer
8th April 2019

Petersfield Town Council

APPENDIX B

Bank - Cash and Investment Reconciliation as at 31 March 2019

Confirmed Bank & Investment Balances

Bank Statement Balances

31/03/2019	Lloyds Current Account	25,000.00	
31/03/2019	Lloyds Savings Account	137,231.41	
31/03/2019	Cambridge & Counties	1,580,619.19	
31/03/2019	Public Sector Deposit Fund	111,108.41	
31/03/2019	Lloyds Ticketsource	5.70	
31/03/2019	Moviola Cinema Float	120.00	
31/03/2019	Petty Cash Tin Float	35.83	
31/03/2019	Reception Tin Float	25.00	
31/03/2019	Town Mayor's Charity -Current	10.00	
31/03/2019	Town Mayor's Charity-Savings	100.47	
31/03/2017	CCLA Local Auth Property Fund	0.00	
			1,854,256.01

Other Cash & Bank Balances **0.00**

1,854,256.01

Unpresented Payments **50,250.00**

1,804,006.01

Receipts not on Bank Statement **13.00**

Closing Balance **1,804,019.01**

All Cash & Bank Accounts

1	Current Bank A/c	111,994.41
2	Cambridge & Counties Bank A/c	1,580,619.19
3	Public Sector Fund A/c	111,108.41
4	Ticketsource A/c	5.70
5	Petty Cash	180.83
6	Town Mayor's Charity A/c	110.47
7	CCLA Local Authorities' Proper	0.00
	Other Cash & Bank Balances	0.00
	Total Cash & Bank Balances	**1,804,019.01**

APPENDIX C

TOWN PETERSFIELD COUNCIL

Finance & General Purposes Committee

Terms of Reference

1. Membership of the Finance & General Purposes Committee shall be determined each year at the Annual meeting of the Council at which time the Chairman for the year will be elected. Membership of the Committee includes the Chairmen of the Grounds Committee and Public Halls Committee.

2. At the first meeting of the Committee following the Annual Meeting of the Council a Deputy Chairman shall be elected.

3. The Committee will generally meet on a monthly cycle except during August with all meeting dates being confirmed by the Annual Meeting of the Council.

4. The minutes of the Committee are to be reported to and received by the Council at each meeting of Council.

5. The principle purpose of the Committee is to manage the finances of the Council and recommend a budget and proposed Precept to Council annually.

6. The Committee shall also:
   - consider and approve financial recommendations received from other committees;
   - consider and approve the recommended annual staff budget from the Staff Panel;
   - undertake overall management of all the Council's finances and banking operations;
   - make recommendations to Council where appropriate in respect of its policies;
   - report to Council all expenditure approved that is not included within the annual budget estimates;
   - undertake maintenance responsibility for the War Memorial, Mosaic in Dragon Street and all civic regalia;
   - consider and report on any matter not specifically referred to or included within any other committee's terms of reference;
   - approve emergency expenditure authorised by the Town Clerk under delegated authority.

7. To produce a Policy Strategy to be reviewed annually by the Committee.

8. To consider quotations, estimates or tenders for all capital projects to be undertaken on any of the Council's grounds or halls submitting recommendations for approval to Council.

PETERSFIELD TOWN COUNCIL APPENDIX D

"Virement

To spend more on one budget head when this is matched by a corresponding reduction on some other budget head, ie a switch of resources between budget heads. Virement must be properly authorised by the appropriate committee or by officers by delegated powers."

"A flexible approach to virement can act as a powerful motivation to seek value for money and should therefore be encouraged."

Source: Councillors Guide to Local Government Finance
Page 232 and 356

POLICY FOR VIREMENT

1. **UP TO £500 within the same Cost Codes.**
   By the Officer responsible for the cost code with authorisation from the Responsible Financial Officer subject to the agreement of the Chairman of Finance and General Purposes committee (no virement between committees)

2. All members to be advised at committee of any virement made by Officers.

3. **£501 - £5000 within the same Cost Codes.**
   By the relevant committee making recommendation to Finance and General Purposes Committee for agreement, with advice from the Responsible Financial Officer (no virement between committees)

4. **£5001 – 5% of the total expenditure in one financial year.**
   By Finance and General Purposes Committee making recommendation to Full Council for agreement, with advice from the Responsible Financial Officer.

5. **Virements Between Committees**
   From relevant committees recommendation to Finance and General Purposes Committee for agreement, with advice from the Responsible Financial Officer.

Susan Watts
Responsible Financial Officer
13th November 2003

APPENDIX E

Petersfield Town Council

Standing Orders

Approved on 24th May 2018

Index of Standing Orders

Standing order		Page
1	Meetings	3
2	Ordinary Council meetings	7
3	Proper Officer	10
4	Motions requiring written notice	12
5	Motions not requiring written notice	13
6	Rules of debate	15
7	Code of conduct (England & Wales)	18
8	Questions	20
9	Minutes	20
10	Disorderly conduct	21
11	Rescission of previous resolutions	21
12	Voting on appointments	22
13	Expenditure	22
14	Execution & sealing of legal deeds	23
15	Committees	23
16	Sub-committees	25
17	Extraordinary meetings	25
18	Advisory committees	26
19	Accounts and Financial Statement	26
20	Estimates/precepts	27
21	Canvassing of and recommendations by councillors	27
22	Inspection of documents	28
23	Unauthorised activities	28
24	Confidential business	28
25	Matters affecting council employees	29
26	Requests for Information	30
27	Relations with the press/media	31
28	Liaison with County, District and Unitary Councillors	31
29	Financial matters	32
30	Allegations of breaches of the code of conduct	33
31	Variation, revocation and suspension of standing orders	34
32	Standing orders to be given to councillors	34

1 Meetings

Mandatory for full Council meetings
Mandatory for committee meetings
Mandatory for sub-committee meetings

a **Meetings shall not take place in premises, which at the time of the meeting, are used for the supply of alcohol unless no other premises are available free of charge or at a reasonable cost.**

b **When calculating the 3 clear days for notice of a meeting to councillors and the public, the day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a day of the Christmas break, a day of the Easter break or of a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning shall not count.**

c **Meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. The public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion.**

d Subject to standing order 1(c) above, members of the public are permitted to make representations, answer questions and give evidence in respect of any item of business included in the agenda at the appropriate time allocated within the meeting provided that due notice of their intention has been given to the

Town Clerk no later than 10.30a.m. of the day of the meeting..

e The period of time which is designated for public participation in accordance with standing order 1(d) above shall not exceed 15 minutes.

f Subject to standing order 1(e) above, each member of the public is entitled to speak once only in respect of business itemised on the agenda and shall not speak for more than 3 minutes.

g In accordance with standing order 1(d) above, a question asked by a member of the public during a public participation session at a meeting shall not require a response or start a debate.

h In accordance with standing order 1(g) above, the Chairman may direct that a response to a question posed by a member of the public be referred to a Councillor for an oral response or to an employee for a written or oral response.

i A record of a public participation session at a meeting shall be included in the minutes of that meeting.

j A person shall raise his hand when requesting to speak and stand when speaking at meetings of full Council (except when a person has a disability or is likely to suffer discomfort). The Chairman may at any time permit an individual to be seated when speaking.

k Any person speaking at a meeting shall address his comments to the Chairman.

l Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wishes

to speak, the Chairman shall direct the order of speaking.

m **Filming, photographing, recording, broadcasting or transmitting the proceedings of any meeting of Council, or a committee** or sub-committee **should be conducted in accordance with the Council's Protocol for reporting at Meetings.**

n **Any person wishing to report on the proceedings of a meeting as in paragraph 1(m) above, shall be provided with reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present.**

o **Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chairman may in his absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chairman.**

p **The Chairman, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chairman is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chairman, if present, shall preside. If both the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman are absent from a meeting, a Councillor as chosen by the Councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.**

q **Subject to model standing order 1 (y) below, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the Councillors present and voting thereon.**

r **The Chairman may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise his casting vote whether or**

not he gave an original vote. (*See also standing orders 2 (i) and (j) below.*)

s **Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on any question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a Councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave his vote for or against that question.** Such a request shall be made after the vote is taken. The Council may, on passing an appropriate resolution permit voting on a specified agenda item to be by secret ballot. All votes in such instances are to be counted by the Clerk and the result advised to the Chairman.

t **The minutes of a meeting shall record the names of councillors present** and absent.

u If prior to a meeting, a Councillor has submitted reasons for his absence at the meeting which is then approved by a resolution, such resolution shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting at which the approval was given.

v The code of conduct adopted by the Council shall apply to councillors in respect of the entire meeting.

w **A councillor or a non-councillor with voting rights who has a disclosable pecuniary interest or another interest as set out in the council's code of conduct in a matter being considered at a meeting is subject to statutory limitations or restrictions under the code on his right to participate and vote on that matter.**

x **No business may be transacted at a meeting unless at least one third of the**

whole number of members of the Council are present and in no case shall the quorum of a meeting be less than 3.

y **If a meeting is or becomes inquorate no business shall be transacted** and the meeting shall be adjourned. Any outstanding business of a meeting so adjourned shall be transacted at a following meeting of Council or that committee. If requested by those members present at a committee meeting when a quorum is not present the business may be adjourned to the next Council meeting.

z Meetings shall not exceed a period of 2 hours 30 minutes unless a resolution is passed to extend the time allowed for the business of the meeting to be completed. Any business not completed shall be considered at the next meeting of Council or the committee as appropriate.

2 Ordinary Council meetings

See also standing order 1 above

a **In an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the new councillors elected take office.**

b **In a year which is not an election year, the annual meeting of a Council shall be held on such day in May as the Council may direct.**

c **If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the Council shall take place at 6pm.**

d **In addition to the annual meeting of the Council, at least three other**

ordinary meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times as the Council directs.

e **The election of the Chairman (Town Mayor)** and the election of the Vice-Chairman **of the Council shall be the first business completed at the annual meeting of the Council.**

f **The Chairman of the Council, unless he/she has resigned or becomes disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until his/her successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the Council.**

g **The Vice-Chairman of the Council, if any, unless he/she resigns or becomes disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chairman of the Council at the next annual meeting of the Council.**

h **In an election year, if the current Chairman of the Council has not been re-elected as a member of the Council, he/she shall preside at the meeting until a successor Chairman of the Council has been elected. The current Chairman of the Council shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chairman of the Council but must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**

i **In an election year, if the current Chairman of the Council has been re-elected as a member of the Council, he/she shall preside at the meeting until a new Chairman of the Council has been elected. He/she may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chairman of the Council and must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**

j Following the election of the Chairman of the Council and Vice-Chairman of the Council at the annual meeting of the Council, the order of business shall be as follows.

i. To receive the declarations of acceptance of office from the Chairman of the Council and the Vice-Chairman following their respective elections.

ii. To appoint the Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes committee.

iii. To receive nominations to Planning, Public Halls, Grounds and Town Development committees.

iv. To appoint Chairmen of the Planning, Public Halls, Grounds and Town Development committees

v. To receive nominations to the Finance and General Purposes committee.

vi. To review the terms of references for committees.

vii. To review delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, employees and other local authorities.

viii. To review the appointment of any new committees, confirmation of their terms of reference, the number of members (including, if appropriate, substitute councillors) and receipt of nominations to them.

ix. To Confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the Council and to receive and note minutes of and/or to determine recommendations made by committees.

x. To review work with outside bodies, appoint representatives to relevant bodies and review arrangements for reporting back.

xi. In an election year, to make arrangements with a view to the council becoming eligible to exercise the general power of competence in the future.

xii. To confirm the calendar of meetings of the full Council and all committees for the year ahead.

xiii. To appoint the members of the Staff Panel.

xiv. To appoint members of the Grants Panel.

xv. To appoint a working party to review standing orders, financial regulations and contract standing orders, recommending any amendments for consideration to the next meeting of Council.

xvi. Review the Council's complaints procedure.

3 Proper Officer

a The Council's Proper Officer shall be either the Town Clerk or such other employee as may be nominated by the Council from time to time or such other employee appointed by the Council to undertake the role of the Proper Officer during the Proper Officer's absence. The Proper Officer and the employee appointed to act as such during the Proper Officer's absence shall fulfil the duties assigned to the Proper Officer in standing orders.

b The Council's Proper Officer shall do the following.

i. **Sign and serve on councillors by delivery or post at their residences a summons confirming the time, date, venue and the agenda of a meeting of the Council and a meeting of a committee** and sub-committee **at least 3 clear days before the meeting.**

ii. **Give public notice of the time, date, venue and agenda at least 3 clear days before a meeting of the Council or a meeting of a committee** or a sub- committee **(provided that the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the Council convened by councillors is signed by them).**

iii. Subject to standing orders 4(a)–(e) below, include in the agenda all

written motions received from councillors in the order received unless a councillor has given written notice at least 3 days before the meeting confirming his withdrawal of it.

iv. **Convene a meeting of full Council for the election of a new Chairman of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in his/her office, in accordance with standing order [3(b)i]** OR [3(b)ii] **above.**

v. Make available for inspection the minutes of meetings.

vi. **Receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities.**

vii. **Receive and retain declarations of acceptance of office from councillors.**

viii. Retain a copy of every councillor's register of interests and any changes to it and keep copies of the same available for inspection.

ix. Keep proper records required before and after meetings;

x. Process all requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Data Protection Act 1998, in accordance with and subject to the Council's procedures relating to the same.

xi. Receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the Council except where there is a resolution to the contrary.

xii. Manage the organisation, storage of and access to information held by the Council in paper and electronic form.

xiii. Arrange for legal deeds to be sealed using the Council's common seal and witnessed (*See also model standing orders 14(a) and (b).*)

xiv. Arrange for the prompt authorisation, approval, and instruction regarding any payments to be made by the Council in accordance with the Council's financial regulations.

xv. Refer a planning application received by the Council to the Chairman or in his/her absence Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee within 2 working days of receipt to facilitate an extraordinary meeting

if the nature of a planning application requires consideration before the next ordinary meeting of the Planning Committee.

xvi. Retain custody of the seal of the Council which shall not be used without a resolution to that effect.

xvii. Action or undertake activity or responsibilities instructed by resolution or contained in standing orders.

4 Motions requiring written notice

a In accordance with standing order 3(b)(iii) above, no written motion submitted may be moved at a meeting unless it is included in the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Council's Proper Officer at least 3 clear days before the next meeting.

b The Proper Officer may, before including a motion in the agenda received in accordance with standing order 4(a) above, correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.

c If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with standing order 4(a) above is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it in writing to the Proper Officer in clear and certain language at least 3 clear days before the meeting.

d If the wording or nature of a proposed motion is considered unlawful or improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the Chairman of the forthcoming meeting or, as the case may be, the Councillors who have convened the meeting, to consider whether the motion shall be included or rejected in the agenda.

e Having consulted the Chairman or councillors pursuant to standing order 4(d) above, the decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion in the agenda shall be final.

f Notice of every motion received in accordance with the Council's standing orders shall be numbered in the order received and shall be entered in a book, which shall be open to inspection by all councillors.

g Every motion rejected in accordance with the Council's standing orders shall be duly recorded with a note by the Proper Officer giving reasons for its rejection in a book for that purpose, which shall be open to inspection by all councillors.

h Every motion and resolution shall relate to the Council's statutory functions, powers and lawful obligations or shall relate to an issue which specifically affects the Council's area or its residents.

5 Motions not requiring written notice

a Motions in respect of the following matters may be moved without written notice.

i. To appoint a person to preside at a meeting.
ii. To approve the absences of councillors.
iii. To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the previous meeting.
iv. To correct an inaccuracy in the minutes of the previous meeting.
v. To dispose of business, if any, remaining from the last meeting.
vi. To alter the order of business on the agenda for reasons of urgency or expedience.

vii. To proceed to the next business on the agenda.

viii. To close or adjourn debate.

ix. To refer by formal delegation a matter to a committee or to a sub-committee or an employee.

x. To appoint a committee or any members thereof.

xi. To receive nominations to a committee or sub-committee.

xii. To dissolve a committee or sub-committee.

xiii. To note the minutes of a meeting of a committee or sub-committee.

xiv. To consider a report and/or recommendations made by a committee or a sub- committee or an employee.

xv. To consider a report and/or recommendations made by an employee, professional advisor, expert or consultant.

xvi. To authorise legal deeds to be sealed by the Council's common seal and witnessed.

(See standing orders 14(a) and (b) below.)

xvii. To authorise the payment of monies.

xviii. To amend a motion relevant to the original or substantive motion under consideration which shall not have the effect of nullifying it.

xix. To extend the time limit for speeches.

xx. To exclude the press and public for all or part of a meeting.

xxi. To silence or exclude from the meeting a Councillor or a member of the public for disorderly conduct.

xxii. To give the consent of the Council if such consent is required by standing orders.

xxiii. To suspend any standing order except those which are mandatory by law.

xxiv. To adjourn the meeting.

xxv. To appoint representatives to outside bodies and to make arrangements for those representatives to report back the activities of outside bodies.

xxvi. To answer questions from councillors.

b If a motion falls within the terms of reference of a committee or sub-committee or within the delegated powers conferred on an employee, a referral of the same may be made to such committee or sub-committee or employee provided that the Chairman may direct for it to be dealt with at the present meeting for reasons of urgency or expedience.

6 Rules of debate

a Motions included in an agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear on the agenda unless the order is changed at the Chairman's direction for reasons of expedience.

b Subject to standing orders 4(a)–(e) above, a motion shall not be considered unless it has been proposed and seconded.

c Subject to standing order 3(b)(iii) above, a motion included in an agenda not moved by the councillor who tabled it, may be treated as withdrawn.

d A motion to amend an original or substantive motion shall not be considered unless proper notice has been given after the original or substantive motion has been seconded and notice of such amendment, shall, if required by the Chairman, be reduced to writing and handed to the Chairman who shall determine the order in which they are considered.

e A Councillor may move amendments to his/her own motion. If a motion has already been seconded, an amendment to it shall be with the consent of the seconder.

f Any amendment to a motion shall be either:

i. to leave out words;

ii. to add words;

iii. to leave out words and add other words.

g A proposed or carried amendment to a motion shall not have the effect of rescinding the original or substantive motion under consideration.

h Only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the Chairman. No further amendment to a motion shall be moved until the previous amendment has been disposed of.

i Subject to Standing Order 6(h) above, one or more amendments may be discussed together if the Chairman considers this expedient but shall be voted upon separately.

j Pursuant to standing order 6(h) above, the number of amendments to an original or substantive motion, which may be moved by a councillor, is limited to one.

k If an amendment is not carried, other amendments shall be moved in the order directed by the Chairman.

l If an amendment is carried, the original motion, as amended, shall take the place of the original motion and shall become the substantive motion upon which any further amendment may be moved.

m The mover of a motion or the mover of an amendment shall have a right of reply, not exceeding 3 minutes.

n Where a series of amendments to an original motion are carried, the mover of the original motion shall have a right of reply in respect of the substantive motion at the very end of debate and immediately before it is put to the vote.

o Subject to standing orders 6(m) and (n) above, a councillor may not speak further in respect of any one motion except to speak once on an amendment moved by another councillor or to make a point of order or to give a personal explanation subject to the discretion of the Chairman.

p During the debate of a motion, a councillor may interrupt only on a point of order or a personal explanation and the councillor who was interrupted shall stop speaking. A Councillor raising a point of order shall identify the standing order which he considers has been breached or specify the irregularity in the meeting he is concerned by.

q A point of order shall be decided by the Chairman and his decision shall be final.

r With the consent of the seconder and/or of the meeting, a motion or amendment may be withdrawn by the proposer. A councillor shall not speak upon the said motion or amendment unless permission for the withdrawal of the motion or amendment has been refused.

s Subject to standing order 6(o) above, when a councillor's motion is under debate no other motion shall be moved except:

i. to amend the motion;

ii. to proceed to the next business;

iii. to adjourn the debate;

iv. to put the motion to a vote;

v. to ask a person to be silent or for him/her to leave the meeting;

vi. to refer a motion to a committee or sub-committee for consideration;

vii. to exclude the public and press;

viii. to adjourn the meeting;

ix. to suspend any standing order, except those which are mandatory.

t In respect of standing order 6(s)(iv) above, the Chairman shall first be satisfied that the motion has been sufficiently debated before it is seconded and put to the vote. The Chairman shall call upon the mover of the motion under debate to exercise or waive his right of reply and shall put the motion to the vote after that right has been exercised or waived. The adjournment of a debate or of the meeting shall not prejudice the mover's right of reply at the resumption.

7 Code of conduct (England)

See also standing orders 1(d)–(i) above

a All councillors and non-councillors with voting rights shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the council.

b Unless he has been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which he/she has a disclosable pecuniary interest. He/she may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which he/she had the interest.

c Unless he/she has been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which he/she has another interest if so required by

the council's code of conduct. He/she may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which he/she had the interest.

d **Dispensation requests shall be in writing and submitted to the Proper Officer** as soon as possible before the meeting, or failing that, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.

e A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by a meeting of the council, or committee or sub-committee for which the dispensation is required and that decision is final.

f A dispensation request shall confirm:

i. the description and the nature of the disclosable pecuniary interest or other interest to which the request for the dispensation relates;

ii. whether the dispensation is required to participate at a meeting in a discussion only or a discussion and a vote;

iii. the date of the meeting or the period (not exceeding four years) for which the dispensation is sought; and

iv. an explanation as to why the dispensation is sought.

g Subject to standing orders 7(d) and (f) above, dispensations requests shall be considered at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required

h A dispensation may be granted in accordance with standing order 7(e) above if having regard to all relevant circumstances the following applies:

i) without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from participating in the particular business would be so great a proportion of the meeting transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business or

ii) granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the council's area or

iii) it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.

8 Questions

a A councillor may seek an answer to a question concerning any business of the Council provided 2 clear days notice of the question has been given to the Proper Officer.

b Questions not related to items of business on the agenda for a meeting shall only be asked during the part of the meeting set aside for such questions.

c Every question shall be put and answered without discussion.

9 Minutes

a If a copy of the draft minutes of a preceding meeting has been circulated to councillors no later than the day of service of the summons to attend the scheduled meeting they shall be taken as read.

b No discussion of the draft minutes of a preceding meeting shall take place except in relation to their accuracy. A motion to correct an inaccuracy in the minutes shall be raised in accordance with standing order 5(a)(iv) above.

c Minutes, including any amendment to correct their accuracy, shall be confirmed by resolution and shall be signed by the Chairman of the meeting and stand as an accurate record of the meeting to which the minutes relate.

d Upon a resolution which confirms the accuracy of the minutes of a meeting, any previous draft minutes or recordings of the meeting shall be destroyed.

10 Disorderly conduct

a No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly. If this standing order is ignored, the chairman of the meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct

b If, in the opinion of the Chairman, there has been a breach of standing order 10(a) above, the Chairman shall express that opinion and thereafter any councillor (including the Chairman) may move that the person be silenced or excluded from the meeting, and the motion, if seconded, shall be put forthwith and without discussion.

c If a resolution made in accordance with standing order 10(b) above, is disobeyed, the Chairman may take such further steps as may reasonably be necessary to enforce it and/or he/she may adjourn the meeting.

11 Rescission of previous resolutions

a A resolution (whether affirmative or negative) of the Council shall not be reversed within 6 months except either by a special motion, the written notice whereof bears the names of at least four members of the Council, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the report or recommendation of a committee.

b When a special motion or any other motion moved pursuant to standing order 11(a) above has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved within a further 6 months.

12 Voting on appointments

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

b Voting on such appointments may be undertaken by secret ballot if so requested by a majority of councillors present in accordance with standing order 1(s).

13 Expenditure

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

b **The Council's financial regulations shall be reviewed once a year.**

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

14 Execution and sealing of legal deeds

See also standing order 5(a)(xvi) above

a A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the Council unless the same has been authorised by a resolution.

b **In accordance with a resolution made under standing order 14(a) above, the Council's common seal shall alone be used for sealing a deed required by law. It shall be applied by the Proper Officer in the presence of two members of the Council who shall sign the deed as witnesses** unless the Town Clerk be so authorised to do by resolution of the Council.

15 Committees

See also standing order 1 above

a The Council may, at its annual meeting, appoint standing committees and may at any other time appoint such other committees as may be necessary, and:

i. shall determine their terms of reference;

ii. shall appoint and determine the term of office of councillor or non-councillor members of such a committee (unless the appointment of non-councillors is prohibited by law) so as to hold office no later than the next annual meeting;

iii. may in accordance with standing orders, dissolve a committee at any

time.

iv. The voting membership of a committee (with the exception of the Planning Committee) shall not exceed half of the members of the Council and their quorum shall be three members (Planning Committee quorum shall be four members).

v. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council shall be entitled , with or without notice to attend and speak , propose and second (but not vote) at any meeting of a committee (other than Planning Committee), sub-committee or working party. Nothing in this standing order shall prevent the Vice-Chairman from being a member of any committee, sub-committee or working party with full voting rights if appointed by name.

vi. Any councillor has the right to raise a matter with any committee within the terms of reference of that committee and speak to that committee with due notice having been given to the Town Clerk prior to the meeting. The councillor may participate in the debate if permitted by the Chairman but cannot vote on, nor propose or second any motion.

vii. Will not under normal circumstances appoint a committee Chairman for more than three consecutive years.

b Unless the council determines otherwise, a committee may appoint a sub-committee or working party whose terms of reference and members shall be determined by the committee.

c The members of a committee may include non-councillors unless it is a committee which regulates and controls the finances of the council.

d Unless the council determines otherwise, all the members of an advisory committee and a sub-committee of the advisory committee may be non-councillors.

16 Sub-committees

See also standing order 1 above

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

b Unless there is a Council resolution to the contrary, a committee may appoint a working party to report and make recommendations to it on any specific matter referred to the working party in accordance with the terms of reference approved for it.

17 Extraordinary meetings

See also standing order 1 above

a The Chairman of the Council may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council at any time.

b **If the Chairman of the Council does not or refuses to call an extraordinary meeting of the Council within 7 days of having been requested to do so by two councillors, those two councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council. The statutory public notice giving the time, venue and agenda for such a meeting must be signed by the two councillors.**

c The Chairman of a committee (or a sub-committee) may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee or sub-committee at any time.

d If the Chairman of a committee (or a sub-committee) does not or refuses to call an extraordinary meeting within 7 days of having been requested by to do so by 2 members of the committee (or sub-committee) , any 2 members of the committee (or sub-committee) may convene an extraordinary meeting of a committee (or a sub-committee). The statutory public notice giving the time, venue and agenda for such a meeting must be signed by the 2 members.

18 Advisory committees

See also standing order 1 above

a The Council may appoint advisory committees comprised of a number of councillors and non-councillors.

b Advisory committees and any sub-committees may consist wholly of persons who are non-councillors.

19 Accounts and Financial Statement

a All payments by the Council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the Council's financial regulations, which shall be reviewed at least annually.

b The Responsible Financial Officer shall report to the Finance and General Purposes committee summarising the Council's receipts and payments and cash balances held. This statement should include a comparison with the budget for the financial year. A Financial Statement prepared on the

appropriate accounting basis (receipts and payments, or income and expenditure) for a year to 31 March shall normally be presented to each councillor before the end of the following month of May. The Statement of Accounts of the Council (which is subject to external audit), including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to Council for formal approval before 30 June.

20 Estimates/precepts

a **The Council shall approve written estimates for the coming financial year** at its meeting before the end of January.

b Any committee desiring to incur expenditure shall consider their requests at the September committee meeting.

21 Canvassing of and recommendations by councillors

a Canvassing councillors or the members of a committee or sub-committee, directly or indirectly, for appointment to or by the Council shall disqualify the candidate from such an appointment. The Proper Officer shall disclose the requirements of this standing order to every candidate.

b A councillor or a member of a committee or sub-committee shall not solicit a person for appointment to or by the Council or recommend a person for such appointment or for promotion; but, nevertheless, any such person may give a written testimonial of a candidate's ability, experience or character for submission to the Council with an application for appointment.

c This standing order shall apply to tenders as if the person making the tender were a candidate for an appointment.

22 Inspection of documents

a Subject to standing orders to the contrary or in respect of matters which are confidential, a councillor may, for the purpose of his official duties (but not otherwise), inspect any document in the possession of the Council or a committee or a sub-committee, and request a copy for the same purpose. The minutes of meetings of the Council, its committees or sub-committees shall be available for inspection by councillors.

23 Unauthorised activities

a Unless authorised by a resolution, no individual councillor shall in the name or on behalf of the Council, a committee or a sub-committee:

i. inspect any land and/or premises which the Council has a right or duty to inspect; or

ii. issue orders, instructions or directions.

24 Confidential business

a Councillors shall not disclose information given in confidence or which they believe, or ought to be aware is of a confidential nature.

b A councillor in breach of the provisions of standing order 24(a) above may be removed from a committee or a sub-committee by a resolution of the Council.

25 Matters affecting council employees

a If a meeting considers any matter personal to a Council employee, it shall not be considered until the Council OR the Finance and General Purposes committee OR the Staff Panel sub-committee has decided whether or not the press and public shall be excluded pursuant to standing order 1(c) above.

b Subject to the Council's policy regarding absences from work, the Council's most senior employee shall notify the Town Mayor or, in his/her absence, the Deputy Town Mayor or the Chairman of the Staff Panel sub-committee of any absence occasioned by illness or urgency and that person shall report such absence to the Staff Panel sub-committee at its next meeting.

c Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, the Council's most senior employee (or other employees) shall contact the Chairman of the Staff Panel sub-committee or in his/her absence, another member of the Staff Panel sub-committee in respect of an informal or formal grievance matter, and this matter shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the Staff Panel sub-committee.

d Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance and disciplinary matters, if an informal or formal grievance matter raised by an employee relates to the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Staff Panel sub-committee, this shall be communicated to another member of the Staff Panel sub-committee or the Town Mayor, which shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the Staff Panel sub-committee or the Council as appropriate.

e Any persons responsible for all or part of the management of Council employees shall keep written records of all meetings relating to their performance, and capabilities, grievance and disciplinary matters.

f The Council shall keep written records relating to employees secure. All paper records shall be secured under lock and electronic records shall be password protected.

g Records documenting reasons for an employee's absence due to ill health or details of a medical condition shall be made available only to those persons with responsibility for the same.

h Only persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to employee records referred to in standing orders 25(f) and (g) above if so justified.

i Access and means of access by keys and/or computer passwords to records of employment referred to in standing orders 25(f) and (g) above shall be provided only to the Town Clerk and/or the Chairman of the Council OR the Chairman of the Staff Panel sub-committee.

26 Requests for Information

a All requests for information held by the Council shall be processed in accordance with the Council's policy in respect of handling requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act (1998).

b Correspondence from, and notices served by, the Information Commissioner shall be referred by the Proper Officer to the chairman of the Finance and

General Purposes committee. The said committee shall have the power to do anything to facilitate compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 including exercising the powers of the Proper Officer in respect of Freedom of Information requests set out under standing order 3(b)(x) above.

27 Relations with the press/media

a All requests from the press or other media for an oral or written statement or comment from the Council shall be processed in accordance with the Council's policy in respect of dealing with the press and/or other media.

b Official statements from the Council to the media shall only be made by the Town Clerk or when authorised by the Town Mayor or the Chairman of a relevant Committee.

c In accordance with the Council's policy in respect to dealing with the press and/or other media, councillors shall not, in their official capacity, provide oral or written statements or written articles to the press or other media as though giving an impression that he/she is acting on behalf of the Council.

28 Liaison with District and County or Unitary Councillors

a An invitation to attend a meeting of the Council shall be sent, together with the agenda, to the councillor of the District and County Council representing its electoral ward.

b Unless the Council otherwise orders, a copy of each letter sent to the District or County Council may be sent to the District or County Council

councillor representing its electoral ward.

29 Financial matters

a The Council shall consider and approve financial regulations drawn up by the Responsible Financial Officer, which shall include detailed arrangements in respect of the following:

i. the accounting records and systems of internal control;

ii. the assessment and management of financial risks faced by the Council;

iii. the work of the Internal Auditor and the receipt of regular reports from the Internal Auditor, which shall be required at least annually;

iv. the inspection and copying by councillors and local electors of the Council's accounts and/or orders of payments;

v. procurement policies (subject to standing order 29(b) below) including the setting of values for different procedures where the contract has an estimated value of less than £50,000.

b **Any proposed contract for the supply of goods, materials, services and the execution of works with an estimated value in excess of** £50,000 **shall be procured on the basis of a formal tender as summarised in standing order 29(c) below.**

c Any formal tender process shall comprise the following steps:

i. a public notice of intention to place a contract to be placed in a local newspaper;

ii. a specification of the goods, materials, services and the execution of works shall be drawn up;

iii. tenders are to be sent, in a sealed marked envelope, to the Proper Officer by a stated date and time;

iv. tenders submitted are to be opened, after the stated closing date and time, by the Proper Officer and at least one member of the Council;

v. tenders are then to be assessed and reported to the appropriate meeting of Council or Committee.

d Neither the Council, nor any committee, is bound to accept the lowest tender, estimate or quote.

e **Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed £138,893 (or other threshold specified by the Office of Government Commerce from time to time) the Council must consider whether the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 (SI No.5, as amended) and the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2006 (SI No. 6, as amended) apply to the contract and, if either of those Regulations apply, the Council must comply with EU procurement rules.**

30 Allegations of breaches of the code of conduct

a Upon notification by the District Council that it is dealing with a complaint that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the council's code of conduct, the Proper Officer shall report this to the council.

b Where the notification in standing order 30(a) above relates to a complaint made by the Proper Officer, the Proper Officer shall notify the Chairman of the Council of this fact, and the Chairman shall nominate another staff member to assume the duties of the Proper Officer in relation to the complaint until it has been determined and the council has agreed what action, if any, to take in accordance with standing order 30(d) below

c The council may:

i. provide information or evidence where such disclosure is necessary to progress an investigation of the complaint or is required by law;

ii. seek information relevant to the complaint from the person or body with statutory responsibility for investigation of the matter.

d Upon notification by the District Council that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the council's code of conduct, the council shall consider what, if any, action to take against him/her. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office.

31 Variation, revocation and suspension of standing orders

a Any or every part of the standing orders, except those which are mandatory by law, may be suspended by resolution in relation to any specific item of business.

b A motion to add to or vary or revoke one or more of the Council's standing orders, not mandatory by law, shall be proposed by a special motion, the written notice whereof bears the names of at least four councillors.

32 Standing orders to be given to councillors

a The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the Council's standing orders to a councillor upon delivery of his declaration of acceptance of office.

b The Chairman's decision as to the application of standing orders at meetings shall be final.

c A councillor's failure to observe standing orders more than 3 times in one meeting may result in him/her being excluded from the meeting in accordance with standing orders.

APPENDIX f

TOWN PETERSFIELD COUNCIL

Contract Standing Orders

Contents

		Page
CSO 1	General	2
CSO 2	Authority to Enter Contracts	3
CSO 3	Framework Agreements and Suitability of Economic Operators	3
CSO 4	Publication of Notices	4
CSO 5	Contracts of £50,000 or Less	4
CSO 6	Requirement for Tenders with a Value above £50,000 but below EU Threshold	5
CSO 7	Tendering Procedures for Contracts above EU Thresholds	5
CSO 8	Form of Invitation to Tender and Submission of Tender	5
CSO 9	Opening of Tenders	6
CSO10	Evaluation of Tenders and Award of Contracts	6
CSO11	Waiver of Contract Standing Orders and Modifications of Contracts	7
Appendix 1	The Public Works Contract Regulations (2006)	8

These CSOs were adopted by the Council at its Meeting held on 24th May 2018

Contract Standing Orders

CSO1 General

1.1 Definitions

"Contract" means (i) any agreement for the supply of goods, services, or the execution of works to or for the Council including the use of consultants; (ii) any Framework Agreement; or (iii) any agreement where no payment is made by the Council but which is of financial value to the economic operator but does not include (without exception) (iv) an employment contract: or (v) a Grant Agreement;

"Contracts Finder" means a web-based portal provided for the purposes of the UK Regulations by or on behalf of the Cabinet Office;

"Council" means Petersfield Town Council;

"Economic Operator" means the party or potential party to a Contract;

"Proper Officer" means the Town Clerk or other such employee as appointed by the Council

1.2 These Contract Standing Orders ("CSOs") are made pursuant to the Local Government Act 1972, section 135 and shall come into force on 1st January 2018 but nothing in these CSOs shall prejudice the validity of any actions taken before that date under any previous CSOs.

1.3 Subject to CSO1.4 every contract made by or on behalf of the Council shall comply with:

1.3.1 these CSOs;

1.3.2 the Council's Financial Regulations;

1.3.3 all relevant statutory provisions including, in particular, Local Government Act 1988 Part II, Local Government Acts 1999 and 2000 and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015;

1.3.4 European Union treaties and European Council directives;

1.3.5 the rules on State Aid;

1.3.6 any direction by the Council or Committee having appropriate delegated authority.

1.4 These CSOs shall not apply or may be varied:

1.4.1 as resolved by the Council or appropriate Committee;

1.4.2 where statute or subordinate legislation prescribes otherwise.

1.5 The estimated value of a contract shall be the total value of the contract, net of VAT. This is the total consideration estimated to be payable over the full term of the Contract by the Council to include any option to extend.

1.6 The estimated value of a Framework Agreement is the total value of all the Contracts which could be entered into by the Council and all other contracting authorities, as applicable. Where the Council has a requirement for a single contract comprising services, supplies or works in combination, the rules to be applied are those which apply to the largest element by consideration.

1.7 Purchases of the same or similar goods or services must be aggregated wherever practicable. Contracts must not be artificially separated so as to circumvent the application of any part of CSOs, the EU Public Procurement Directives or UK Regulations.

1.8 Where the Contract period exceeds four years or is for an indefinite or unknown period, the value shall be calculated on the basis that the Contract shall be for a period of four years.

1.9 A decision whether to employ electronic or paper based methods of seeking expressions of interest, inviting tenders and/or receiving tenders shall be taken before expressions of interest are sought and the method chosen shall take into account of the class of potential economic operators and economic operators. Those decisions shall be advertised to potential economic operators and economic operators.

CSO2 Authority to Enter into Contracts

2.1 The Proper Officer shall have power to accept tenders (where required) and to enter into contracts on behalf of the Council to a value not exceeding £5,000.

2.2 In other cases the Council or the relevant committee shall have power to accept tenders and to authorise the conclusion of contracts.

2.3 The authority to accept tenders and/or enter into contracts shall be documented by the Proper Officer. The report seeking authority and the decisions shall include: a Council summary, recommendations, reasons for recommendations, a list of background papers (if any), the outcomes of consultations, statutory background, relevant policy background, other courses of action considered but rejected (if appropriate), staffing consequences, financial consequences, and how the proposal will help to reduce crime and disorder and promote race relations. Decisions taken under delegated authority shall be recorded by the Proper Officer in the database of delegated decisions.

CSO3 Framework Agreements and Suitability of Economic Operators

3.1 A Framework Agreement is an agreement between one or more contracting authorities (bodies governed by public law) and one or more economic operators, the purpose of which is to establish the terms governing contracts to be awarded during a given period, in particular with regard to price and, where appropriate, the quantity envisaged. Framework Agreements may be established by the Council, or by other public bodies, or public sector buying consortia, as arrangements through which the Council, along with other public bodies, may make specific purchases.

3.2 Where appropriate a Framework Agreement that has been approved as suitable by the Council or an appropriate Committee should be used for the making of the proposed purchase. A suitable Framework Agreement shall be appropriate for the specific requirement and procured in compliance with the UK Regulations, and the terms and conditions applicable shall meet the minimum requirements of the Council.

3.3 Provisions contained in the UK Regulations which govern Framework Agreements must be complied with when concluding a Framework Agreement or awarding a contract based on a Framework Agreement.

3.4 In all cases where a Contract is awarded under these CSOs, an economic operator can only be appointed who, as a minimum:

a) meets the Council's insurance requirements for the Contract (in respect of public liability, product, professional indemnity and/or employer's liability as appropriate, based on an assessment of risk for the Contract); and

b) is registered for tax and holds a valid certificate (where appropriate).

CSO4 Publication of Notices

4.1 In accordance with either these CSOs or UK Regulations, in all cases a public notice will be required. The notice shall be placed on the Council's web site and on Contracts Finder.

4.2 The notice shall additionally be placed in at least one local newspaper, one trade journal and/or approved website stating the nature and purposes of the Contract, inviting tenders and stating the last day when tenders shall be accepted.

4.3 Where the value of the Contract is £25,000 or greater the information regarding the Contract award is required to be placed on Contracts Finder.

4.4 Where the value of the Contract exceeds the relevant EU Threshold, the Contract notice and Contract award notice shall also be placed in the OJEU in accordance with the UK Regulations.

CSO5 Contracts of £50,000 or Less

5.1 Where the estimated value of the Contract, calculated in accordance with CSO1, is less than £50,000 and there is a suitable Framework Agreement approved by the Council or appropriate committee under CSO3, that Framework Agreement shall be used.

5.2 Where no suitable Framework Agreement is available, and the estimated value of the Contract, calculated in accordance with CSO1, is less than £500, then one written quotation should be obtained.

5.3 Where no suitable Framework Agreement is available, aCnd the estimated value of the Contract, calculated in accordance with CSO1, is £500.01 or greater and less than £50,000 three written quotations should be obtained against the same written request for quotation should be obtained.

5.4 In the selection of the economic operator, the need to seek best value for money and be able to demonstrate that they have achieved this should be borne in mind.

5.5 The requirement for written quotations in CSO4.1 or 4.2 shall not apply where the services comprise:

5.5.1 seeking the advice of counsel;

5.5.2 the services of counsel byway of representation;

5.5.3 the services of an expert witness;

5.5.4 the engagement of temporary or locum staff but the Proper Officer shall obtain quotations wherever possible.

5.6 Contracts having a value of £50,000 or less shall be evidenced in writing which may be the Council's Purchase Order form.

CSO6 Requirement for Tenders with a Value above £50,000 but below EU Threshold

6.1 Where the estimated value of the Contract, calculated in accordance with CSO1, is £50,000 or greater but less than the relevant EU Threshold, and there is a suitable Framework Agreement approved by the Council or appropriate committee, under CSO3, that Framework Agreement shall be used.

6.2 Where no suitable Framework Agreement is available, tenders shall be invited using a procedure comparable/similar to the open procedure under the Public Contract Regulations.

6.3 The procedure requires the publication of a notice in accordance with CSO4. The public notice shall specify (i) a time period within which interested parties may express an interest in tendering and (ii) the method by which such interest shall be expressed. At the end of this period, an invitation to tender shall be sent to all parties who have expressed an interest, specifying a reasonable period for tenders to be returned.

6.4 In all cases, every invitation to tender shall include the following:

- ☐ A statement that the tendering process will be conducted within the Council's corporate [electronic] tendering system;
- ☐ [Full instructions on how to submit their tender to this system];
- ☐ Advice that tenders, once received in the system, will be anonymous until the time specified for their opening;
- ☐ Advice as to the deadline for submission of tenders to this system.

6.5 The invitation to tender shall state:

- ☐ the evaluation criteria (including sub-criteria and sub-sub-criteria (where used));
- ☐ weightings and scoring criteria that will be applied in the award of the Contract.

6.6 These criteria must be capable of objective assessment, include price and any other relevant factors, and be weighted by relative importance. The invitation to tender shall also include the terms and conditions that will apply to the Contract.

CSO7 Tendering Procedures for Contracts above EU Thresholds

7.1 The EU Public Procurement Directives sets the financial threshold above which prescribed tendering procedures must be followed. The EU Thresholds are reviewed every two years.

7.2 Where the estimated value of the Contract is above the relevant EU Threshold, the procedures set out in the EU Public Procurement Directives must be followed. In most cases, the open procedure, restricted procedure or competitive procedure with negotiation will be used, but in certain specialist cases, the negotiated procedure without prior publication, competitive dialogue procedure or innovation partnership procedure shall apply.

CSO8 Form of Invitation to Tender and Submission of Tender

8.2 The invitations to tender shall state that no tender will be considered unless contained in a plain sealed envelope and endorsed 'Tender' followed by the subject to which it relates. Every such envelope shall bear no name or mark indicating the sender. In cases where in accordance with CSO1.5 it has been decided that electronic means of communication may or shall be used, tender forms may be accepted by email or other form of electronic

communication provided all appropriate safeguards ensuring probity and anonymity have been put into place and have been complied with by the economic operator.

8.3 Every tender shall be addressed to the Proper Officer of the Council and the tender shall remain in the custody of the Proper Officer until the time appointed for its opening.

CSO9 Opening of Tenders

9.1 All tenders for a contract shall be opened at the same time and in the presence of the following persons:

9.1.1 in respect of tenders invited by the Proper Officer in accordance with CSO2.1 above, the Proper or such officer as he or she shall have designated for the purpose;

9.1.2 in respect of tenders in accordance with CSO2.2 above, the Chairman or other member of the appropriate committee together with the Proper Officer or such officer as he or she shall have designated for the purpose.

9.2 The Proper Officer shall prepare and maintain a register of tenders received and shall record in that register the name of the economic operator and the total amount of the tender.

9.3 All persons required by CSO11.1 above to be present at the opening of tenders shall immediately thereafter sign against the relevant particulars in the register of such tenders having been opened by them or in their presence and shall initial each of the tender documents.

CSO10 Evaluation of Tenders and Award of Contracts

10.1 The Proper Officer shall ensure that the tenders received are evaluated in accordance with the evaluation criteria that have been adopted for the Contract, and stated in the Invitation to Tender. These criteria must be capable of objective assessment, include price and other relevant factors, and be weighted by relative importance.

10.2 The Proper Officer shall produce a written report evaluating each tender received against the evaluation criteria. The report shall identify the tenderer who has submitted the most economically advantageous tender i.e. the tender that achieves the highest score in the evaluation, and recommend the award of the Contract to that tenderer. This report shall be submitted to the person authorised to award the Contract under CSO 2.

10.2 Where the value of a Contract is above the relevant EU Threshold, the Contract shall be awarded in accordance with the UK Regulations and in particular the requirements relating to a "standstill" period prior to the Contract being entered into.

10.4 All Contracts, including an arrangement subject to a purchase order, must be made in writing under English Law, and must clearly and carefully specify the supplies, services or works to be provided, the agreed programme for delivery and the price and terms for payment together with all other terms and conditions.

10.4 Subject to CSO10.5 and CSO10.6 every Contract exceeding £50,000 in value not required or intended to be made under seal shall be signed on behalf of the Council by two officers of the Council being the Proper Officer and the Finance Officer or other office as nominated and approved by Council.

10.5 Every Contract which is a lease finance agreement shall be signed by both the Proper Officer and the Finance Officer.

10.6 Every Contract required or intended to be made under seal shall be sealed on behalf of the Council by the Proper Officer in the presence of a member of the Council.

CSO11 Waiver of Contract Standing Orders and Modifications of Contracts

11.1 Any of the requirements of these CSOs may be waived in an individual case, by the person authorised as follows:

11.1.1 Where the estimated value of the Contract is less than £50,000, the Manager within whose area of responsibility the Contract falls;

11.1.2 Where the estimated value of the Contract is £50,000 or greater but less than £100,000, the Town Clerk;

11.1.3 Where the estimated value of the Contract is £100,000 or greater, the Council or an appropriate committee with delegated responsibility for the relevant service area.

11.2 A request for the issue of a waiver must be made in writing to the person authorised under CSO11.1, with full reasons as to why the waiver is required, and evidence that the issue of a waiver will not prevent best value from being obtained. The decision in response to the request must also be in writing. No action shall be taken to enter into the Contract until such request has been submitted and the decision made.

11.3 The Council is subject to legal requirements to ensure fair competition for Contracts of a value exceeding the EU Thresholds, and subject to obligations under the EU Treaty to ensure that all Contracts (regardless of value) are awarded having regard to the need to avoid any action that is discriminatory, improper or which distorts competition.

11.4 It is understood that a waiver may be utilised where it can be demonstrated that the ability to act quickly to engage a single supplier would make economic sense and fit with service requirements, in circumstances where there is no more effective way to secure the capacity.

11.5 Any proposed modifications to existing contracts which have not been provided for in the initial procurement documents in clear, precise and unequivocal review clauses shall be approved by the Town Clerk where the value of the modification is less than £5,000 and by the relevant committee with delegated responsibility for the relevant service area where the value of the modification is £5,000 or greater prior to agreement of such modification.

APPENDIX 1

The Public Works Contracts Regulations 2015 or the most recently approved set of regulations in force.

APPENDIX G

PETERSFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

INDEX

		Page
1	General	2
2	Accounting and Audit (Internal and External)	4
3	Annual Estimates (Budget)	5
4	Budgetary Control and Authorisation of Spending	6
5	Banking Arrangements and Authorisation of Payments	7
6	Instructions for the making of Payments	9
7	Payment of Salaries	11
8	Loans and Investments	12
9	Income	13
10	Orders for Works, Goods and Services	13
11	Contracts	14
12	Payment under Contracts for Building or Construction Work	15
13	Stores and Equipment	16
14	Assets, Properties or Estates	16
15	Insurance	17
16	Charities	17
17	Town Mayors Charity	17
18	Risk Management	18
19	Revision and Suspension of Financial Regulations	18

These Financial Regulations were adopted by the Council at its Meeting held on 24th May 2018

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. Financial regulations are one of the council's three governing policy documents providing procedural guidance for members and officers. Financial regulations must be read in conjunction with the council's standing orders and any separate financial regulations relating to contracts.

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

1.3 The council's accounting control systems must include measures:

- for the timely production of accounts;
- to prevent and detect inaccuracy and fraud; and
- identifying the duties of officers.

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

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

1.6 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.

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

1.8 The RFO;

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

1.9 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, any 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.

1.10 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 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.

1.11 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.

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

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

shall be a matter for the full Council only.

1.13 In addition the Council must:

- determine and keep under regular review the bank mandate
- approve any grant or a single commitment;
- 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.

1.14 In these financial regulations, references to the Accounts and Audit Regulations or 'the regulations' shall mean the regulations issued under the provisions of section 27 of the Audit Commission Act 1998 and then in force unless otherwise specified.

1.15 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) which is published jointly by National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) from time to time.

2. ACCOUNTING AND AUDIT (INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL)

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

2.2 On a regular basis, at least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, the Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee shall verify bank reconciliations for all accounts produced by the Finance Officer. The member shall sign the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of verification. This activity shall on conclusion be reported, including any exceptions, to and noted by the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

2.3 The RFO shall complete the annual statement of accounts, annual report, and any related documents of the council contained in the Annual Return (as specified in proper practices) as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and having certified the accounts shall submit them and report thereon to the council within the timescales set by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

2.4 The council shall ensure that there is adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records, and of its system of internal control in accordance with proper practices. Any officer or member of the council shall make available such documents and records as appear to the council to be necessary for the purpose of the audit and shall, as directed by the council, supply the RFO, internal auditor, or external auditor with such information and explanation as the council considers necessary for that purpose.

2.5 The internal auditor shall be appointed by and shall carry out the work in relation to internal controls required by the council in accordance with proper practices.

2.6 The internal auditor shall:

- be competent and independent of the financial operations of the council;
- report to the Council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of two written reports during each financial year, one of them coming at the end of the financial year;

- to demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, be free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships, and
- have no involvement in the financial decision making, management or control of the council.

2.7 Internal or external auditors may not under any circumstances:
- perform any operational duties for the council;
- initiate or approve accounting transactions;
- direct the activities of any council employee, except to the extent that such employees have been appropriately assigned to assist the internal auditor.

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

2.9 The RFO shall make arrangements for the exercise of electors' rights in relation to the accounts including the opportunity to inspect the accounts, books, and vouchers and display or publish any notices and statements of account required by Audit Commission Act 1998 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

2.10 The RFO shall, without undue delay, bring to the attention of all councillors any correspondence or report from internal or external auditors.

3. ANNUAL ESTIMATES (BUDGET) AND FORWARD PLANNING

3.1 Each committee shall review in September each year its proposed revenue and capital receipts and payments for the forthcoming financial year. In addition, each Committee may consider potential proposed income and expenditure for an additional two financial years, if desired.

3.2 The Finance Officer shall during October each year use the information provided by each committee, along with officer forecasts for other routine expenditure and asset maintenance requirements to produce a detailed draft budget estimate for the following financial year.

3.3 A Finance Working Party, comprising the Town Mayor, Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee, Chairman of the Grounds Committee, Chairman of the Public Halls Committee, Chairman of the Town Development Committee plus the Town Clerk & RFO shall meet each year, by no later than the end of November to review the detailed estimates of all receipts and payments including the use of reserves and all sources of funding for the following financial year and produce a recommended budget and precept requirement for consideration by the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

3.4 The Finance & General Purposes Committee shall consider the recommendations from the Finance Working Party by no later than its

December meeting each year and produce a recommended budget that Council shall consider. The annual budget proposals in relation to the council's three year forecast of revenue and capital receipts and payments shall include recommendations for the use of reserves and sources of funding and update the forecast accordingly.

3.5 The Council shall approve the precept (council tax requirement), and relevant basic amount of council tax to be levied for the ensuing financial year not later than by the end of January each year. The RFO shall issue the precept to the billing authority and shall supply each member with a copy of the approved annual budget.

3.6 The approved annual budget shall form the basis of financial control for the ensuing year.

4 BUDGETARY CONTROL AND AUTHORITY TO SPEND

4.1 Expenditure on revenue items may be authorised up to the amounts included for that class of expenditure in the approved budget. This authority is to be determined by the terms of reference for each committee. 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 the Finance & General Purposes 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.

4.4 The salary budgets are to be reviewed at least annually in September or October for the following financial year by the Staff Panel and such review shall be evidenced by a hard copy schedule signed by the Town Clerk & RFO and the Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee and/or the minutes of the Staff Panel meeting.

4.5 In cases of risk to the delivery of council services and protection of the Council's assets, the Town Clerk may authorise revenue expenditure on behalf of the council which in the Town 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, subject to a limit of £2,000. The Town Clerk shall report such action to the relevant Chairman as soon as possible and to the Finance & General Purposes Committee as soon as practicable thereafter. In the event that the emergency expenditure required is in excess of £2,000, this may be approved by the Town Clerk with the approval of the Town Mayor, Chairman

of Finance & General Purposes Committee and Chairman of the relevant committee.

4.6 Authority is delegated to the Town Clerk and RFO to authorise and commit expenditure on matters conducive to the smooth running of the Council's services. This includes utility and fuel costs, stationery, cleaning materials, planned maintenance of facilities, staff training/development, legal advice, regular functions/services and statutory payments but is not intended to be exhaustive.

4.7 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 or the requisite borrowing approval has been obtained.

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

4.9 The RFO shall regularly provide the Finance & General Purposes Committee with a statement of receipts and payments to date under each heading 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 and ideally to every meeting of the committee and shall show explanations of material variances from the budget.

4.10 Changes in earmarked reserves shall be approved 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 safety and efficiency. The council may seek credit references in respect of members or employees who act as signatories.

5.2 The RFO shall approve a prepared schedule of payments requiring approval, forming part of the Agenda for the Council Meeting and present the schedule to Council. The Council shall review the schedule for compliance and, approve the payments by a resolution of the Council. The schedule shall be disclosed as an attachment to the minutes of the meeting at which payment was approved. Personal payments (including salaries, wages, expenses and any payment made in relation to the termination of a contract of employment) may be summarised to remove public access to any personal information.

5.3 All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the RFO to confirm that the work, goods or services to which each invoice relates has

been received, carried out, examined and represents expenditure previously approved by the Council.

5.4 The Finance Officer shall examine invoices for arithmetical accuracy and analyse them to the appropriate expenditure heading. The RFO shall take all steps to pay all invoices submitted and which are in order within the terms specified on the account or contract.

5.5 The Clerk and RFO shall have delegated authority to authorise the payment of items in the following circumstances:

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

(b) An expenditure item authorised under 5.6 below (continuing contracts and obligations) provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of Council;

(c) Fund transfers within the councils banking arrangements, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of Council.

(d) Payments for work that has been completed to the full satisfaction of the officer managing the project in accordance with any terms and conditions that may apply for the relevant account or contract.

5.6 For each financial year the Finance Officer shall draw up a list of due payments which arise on a regular basis as the result of a continuing contract, statutory duty, or obligation (such as but not exclusively, Salaries, PAYE and NI, Superannuation Fund, regular maintenance contracts and other similar payments provided also that a list of all such payments, when made shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of Council on the schedule of payments.

5.7 In respect of grants a Grants Panel comprising three councillors is appointed by Council at its Annual Meeting. It shall consider and recommend approval of community grant applications to Council within any limits set by Council and in accordance with any Policy statement approved by Council. All grants provided to Perennial Clients are to be considered and approved as part of the Council's budget setting process. Any client to be added to or removed from the Perennial Client list must be approved by resolution of Council following a recommendation from the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

5.8 In respect of Capital Grants that may be approved by the Council as part of its budget setting process, all applications are to be considered by the Finance & General Purposes Committee annually in October. The grant shall not be payable until at least 1st March of the following year and all successful applicants will need to provide evidence of expenditure prior to

the grant payment being approved. This evidence can be by way of receipted invoice, approved contract, order of goods or some other form that is satisfactory to the Town Clerk.

5.9 Members are bound by the Code of Conduct as adopted by the Council and shall not be present in the room when a decision to authorise or instruct payment is made in respect of a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest, unless a dispensation has been granted.

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

5.11 Any changes in the recorded details of suppliers, such as bank account records, shall be approved in writing by a member.

6 INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE MAKING OF PAYMENTS

6.1 The council will make safe and efficient arrangements for making of its payments.

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 All payments shall be effected by cheque or other instructions to the Council's bankers, or otherwise, in accordance with a resolution of Council or duly delegated Committee.

6.4 Cheques or orders for payment drawn on the bank account in accordance with the schedule as presented to Council shall be signed by two members of council and countersigned by the Clerk or (in the Clerk's absence) the Finance Officer. If a member who is also a bank signatory has declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in the matter in respect of which the payment is being, alternative councillors shall be required to sign the cheque for that payment.

6.5 To indicate agreement of the details shown on the cheque or order for payment with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall each also initial the cheque counterfoil.

6.6 If thought appropriate by the council, payment for utility supplies (energy, telephone and water), any National Non-Domestic Rates and other regular on-going contracts may be made by variable Direct Debit provided that the instructions are signed by two members plus the Town Clerk or Finance Officer and any payments are reported to Council as made. The approval of the use of a variable Direct Debit shall be renewed by resolution of the council at least every two years.

6.7 If thought appropriate by the council, payment for certain items may be made by Banker's Standing Order provided that the instructions are signed, or

otherwise evidenced by two members plus the Town Clerk or Finance Officer and any payments are reported to Council as made. The approval of the use of a Bankers Standing Order shall be renewed by resolution of the council at least every two years.

6.8 The normal method of making payments will be by electronic bank payments provided that the instructions for each payment are signed, or otherwise evidenced, by two members plus the Town Clerk or Finance Officer and any payments are reported to Council as made. Should it become necessary to make any payment by cheque then these will be actioned monthly. The approval of the use of BACS or CHAPS shall be renewed by resolution of the council at least every two years.

6.9 The process to be followed for the making of electronic bank payments is:

- The payments to be made will be processed through internet banking with a future payment date of at least a week, and preferably 10 days;
- This list will be printed out from internet banking and placed with the invoices or 'orders for payment' or similar paperwork to support the payment;
- This list will be examined by 2 councillors prior to the date when internet banking is scheduled to make the payments;
- The 2 councillors will sign the internet banking schedule to confirm they have examined the payments and are satisfied that the payments can and should be made;
- In the event that councillors are not content that any of the payments should be made, there is still time for them to be removed from internet banking before the scheduled due date.

6.10 Payment of staff salaries is to be made by internet banking transfer with a 'schedule' or 'order for payment' being signed by two members plus the Town Clerk or Finance Officer. All internet banking transfers are to be entered into the computer system in the presence of the Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee or the Town Mayor. If neither of these members are available for any reason an alternative councillor must be present to confirm the payments.

6.11 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 unless by resolution of the Council or a duly delegated committee.

6.11 Regular back-up copies of the records on any computer shall be made and shall be stored securely away from the computer in question.

6.12 The Council, and any members using computers for the council's financial business, shall ensure that anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall, software with automatic updates, together with a high level of security, is used.

6.13 Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the Town Clerk and RFO shall be appointed as the Service Administrator.

Arrangements shall also be made to ensure that a councillor is involved in authorising payments before they are made.

6.14 Access to any internet banking accounts will be directly to the access page (which may be saved under "favourites"), and not through a search engine. or e-mail link Remembered or saved passwords facilities must not be used on any computer used for council banking work. Breach of this Regulation will be treated as a very serious matter under these regulations.

6.15 Changes to account details for suppliers, which are used for internet banking may only be changed on written hard copy notification by the supplier and supported by hard copy authority for the change signed by two of the Town Clerk & RFO, Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee and the Town Mayor. A programme of regular checks of standing data with suppliers will be followed.

6.16 The Finance Officer may provide petty cash to officers for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses. Vouchers for payments made shall be forwarded to the Finance Officer with a claim for reimbursement.

a) The RFO shall maintain as petty cash a float of £315 for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses. Vouchers for payments made from petty cash shall be kept to substantiate the payment.

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

c) Payments to maintain the petty cash float shall be shown separately on the schedule of payments presented to council under 5.2 above.

7 PAYMENT OF SALARIES

7.1 As an employer, the council shall make arrangements to meet fully the statutory requirements placed on all employers by PAYE and National Insurance legislation. The payment of all salaries shall be made in accordance with payroll records and the rules of PAYE and National Insurance currently operating, and salary rates shall be as agreed by Council, or the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

7.2 Payment of salaries and payment of deductions from salary such as may be required to be made for tax, national insurance and pension contributions, or similar statutory or discretionary deductions may be made in accordance with the payroll records and on the appropriate dates stipulated in employment contracts, provided that each payment is reported to the next available council meeting, as set out in these regulations above. All payments are to be made in accordance with regulation 6.9 above and be duly authorised as specified in that regulation.

7.3 No changes shall be made to any employee's pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the relevant

committee with the exception of contractual spinal column point pay increases.

7.4 Each and every payment to employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall be recorded in a separate confidential record. This confidential record is not open to inspection or review (under the Freedom of Information Act 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;
d) by any person authorised under Audit Commission Act 1998.

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

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 of the Clerk.

9.4 Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts shall be reported to the Council and shall be written off in the financial year.

9.5 All sums received on behalf of the Council shall be banked intact as directed by the Finance Officer. In all cases, all receipts shall be deposited with the council's bankers with such frequency as the Finance Officer 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 Finance Officer shall promptly complete any VAT Return that is required. Any repayment claim due in accordance with VAT Act 1994 section 33 shall be made quarterly.

9.9 Where any significant sums of cash are regularly received by the council, the RFO shall take such steps as are agreed by the council to ensure that more than one person is present when the cash is counted in the first instance, that there is a reconciliation to some form of control such as ticket issues, and that appropriate care is taken in the security and safety of individuals banking such cash.

10 ORDERS FOR WORK, GOODS AND SERVICES

10.1 An official order or letter shall be issued for all work, goods and services unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate. Copies of orders shall be retained.

10.2 Order books shall be controlled by the RFO.

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

appropriate suppliers, subject to any de minimus provisions in Regulation 11 (i) below.

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

10.5 The RFO shall verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before the issue of any order, and in the case of new or infrequent purchases or payments, the RFO shall ensure that the statutory authority shall be reported to the meeting at which the order is approved so that the Minutes can record the power being used.

11 CONTRACTS

11.1 Procedures as to contracts are laid down as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

(v) for additional audit work of the external Auditor up to an estimated value of £500 (in excess of this sum the Clerk and RFO shall act after consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council);

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

(b) Where it is intended to enter into a contract exceeding £50,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Clerk shall invite tenders from at least four firms having previously advertised the nature and purpose of the proposed contract in accordance with the Contract Standing Orders.

(c) When applications are made to waive financial regulations relating to contracts to enable a price to be negotiated without competition the reason shall be embodied in a recommendation to the Council.

(d) Such invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases. The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the Clerk in the ordinary course of post. Each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specifically

marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract.

(f) All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the Clerk in the presence of at least one member of council who will normally be the Chairman or member of the relevant Committee.

(g) If less than three tenders are received for contracts above £50,000 or if all the tenders are identical the council may make such arrangements as it thinks fit for procuring the goods or materials or executing the works.

(h) All tenders received and opened are to be assessed and analysed before being reported to the next meeting of Council or the appropriate Committee.

(i) Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall contain a statement to the effect of Standing Order 21, and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.

(j) When it is to enter into a contract less than £50,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Clerk or RFO shall obtain 3 quotations (priced descriptions of the proposed supply); where the value is below £5,000 and above £2,000 the Clerk or RFO shall strive to obtain 3 estimates. Otherwise, Regulation 10 (3) above shall apply.

(k) The council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest of 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) The European Union Procurement Directive shall apply and the terms of the Public Contracts Regulations including thresholds shall be followed.

12. PAYMENTS UNDER CONTRACTS FOR BUILDING OR OTHER CONSTRUCTION WORKS

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

12.2 Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the RFO shall maintain a record of all such payments. In any case where it is estimated that the total cost of work carried out under a contract, excluding agreed variations, will exceed the contract sum by 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 confirmed by the Clerk to the contractor in writing, the Council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the financial provision.

13 STORES AND EQUIPMENT

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

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

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

13.4 The RFO shall be responsible for periodic checks of stocks and stores at least annually.

14 ASSETS, PROPERTIES AND ESTATES

14.1 The Clerk shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the council. The RFO shall ensure a record is maintained of all properties held by the council, recording the location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.

14.2 No tangible moveable property shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of the Council, together with any other consents required by law, save where the estimated value of any one item of tangible movable property does not exceed £250.

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

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

14.5 Subject only to the limit set in Reg 14.2 above, no tangible moveable property shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the full Council. In each case a Report in writing shall be provided to council with a full business case

14.6 The Finance Officer 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 and valued at least once during the term of the Council.

15 INSURANCE

15.1 Following the annual risk assessment (per Financial Regulation 17), the Town Clerk shall effect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the council's insurers.

15.2 The Town Clerk shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the council and the property and risks covered thereby and annually review it.

15.3 The Town Clerk shall be notified of any loss liability or damage or of any event likely to lead to a claim, and shall report these to Council at the next available meeting.

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

16 CHARITIES

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

17 TOWN MAYOR'S CHARITY ACCOUNT

17.1 During the Town Mayor's period of office, he/she may raise funds for charities or causes that are for the benefit of people locally or nationally/internationally.

17.2 The Town Mayor is responsible for the choice of beneficiaries as well as the activities that are undertaken to raise and/or distribute the funds.

17.3 The Town Mayor may use the budget allowance provided each year to cover the costs incurred in undertaking the role of Town Mayor to defray the expenses incurred during fundraising activities should he/she so desire.

17.4 All cheques or orders for payment raised from the account are to be authorised by the Town Mayor and signed by two councillors in accordance with the bank mandate.

17.5 Whilst the Town Mayor remains responsible for the activities raising funds, the control of all invoices, payments and associated documentation rests

with the Finance Officer who will operate control systems in line with those used for regular council expenditure and maintain appropriate financial records for audit purposes.

17.6 The balance of the Town Mayor's Charity Account should be reported regularly by the Responsible Finance Officer to the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

17.7 Bank reconciliations are to be presented by the Finance Officer to the Finance & General Purposes Committee with the regular bank accounts on a monthly basis.

18 RISK MANAGEMENT

18.1 The council is responsible for putting in place arrangements for the management of risk. The Clerk shall prepare, for approval by the Council, risk management policy statements in respect of all activities of the Council. Risk policy statements and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.

18.2 When considering any new activity, the Clerk or appropriate Officer shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration and adoption by the Council.

20 SUSPENSION AND REVISION OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

19.1 It shall be the duty of the council to review the Financial Regulations of the council on a regular basis. The Clerk shall make arrangements to monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and shall advise the council of any requirement for a consequential amendment to these financial regulations.

19.2 The council may, by resolution of the council duly notified prior to the relevant meeting of council, suspend any part of these Financial Regulations provided that reasons for the suspension are recorded and that an assessment of the risks arising has been drawn up and presented in advance to all members of council.

* * *

APPENDIX H

Petersfield Town Council

MEDIA POLICY

Draft revised by PGH March 2019

Approved by Finance & General Purposes Committee: 18th July 2016
(Minute No. F 0190 refers)

Reviewed 18th July 2016 (*Minute number F 0190 refers)*

Policy Review Date: July 2018

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to define the roles and responsibilities within the Council for working with journalistic and social media and deals with the day-to-day relationship between the Council media publicity.

1.2 It is not the intention of this policy to curb freedom of speech or to enforce strict rules and regulations. Rather, the intention is to establish a framework for achieving an effective working relationship with the media. The Council welcomes the opportunity to talk to the media and, through them, to debate issues in the public arena.

2 KEYS AIMS

2.1 The Council is accountable to the local community for its actions and this can only be achieved through effective two-way communications. The media – press, social, radio, TV, internet – are crucially important in conveying information to the community so the Council must maintain positive, constructive media relations and work with them to increase public awareness of the services and facilities provided by the Council and to explain the reasons for particular policies and priorities.

2.2 The journalistic media themselves have a vital role to play on behalf of the local community in holding the Council to account for its policies and actions. It is important that they have access to officers and members and to background information to assist them in this role. To balance this, the Council will defend itself from any unfounded criticism and will ensure that the public are properly informed of all the relevant facts using other channels of communication if necessary.

3 THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 The law governing communications in local authorities can be found in the Local Government Acts 1986 and 1988. The Council must also have regard to the government's Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity. Some aspects of the Code are relevant to this policy:-

- "Any publicity describing the Council's policies and aims [and the provision of services] should be as objective as possible, concentrating on facts or explanation or both."

- "Publicity touching on issues that are controversial, or on which there are arguments for and against the views or policies of the Council... should be handled with particular care. Issues must be presented clearly, fairly and as simply as possible, although councils should not oversimplify facts, issues or arguments."

- "Publicity should not attack, nor appear to undermine, generally accepted moral standards."

- "... local authorities... should not use public funds to mount publicity campaigns whose primary purpose is to persuade the public to hold a particular view on a question of policy."

3.2 In particular, officers and members should always have due regard for the long-term reputation of the Council in all their dealings with and through media channels.

3.3 Confidential documents, exempt Minutes, reports, papers and private correspondence should not be leaked to the media. If such leaks do occur, an investigation will take place to establish who was responsible and take appropriate action.

3.4 When the journalistic media wish to discuss an issue that is, or is likely to be, subject to legal proceedings then advice should be taken from the Council's solicitor before any response is made.

3.5 There are a number of personal privacy issues for officers and members that must be handled carefully and sensitively. These include the release of personal information, such as home address and telephone number (although Member contact details are in the public domain), disciplinary procedures and long-term sickness absences that are affecting service provision. In all these and similar situations, advice must be taken from the Town Clerk before any response is made to the media or through social media.

4 CONTACT WITH THE JOURNALISTIC MEDIA

4.1 When responding to approaches from the media, the Town Clerk is usually the main contact with permission to speak to the media. The Town Mayor and the Chairmen of Committees, by the nature of their position are also authorised contacts with the media in consultation with the Town Clerk.

4.2 Statements made by the Town Mayor or the Chairmen of Committees should reflect the Council's opinion and set policies.

4.3 If other councillors are contacted directly by the media for comment, they should liaise with the Town Clerk before responding to the request.

4.4 Other Councillors can talk to the media but must ensure that it is clear that the opinions given were their own and not necessarily those of the Council, preferably by confirming with the Town Clerk beforehand.

4.5 Caution should be exercised when submitting letters to the editor for publication in newspapers. There are occasions when it is appropriate for the Council to submit a letter, for example to explain important policies or to correct factual errors in letters submitted by other correspondents. However, such letters should be kept brief and balanced in tone and correspondence should not be drawn out over several weeks.

4.6 Letters representing the views of the Council should only be submitted by the Town Mayor or the Chairmen of Committees or the Town Clerk. Other members are strongly encouraged not to use the letters page within the Local Press as a means of expressing their personal views.

4.7 At all times consideration should be given as to how the correspondence may affect the reputation of the Council.

5 ATTENDANCE OF JOURNALISTIC MEDIA AT COUNCIL OR COMMITTEE MEETINGS

5.1 The Local Government Act 1972 requires that all agendas, reports and minutes are sent to the media on request, five working days prior to the meeting.

5.2 The media are encouraged to attend Council and Committee meetings and seating and workspace will be made available.

5.3 Any filming or taping of Council or Committee proceedings by the media can only be done with the express permission of the Town Clerk and Chairman of the particular meeting.

6 SOCIAL MEDIA

6.1 The use of digital and social media and electronic communication enables the Parish/Town Council to interact in a way that improves the communications both within the Council and between the Council and the people, businesses and agencies it works with and serves.

6.2 The Council has a website, Facebook page, Twitter account and uses email to communicate. The Council will always try to use the most effective channel for its communications. Over time the Council may add to the channels of communication that it uses as it seeks to improve and expand the services it delivers.

6.3 The Council uses the Facebook pages and Twitter account to provide information and updates regarding activities and opportunities within the town and promote our community positively.

6.4 Communications from the Council will meet the following criteria:

- Be civil, tasteful and relevant;
- Not contain content that is knowingly unlawful, libellous, harassing, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually oriented or racially offensive;
- Not contain content knowingly copied from elsewhere, for which we do not own the copyright;
- Not contain any personal information.
- If it is official Council business it will be moderated by either the Town Mayor/Deputy Town Mayor or the Town Clerk;
- Social media will not be used for the dissemination of any political advertising.

6.5 In order to ensure that all discussions on the Council page are productive, respectful and consistent with the Council's aims and objectives all communications should follow these guidelines:

- Be considerate and respectful of others. Vulgarity, threats or abuse of language will not be tolerated.
- Differing opinions and discussion of diverse ideas are encouraged, but personal attacks on anyone, including the Council members or staff, will not be permitted.
- Share freely and be generous with official Council posts, but be aware of copyright laws; be accurate and give credit where credit is due.
- Stay on topic.
- Refrain from using the Council's Facebook page or Twitter site for commercial purposes or to advertise market or sell products.

6.6 Social media is not monitored 24/7 and we will not always be able to reply individually to all messages or comments received. However, we will endeavour to ensure that any emerging themes or helpful suggestions are passed to the relevant people or authorities. Please do not include personal/private information in your social media posts to us. Sending a message/post via Facebook or Twitter will not be considered as contacting the Council for official purposes and we will not be obliged to monitor or respond to requests for information through these channels. Instead, please make direct contact with the Town Clerk and/or members of the council by emailing.

6.7 We retain the right to remove comments or content that includes:

- Obscene or racist content
- Personal attacks, insults, or threatening language
- Potentially libellous statements.
- Plagiarised material; any material in violation of any laws, including copyright
- Private, personal information published without consent
- Information or links unrelated to the content of the forum
- Commercial promotions or spam
- Alleges a breach of a Council's policy or the law

The Council's response to any communication received not meeting the above criteria will be to either ignore, inform the sender of our policy or send a brief response as appropriate. This will be at the Council's discretion based on the message received, given our limited resources available. Any information posted on the Facebook page not in line with the above criteria will be removed as quickly as practically possible. Repeat offenders will be blocked from the Facebook page. The Council may post a statement that '*A post breaching the Council's Social Media Policy has been removed*'. If the post alleges a breach of a Council's policy or the law the person who posted it will be asked to submit a formal complaint to the Council or report the matter to the Police as soon as possible to allow due process.

7 TOWN COUNCIL WEBSITE

7.1 Where necessary, we may direct those contacting us to our website to see the required information, or we may forward their question to one of our Councillors for consideration and response. We may not respond to every comment we receive particularly if we are experiencing a heavy workload.

7.2 The Council may, at its discretion, allow and enable approved local groups to have and maintain a presence on its website for the purpose of presenting information about the group's activities. The local group would be responsible for maintaining the content and ensuring that it meets the Council's 'rules and expectation' for the web site. The Council reserves the right to remove any or all of a local group's information from the web site if it feels that the content does not meet the Council's 'rules and expectation' for its website. Where content on the website is maintained by a local group it should be clearly marked that such content is not the direct responsibility of the Council.

8 TOWN COUNCIL EMAIL AND OTHER DIRECTED COMMUNICATIONS

8.1 The Town Clerk has his/her own council email address (clerks email address). The email account is monitored mainly during office hours, Monday to Friday, and we aim to reply to all questions sent as soon as we can. An 'out of office' message should be used when appropriate.

The Clerk is responsible for dealing with email received and passing on any relevant mail to members or external agencies for information and/or action. All communications on behalf of the Council will usually come from the Clerk, and/or otherwise will always be copied to the Clerk. All new emails requiring data to be passed on, will be followed up with a Data consent form for completion before action is taken with that correspondence.

8.2 Individual Councillors are at liberty to communicate directly with parishioners in relation to their own personal views, if appropriate, copy to the Clerk. NB any emails copied to the Clerk become official and will be subject to The Freedom of Information Act.

These procedures will ensure that a complete and proper record of all correspondence is kept.

8.3 Users must not forward personal information on to other people or groups outside of the Council, this includes names, addresses, email, IP addresses and other personal identifiers.

8.4 All are reminded that this policy also applies to SMS, Video conferencing and all other modes of directed communication including those that may emerge as the council seeks to serve the community more effectively.

9 ELECTIONS

9.1 The Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity contains guidance for providing publicity for Members and for publicity around elections. The code makes it clear that Council resources should not be

used on publicising individual members unless it is relevant to the particular position they hold in the Council. These extracts from the Code illustrate the main points:

- Publicity about individual councillors may include the contact details, the positions they hold in the council (for example, Town Mayor or Chairman of a committee), and their responsibilities. Publicity may also include information about individual councillors' proposals, decisions and recommendations only where this is relevant to their position and responsibilities within the Council. All such publicity should be objective and explanatory, and ... personalisation of issues or personal images making should be avoided."

- "Publicity should not be, or liable to misrepresentation as being, party political. Whilst it may be appropriate to describe policies put forward by an individual councillor which are relevant to their position and responsibilities within the council, and to put forward their justification in defence of them, this should not be done in party political terms, using political slogans, expressly advocating policies of those of a particular party or directly attacking policies and opinions of other parties, groups or individuals."

- "The period between the notice of an election and the election itself should preclude proactive publicity in all its forms of candidates and other politicians involved directly in the election.

9.2 In line with practice elsewhere in the country, the Council will not quote any Councillor in a news release or involve them in proactive publicity events during the election period, regardless of whether or not they are standing for election. The only exception to this (as laid down in the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity) is during an emergency or where there is a genuine need for a member level response to an important event outside the control of the Council. In this situation, members holding key civic positions should be able to comment.

10 PRESS RELEASES

10.1 The purpose of a press release is to make the media aware of a potential story, to provide important public information or to explain the Council's position on a particular issue. It is the responsibility of all officers and members to look for opportunities where the issuing of a press release may be beneficial.

10.2 All press releases are to be factual, non-political, not written to cause offence and must be in accordance with Council policy.

10.3 All press releases are to be drafted and issued by the Town Clerk in order to ensure that the principles outlined in section three (Legal Framework) are adhered to, that there is consistency of style across the Council and that the use of the press release can be monitored, having consulted with the Town Mayor or Chairman of the relevant committee on the proposed wording.

APPENDIX II

Neil Hitch

From: Pensions Employer Services <pensions.employer@hants.gov.uk>
Sent: 29 March 2019 08:21
Subject: **STOP PRESS** - Consultation on the Pension Fund's Responsible Investment Policy
Attachments: DRAFT Responsible Investment Policy agreed 2018-12-14.pdf

****STOP PRESS**STOP PRESS**STOP PRESS**STOP PRESS**STOP PRESS**STOP PRESS**STOP PRESS**STOP PRESS**STOP PRESS**STOP PRESS****

Consultation on the Pension Fund's Responsible Investment Policy

The Hampshire Pension Fund is responsible for investing the funds it receives in contributions from employees and employers in order to ensure that it can pay the pension benefits that have been promised to scheme members.

It is a significant responsibility for the Pension Fund Panel and Board in setting the investment strategy for the fund, which determines the specialist external investment managers employed to manage the Fund's assets. The Pension Fund expects that its investment managers will consider all relevant factors in assessing the financial return of the companies that they invest in, which is in line with the Pension Fund's perspective as a long-term investor. This would include issues such how the companies' activities may impact on climate change, its policies for executive pay and the strength of its corporate governance to guard against fraud and corruption. These issues are sometimes referred to as ESG - Environmental, Social and Governance issues.

The Pension Fund Panel and Board takes the consideration of responsible investment, and the inclusion of all factors in investment decision making, very seriously. As such it has updated its Responsible Investment Policy, which forms part of the Fund's Investment Strategy Statement. The new draft policy is attached.

The Pension Fund Panel and Board want to hear the views of the Fund's scheme members and employers. Please could you highlight this to your employees and share feedback on behalf of your organisation on the approach to Responsible Investment outlined in the new draft policy by emailing investments@hants.gov.uk **before 17 May 2019**. The comments received will be reported to the next meeting of the Pension Fund Panel and Board when finalising the draft policy is considered.

Andrew Boutflower
Deputy Investments and Borrowing Manager
Corporate Resources – Finance

Hampshire Pension Fund

DRAFT Responsible Investment Policy

The Pension Fund's investment principles include:

i) that it has a long term focus, and

ii) a belief in the importance of Responsible Investment, including consideration of **social, environmental and corporate governance (ESG),** which can both positively and negatively influence investment returns.

The Pension Fund's approach to Responsible Investment, includes consideration of the UN Principles for Responsible Investment (UNPRI), which provides the following examples of ESG factors:

- **Environmental** - climate change – including physical risk and transition risk, resource depletion, including water, waste and pollution, deforestation,
- **Social** - working conditions, including slavery and child labour, local communities, including indigenous communities, conflict, health and safety, employee relations and diversity
- **Governance** - executive pay, bribery and corruption, political lobbying and donations, board diversity and structure, tax strategy

These factors, whilst not exhaustive, provide a baseline of ESG factors to be taken into account as part of the Pension Funds overall investment strategy.

<u>Responsible Investment Sub-Committee</u>
The Pension Fund Panel and Board (PFPB) take their responsibilities for Responsible Investing and the consideration of ESG issues very seriously, and have established a Responsible Investment sub-committee, which meets at least twice a year, to consider emerging ESG issues.

The Terms of Reference of the sub-committee are as follows:

To make recommendations to the PFPB on ESG issues having completed the following activities:

a. to review regularly the Pension Fund's Responsible Investment Policy (contained in its Investment Strategy Statement), and practices relating to it, to ensure that ESG issues are adequately reflected;

b. to consider representations on ESG issues.

Hampshire Pension Fund

Consideration of ESG in Investment Decisions

The Pension Fund delegates its investment decisions to its appointed investment managers, who are a combination of specialist external active investment managers and passive investment managers. The PFPB engages in responsible stewardship with its investment managers and will review and monitor investments in the context of this Policy as follows:

Passive investment managers

These managers are employed to mirror the stocks in various indices, and the PFPB accept that in making investments for the Pension Fund through an index, passive managers are unable to actively take ESG factors into account.

However, the PFPB does expect its passive investment managers to engage with companies within the index on ESG issues and to also exercise voting rights particularly on ESG issues attached to investments (see separate section below on Exercising Voting rights).

Active investment managers

The PFPB delegates responsibility for making individual investment decisions (non passive) to its active investment managers.

In delivering their service to the Pension Fund, the PFPB requires its active investment managers to pro-actively consider how all relevant factors, including ESG factors, will influence the long term value of each investment.

To ensure that ESG factors are considered in investment decisions, the PFPB uses the following framework of questions, which it requires its investment managers to be able to answer and uses as a basis to scrutinise them.

For each investment has the investment manager assessed and concluded that the expected long-term financial return is mitigated from the risk of:

- Detrimental social impacts from the company's products/services.
- Negatively contributing to Climate Change or other environmental issues.
- The wider impacts of Climate Change.
- Poor corporate governance and systems of control.
- A senior management pay structure that is biased towards managers making short-term decisions that aren't in the company's and investors long-term interests.
- The treatment of the company's workforce or workers in the company's supply chain.
- Reputational damage to the company, the Pension Fund in relation to its beneficiaries, Hampshire residents, or the general principles of the UK Corporate Governance Code; as a result of its approach to any ESG issue.

If the PFPB do not receive satisfactory responses to these questions they may undertake further engagement with investment managers (and possibly directly with investments) and/or consider directing the investment manager to not invest in the company/sector in question.

Stock/Sector Exclusions and Social Impact investments

The PFPB may also consider disinvestment from a particular stock, the exclusion of a particular type of stock or investment in specific 'social' investments where, based on an evaluation of ESG factors, it believes that the decision would be supported by a significant majority of scheme members and employers; the PFPB may take this approach so long as it does not result in significant financial detriment to the Pension Fund.

Exercise of rights attaching to investments

Each of the Pension Fund's investment managers is asked to work actively with companies they are invested in to ensure they achieve the best possible outcomes for the Pension Fund, including forward-looking social, environmental and corporate governance standards. This includes instructing investment managers to exercise the Fund's responsibility to vote on company resolutions wherever possible.

The Fund believes that if companies comply with the principles of the UK Corporate Governance Code published by the Financial Reporting Council, this can be an important factor in helping them succeed; but the Fund also accepts the need for a flexible approach that is in the common long-term interests of shareholders, company employees and consumers. The Fund's investment managers should cast their votes with this in mind.

In particular, the Fund's investment managers should cast their votes to ensure that:

- executive directors are subject to re-election at least annually
- executive directors' salaries are set by a remuneration committee consisting of a majority of independent non-executive directors, who should make independent reports to shareholders
- arrangements for external audit are under the control of an audit committee consisting of a majority of independent non-executive directors, with clear terms of reference – these should include a duty to ensure that investment managers closely control the level of non-audit work given to auditors, and should not significantly exceed their audit-related fee unless there are, in any investment manager's opinion, special circumstances to justify it
- in the investment managers' opinion, no embarrassment is caused to the Fund in relation to its beneficiaries, Hampshire residents, or the general principles of the UK Corporate Governance Code.

If investment managers do not follow these guidelines, they must report to the Pension Fund explaining why.