



RHUDDLAN TOWN COUNCIL FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Reviewed and approved on the 14th March 2024

1. GENERAL

- 1.1 These financial regulations govern the conduct of financial management by the Rhuddlan Town Council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the Council.
- 1.2 The Town Clerk (TC) is the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO). The TC/RFO, acting under the policy direction of the Council, shall administer the Council's financial affairs in accordance with proper practices.
- 1.3 The TC/RFO shall produce financial management information as required by the Council.
- 1.4 Prior to approving the annual return the Council shall conduct a review of the effectiveness of its system of internal control and of these financial regulations which shall be in accordance with proper practices. The TC/RFO shall monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and shall advise the Council of any requirement for a consequential amendment to these financial regulations. The review will take place annually.

2. ANNUAL BUDGET

- 2.1 The TC/RFO shall prepare an annual budget not later than the end of December each year.
- 2.2 The Council shall review the budget not later than the precept submission date each year and shall fix the Precept to be levied for the ensuing financial year. The TC/RFO shall issue the precept to the County Council and shall supply each member with a copy of the approved budget.
- 2.3 The annual budget shall form the basis of financial control for the ensuing year.

3. BUDGETARY CONTROL

- 3.1 Expenditure on revenue items may be incurred up to the amounts included in the approved budget.
- 3.2 No expenditure may be incurred that will exceed the amount provided in the revenue budget for that class of expenditure unless approved by the council and recorded in the relevant minutes.
- 3.3 The TC/RFO shall provide the Council with a statement of receipts and payments to date at each monthly meeting.
- 3.4 The TC/RFO may incur expenditure on behalf of the Council which is necessary to carry out any repair replacement or other work which is of such extreme urgency that it must be done at once, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £1000. The TC/RFO shall report the action to the Council within 28 days.
- 3.5 No expenditure shall be incurred in relation to any capital project and no contract entered into or tender accepted involving capital expenditure unless the Council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available, or the requisite borrowing approval has been obtained.
- 3.6 All capital works shall be administered in accordance with the Council's standing orders and financial regulations relating to contracts.

4. ACCOUNTING AND AUDIT

- 4.1 All accounting procedures and financial records of the Council shall be determined by the TC/RFO in accordance with the relevant Accounts and Audit Regulations or other associated statutory regulations.
- 4.2 The TC/RFO shall complete the annual financial statements of the Council, including the Council's annual return by the statutory date of the 30th June and shall submit them for approval to the Council no later than the June meeting. The annual return will comprise in four sections:
 - The accounts
 - The statement of assurance
 - The internal audit's report
 - The external auditor's report and opinion

- 4.3 The TC/RFO shall ensure that there is adequate and effective system of internal audit of the Council's accounting, financial and other operations in accordance with proper practices.
- 4.4 The Internal Auditor shall be appointed by and shall carry out the work required by the Council in accordance with proper practices. The Internal Auditor, shall be competent and independent of the operations of the Council, and shall report to Council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis, with a minimum of one annual written report in respect of each financial year. In order to demonstrate objectivity and independence, the internal auditor shall be free from any conflicts of interest and have no involvement in the financial decision making, management or control of the Council.
- 4.5 The Council shall consider and act on any items appearing in the internal audit report for the financial year just ended.
- 4.6 The Council shall consider and act on any items appearing in the external audit report for the financial year just ended.
- 4.7 The statement of assurance shall be completed and approved by the Council and signed and dated by the Chairman and the Clerk and the minute reference recorded.
- 4.8 The TC/RFO shall make arrangements for the opportunity for public inspection of the accounts, books, and vouchers and for the display or publication of any required notices and statements of account.
- 4.9 The TC/RFO shall, as soon as practicable, bring to the attention of all Councillors any correspondence or report from the Internal or External Auditor, unless the correspondence is of a purely administrative matter.

5. BANKING ARRANGEMENTS AND CHEQUES

- 5.1 The Council's banking arrangements, including the Bank Mandate, shall be made by the TC/RFO and approved by the Council. They shall be regularly reviewed for efficiency.
- 5.2 A monthly schedule of the payments required, together with the relevant invoices, forming part of the agenda for the meeting, shall be prepared and presented by the TC/RFO to Council for authorisation and payment by a resolution of the Council; which shall be initialled by the Mayor/Chairman of the Meeting.
- 5.3 Cheques drawn on the bank account shall be signed by three named members of Council. The signatories shall each also initial the cheque counterfoil.
- 5.4 All electronic payments made must be pre-approved by email by any 3 named members of the Council. E-mail approvals must be kept with the invoice.

6. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

- 6.1 All payments shall be made by either electronic payment, cheque, direct debit or standing order drawn on the Council's bankers.
- 6.2 All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the TC/RFO. Before certification, the TC/RFO shall satisfy him/herself that the work, goods or services to which the invoice relates shall have been received, carried out, examined and approved.
- 6.3 The TC/RFO shall present for approval all invoices submitted, and which are in order, at the next available Council Meeting.
- 6.4 If a payment is necessary to avoid a charge to interest under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998, and the due date for payment is before the next scheduled Meeting of Council, where the TC/RFO certify that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, the Clerk may take all steps necessary to settle such invoices provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of Council for ratification.
- 6.5 Payment for utility supplies (energy, telephone and water) may be made by variable Direct Debit provided that the instructions are signed by two members and any payments are reported to Council as made. The approval of the use of a variable Direct Debit shall be renewed by resolution of the Council at least every two years.

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. Hours of payment shall be agreed by the Council and payment made by the Clerk and audited checked by a Councillor. Any changes to agreed hours will be approved by the Council.

8. LOANS AND INVESTMENTS

- 8.1 All loans and investments shall be negotiated by the TC/RFO in the name of the Council and shall be for a set period in accordance with Council policy.
- 8.2 All investments of money under the control of the Council shall be in the name of the Council.
- 8.3 All borrowings and application for borrowing approval shall be approved and be made in the name of the Council. The terms and conditions of borrowings shall be reviewed at least annually.

- 8.4 All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the TC/RFO.

9 INCOME

- 9.1 The collection of all sums due to the Council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the TC/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 TC/RFO and the TC/RFO shall be responsible for the collection of all accounts due to the Council.
- 9.3 The Council will review all fees and charges annually, following a report of the TC/RFO.
- 9.4 Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts shall be reported to the Council at the next meeting for consideration and appropriate action.
- 9.5 All sums received on behalf of the Council shall be banked intact within 1 week of receipt by the TC/RFO.
- 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 TC/RFO shall promptly complete any VAT Return that is required. Any repayment claim due in accordance with VAT Act 1994 section 33 shall be made at least annually coinciding with the financial year end.

10. ORDERS FOR WORK, GOODS AND SERVICES

- 10.1 An official works 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 It is important for the Council to obtain value for money at all times. The TC/RFO shall ensure as far as reasonable and practicable that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction, usually by striving to obtain three or more quotations or estimates from appropriate suppliers.

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 these regulations shall not apply to contracts which relate to items (i) to (vi) below:

- (i) for the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telephone services;
 - (ii) for specialist services such as are provided by solicitors, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants;
 - (iii) for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which consist of repairs to or parts for existing machinery or equipment or plant;
 - (iv) for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract or works order by the Council;
 - (v) for additional audit work of the external Auditor up to an estimated value of £250 (in excess of this sum the Clerk and TC/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 not exceeding £25,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than those set out in paragraph (a) the TC/RFO shall invite quotations/tenders from at least three firms. Where the Council intends to procure or award a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract as defined by The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 ("the Regulations") which is valued at or above the thresholds stipulated by those Regulations and central government, the Council shall comply with the relevant requirements of the Regulations.
 - (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) An invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the work or service and the TC/RFO shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases. Each tendering firm shall electronically submit their tender by email to the clerk. All tenders shall be reviewed at the same time by such persons as the Council direct in the presence of the TC/RFO.
 - (e) If less than three tenders are received for contracts above £1000 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.
 - (f) When it is to enter into a contract less than £1000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or works or specialist services other than set out in paragraph (a) the TC/RFO shall strive to obtain at least two quotations where possible. If similar works

have been quoted for in the last 12 months then the TC/RFO at his discretion can use the same supplier.

- (g) If less than two quotations are received for contracts less than £1000 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.

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

12. ASSETS, PROPERTIES AND ESTATES

- 12.1 The TC/RFO shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds of properties owned by the Council. The TC/RFO shall ensure a record is maintained of all properties owned by the Council, recording the location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.

- 12.2 No property shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the Council, together with any other consents required by law, save where the estimated value of any one item of tangible movable property does not exceed £50.

- 12.3 The TC/RFO shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date. The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the Register shall be verified at least annually, possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.

13. INSURANCE

- 13.1 Following the annual risk assessment (as per Financial Regulation 14), the TC/RFO shall, in consultation with the Chairman, effect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the Council's insurers and shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the Council and the property and risks covered thereby and annually review it.

- 13.2 The TC/RFO shall be notified of any loss liability or damage or of any event likely to lead to a claim, and shall report these to Council at the next available meeting.

14. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 14.1 The Council is responsible for putting in place arrangements for the management of risk. The TC/RFO 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.

- 14.2 When considering any new activity, the TC/RFO shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration and adoption by the Council.