



Okehampton Town Council

Okehampton Town Council

DRAFT

Asset Register and Disposal Policy

Background

Local councils must maintain an asset register to ensure fixed assets are appropriately safeguarded.

The term fixed asset means items of a capital nature comprising of property, plant and equipment with a useful life of more than one year.

Scope of Asset Register

In order to ensure transparency and reasonableness, the following items are included in the Council's asset register, whether purchased, gifted or otherwise acquired, together with their holding location:

- land and buildings held freehold or on lease in the name of the Council
- community assets
- vehicles, plant and machinery
- assets considered to be portable, attractive or of community significance
- other assets estimated or known to have a minimum purchase or resale value of £500.00 or are of historical importance
- long term investments, shares and loans made by the Council

The values indicated in the asset register will inform the 'total fixed assets' section of the Annual Return with the exception of assets held on trust.

The following items fall outside the definition for inclusion and are therefore excluded from the Council's asset register:

- land and buildings maintained or serviced, but not owned by the Council
- assets rented by or loaned to the Council
- stationery and other consumable items
- boundaries of land owned (e.g. fences, hedges and gates)
- floor or land surfaces and drainage
- plants and trees
- assets with a purchase or resale value of less than £500 (other than items listed as for inclusion in the asset register)
- repairs
- cash, short term investments and other current assets
- intangible assets (e.g. trademarks, internet domain names, contingent assets, broadcast rights)
- negative' assets (e.g. provisions, borrowings, creditors and contingent liabilities)

A schedule of disposals will be kept. All asset disposals must comply with the Asset Disposal Procedure referenced within this policy.

Valuation of Assets

Once recorded on the asset register, the value of assets must not change from year to year until disposal. Concepts of depreciation and impairment adjustments are not

appropriate for local councils (Governance and Accountability for Local Councils: A Practitioner's Guide (England)).

Assets must be valued by one of the following means based on available information:

- ideally, apply the purchase price (net of VAT if VAT has been reclaimed);
- otherwise, apply the purchase price (gross of VAT if VAT has not been reclaimed or where the VAT status of the purchase is unclear)

Where it is not possible to trace the purchase price of the asset the insurance valuation should be applied. As a last resort, a nominal value of £1 may be applied. This should also be used for assets gifted to the Council.

There is no guidance where land or buildings have been subject to substantial renovation and improvement to such an extent that the new market value bears no relation to the original purchase cost. In order to avoid renovation and improvement work being separately recorded on the asset register and in these exceptional circumstances only, a market value supplied by a qualified surveyor may be entered, if approved by the council.

Procedure for Updating the Asset Register

The start point is the asset register that has been agreed for the end of the previous financial year. The financial ledger should be reviewed for all purchases made during the year. A discussion should be held with all Council officers to identify any assets that have been gifted to the Council. Any new assets which fall in the categories above should be added to the asset register, with their values recorded at the purchase price (net of VAT if VAT is being reclaimed or at £1 if gifted to the Council).

The financial ledger should also be reviewed for all asset sales made during the year. A discussion should be held with all Council officers to identify any assets that have been lost, disposed of or gifted by the Council. Any assets which fall in the categories stated above should be removed from the asset register and recorded in the schedule of disposals. The asset register should record any assets loaned by the Council, including the person or organisation borrowing the asset, its location and the date when the loan period ends.

It is the Council's responsibility to ensure that an audit of asset register items occurs annually to confirm that items can be physically verified. A Councillor will be nominated annually to undertake this audit which should as a minimum include the silverware and paintings.

Items with a value of less than £500 listed on the Asset Register prior to the adoption of this policy in March 2023 will remain thereon.

The Asset Register and Insurance

For insurance purposes, the asset register shall include a column to record the valuation or replacement value of each asset.

The Asset Register will be used to inform the insurers of Council assets. For the purposes of insurance, the value to be used is the valuation or replacement value of items and not the acquisition price as per the Asset Register. The Council should ensure land and buildings and high value items are valued accurately for insurance purposes, therefore they should be valued every five years.

Asset Disposal

Items can be available for disposal because they are:

- no longer required due to changed procedures, functions or usage patterns
- unfit for purpose
- beyond repair

Items for disposal should be referred to the relevant Committee for consideration and recommendation to full Council in the event the estimated value is in excess of £4,000.

Assets identified for disposal may be dispensed with using the procedures listed below:

- Sale by public tender
- Donated to a community service or organisation
- Scrap

Choice of the most appropriate disposal option will normally be influenced by the nature of the goods for disposal and market value.

Where the Council has determined that goods have no residual value, and where their disposal is therefore unlikely to produce sufficient revenue, it may authorise the donation of the goods to another organisation within the parish area such as schools, charities and volunteer organisations. Donations of items valued in excess of £500 must be approved by full Council.

Where items have negligible value or where the cost and time involved in managing the sale process would exceed the financial benefit, the equipment may be scrapped.



Okehampton Town Council

Okehampton Town Council

DRAFT Co-Option Policy

The Co-option of a Town Councillor occurs when a casual vacancy has arisen on the Council and no poll (by-election) has been called.

To ensure that a fair and transparent process is undertaken the following procedure will be followed by Okehampton Town Council:

- 1) On receipt of written confirmation from the Electoral Services Office at West Devon Borough Council that the casual vacancy can be filled by means of Co-option, the Town Clerk will advertise the vacancy for a minimum of 4 weeks on the Council noticeboard, Facebook page, newsletter and website, and place an advert in the local press.
- 2) Applicants for co-option will be asked to:
 - a) submit information about themselves, by way of completing a short application form,
 - b) confirm their eligibility for the position of Councillor within the statutory rules, by completing an Eligibility statement.
- 3) Copies of the applicant's application form will be circulated to all Councillors with the agenda prior to the meeting of the Full Council when the Co-option will be considered. Confidential information, with the exception of the applicant's name, will be redacted.
- 4) Applicants will be sent a copy of the Full Council Agenda of the meeting when the Co-option will be considered ~~and invited to attend if they wish to do so and requested to attend to give a short presentation (see 5c)~~
- 5) **At the meeting** when co-option is to be considered the following process will be followed:
 - a) The Mayor will explain the co-option process
 - b) Any Member who personally knows a candidate must declare an interest and leave the room for the duration of the item of business. ~~In the event that this would leave the council inquorate, all Members may remain and vote with the exception of any who are closely related (spouse, partner, child, mother, father, carer)~~
 - c) Candidates are invited to give a presentation explaining their reasons for applying for co-option, maximum of two minutes, followed by a short opportunity for questions by Members.
 - d) Candidates are asked to leave the room. Discussion about the applications will take place within an open part of the Council meeting without intervention from the candidates or public.
 - e) A written vote is taken (see voting procedure at 6 below)
 - f) After voting has concluded candidates will be invited back into the room and the Chairman will declare the outcome. The number of votes will not be disclosed.
 - g) The Town Clerk explains paperwork is required to be completed including the Declaration of Acceptance Office following which the successful candidate will become a Councillor. The successful candidate is encouraged to remain at the

meeting as a member of the public, seated in the public area and leaving for any confidential items of business.

- 6) **The voting process** will be according to the statutory requirements, in that, a successful candidate must have received an absolute majority vote of those present and voting.
- a) Councillors shall vote by written ballot.
 - b) Candidates will be asked to leave the room for any discussion and the voting process (see 5) d)). If there is more than one vacancy, there will be a separate vote for each vacancy.
 - c) Where more than two persons have been nominated for a position to be filled 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. A tie in votes may be settled by the casting vote exercisable by the chairman of the meeting. This includes a tie of candidates with the lowest number of votes, for example 12 voting councillors for 3 candidates results in votes equalling 6, 3 and 3.



Okehampton Town Council

Okehampton Town Council

Company Mobile Phone Policy

DRAFT

The following policy applies to all employees of the Company who are issued with a Company mobile phone. The following guidelines should be adhered to:

- 1) Company mobile phones are provided to you in order for you to fulfil your duties professionally and efficiently. The mobile phone provided does not belong to you. It is to be used strictly for business purposes, only except in the case of an emergency. Text messages should not be sent from your Company phone unless they are work related.
- 2) Security is imperative, and the mobile phone must be password/pin protected. This password must not be shared with anyone else.
- 3) Internet (where applicable) should not be accessed at any time. We reserve the right to monitor internet use on a Company mobile phone to ensure compliance with our policy and any personal use will be recharged back to you. Company policy in relation to inappropriate internet use (contained within the E-mail and Internet Policy in the Employee Handbook) applies to internet use on Company mobile phones and you should make yourself aware of its provisions.
- 4) The Company reserves the right to monitor all use of Company mobile phones, and all communication made using any means including text message, email or any application added to the phone. Therefore, communicating in this way via a Company mobile phone is done in the knowledge that those communications may be read by those in the Company responsible for monitoring mobile phone use.
- 5) Software must not be added to Company mobile phones without express prior authorisation from the Town Clerk.
- 6) For security and privacy reasons, it is strictly prohibited to download, access or install any apps to Company mobile phones, including but not limited to TikTok and YouTube, without express prior authorisation from the Town Clerk
- 7) When using a Company phone you are an ambassador of the Company therefore you should deal with all calls courteously and professionally.
- 8) If you are issued with a Company mobile phone you are responsible for its safe-keeping, ensuring that its batteries are fully charged and that it is switched on at all times when on duty. However, there are some circumstances where it may be necessary to set the phone to silent or divert to voicemail – for example when attending a meeting.
- 9) When you are on annual leave, you should change your voicemail to reflect this; clearly stating who can be contacted for assistance in your absence.
- 10) It is illegal to hold and use a mobile phone, sat nav, tablet or any device that can send and receive data whilst driving.

It is our Company policy that you should not hold and use a mobile phone, sat nav, tablet or any device that can send and receive data whilst driving. You should ensure you are safely parked and you have turned off the engine before making or receiving any telephone calls. In the event of you being unable to answer a call because you cannot find a safe place to stop, you must return the call as soon as conveniently possible after you have safely parked and turned off the engine.

You can use a device held in your hand in the following circumstances only:

- you need to call 999 or 112 in an emergency and it is unsafe or impractical to stop
- you are safely parked
- you are making a contactless payment in a vehicle that is not moving, for example at a drive-through restaurant
- you are using the device to park the vehicle remotely.

You can use devices with hands-free access, such as a built-in sat nav, provided you do not hold the device at any time during usage.

- 11) If you lose or have your Company mobile phone stolen you must report this immediately to the Town Clerk so the SIM card can be cancelled so no unauthorised user can make calls. You must also report it immediately to the local police station and obtain a crime reference number.
- 12) On termination of employment, your Company mobile phone, accessories and password/pin must be handed in to the Town Clerk on your last date of employment.

I have read and understood the conditions of use.

SIGNATURE:	_____	Employee
NAME:	_____	Print
DATE:	_____	



Okehampton Town Council

Okehampton Town Council

DRAFT

Discretions Policy (Employer Pensions)

The LGPS Regulations 2013

and

The LGPS Regulations 2014

(Transitional Provisions and Savings)

and

The LGPS Regulations 2008

(Benefits, Membership and Contributions)

(as at 14th May 2018)

Employer name: Okehampton Town Council

Policy effective from: 1st October 2025

These policies may be subject to review from time to time. Affected employees will be notified of any subsequent change to this Policy Statement.

Print name of authorised officer: Emma James

Job title: Town Clerk

Signature of authorised officer: E James

Date:

Mandatory LGPS 2013 & 2014 discretions

Discretionary policies from 1 April 2014 in relation to post 31 March 2014 active members and post 31 March 2014 leavers (excluding councillor members)

Power of employing authority to grant additional pension (Reg 31)

An employer can choose to grant extra annual pension* (at full cost to themselves) to:

- an active member; or
- to a member, within 6 months of leaving, whose employment was terminated on the grounds of redundancy or business efficiency

**(Please see [our website](#) for the current years maximum additional pension purchase limit)*

Policy Decision:

Okehampton Town Council will not award additional pension, including in circumstances where an employee would agree to forgo a lump sum which would otherwise be payable to an employee leaving by reason of redundancy or business efficiency and will only consider exercising these discretions in the most exceptional circumstances having regard to the following:

- The interests of the Council
- Any potential benefits or savings to the Council
- The ability of the Council to meet the cost of granting such an award
- The funding position of the Council within the LGPS Pension Fund

Shared Cost Additional Pension Contribution (Reg 16(2)(e) & Reg 16(4)(d))

Where an active member wishes to purchase extra annual pension by making additional pension contributions (APCs)*, an employer can choose to voluntarily contribute towards the cost of purchasing that extra pension through a Shared Cost Additional Pension Contribution (SCAPC)

**(Please see [our website](#) for the current years maximum additional pension purchase limit)*

Note: this discretion does not relate to cases where a member has a period of authorised unpaid leave of absence and elects within 30 days of return to work (or a longer period if the employer allows) to pay a SCAPC to cover the amount of pension 'lost' during that period of absence. In those cases, the employer must contribute 2/3rds of the cost to a SCAPC; there is no discretion (regulation 15(5) of the LGPS Regulations 2013).

Policy Decision:

Okehampton Town Council will not fund, in whole or part, an employee's additional pension contributions and will only consider exercising these discretions in the most exceptional circumstances having regard to the following:

- The interests of the Council
- Any potential benefits or savings to the Council
- The ability of the Council to meet the cost of granting such an award
- The funding position of the Council within the LGPS Pension Fund

‘Switch on’ the 85-year rule
TPSch 2, para 1(2) & 1(1)(c)

The 85-year rule does not automatically fully apply to members who would have had the protection under old regulations, and who choose to voluntarily draw their benefits on or after age 55 and before age 60. An employer can decide to switch the 85-year rule back on in full for such members.

Where the Scheme employer does not switch back on the 85-year rule, the member’s benefits will be actuarially reduced. However, the Scheme employer can exercise a discretion to waive any actuarial reductions (at cost to the Scheme employer).

Flexible Retirement (R30(6) & TP11(2))

An employer can decide whether to permit flexible retirement for staff aged 55 or over who reduce their working hours and/or grade and wish to access their pension benefits.

In such cases, pension benefits may be reduced in accordance with actuarial tables unless the employer waives reduction on compassionate grounds.

The employee must reduce either their hours, and/or their grade and the employer must agree to the release of the pension.

You will need to consider:

- The minimum reduction in hours or grade required.

(The specific reduction required is not set out in the regulations, but instead must be determined by the employer and specified in this flexible retirement policy).

- Whether the employee should commit to a reduction in hours or grade for a minimum period.
- Whether the employee should commit to remaining in employment with the employer for a minimum period

You must also state whether, in addition to the benefits the member has accrued prior to 1st April

Policy Decision:

Okehampton Town Council will not ‘switch on’ the 85 year rule for scheme members unless there would be a financial or other benefit to the Council and will only consider exercising these discretions in the most exceptional circumstances having regard to the following:

- The interests of the Council
- Any potential benefits or savings to the Council
- The ability of the Council to meet the cost of granting such an award
- The funding position of the Council within the LGPS Pension Fund

Policy Decision:

Okehampton Town Council will consider individual applications for flexible retirement, in line with the Flexible Retirement Policy, annexed hereto, where there are no financial costs to the Council and where there is no detrimental effect on service delivery.

All applications will be considered by three members of the Personnel Sub-Committee who will make a recommendation to Full Council for ratification.

2008 (which the member must draw), you permit the member to choose to draw:

- All, part, or none of the benefits they accrued after 31st March 2008 and before 1st April 2014 and/or,
- All, part, or none of the benefits accrued after 31st March 2014, and,
- Whether to waive, on compassionate grounds, the actuarial reduction (in whole or part) applied to members' benefits paid on the grounds of flexible retirement before normal retirement age (R30(8)).

Note: If flexible retirement is agreed for a member aged between 55 and 60, there could be a Strain cost to be paid to the Pension Fund by the employer in respect of the pension benefits paid. There would also be a Strain cost payable by the employer where you have waived any actuarial reduction, in whole or in part.

Waive actuarial reductions to members benefits TP3(1) & TP3(5), TPSch 2 (para 2(1), 3(1), 3(2) & 9) B30(5) & B30A(5)

An employer can decide whether to waive in whole or in part any actuarial reduction for a member voluntarily drawing benefits before normal pension age other than on the grounds of flexible retirement

This applies to:

- active members voluntarily retiring on or after age 55 and before Normal Pension Age, who elect to immediately draw benefits, and
- deferred members and suspended tier 3 ill health pensioners who elect to draw benefits (other than on ill health grounds) on or after age 55 and before Normal Pension Age.

Policy Decision:

Okehampton Town Council will only waive the actuarial reduction to members benefits in exceptional circumstances, or where there will be a financial or other benefit to the Council.

The same criteria will be applied in cases where active members choose to voluntarily draw benefits on or after age 55 and before normal pension age.

The same criteria will be applied in cases where deferred members and suspended 3 tier pensioners elect to draw benefits on or after age 55 and before normal pension age.

All applications will be considered by three members of the Personnel Sub-Committee who will make a recommendation to Full Council for ratification.

Recommended LGPS 2013 & 2014 discretions (non mandatory)

There is no requirement to have a written policy in respect of non-mandatory discretions. However, there are some non-mandatory discretions where it is recommended for Scheme employers to have a written policy so that both members and the Pension Fund administering authority can be clear on the employer's policy on these matters.

Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contribution Arrangement (SCAVC) R17 (1) and TP15 (2A) and A25 (3) and definition of SCAVC in RSch 1	Policy Decision:
<p>An employer can choose to pay for or contribute towards a member's Additional Voluntary Contribution through a shared cost arrangement (SCAVC).</p> <p>An employer will also need to decide how much, and in what circumstances to contribute to a SCAVC arrangement.</p>	<p>Okehampton Town Council will consider individual applications where there are no financial costs to the Council and where there is no detrimental effect on service delivery.</p> <p>All applications will be considered by three members of the Personnel Sub-Committee who will make a recommendation to Full Council for ratification.</p>
Extend the time limit for member to elect for a Shared Cost Additional Pension Contribution (R16(16))	Policy Decision:
<p>An employer can decide to extend the 30 day deadline for a member to elect to purchase additional pension by way of a Shared Cost Additional Pension Contribution (SCAPC) upon return from a period of unpaid absence (other than because of illness or injury, relevant child-related leave or reserve forces service leave).</p>	<p>Okehampton Town Council will consider individual applications where there are no financial costs to the Council and where there is no detrimental effect on service delivery.</p> <p>All applications will be considered by three members of the Personnel Sub-Committee who will make a recommendation to Full Council for ratification.</p>
Extend the 12-month time limit for transfer of pension rights (R100(6))	Policy Decision:
<p>An employer can decide to extend the 12-month time limit for a member to elect to transfer pension rights from another registered pension scheme into the LGPS, if an election has not been made within 12 months of joining the LGPS in that employment.</p>	<p>Okehampton Town Council will consider individual applications where there are no financial costs to the Council and where there is no detrimental effect on service delivery.</p> <p>All applications will be considered by three members of the Personnel Sub-Committee who will make a recommendation to Full Council for ratification.</p>
Extend the 12-month time limit for a member to elect not to aggregate Post 31 March 2014 deferred benefits	Policy Decision:

(R22(7) and (8))	
<p>An employer can extend the 12 month time limit for a member to elect not to aggregate their Post 31 March 2014 (or combinations of Pre & Post 2014) deferred benefits with their new LGPS employment (or ongoing concurrent LGPS employment), if an election has not been made within 12 months of joining the LGPS in that employment (or within 12 months of ceasing the concurrent membership).</p>	<p>Okehampton Town Council will consider individual applications where there are no financial costs to the Council and where there is no detrimental effect on service delivery.</p> <p>All applications will be considered by three members of the Personnel Sub-Committee who will make a recommendation to Full Council for ratification.</p>
<p>Extend the 12-month time limit for a member to elect to aggregate Pre 1 April 2014 deferred benefits (TP 10(6) as amended by A27 (2018))</p>	<p>Policy Decision:</p>
<p>Employers can decide whether to extend the 12-month time limit for a member to elect to aggregate their Pre 1 April 2014 deferred benefits with their new LGPS employment that commenced on or after 14 May 2018 in order to purchase earned pension.</p>	<p>Okehampton Town Council will consider individual applications where there are no financial costs to the Council and where there is no detrimental effect on service delivery.</p> <p>All applications will be considered by three members of the Personnel Sub-Committee who will make a recommendation to Full Council for ratification.</p>
<p>How an employee's contribution band will be initially determined and thereafter reviewed (R9 and R10)</p>	<p>Policy Decision:</p>
<p>Employers must decide how the pension contribution band to which an employee is to be allocated on joining the Scheme will be determined and reviewed at each subsequent April.</p> <p>Circumstances in which the employer will review the pension contribution band will also need to be determined. For example, following a material change which affects the member's pensionable pay during the Scheme year (1 April to 31 March)</p>	<p>Okehampton Town Council will consider individual applications where there are no financial costs to the Council and where there is no detrimental effect on service delivery.</p> <p>All applications will be considered by three members of the Personnel Sub-Committee who will make a recommendation to Full Council for ratification.</p>
<p>Whether to include a regular lump sum payment when calculating assumed pensionable pay (APP) (Reg 21(4)(a)(iv), 21(4)(b)(iv) and 21(5))</p>	<p>Policy Decision:</p>
<p>When calculating assumed pensionable pay, employers can decide to include the amount of any 'regular lump sum payment' received by the member in the 12 months preceding the date the</p>	<p>Okehampton Town Council will consider individual applications where there are no financial costs to the Council and where there is no detrimental effect on service delivery.</p>

absence began or the ill health retirement or death occurred.

A 'regular lump sum payment' is a payment for which the employer determines there is a reasonable expectation that such a payment would be paid on a regular basis.

Whether to substitute a higher level of pensionable pay when calculating assumed pensionable pay

(R21(5A) and 21(5B) backdated to 1 April 2014 by A7 2018)

When calculating assumed pensionable pay (APP), an employer can decide to substitute a higher level of pensionable pay if, in their opinion, the pensionable pay received in the 3 months/12 weeks before the commencement of APP, is materially lower than the level of pensionable pay the member would have normally received.

All applications will be considered by three members of the Personnel Sub-Committee who will make a recommendation to Full Council for ratification.

Policy Decision:

Okehampton Town Council will consider individual applications where there are no financial costs to the Council and where there is no detrimental effect on service delivery.

All applications will be considered by three members of the Personnel Sub-Committee who will make a recommendation to Full Council for ratification.

Pre LGPS 2014 discretions

Discretions to be exercised on and after 1 April 2014 in relation to scheme members who ceased active membership between 1 April 2008 and 31 March 2014

'Switch on' the 85-year rule

TPSch 2, para 1(1)(c) & 1(2)

The 85-year rule does not automatically fully apply to members who would have had the protection under old regulations, and who choose to voluntarily draw their benefits on or after age 55 and before age 60. An employer can decide to switch the 85-year rule back on in full for such members.

This also applies to members with deferred benefits or a suspended tier 3 ill health pension who choose to voluntarily draw their deferred benefits (on or after 14 May 2018) on or after age 55 and before age 60.

Policy decision

Okehampton Town Council will consider individual applications where there are no financial costs to the Council and where there is no detrimental effect on service delivery.

All applications will be considered by three members of the Personnel Sub-Committee who will make a recommendation to Full Council for ratification.

Waive actuarial reductions to members benefits

B30(5), TPSch 2, para 2(1) B30A(5)

An employer can decide whether, on compassionate grounds, to waive any actuarial

Policy decision

Okehampton Town Council will consider individual applications where

reduction that would normally be applied to deferred benefits which are paid before age 65.

there are no financial costs to the Council and where there is no detrimental effect on service delivery.

All applications will be considered by three members of the Personnel Sub-Committee who will make a recommendation to Full Council for ratification.



**Okehampton
Town Council**

Employee Handbook

Okehampton Town Council

Contents	Page
Employee Handbook Issues And Updates	3
Introduction.....	4
Joining Our Council	5
Information For Apprentices.....	7
Salaries and Wages, etc	8
Holiday Entitlement and Conditions	10
Sickness/Injury Payments and Conditions.....	11
Other Benefits	13
Safeguards	14
Standards	17
Health, Safety, Welfare and Hygiene	18
Lone Worker Policy	20
General Terms and Procedures.....	22
Capability Procedures	27
Disciplinary Procedures	28
Capability / Disciplinary Appeal Procedure	32
Grievance Procedure	33
Termination of Employment.....	34
Other Policies	35

Employee Handbook Issues And Updates

[illegible]

Introduction

WELCOME TO OUR TEAM

We would like to wish you every success during your employment whether you recently joined us or whether you are an existing employee. We hope that your experience of working here will be positive and rewarding.

This Employee Handbook is designed both to introduce you to our council and to be of continuing use during your employment.

We ask that you study carefully the contents of this Employee Handbook as, in addition to setting out our rules and regulations, it also contains information on some of the main employee benefits that may be available to you and the policies and procedures relating to your employment. If you require any clarification or additional information please refer to the Town Clerk.

Please note that we provide equal opportunities and are committed to the principle of equality in accordance with legislative provisions. We expect your support in implementing these policies. We will not condone any unlawful discriminatory act or attitude in the course of your employment or in your dealings with our customers, suppliers, contract workers, members of the public or with fellow employees. Acts of unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation will result in disciplinary action.

General amendments to the Employee Handbook will be issued from time to time.

Joining Our Council

INDUCTION

At the start of your employment with our Council, you are required to complete an induction programme, during which all our policies and procedures (including Health and Safety) will be explained to you. Information relating to these will be given to you at the induction.

WORK PERMITS

All employees are required in law to provide evidence of their eligibility to work in the UK. As an employer we have the legal obligation to comply with the applicable immigration legislation which includes ensuring that employees provide the appropriate documentation prior to the commencement of employment.

In the event that an employee is unable to provide satisfactory evidence of their eligibility to work in the UK the Council reserve the right to terminate the employment without notice. Acceptable evidence is set out in our Work Permits and Eligibility to Work Policy.

All costs relating to any immigration application must be borne by the employee in question and will be deducted from your salary.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Amendments may be made to your job description from time to time in relation to our changing needs and your own ability.

STAFF APPRAISAL SCHEME

We have a staff appraisal scheme in place for the purpose of monitoring staff performance levels with a view to maximising the effectiveness of individuals, details of which are available separately.

JOB FLEXIBILITY

It is an express condition of employment that you are prepared, whenever necessary, to transfer to alternative duties within our Council. During holiday periods, etc. it may be necessary for you to take over some duties normally performed by colleagues. This flexibility is essential for operational efficiency as the type and volumes of work are always subject to change.

STAFF MEETINGS, TRAINING AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

We hold regular meetings and training sessions in normal working hours where possible. It is a condition of your employment that you attend these meetings and training sessions as it is mandatory for all staff to attend, you will be given adequate notice.

DISCLOSURE AND BARRING CERTIFICATE(S)

Your initial employment is conditional upon the provision of a satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Certificate of a level appropriate to your post. You may be required to undertake subsequent criminal record checks from time to time during your employment as deemed appropriate by the Council. In the event that such certificate's are not supplied, your employment with us will be terminated.

Data collected about criminal convictions will be processed in line with the Data Protection Act. You may read more about the data we hold on you, why we hold it and the lawful basis that applies in the employee privacy notice.

CONVICTIONS AND OFFENCES

During your employment, you are required to immediately report to the Council any convictions or offences with which you are charged, including traffic offences. Data collected about criminal convictions will be processed in line with the Data Protection Act. You may read more about the data we hold on you, why we hold it and the lawful basis that applies in the employee privacy notice.

OTHER POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Council has a number of other policies and procedures that will have been explained to you during your induction. Copies of these will have been provided to you separately or are available on request from the office.

Information For Apprentices

TIME OFF FOR LEARNING

As an apprentice, you have joined the Council for a fixed period during which you will receive training from the Council in the skill/trade/occupation specified in your Apprenticeship Agreement. The Council will permit you time off during working hours to undertake your studies at your place of learning. You may be requested to provide proof of your required attendance at your place of learning.

Where applicable, you will also be permitted time off to attend examinations (this includes all examinations/tests that are required by your course). You will be expected to attend work both before and after examinations where this is reasonably required by your Line Manager. You may be required to undertake workplace assessments where it is a requirement of your apprenticeship that you do so. The conditions attached to attendance/performance in these examinations and/or assessments are set out in your Apprenticeship Agreement. Alternatively, your learning will take place on the job.

You are expected to use annual leave to cover any time off you may require during working time for examination revision.

EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENTS

As the Council is investing in your learning, you are expected to apply due diligence in your examinations and/or assessments in order to perform at the required level. The conditions attached to your attendance and performance in those examinations and/or assessments is set out in your Apprenticeship Agreement. Failure to meet those standards is likely to result in the termination of your Apprenticeship Agreement.

You are required to provide notification to your Line Manager of the date/time of any examinations or assessments within two working days of your being informed that an examination will take place. If the date subsequently changes, or the examination or assessment is cancelled for any reason, you are required to inform your Line Manager at the earliest opportunity, and in all circumstances, before the examination or assessment was due to take place. If upon attendance for an examination or assessment, you are informed that it will not take place, you must contact your Line Manager immediately and attend work, unless instructed otherwise by your Line Manager.

You are subsequently required to provide notification of your examination results to your Line Manager at the soonest possible opportunity. Photocopies of hard copy results will be taken. If you are informed by e-mail, you must forward the e-mail to your Line Manager and this e-mail will be stored.

COMMUNICATION WITH LEARNING PROVIDER

Where necessary, the Council will undertake communications with your learning provider regarding, amongst other matters which may arise, your performance.

Salaries and Wages, etc

ADMINISTRATION

Payment

- a) For salaried staff the pay period is the calendar month. Basic salaries are paid by the 24th of the month
- b) You will receive a payslip showing how the total amount of your pay has been calculated. It will also show the deductions that have been made and the reasons for them, e.g. Income Tax, National Insurance, etc.
- c) Any pay queries that you may have should be raised with the Town Clerk.

Overpayments

If you are overpaid for any reason, the total amount of the overpayment will normally be deducted from your next payment but if this would cause hardship, arrangements may be made for the overpayment to be recovered over a longer period.

Income Tax and National Insurance

At the end of each tax year, you will be given a form P60 showing the total pay you have received from us during that year and the amount of deductions for Income Tax and National Insurance. You may also be given a form P11D showing non-salary benefits. You should keep these documents in a safe place as you may need to produce them for tax purposes.

Pay Reviews

Salaries are normally reviewed annually and any increase is at our discretion. The review does not imply an automatic increase in salary.

LATENESS/ABSENTEEISM

You must attend for work punctually at the specified time(s) and you are required to comply strictly with any time recording procedures relating to your area of work.

All absences must be notified in accordance with the sickness reporting procedures laid down in this Employee Handbook.

Lateness or absence may result in disciplinary action and/or loss of appropriate payment.

TIMESHEETS

You may be required to complete and submit timesheets as directed in order to ensure that you receive the correct payment. Incorrectly completed, or late submission of, timesheets may result in incorrect or delayed payment of wages. Deliberate falsification of timesheets will be regarded as a disciplinary offence and may lead to your summary dismissal.

SHORTAGE OF WORK

In the event that the Council is faced with a shortage of work, or is unable to provide you with work for any other reason, then you agree that the Council may temporarily:

- a) place you on short-time working, in which case you will be paid for those hours worked; or
- b) lay you off from work, in which case you will be paid in accordance with the statutory guarantee pay provisions in place at that time; or
- c) designate you as a furloughed (or similar) worker, in accordance with the terms of any Government furlough (or similar) scheme in place from time to time, in which case during such period, if required, you agree to a reduction in your hours or will cease to carry out any work for the Council. (For this purpose you agree that the Council may adjust your hours, salary and benefits by an appropriate amount to reflect the needs of the Council at that time and ensure that it receives reimbursement of salary and benefits under the said scheme to the fullest extent possible).

The entirety of this section entitled “Shortage of work” forms part of your contractual terms and conditions.

PENSION SCHEME

We operate a contributory pension scheme to which you will be auto-enrolled into (subject to the conditions of the scheme). The scheme enables you to save for your retirement using your own money, together with tax relief and contributions from the Council.

Holiday Entitlement and Conditions

ANNUAL HOLIDAYS

Your annual holiday entitlement is shown in your individual Statement of Main Terms of Employment (Form SMT).

All annual leave should be taken in the leave year during which it is accrued. A maximum of five days' leave can be carried over into the next leave year with the permission of the Town Clerk who will take into consideration recommendation from the employees line manager.

Holiday dates will normally be allocated on a "first come - first served" basis whilst ensuring that operational efficiency and appropriate staffing levels are maintained throughout the year.

We operate an online system for booking holidays via BrightHR. You will be given the rights to request absence online and you will also be able to view your holiday entitlement online at any time. This is to give you the facility to easily plan your holidays throughout the year.

Once you have registered your holiday request online, you will receive an e-mail from your Line Manager authorising or declining your request. If you feel that your request has been unreasonably refused for any reason you should refer the matter to the Town Clerk. They will endeavour to ensure that you have every opportunity to take your holidays at the time you request them, but they will need to balance your requests with the needs of the department.

You should give at least four weeks' notice of your intention to take holidays of a week or more and one week's notice is required for odd single days.

You may not normally take more than two working weeks consecutively.

Payment for holidays will be at the rate shown in your individual Statement of Main Terms of Employment.

PUBLIC/BANK HOLIDAYS

Your entitlement to public/bank holidays is shown in your individual Statement of Main Terms of Employment.

Sickness/Injury Payments and Conditions

NOTIFICATION OF INCAPACITY FOR WORK

You must notify us by telephone on the first day of incapacity at the earliest possible opportunity and by no later than 9.30am. Other than in exceptional circumstances notification should be made personally, to your Line Manager.

You should try to give some indication of your expected return date and notify us as soon as possible if this date changes. The notification procedures should be followed on each day of absence unless you are covered by a medical certificate.

If your incapacity extends to more than seven calendar days you are required to notify us of your continued incapacity once a week thereafter, unless otherwise agreed.

EVIDENCE OF INCAPACITY

Medical certificates are not issued for short-term incapacity. In these cases of incapacity (up to and including seven calendar days) you must sign a self-certification absence form on your return to work.

If your sickness has been (or you know that it will be) for longer than seven days (whether or not they are working days) you should obtain a medical certificate and forward this to us without delay. Subsequently you must supply us with consecutive medical certificates to cover the whole of your absence.

In some situations, in line with government guidance, an extension of self-certification of absence will be temporarily accepted. You will be informed of any such changes should these apply.

PAYMENTS

You are entitled to statutory sick pay (SSP) if you are absent for four or more consecutive days because of sickness or injury provided you meet the statutory qualifying conditions. SSP is treated like wages and is subject to normal deductions.

Qualifying days are the only days for which you are entitled to SSP. These days are normally your working days unless otherwise notified to you. The first three qualifying days of absence are waiting days for which SSP is not payable. Where a second or subsequent period of incapacity (of four days or more) occurs within 56 days of a previous period of incapacity, waiting days are not served again.

Any contractual sickness/injury payments are shown in your individual Statement of Main Terms of Employment.

Any days of contractual sickness/injury payments that qualify for SSP will be offset against SSP on a day-to-day basis. A deduction will be made for any other state benefits received if you are excluded or transferred from SSP.

If you are entitled to any payments in excess of SSP and your entitlement expires, full or part payment may be allowed at our discretion where it is considered that there are special circumstances warranting it.

Where the circumstances of your incapacity are such that you receive or are awarded any sum by way of compensation or damages in respect of the incapacity from a third party, then any payments which we may have made to you because of the absence (including SSP) shall be repaid by you to us up to an amount not exceeding the amount of the compensation or damages paid by the third party and up to, but not exceeding, any amount paid by us.

RETURN TO WORK

You should notify your Line Manager as soon as you know on which day you will be returning to work if this differs from the date of return previously notified.

If you have been suffering from an infectious or contagious disease or illness such as rubella or hepatitis you must not report for work without clearance from your own doctor.

On return to work after any period of sickness/injury absence (including absence covered by a medical certificate), you are also required to complete a self-certification absence form and hand this to the Town Clerk.

Upon returning to work after any period of sickness/injury absence, you may be required to attend a “return to work” interview to discuss the state of your health and fitness for work. Information arising from such an interview will be treated with the strictest confidence.

GENERAL

Submission of a medical certificate or sickness self-certification absence form, although giving us the reason for your absence may not always be regarded by us as sufficient justification for accepting your absence. Sickness is just one of a number of reasons for absence and although it is understandable that if you are sick you may need time off, continual or repeated absence through sickness may not be acceptable to us.

In deciding whether your absence is acceptable or not we will take into account the reasons and extent of all your absences, including any absence caused by sickness/injury. We cannot operate with an excessive level of absence as all absence, for whatever reason, reduces our efficiency.

We will take a serious view if you take sickness/injury leave which is not genuine, and it will result in disciplinary action being taken. In addition, we will take a serious view if you are found to be undertaking any activity during sickness absence which we reasonably believe is inconsistent with being incapable of work at that time despite the presence of an illness, injury or medical condition. Disciplinary action will be taken in this instance.

If we consider it necessary, we may ask your permission to contact your doctor and/or for you to be independently medically examined by our Occupational Health Specialists, Health Assured Limited.

Other Benefits

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

We recognise that sometimes you may face certain challenges in your work and home life that are difficult to deal with. We subscribe to a confidential and professional life management service that provides you with a qualified counsellor who can offer personal support for any practical or emotional challenges you may be facing. The service is initially provided via telephone and online advice but face to face meetings will be arranged where this is felt clinically appropriate. This service is totally confidential. You can use the Health Assured App or call 0800 0474097. More details of this service are available from the Town Clerk.

As part of our Employee Assistance Programme, you also have access to an online wellbeing tool, Wisdom AI, which you can use to find fast answers to any wellbeing questions you have. You can access Wisdom AI at any time via the Health Assured portal. The link in the menu bar will take you directly to the Wisdom AI homepage, where you can ask your question. More details of this service are available the Town Clerk.

BRIGHT EXCHANGE

We currently subscribe to an online HR tool, Bright HR. Through Bright HR you have exclusive access to Bright Exchange. Bright Exchange is an online marketplace exclusive to Bright HR users giving you access to hundreds of products, services and special offers from a wide range of different companies. You can use your Bright HR credentials to log in to Bright Exchange and take advantage of these offers. More details are available from the Town Clerk.

Safeguards

RIGHTS OF SEARCH

Although we do not have the contractual right to carry out searches of employees and their property (including vehicles) whilst they are on our premises or Council, we would ask all employees to assist us in this matter should we feel that such a search is necessary.

Where practicable, searches will be carried out in the presence of a colleague of your choice who is available on the premises at the time of the search. This will also apply at the time that any further questioning takes place.

We reserve the right to call in the police at any stage.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information that:

a) is or has been acquired by you during, or in the course of your employment, or has otherwise been acquired by you in confidence;

b) relates particularly to our Council, or that of other persons or bodies with whom we have dealings of any sort; and

c) has not been made public by, or with our authority;

shall be confidential, and (save in the course of our Council or as required by law) you shall not at any time, whether before or after the termination of your employment, disclose such information to any person without our prior written consent.

You are to exercise reasonable care to keep safe all documentary or other material containing confidential information, and shall at the time of termination of your employment with us, or at any other time upon demand, return to us any such material in your possession.

You must make yourself aware of our policies on data protection in relation to personal data and ensure compliance with them at all times.

DATA PROTECTION

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the current Data Protection Act regulates our use of your personal data. As an employer, it is our responsibility to ensure that the personal data we process in relation to you is done so in accordance with the required principles. Any data held shall be processed fairly and lawfully and in accordance with the rights of data subjects.

We will process data in line with our privacy notices in relation to both job applicants and employees.

You have several rights in relation to your data. More information about these rights is available in our “Policy on your rights in relation to your data”. We commit to ensuring that your rights are upheld in accordance with the law and have appropriate mechanisms for dealing with such.

We may ask for your consent for processing certain types of personal data. In these circumstances, you will be fully informed as to the personal data we wish to process and the reason for the processing. You may choose to provide or withhold your consent. Once consent is provided, you are able to withdraw consent at any time.

You are required to comply with all Council policies and procedures in relation to processing data. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

COUNCIL PROPERTY AND COPYRIGHT

All written material, whether held on paper, electronically or magnetically which was made or acquired by you during the course of your employment with us, is our property and, where appropriate, our copyright. At the time of termination of your employment with us, or at any other time upon demand, you shall return to us any such material in your possession.

STATEMENTS TO THE MEDIA

Any statements to reporters from newspapers, radio, television, etc. in relation to our Council will be given only by, or with the approval of the Town Clerk.

INVENTIONS/DISCOVERIES

An invention or discovery made by you will normally belong to you. However, an invention or discovery made by you will become our property if it was made:

- a) in the course of your normal duties under such circumstances that an invention might reasonably be expected to result from those duties;
- b) outside the course of your normal duties, but during duties specifically assigned to you, when an invention might reasonably be expected to result from these; and
- c) during the course of any of your duties, and at the time you had a special obligation to further our interests arising from the nature of those duties, and your particular responsibilities.

VIRUS PROTECTION PROCEDURES

In order to prevent the introduction of virus contamination into the software system, the following must be observed:

- a) unauthorised software including public domain software, USBs, external hard drives, CDs or internet downloads must not be used; and
- b) all software must be virus checked using standard testing procedures before being used.

USE OF COMPUTER EQUIPMENT

In order to control the use of the Council's computer equipment and reduce the risk of contamination the following will apply:

- a) the introduction of new software must first of all be checked and authorised by the Town Clerk before general use will be permitted;
- b) only authorised staff should have access to the Council's computer equipment;
- c) only authorised software may be used on any of the Council's computer equipment;
- d) only software that is used for Council applications may be used;
- e) no software may be brought onto or taken from the Council's premises without prior authorisation;
- f) unauthorised access to the computer facility will result in disciplinary action; and
- g) unauthorised copying and/or removal of computer equipment/software will result in disciplinary action, such actions could lead to dismissal.

E-MAIL AND INTERNET POLICY

Please refer to the Council IT policy for further information.

USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

Any work related issue or material that could identify an individual who is a customer or work colleague, which could adversely affect the Council, a customer or our relationship with any customer must not be placed on a social networking site. This means that work related matters must not be placed on any such site at any time either during or outside of working hours and includes access via any computer equipment or mobile device.

KEYHOLDING/ALARM SETTING

If you are an allocated key holder, you must ensure that all procedures and guidelines are followed when securing the building prior to leaving. The keys and any security measure such as alarm codes must be kept safe at all times. You must not give the keys or alarm code to any third party unless authorisation is obtained from the Town Clerk. Any loss or damage caused as a result of your failure to follow procedures or your negligence in ensuring the safekeeping of the keys and alarm code will result in disciplinary action which could lead to your summary dismissal. We also reserve the right to deduct the cost of any loss, repair or replacement from any monies owing to you.

Any breaches or security issues including the loss or theft of keys must be reported immediately to the Town Clerk.

To satisfy the requirements of our insurers and to protect us from fire and theft, you must secure all properties and premises when unattended. The last person to leave the premises must ensure lights and appropriate electrical equipment are switched off, windows and doors are secure and alarms are set accordingly.

CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION

CCTV is operated on some of our Council premises for several reasons, including the prevention of crime and the safety of employees and customers.

We will ensure all personal data obtained in this way is processed in line with the current Data Protection Act. You may refer to the employee privacy notice for more information on the data we hold, the reasons we hold it and the lawful basis which applies.

PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES

Staff must ensure that communication with young people/children is within clear and explicit professional boundaries. Communication via telephone, e-mail, text or social networking sites between an adult and a child under the age of 18 outside of professional protocol may lead to disciplinary action. Never reveal personal numbers or e-mail addresses to young person.

The council regard the private lives of staff as being nobody's business but their own. Staff must be careful, however, to ensure that nothing they say or do, including through the use of social networking sites, brings the Town Council's name into disrepute. Gossip in communities can be very damaging.

COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE

Please refer to the Council policy for further information.

Standards

WASTAGE

We maintain a policy of "minimum waste" which is essential to the cost-effective and efficient running of our council.

You are able to promote this policy by taking extra care during your normal duties by avoiding unnecessary or extravagant use of services, time, energy, etc. The following points are illustrations of this:

- a) handle machines, equipment and stock with care;
- b) turn off any unnecessary lighting and heating. Keep doors closed whenever possible;
- c) ask for other work if your job has come to a standstill; and
- d) start with the minimum of delay after arriving for work and after breaks.

The following provision is an express written term of your contract of employment:

- a) any damage to vehicles, stock or property that is the result of your carelessness, negligence or deliberate vandalism may render you liable to pay the full or part of the cost of repair or replacement;
- b) any loss to us that is the result of your failure to observe rules, procedures or instruction, or is as a result of your negligent behaviour or your unsatisfactory standards of work may render you liable to reimburse to us the full or part of the cost of the loss; and
- c) in the event of an at fault accident whilst driving one of our vehicles you may be required to pay the cost of the insurance excess up to a maximum of £250.00.

In the event of failure to pay, we have the contractual right to deduct such costs from your pay.

STANDARDS OF DRESS

As you are liable to come into contact with customers and members of the public, it is important that you present a professional image with regard to appearance and standards of dress.

Where uniforms are not provided, you should wear clothes and footwear appropriate to your job responsibilities, and they should be kept clean and tidy at all times.

Where uniforms are provided, these must be worn at all times whilst at work and laundered on a regular basis.

HOUSEKEEPING

Both from the point of view of safety and of appearance, work areas must be kept clean and tidy at all times.

Health, Safety, Welfare and Hygiene

SAFETY

You should make yourself familiar with our Health and Safety Policy and your own health and safety duties and responsibilities, as shown separately.

You must not take any action that could threaten the health or safety of yourself, other employees, customers or members of the public.

Protective wear and other equipment that may be issued for your protection because of the nature of your job must be worn and used at all appropriate times. Failure to do so could be a contravention of your health and safety responsibilities. Once issued, this protective wear/equipment is your responsibility.

You should report all accidents, near misses and injuries at work, no matter how minor, in the accident book, your Line Manager or the Town Clerk.

You must ensure that you are aware of our fire and evacuation procedures and the action you should take in the event of such an emergency.

First-Aid at Work

We will comply with our obligations regarding first-aid at work and ensure that all employees are given details of our first-aid arrangements, in accordance with current legislation. This may include (but is not limited to) providing trained first-aiders, depending on the outcome of our first-aid needs assessment.

REFRESHMENT MAKING FACILITIES

We provide refreshment making facilities for your use, which must be kept clean and tidy at all times.

ALCOHOL & DRUGS POLICY

Under legislation we, as your employer, have a duty to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety and welfare at work of all our employees and similarly you have a responsibility to yourself and your colleagues. The use of alcohol and drugs may impair the safe and efficient running of the Council and/or the health and safety of our employees.

If your performance or attendance at work is affected as a result of alcohol or drugs, or we believe you have been involved in any drug related action/offence, you may be subject to disciplinary action and, dependent on the circumstances, this may lead to your dismissal.

NO SMOKING POLICY

Smoking on the premises or in Council vehicles is not permitted. You may only smoke during authorised breaks. Whilst there is no designated smoking area, you should ensure that you are away from the premises and any windows/doors. This includes the use of vapes and e-cigarettes.

PERSONAL HYGIENE

Your highest attention to your own personal hygiene is requested at all times, as you work in close proximity with our customers and fellow colleagues.

FITNESS FOR WORK

If you arrive for work and, in our opinion, you are not fit to work, we reserve the right to exercise our duty of care if we believe that you may not be able to undertake your duties in a safe manner or may pose a safety risk to others, and send you away for the remainder of the day with or without pay and, dependent on the circumstances, you may be liable to disciplinary action.

MANUAL HANDLING

You are required, in accordance with the Manual Handling Regulations 1992, to advise us of any condition which may make you more vulnerable to injury.

Lone Worker Policy

The Council will avoid the need for employees to work alone where reasonably practicable. Where lone working is necessary, the Council will take all reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of employees working alone.

The Council will ensure that a risk assessment is conducted and that arrangements are in place prior to employees working alone.

The Line Manager will ensure that:

- a) loneworking is avoided as far as is reasonably practicable;
- b) emergency procedures are in place so that members of staff working alone can obtain assistance if required;
- c) a risk assessment is completed by a person competent to do so prior to employees working alone;
- d) any employee working alone is capable of undertaking the work alone;
- e) where possible, arrangements are in place so that someone else is aware of a lone worker's whereabouts at all times;
- f) persons working alone are provided with adequate information, instruction and training to understand the hazards and risks and the safe working procedures associated with working alone; and
- g) training records are kept;
- h) whilst lone working, please ensure your mobile is with you at all times.

The person conducting the lone working assessment will:

- a) give consideration to the greater risks to expectant mothers and young persons;
- b) involve the employee who is working alone in the assessment process and the development of safe working methods;
- c) advise the employee undertaking the lone working of the findings of the assessment; and
- d) maintain a file of all lone working.

Employees working alone will:

- a) follow the safe working arrangements developed by the Council for lone working;
- b) take reasonable steps to ensure their own safety; and
- c) inform their Line Manager of any incidents or safety concerns.

Leading Statutory Authority

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (SI 1999/3242).

Employers have a general duty under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 to ensure the health, safety and welfare of their employees as far as is reasonably practicable, which includes providing safe systems, a safe place of work and suitable arrangements for employees' welfare.

Regulation 3 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 requires a suitable and sufficient assessment of risks arising from work activities (including lone working) to be undertaken.

Regulation 13 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 requires employers to consider the physical and mental capabilities of employees when deciding on the tasks they will undertake.

Lone working is not permitted under certain legislation. It is prudent for employers to review any regulations specific to their Council prior to allowing lone working.

In relation to a lone working risk assessment consideration should be given to:

- a) the remoteness of the workplace;
- b) potential communication problems;
- c) the likelihood of a criminal attack;
- d) potential for verbal and physical abuse;
- e) vulnerability of lone workers to feelings of isolation, stress and depression;
- f) whether all the plant, equipment, materials, etc. can be handled safely by one person;
- g) whether the person is medically fit and suitable to work alone;
- h) how the lone worker will be supervised;
- i) how the lone worker will obtain help in an emergency such as an assault, vehicle breakdown, accident or fire; and
- j) whether there is adequate first-aid cover.

General Terms and Procedures

CHANGES IN PERSONAL DETAILS

You must notify us of any change of name, address, telephone number, etc., so that we can maintain accurate information on our records and make contact with you in an emergency, if necessary, outside normal working hours.

OTHER EMPLOYMENT

You are expected to devote the whole of your time and attention during working hours to the Council. If you propose taking up employment with an employer or pursuing separate business interests or any similar venture, you must discuss the proposal with the Town Clerk in order to establish the likely impact of these activities on both yourself and the Council. You will be asked to give full details of the proposal and consideration will be given to:

Working hours;
Competition, reputation and credibility;
Conflict of Interest;
Health, safety and welfare.

You will be notified in writing of the Council's decision. The Company may refuse to consent to your request. If you work without consent this could result in the termination of your employment.

If you are unhappy with the decision, you may appeal using the Grievance Procedure.

PRIVATE WORK

You are forbidden from undertaking any private work without authorisation from the Council. You will not be allowed to undertake any work which could otherwise have been undertaken by the Council. In the event of you being approached to undertake such work you must report the approach to the Town Clerk.

TIME OFF

Circumstances may arise where you need time off for medical/dental appointments, or for other reasons. Where possible, such appointments should be made outside normal working hours. Where this is not possible, depending on the length of time off needed, you may at our discretion be able to make up the time otherwise it will be unpaid. To minimise the impact you should try and get the first/last appointment of the day.

LEAVE WITHOUT PAY

Additional leave without pay may be granted in special circumstances at the discretion of the Town Clerk.

IMPLICATIONS OF AUTHORISED UNPAID LEAVE AND INDUSTRIAL ACTION FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSIONABLE SERVICE

Under the LGPS 2014 rules, if employees who are LGPS members are granted unpaid leave of absence they will have the option to buy back the lost pension by taking out a Shared Cost Additional Pension Contribution (SCAPC) contract.

If employees who are LGPS members are absent from work due to industrial action they will also have the option to buy back the lost pension by making an Additional Pension Contribution. In order to do so they must write to the Town Clerk as above; however there is no time limit and the entire cost will be met by the employee.

MATERNITY/PATERNITY/ADOPTION LEAVE AND PAY

You may be entitled to maternity/paternity/adoption leave and pay in accordance with the current statutory provisions. If you (or your partner) become pregnant or are notified of a match date for adoption purposes you should notify the Town Clerk at an early stage so that your entitlements and obligations can be explained to you.

NEONATAL CARE LEAVE

Eligible employees are entitled to neonatal care leave and pay in line with current statutory provisions. If you need time off in these circumstances you should speak with your Manager who will explain your entitlements and agree time off.

PARENTAL/SHARED PARENTAL LEAVE

If you are entitled to take parental leave or shared parental leave in respect of the current statutory provisions, you should discuss your needs with the Town Clerk who will identify your entitlements and look at the proposed leave periods dependent upon your child's/children's particular circumstances and the operational aspects of the Council.

PARENTAL BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

In the unfortunate event that you experience the loss of a child, you may be entitled to parental bereavement leave and pay in accordance with the current statutory provisions. You should discuss your circumstances with the Town Clerk and agree time off.

You are reminded that you have access to the Employee Assistance Programme, a confidential telephone counselling service offered by the Council where you can talk to a trained counsellor about your circumstances. You can access this by accessing online resources or calling the number provided, further details are available from the Town Clerk.

CARER'S LEAVE

Employees with caring responsibilities may be entitled to take Carer's Leave in line with current statutory provisions. You should discuss your situation with your Manager who will explain your entitlements and if appropriate, agree time off.

FLEXIBLE WORKING

You have the right to request flexible working in accordance with the current statutory provisions. Further information on the application process can be obtained from the Town Clerk.

TIME OFF FOR DEPENDANTS

You may be entitled to take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off during working hours to take action that is necessary to provide help to your dependants. Should this be necessary you should discuss your situation with the Town Clerk who, if appropriate, will agree the necessary time off.

COMPASSIONATE LEAVE WITH PAY

Up to three days' compassionate leave with pay can be granted in order to help the employee to cope with the death or serious illness of a member of their immediate family. This includes:

- Husband, wife, or partner;
- Mother or father;
- Child, including any adopted child; and
- Sister or brother

A further day may be granted for attending the funeral.

Employees may also wish to consider taking a period of parental bereavement leave following the loss of a child under the age of 18. See parental bereavement leave.

All applications for Compassionate Leave must be made to the Town Clerk for determination.

In exceptional circumstances, the Town Clerk will consider granting a maximum of a further seven days' compassionate leave in any one year.

PUBLIC DUTIES

Up to five days' leave with pay per year may be given with the permission of the Town Clerk for serving on public bodies or undertaking public duties, e.g. magistrate's service, school governing bodies, and political appointments for those employees whose posts are not politically restricted.

Where an allowance is claimable for loss of earnings, employees should claim and pay the allowance to the Council.

JURY SERVICE

If you are required to undertake jury service or to attend court you must advise the Town Clerk in order that the necessary arrangements for your work can be made. You are normally eligible for loss of earnings, travel and subsistence allowances. You will be permitted reasonable time off to carry out such public duty, but you should not volunteer for jury service beyond 14 days without referral and permission from the Town Clerk.

EXPENSES

We will reimburse you for any reasonable expenses incurred whilst travelling on our Council. The rules relating to travelling expenses will be issued separately. You must provide receipts for any expenditure. Please refer to the council expense policy.

EMPLOYEES' PROPERTY AND LOST PROPERTY

We do not accept liability for any loss of, or damage to, property that you bring onto the premises. You are requested not to bring personal items of value onto the premises and, in particular, not to leave any items overnight. Articles of lost property should be handed to the Town Clerk who will retain them whilst attempts are made to discover the owner.

FRIENDS AND RELATIVES CONTACT / TELEPHONE CALLS / MOBILE PHONES

You should discourage your friends and relatives from either calling on you in person or by telephone except in an emergency. Personal telephone calls, both incoming and outgoing are discouraged. Permission to make outgoing personal calls from council phones should be sought from the Town Clerk. Personal mobile phones should be switched to silent during working hours. Personal use of personal mobile phones should be kept to a minimum and not interfere with your duties during working hours.

It is illegal to hold and use a mobile phone, sat nav, tablet or any device that can send and receive data whilst driving.

It is our Council policy that you should not hold and use a mobile phone, sat nav, tablet or any device that can send and receive data whilst driving. You should ensure you are safely parked and you have turned off the engine before making or receiving any telephone calls. In the event of you being unable to answer a call because you cannot find a safe place to stop, you must return the call as soon as conveniently possible after you have safely parked and turned off the engine.

You can use a device held in your hand in the following circumstances only:

- you need to call 999 or 112 in an emergency and it is unsafe or impractical to stop
- you are safely parked
- you are making a contactless payment in a vehicle that is not moving, for example at a drive-through restaurant
- you are using the device to park the vehicle remotely.

You can use devices with hands-free access, such as a built-in sat nav, provided you do not hold the device at any time during usage.

COUNCIL TOOLS/EQUIPMENT

The Council provides the tools and/or equipment necessary to carry out your duties. You should keep these in good repair and take all reasonable steps to ensure that they are secure at all times. You must report any lost, damaged or mislaid tools and/or equipment to the Town Clerk. You must return all Council tools and/or equipment upon termination of employment by either party. Failure to return any tools and/or equipment, or any loss or damage suffered as a result of your negligence, will result in a deduction to cover the cost of the tools and/or equipment being made from monies due to you.

BEHAVIOUR AT WORK

You should behave with civility towards fellow employees, and no rudeness will be permitted towards customers or members of the public. Objectionable or insulting behaviour, or bad language will render you liable to disciplinary action. You should use your best endeavours to promote the interests of the Council and shall, during normal working hours, devote the whole of your time, attention and abilities to the Council and its affairs. Any involvement in activities which could be construed as being in competition with us is not allowed.

BEHAVIOUR OUTSIDE OF WORK

The Council recognises the importance of work/life balance. However, owing to the nature of the Council, the Council insists on employing staff of the highest integrity, we expect you to maintain these standards outside of working hours. Activities that result in adverse publicity to ourselves, or which cause us to lose faith in your integrity, may give us grounds for your dismissal.

ADVERSE WEATHER/TRAVEL ARRANGEMENT DISRUPTION

Every reasonable effort should be made to attend work in accordance with your contract. In the event that you are unable to attend work owing to inclement weather conditions and/or severe disruption to your travel arrangements, you should report your absence through the normal absence reporting procedures. Your absence will be unpaid unless you have sufficient annual leave in which case you may request to use this. Alternatively, you may be able to work additional hours to compensate for the lost hours at the sole discretion of your Line Manager.

COUNCIL FUEL/CREDIT CARDS

If you have been provided with a Council fuel/credit card, you are responsible for its security and safekeeping. In the event that it is lost or stolen, it is imperative that you report this to the Town Clerk immediately. The card is to be used exclusively for Council purposes only and receipts should be obtained for every transaction. Usage will be regularly monitored therefore it is in your interest to keep a personal record of transactions in order that you are able to explain them if necessary.

Personal use of a Council fuel/credit card is not permitted under any circumstances. Misuse of the card and/or failure to comply with Council procedures will result in disciplinary action, which may result in your dismissal. You will be required to reimburse us the cost of any unauthorised expenditure. In the event of failure to pay, we have the contractual right to deduct such costs from your pay.

DRIVING LICENCE

If driving is a necessary part of your role it is imperative that you maintain a valid driving licence suitable for the vehicle you operate at all times during your employment. You are required upon request to produce your driving licence to the Town Clerk. We may also require you to provide us with the ability to access your driving licence details online. If at any time your licence is endorsed, or you are disqualified from driving, we must be informed immediately. If you are required to drive as part of your job and we are unable to find alternative employment, your employment may be terminated.

Data collected about driving licences will be processed in line with the Data Protection Act. You may read more about the data we hold on you, why we hold it and the lawful basis that applies in the employee privacy notice.

FINES

Any fines imposed by relevant authorities including (but not limited to) speeding and parking will be payable by the employee. The Council takes no responsibility for the payment of fines incurred by the employee during their employment.

CAR INSURANCE

If your position requires you to use your own car for Council purposes, you must ensure that your car insurance provides adequate cover. Proof of adequate insurance, Driving Licence, Tax and an MOT Certificate must be produced for scrutiny by the Council, upon renewal and at any time when so requested.

THIRD PARTY INVOLVEMENT

We reserve the right to allow third parties to chair any meeting, for example disciplinary, capability, grievance, this is not an exhaustive list. Where we are required to share special category data to any third parties as part of that hearing, we ensure that a relevant condition of processing is met and we do not rely upon your consent for the processing.

RECORDING OF FORMAL MEETINGS

We reserve the right to record any formal meetings whether conducted by us or a third party, a copy of the recording can be made available on request. All personal data collected for this purpose will be processed in line with the current Data Protection Act.

Capability Procedures

INTRODUCTION

We recognise that during your employment with us your capability to carry out your duties may deteriorate. This can be for a number of reasons, the most common ones being that either the job changes over a period of time and you fail to keep pace with the changes, or you change (most commonly because of health reasons) and you can no longer cope with the work.

JOB CHANGES/GENERAL CAPABILITY ISSUES

If the nature of your job changes or if we have general concerns about your ability to perform your job we will try to ensure that you understand the level of performance expected of you and that you receive adequate training and supervision. Concerns regarding your capability will normally first be discussed in an informal manner and you will be given time to improve.

If your standard of performance is still not adequate you will be warned in writing that a failure to improve and to maintain the performance required could lead to your dismissal. We will also consider the possibility of a transfer to more suitable work if possible.

If there is still no improvement after a reasonable time and we cannot transfer you to more suitable work, or if your level of performance has a serious or substantial effect on our council or reputation, you will be issued with a final warning that you will be dismissed unless the required standard of performance is achieved and maintained.

If such improvement is not forthcoming after a reasonable period of time, you will be dismissed with the appropriate notice.

Please refer to our full Capability Procedure for further details.

PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES/HEALTH ISSUES

Personal circumstances may arise which do not prevent you from attending for work but which prevent you from carrying out your normal duties (e.g. a lack of dexterity or general ill health). If such a situation arises, we will normally need to have details of your medical diagnosis and prognosis so that we have the benefit of expert advice. Under normal circumstances this can be most easily obtained by asking your own doctor for a medical report. Your permission is needed before we can obtain such a report and we will expect you to co-operate in this matter should the need arise. When we have obtained as much information as possible regarding your condition and after consultation with you, a decision will be made about your future employment with us in your current role or, where circumstances permit, in a more suitable role.

There may also be personal circumstances that prevent you from attending work, either for a prolonged period(s) or for frequent short absences. Under these circumstances, we will need to know when we can expect your attendance record to reach an acceptable level. This may again mean asking your own doctor for a medical report or by making whatever investigations are appropriate in the circumstances. When we have obtained as much information as possible regarding your condition, and after consultation with you, a decision will be made about your future employment with us in your current role or, where circumstances permit, in a more suitable role.

SHORT SERVICE STAFF

We retain discretion in respect of the capability procedures to take account of your length of service and to vary the procedures accordingly. If you have a short amount of service, you may not be in receipt of any warnings before dismissal.

Disciplinary Procedures

INTRODUCTION

It is necessary to have a minimum number of rules in the interests of the whole council.

The rules set standards of performance and behaviour whilst the procedures are designed to help promote fairness and order in the treatment of individuals. It is our aim that the rules and procedures should emphasise and encourage improvement in the conduct of individuals, where they are failing to meet the required standards, and not be seen merely as a means of punishment. We reserve the right to amend these rules and procedures where appropriate.

Every effort will be made to ensure that any action taken under this procedure is fair, with you being given the opportunity to state your case and appeal against any decision that you consider to be unjust.

The following rules and procedures should ensure that:

- a) the correct procedure is used when requiring you to attend a disciplinary hearing;
- b) you are fully aware of the standards of performance, action and behaviour required of you;
- c) disciplinary action, where necessary, is taken speedily and in a fair, uniform and consistent manner;
- d) you will only be disciplined after careful investigation of the facts and the opportunity to present your side of the case. On some occasions we may implement temporary measures in order that an uninterrupted investigation can take place. These measures may include, for example:
 - working in a different department, or from a different office or site
 - a change to your usual duties
 - working with different customers, or away from customers
 - working from home
 - suspension on contractual pay.

This list is not exhaustive, and we may implement other measures which are appropriate to the circumstances. None of these measures are to be regarded as disciplinary action or a penalty of any kind.

Where an employee on temporary suspension tells us that they are sick, the employee will be considered to be on sickness absence, rather than suspension, until the employee notifies us that they are no longer sick, at which point suspension will resume where appropriate.

- e) other than for an "off the record" informal reprimand, you have the right to be accompanied by a fellow employee at all stages of the formal disciplinary process;
- f) you will not normally be dismissed for a first breach of discipline, except in the case of gross misconduct; and
- g) if you are disciplined, you will receive an explanation of the penalty imposed and you will have the right to appeal against the finding and the penalty.

DISCIPLINARY RULES

It is not practicable to specify all disciplinary rules or offences that may result in disciplinary action, as they may vary depending on the nature of the work. In addition to the specific examples of unsatisfactory conduct, misconduct and gross misconduct shown in this handbook, a breach of other specific conditions, procedures, rules etc. that are contained within this handbook or that have otherwise been made known to you, will also result in this procedure being used to deal with such matters.

RULES COVERING UNSATISFACTORY CONDUCT AND MISCONDUCT

(These are examples only and not an exhaustive list.)

You will be liable to disciplinary action if you are found to have acted in any of the following ways:

- a) failure to abide by the general health and safety rules and procedures;
- b) smoking in designated non-smoking areas;
- c) consumption of alcohol on the premises;
- d) persistent absenteeism and/or lateness;
- e) unsatisfactory standards or output of work;
- f) rudeness towards customers, members of the public or other employees, objectionable or insulting behaviour, harassment, bullying or bad language;
- g) failure to devote the whole of your time, attention and abilities to our Council and its affairs during your normal working hours;
- h) unauthorised use of e-mail and internet;
- i) failure to carry out all reasonable instructions or follow our rules and procedures;
- j) unauthorised use or negligent damage or loss of our property;
- k) failure to report immediately any damage to property or premises caused by you;
- l) use of our vehicles without approval or the private use of our commercial vehicles without authorisation;
- m) failure to report any incident whilst driving our vehicles, whether or not personal injury or vehicle damage occurs;
- n) if your work involves driving, failure to report immediately any type of driving conviction, or any summons which may lead to your conviction;
- o) carrying unauthorised goods or passengers in our commercial vehicles or the use of our vehicles for personal gain; and
- p) loss of driving licence where driving on public roads forms an essential part of the duties of the post.

SERIOUS MISCONDUCT

Where one of the unsatisfactory conduct or misconduct rules has been broken and if, upon investigation, it is shown to be due to your extreme carelessness or has a serious or substantial effect upon our operation or reputation, you may be issued with a final written warning in the first instance.

You may receive a final written warning as the first course of action, if, in an alleged gross misconduct disciplinary matter, upon investigation, there is shown to be some level of mitigation resulting in it being treated as an offence just short of dismissal.

RULES COVERING GROSS MISCONDUCT

Occurrences of gross misconduct are very rare because the penalty is dismissal without notice and without any previous warning being issued. It is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of examples of gross misconduct. However, any behaviour or negligence resulting in a fundamental breach of contractual terms that irrevocably destroys the trust and confidence necessary to continue the employment relationship will constitute gross misconduct. Examples of offences that will normally be deemed as gross misconduct include serious instances of:

- a) theft or fraud;
- b) physical violence or bullying;
- c) deliberate damage to property;
- d) deliberate acts of unlawful discrimination or harassment;
- e) possession, or being under the influence, of drugs* at work and/or testing positive for drug use in a test carried out in line with our policy; and

*For this purpose, the term 'drugs' is used to describe both illegal drugs and other psychoactive (mind-altering) substances which may or may not be illegal.

- f) breach of health and safety rules that endangers the lives of, or may cause serious injury to, employees or any other person.

(The above examples are illustrative and do not form an exhaustive list.)

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

Disciplinary action taken against you will be based on the following procedure:

OFFENCE	FIRST OCCASION	SECOND OCCASION	THIRD OCCASION	FOURTH OCCASION
Unsatisfactory Conduct	Formal Verbal Warning	Written Warning	Final Written Warning	Dismissal
Misconduct	Written Warning	Final Written Warning	Dismissal	
Serious Misconduct	Final written warning	Dismissal		
Gross Misconduct	Dismissal			

We retain discretion in respect of the disciplinary procedures to take account of your length of service and to vary the procedures accordingly. If you have a short amount of service you may not be in receipt of any warnings before dismissal.

If a disciplinary penalty is imposed it will be in line with the procedure outlined above, which may encompass a formal verbal warning, written warning, final written warning, or dismissal, and full details will be given to you.

In all cases warnings will be issued for misconduct, irrespective of the precise matters concerned, and any further breach of the rules in relation to similar or entirely independent matters of misconduct will be treated as further disciplinary matters and allow the continuation of the disciplinary process through to dismissal if the warnings are not heeded.

DISCIPLINARY AUTHORITY

The operation of the disciplinary procedure contained in the previous section, is based on the following authority for the various levels of disciplinary action. However, the list does not prevent a higher level of seniority progressing any action at whatever stage of the disciplinary process.

Levels of Disciplinary Action		
	Disciplinary Authority for All Employees	Town Clerk
Formal Verbal Warning	Town Clerk	Personnel sub-Committee
Written Warning	Town Clerk	Personnel sub-Committee
Final Written Warning	Town Clerk	Personnel sub-Committee
Dismissal	Personnel-Sub-Committee	Policy & Resources Committee

PERIOD OF WARNINGS

Formal verbal warning

A formal verbal warning will normally be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after a three month period.

Written warning

A written warning will normally be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after a six month period.

Final written warning

A final written warning will normally be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after a twelve month period.

GENERAL NOTES

If you are in a supervisory or Managerial position then demotion to a lower status at the appropriate rate may be considered as an alternative to dismissal except in cases of gross misconduct.

In exceptional circumstances, suspension from work without pay for up to five days as an alternative to dismissal (except dismissal for gross misconduct) may be considered by the person authorised to dismiss.

Gross misconduct offences will result in dismissal without notice.

You have the right to appeal against any disciplinary action.

Capability / Disciplinary Appeal Procedure

You have the right to lodge an appeal in respect of any capability/disciplinary action taken against you.

If you wish to exercise this right you should apply either verbally or in writing to the person indicated in your individual Statement of Main Terms of Employment.

It may be necessary, because of the size of our council, for the appeal to be heard by the person who took the original action and it is therefore important that your appeal gives details of why the penalty imposed is too severe, inappropriate or unfair in the circumstances.

If you are appealing on the grounds that you have not committed the offence, it may be necessary for the person conducting the appeal to have a complete re-hearing so that there can be a reappraisal of all matters before a decision is made to grant or refuse the appeal.

You may be accompanied at the appeal hearing by a fellow employee of your choice and the result of the appeal will be made known to you in writing, normally within five working days after the hearing. This is the final stage of the appeal process.

Please refer to our full Capability Procedure for further details

Grievance Procedure

It is important that if you feel dissatisfied with any matter relating to your employment you should have an effective means by which such a grievance can be aired and, where appropriate, resolved.

Nothing in this procedure is intended to prevent you from informally raising any matter you may wish to mention. Informal discussion can frequently solve problems without the need for a written record. However, if you wish to raise a formal grievance you should normally do so in writing from the outset.

You have the right to be accompanied at any stage of the procedure by a fellow employee who may act as a witness or speak on your behalf to explain the situation more clearly.

If you feel aggrieved at any matter relating to your work (except personal harassment, for which there is a separate procedure following this section), you should first raise the matter with the person specified in your Statement of Main Terms of Employment, explaining fully the nature and extent of your grievance. You will then be invited to a meeting at a reasonable time and location at which your grievance will be investigated fully. You must take all reasonable steps to attend this meeting. You will be notified of the decision, in writing, normally within ten working days of the meeting, including your right of appeal.

If you wish to appeal you must inform the Town Clerk or Chair of personnel Sub-Committee in writing within five working days. You will then be invited to a further meeting, which you must take all reasonable steps to attend. As far as reasonably practicable, the Council will be represented by a different member of the Personnel Sub-Committee.

Following the appeal meeting you will be informed of the final decision, normally within ten working days, which will be confirmed in writing.

Please refer to our full grievance policy for further details

Termination of Employment

RESIGNATIONS

All resignations must be supplied in writing, stating the reason for resigning your post.

TERMINATING EMPLOYMENT WITHOUT GIVING NOTICE

If you terminate your employment without giving or working the required period of notice, as indicated in your individual Statement of Main Terms of Employment, you will have an amount equal to any additional cost of covering your duties during the notice period not worked deducted from any termination pay due to you. This is an express written term of your contract of employment. You will also forfeit any contractual accrued holiday pay due to you over and above your statutory holiday pay, if you fail to give or work the required period of notice.

RETURN OF OUR PROPERTY

On the termination of your employment you must return all our property which is in your possession or for which you have responsibility. Failure to return such items will result in the cost of the items being deducted from any monies outstanding to you. This is an express written term of your contract of employment.

RETURN OF VEHICLES

On termination of your employment you must return any Council vehicle in your possession to our premises. Failure to return the vehicle will result in the cost of its recovery being deducted from any monies outstanding to you. This is an express written term of your contract of employment.

GARDEN LEAVE

If either you or the Council serves notice on the other to terminate your employment the Council may require you to take “garden leave” for all or part of the remaining period of your employment.

NB.

During any period of garden leave you will continue to receive your full pay and any other contractual benefits.

Other Policies

The Council has a number of other policies and procedures, copies of these will have been provided to you separately or are available via the Council website, please ensure you have read and understood the following:-

- **Anti-Bribery Policy**
- **Anti-Tax Evasion Policy**
- **Whistle-blowers**
- **Personal Harassment Policy and Procedure**
- **Sexual Harassment Policy**
- **Equality, Inclusion and Diversity Policy**

If you require any clarification or additional information please refer to the Town Clerk.



Okehampton Town Council

Okehampton Town Council

DRAFT Financial Regulations

Contents

1. General.....	2
2. Risk management and internal control.....	3
3. Accounts and audit	4
4. Budget and precept	5
5. Procurement	6
6. Banking and payments.....	8
7. Electronic payments	9
8. Cheque payments.....	10
9. Payment cards.....	11
10. Petty Cash.....	11
11. Payment of salaries and allowances	11
12. Loans and investments	12
13. Income	12
14. Payments under contracts for building or other construction works	13
15. Stores and equipment	13
16. Assets, properties and estates	13
17. Insurance.....	14
18. [Charities].....	14
19. Suspension and revision of Financial Regulations	14
Appendix 1 - Tender process.....	16

These Financial Regulations were adopted by the council at its meeting held on

1. General

- 1.1. These Financial Regulations govern the financial management of the council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the council. They are one of the council's governing documents and shall be observed in conjunction with the council's Standing Orders.
- 1.2. Councillors are expected to follow these regulations and not to entice employees to breach them. Failure to follow these regulations brings the office of councillor into disrepute.
- 1.3. Wilful breach of these regulations by an employee may result in disciplinary proceedings.
- 1.4. In these Financial Regulations:
 - 'Accounts and Audit Regulations' means the regulations issued under Sections 32, 43(2) and 46 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, or any superseding legislation, and then in force, unless otherwise specified.
 - "Approve" refers to an online action, allowing an electronic transaction to take place.
 - "Authorise" refers to a decision by the council, or a committee or an officer, to allow something to happen.
 - 'Proper practices' means those set out in *The Practitioners' Guide*
 - *Practitioners' Guide* refers to the guide issued by the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) and published by NALC in England or Governance and Accountability for Local Councils in Wales – A Practitioners Guide jointly published by One Voice Wales and the Society of Local Council Clerks in Wales.
 - 'Must' and **bold text** refer to a statutory obligation the council cannot change.
 - 'Shall' refers to a non-statutory instruction by the council to its members and staff.
- 1.5. The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) holds a statutory office, appointed by the council. The Clerk has been appointed as RFO and these regulations apply accordingly. 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 control systems;
 - ensures the accounting control systems are observed;
 - ensures the accounting records are kept up to date;
 - seeks economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of council resources; and
 - produces financial management information as required by the council.
- 1.6. **The council must not delegate any decision regarding:**
 - **setting the final budget or the precept (council tax requirement);**

- the outcome of a review of the effectiveness of its internal controls
- approving accounting statements;
- approving an annual governance statement;
- borrowing;
- declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence; and
- addressing recommendations from the internal or external auditors

1.7. The council shall:

- authorise any grant in excess of £10,000 or other single commitment in excess of £8,000; and

1.8 The Policy & Resources Committee shall:

- determine and regularly review the bank mandate for all council bank accounts;

2. Risk management and internal control

- 2.1. **The council must ensure that it has a sound system of internal control, which delivers effective financial, operational and risk management.**
- 2.2. The Clerk shall prepare, for approval by the council, a risk management policy covering all activities of the council. This policy and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.
- 2.3. When considering any new activity, the Clerk shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals.
- 2.4. **At least once a year, the council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control, before approving the Annual Governance Statement.**
- 2.5. **The accounting control systems determined by the RFO must include measures to:**
 - ensure that risk is appropriately managed;
 - ensure the prompt, accurate recording of financial transactions;
 - prevent and detect inaccuracy or fraud; and
 - allow the reconstitution of any lost records;
 - identify the duties of officers dealing with transactions and
 - ensure division of responsibilities.
- 2.6. At least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, a member other than the Chair shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the RFO. The member shall sign and date the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of this. This activity, including any exceptions, shall be reported to and noted by the Policy & Resources Committee. This check will include verification of all other types of payments including Lloyds Debit Cards.
- 2.7. Regular back-up copies shall be made of the records on any council computer and stored either online or in a separate location from the computer. The council shall

put measures in place to ensure that the ability to access any council computer is not lost if an employee leaves or is incapacitated for any reason.

3. Accounts and audit

- 3.1. All accounting procedures and financial records of the council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 3.2. **The accounting records determined by the RFO must be sufficient to explain the council's transactions and to disclose its financial position with reasonably accuracy at any time. In particular, they must contain:**
 - **day-to-day entries of all sums of money received and expended by the council and the matters to which they relate;**
 - **a record of the assets and liabilities of the council;**
- 3.3. The accounting records shall be designed to facilitate the efficient preparation of the accounting statements in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.
- 3.4. The RFO shall complete and certify the annual Accounting Statements of the council contained in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with proper practices, as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year. Having certified the Accounting Statements, the RFO shall submit them (with any related documents) to the council, within the timescales required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 3.5. **The council must ensure that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and internal control system in accordance with proper practices.**
- 3.6. **Any officer or member of the council must make available such documents and records as the internal or external auditor consider necessary for the purpose of the audit** and shall, as directed by the council, supply the RFO, internal auditor, or external auditor with such information and explanation as the council considers necessary.
- 3.7. The internal auditor shall be appointed by the council and shall carry out their work to evaluate the effectiveness of the council's risk management, control and governance processes in accordance with proper practices specified in the Practitioners' Guide.
- 3.8. The council shall ensure that the internal auditor:
 - is competent and independent of the financial operations of the council;
 - reports to council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one written report during each financial year;
 - can demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships; and
 - has no involvement in the management or control of the council
- 3.9. Internal or external auditors may not under any circumstances:
 - perform any operational duties for the council;

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

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

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

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

4. Budget and precept

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

4.2. Budgets for salaries and wages, including employer contributions shall be reviewed by the Policy & Resources Committee at least annually in the autumn for the following financial year and the final version shall be evidenced by a hard copy schedule signed by the Clerk and the Chair of the committee.

4.3. No later than December each year, the RFO shall prepare a draft budget with detailed estimates of all receipts and payments/income and expenditure for the following financial year, taking account of the lifespan of assets and cost implications of repair or replacement.

4.4. Unspent budgets for completed projects shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year. Unspent funds for partially completed projects may only be carried forward with the formal approval of the full council.

4.5. Each committee that is delegated a budget shall review its draft budget and submit any proposed amendments to the council not later than the end of December each year.

4.6. The draft budget with any committee proposals, including any recommendations for the use or accumulation of reserves, shall be considered by the council.

4.7. Having considered the proposed budget forecast for the ensuing financial year, the council shall determine its council tax requirement by setting a budget. The council shall set a precept for this amount no later than the end of January for the ensuing financial year.

4.8. **Any member with council tax unpaid for more than two months is prohibited from voting on the budget or precept by Section 106 of the Local Government**

Finance Act 1992 and must and must disclose at the start of the meeting that Section 106 applies to them.

- 4.9. The RFO shall **issue the precept to the billing authority no later than the end of February** and supply each member with a copy of the agreed annual budget.
- 4.10. The agreed budget provides a basis for monitoring progress during the year by comparing actual spending and income against what was planned.
- 4.11. Any addition to, or withdrawal from, any earmarked reserve shall be agreed by the council or relevant committee.

5. Procurement

- 5.1. **Members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times.** Any officer procuring goods, services or works should ensure, as far as practicable, that the best available terms are obtained, usually by obtaining prices from several suppliers.
- 5.2. The RFO should verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before it is made.
- 5.3. Every contract shall comply with these the council's Standing Orders and these Financial Regulations and no exceptions shall be made, except in an emergency.
- 5.4. **For a contract for the supply of goods, services or works where the estimated value will exceed the thresholds set by Parliament, the full requirements of The Procurement Act 2023 and The Procurement Regulations 2024 or any superseding legislation ("the Legislation"), must be followed in respect of the tendering, award and notification of that contract.**
- 5.5. Where the estimated value is below the Government threshold, the council shall (with the exception of items listed in paragraph 6.12) obtain prices as follows:
- 5.6. For contracts estimated to exceed £60,000 including VAT, the Clerk shall advertise an open invitation for tenders in compliance with any relevant provisions of the Legislation. Tenders shall be invited in accordance with Appendix 1.
- 5.7. **For contracts estimated to be over £30,000 including VAT, the council must comply with any requirements of the Legislation regarding the publication of invitations and notices.**
- 5.8. For contracts greater than £12,000 excluding VAT the Clerk shall seek at least three fixed-price quotes;
- 5.9. where the value is between £3,000 and £12,000 excluding VAT, the Clerk shall try to obtain 3 estimates which might include evidence of online prices, or recent prices from regular suppliers.
- 5.10. For smaller purchases, the RFO and delegated officers shall seek to achieve value for money.
- 5.11. **Contracts must not be to avoid compliance with these rules.**
- 5.12. The requirement to obtain competitive prices in these regulations need not apply to contracts that relate to items (i) to (iv) below:
 - i. specialist services, such as legal professionals acting in disputes;

- ii. repairs to, or parts for, existing machinery or equipment;
- iii. works, goods or services that constitute an extension of an existing contract;
- iv. goods or services that are only available from one supplier or are sold at a fixed price.

5.13. When applications are made to waive this financial regulation to enable a price to be negotiated without competition, the reason should be set out in a recommendation to the council or relevant committee. Avoidance of competition is not a valid reason.

5.14. The council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.

5.15. Individual purchases within an agreed budget for that type of expenditure may be authorised by:

- officers other than the Clerk, under delegated authority, as follows excluding VAT:

Role	£	Authority
Assistant Clerk	£500	For goods or services within the appropriate budget heading
	Between £500 and £2,000	When covering the absence of the Clerk and in consultation with the Mayor or Chairman of the relevant Committee
Finance Officer	£250 £500	For goods or services within the appropriate budget heading Spend by Debit Card restricted to maximum of £500 per order in the absence of the Clerk, or as approved by the Clerk up to the Clerk's limit as specified at 9.1.
Park-Keeper	£500	For goods or services within the appropriate budget heading
Facilities Officer	£500	For goods or services within the appropriate budget heading

- the Clerk, under delegated authority, for any items below £2,000 excluding VAT.
- the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of the Council or Chair of the appropriate committee, for any items below £4,000 excluding VAT.
- a duly delegated committee of the council for all items of expenditure within their delegated budgets for items under £8,000 excluding VAT.
- in respect of grants, a duly authorised committee (Policy & Resources Committee) for awards under £10,000 excluding VAT.
- the council for all items over £8,000;

Such authorisation must be supported by a minute (in the case of council or committee decisions) or other auditable evidence trail.

- 5.16. No individual member, or informal group of members may issue an official order or make any contract on behalf of the council.
- 5.17. In cases of serious risk to the delivery of council services or to public safety on council premises, the clerk may authorise expenditure of up to £2,000 excluding VAT on repair, replacement or other work that in their judgement is necessary, whether or not there is any budget for such expenditure. The Clerk shall report such action to the Chair as soon as possible and to the council or relevant committee as soon as practicable thereafter.
- 5.18. No expenditure shall be authorised, no contract entered into or tender accepted in relation to any major project, unless the council or relevant committee is satisfied that the necessary funds are available and that where a loan is required, Government borrowing approval has been obtained first.
- 5.19. An official order or letter shall be issued for all work, goods and services above £2,000 excluding VAT unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate. Copies of orders shall be retained, along with evidence of receipt of goods.
- 5.20. Any ordering system can be misused and access to them shall be controlled by the RFO.

6. Banking and payments

- 6.1. The council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the RFO and authorised by the council; banking arrangements shall not be delegated to a committee. The council has resolved to bank with Lloyds, Nationwide, NatWest and the CCLA. The arrangements shall be reviewed annually for security and efficiency.
- 6.2. The council must have safe and efficient arrangements for making payments, to safeguard against the possibility of fraud or error. Wherever possible, more than one person should be involved in any payment, for example by dual online authorisation or dual cheque signing. Even where a purchase has been authorised, the payment must also be authorised and only authorised payments shall be approved or signed to allow the funds to leave the council's bank.
- 6.3. All invoices for payment should be examined for arithmetical accuracy, analysed to the appropriate expenditure heading and verified to confirm that the work, goods or services were received, checked and represent expenditure previously authorised by the council before being certified by the RFO.
- 6.4. Personal payments (including salaries, wages, expenses and any payment made in relation to the termination of employment) may be summarised to avoid disclosing any personal information.
- 6.5. All payments shall be made by online banking/cheque, in accordance with a resolution of the council or duly delegated committee, or a delegated decision by the RFO, unless the council or relevant committee resolves to use a different payment method.

- 6.6. For each financial year the RFO may draw up a schedule of regular payments due in relation to a continuing contract or obligation (such as Salaries, PAYE, National Insurance, pension contributions, rent, rates, regular maintenance contracts and similar items), which the council or Policy & Resources committee may authorise in advance for the year.
- 6.7. A list of such payments shall be reported to the next appropriate meeting of the council or Policy & Resources Committee for information only.
- 6.8. The Clerk and RFO shall have delegated authority to authorise payments in the following circumstances:
- i. any payments of up to £500 excluding VAT.
 - ii. payments of up to £2,000 excluding VAT in cases of serious risk to the delivery of council services or to public safety on council premises.
 - iii. any payment necessary to avoid a charge under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998 or to comply with contractual terms, where the due date for payment is before the next scheduled meeting of the council or a committee, where the RFO certifies that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council or relevant committee.
 - iv. Fund transfers within the councils banking arrangements up to the sum of £20,000, and any amount as required between the Lloyds current and CCLA accounts in order to maintain an amount equalling three months precept in the Lloyds current account. A list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council or Policy & Resources committee.
- 6.9 The RFO shall present a schedule of payments requiring authorisation, forming part of the agenda for the meeting, together with the relevant invoices, to the council or committee with delegated power as set out in the committee Terms of Reference. The council or committee shall review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied itself, shall authorise payment by resolution. The authorised schedule shall be initialled immediately below the last item by the person chairing the meeting.

7. Electronic payments

- 7.1. Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the RFO shall be appointed as the Service Administrator and the Finance Officer will have full access. The bank mandate agreed by the council shall identify those councillors who will be authorised to approve transactions on those accounts and a minimum of two people will be involved in any online approval process.
- 7.2. All authorised signatories shall have access to view the council's bank accounts online.
- 7.3. No employee or councillor shall disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the council or its banking, to anyone not authorised in writing by the council or a duly delegated committee.
- 7.4. The Service Administrator or Finance Officer shall set up all items due for payment online. A list of payments for approval, together with copies of the relevant invoices, shall be sent by email to an authorised signatory.

- 7.5. In the prolonged absence of the Service Administrator and Finance Officer an authorised signatory shall set up any payments due before the return of the Service Administrator.
- 7.6. Two authorised signatories, one of whom may be the Service Administrator, shall check the payment details against the invoices before approving each payment using the online banking system.
- 7.7. Evidence shall be retained showing which members approved the payment online and a printout of the transaction confirming that the payment has been made shall be retained for audit purposes. To ensure there is no delay in payment, once approved, online or cheque payments that have not been second authorised by an authorised signatory by the following Thursday may be second authorised by the Clerk/RFO or Finance Officer.
- 7.8. A full list of all payments made shall be provided to the next council or committee meeting.
- 7.9. With the approval of the Policy & Resources Committee in each case, regular payments (such as gas, electricity, telephone, broadband, water, National Non-Domestic Rates, refuse collection, pension contributions and HMRC payments) may be made by variable direct debit, provided that the instructions are signed/approved by two Members. The approval of the use of each variable direct debit shall be reviewed by Policy & Resources Committee at least every two years.
- 7.10. Payment may be made by BACS or CHAPS by resolution of any delegated committee provided that each payment is approved online by two authorised bank signatories, evidence is retained and any payments are reported to the council or a committee at the next meeting. The approval of the use of BACS or CHAPS shall be renewed by resolution of the council at least every two years.
- 7.11. If thought appropriate by the council, regular payments of fixed sums may be made by banker's standing order, provided that the instructions are signed or approved online by two authorised signatories, evidence of this is retained and any payments are reported to council when made. The approval of the use of a banker's standing order shall be reviewed by the Policy & Resources Committee at least every two years.
- 7.12. Account details for suppliers may only be changed upon written notification by the supplier verified by the Clerk and the Finance Officer, or a member. This is a potential area for fraud and the individuals involved should ensure that any change is genuine. Data held should be checked with suppliers every three years.
- 7.13. Members and officers shall ensure that any computer used for the council's financial business has adequate security, with anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall software installed and regularly updated.
- 7.14. Remembered password facilities other than secure password stores requiring separate identity verification should not be used on any computer used for council banking.

8. Cheque payments

- 8.1. Cheques or orders for payment in accordance with a resolution or delegated decision shall be signed by two signatories.

- 8.2. A signatory having a family or business relationship with the beneficiary of a payment shall not, under normal circumstances, be a signatory to that payment.
- 8.3. To indicate agreement of the details on the cheque with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall also initial the cheque counterfoil and invoice.
- 8.4. Cheques or orders for payment shall not normally be presented for signature other than at, or immediately before or after a council or committee meeting. Any signatures obtained away from council meetings shall be reported to the council or next committee meeting as part of the payment authorisation process.

9. Payment cards

- 9.1. Any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the RFO ~~and Finance Officer and-~~ Cards will ~~also~~ be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £700 for the RFO and £5000 for the Finance Officer as set out at 5.15, unless authorised by council or relevant committee Chair in writing before any order is placed.
- 9.2. A pre-paid debit card may be issued to employees with varying limits. These limits will be set by the Policy & Resources Committee. Transactions and purchases made will be reported to the council or next meeting of a committee and authority for topping-up shall be at the discretion of Policy & Resources Committee.
- 9.3. Any corporate credit card or trade card account opened by the council will be specifically restricted to use by the Clerk, Finance Officer, Facilities Officer and Park-Keeper and any balance shall be paid in full each month.
- 9.4. Personal credit or debit cards of members or staff shall not be used except for expenses of up to £250 including VAT, incurred in accordance with council policy.

10. Petty Cash

- 10.1. The RFO shall maintain a petty cash float of £100 and may provide petty cash to officers for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses.
 - a) Vouchers for payments made from petty cash shall be kept, along with receipts to substantiate every payment.
 - b) Cash 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 any schedule of payments presented for approval.

11. Payment of salaries and allowances

- 11.1. **As an employer, the council must make arrangements to comply with the statutory requirements of PAYE legislation.**
- 11.2. **Councillors allowances (where paid) are also liable to deduction of tax under PAYE rules and must be taxed correctly before payment.**
- 11.3. Salary rates shall be agreed by the council, or a duly delegated committee. No changes shall be made to any employee's gross pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the council or Policy & Resources Committee

- 11.4. Payment of salaries shall be made, after deduction of tax, national insurance, pension contributions and any similar statutory or discretionary deductions, on the dates stipulated in employment contracts.
- 11.5. Deductions from salary shall be paid to the relevant bodies within the required timescales, provided that each payment is reported, as set out in these regulations above.
- 11.6. Each payment to employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall be recorded in a payroll control account or other separate confidential record, with the total of such payments each calendar month reported in the cashbook. Payroll reports will be reviewed by a Committee or Council to ensure that the correct payments have been made.
- 11.7. Any termination payments shall be supported by a report to the council, setting out a clear business case. Termination payments shall only be authorised by the full council.
- 11.8. Before employing interim staff, the council must consider a full business case.

12. Loans and investments

- 12.1. Any application for Government approval to borrow money and subsequent arrangements for a loan must be authorised by the council and recorded in the minutes. All borrowing shall be in the name of the council, after obtaining any necessary approval.
- 12.2. Any financial arrangement which does not require formal borrowing approval from the Secretary of State (such as Hire Purchase, Leasing of tangible assets or loans to be repaid within the financial year) must be authorised by the council, following a written report on the value for money of the proposed transaction.
- 12.3. The council shall consider the requirement for an Investment Strategy and Policy in accordance with Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments, which must be written in accordance with relevant regulations, proper practices and guidance. Any Strategy and Policy shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.
- 12.4. All investment of money under the control of the council shall be in the name of the council.
- 12.5. All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO.
- 12.6. Payments in respect of short term or long-term investments, including transfers between bank accounts held in the same bank, shall be made in accordance with these regulations.

13. Income

- 13.1. The collection of all sums due to the council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO.
- 13.2. The council will review all fees and charges for work done, services provided, or goods sold at least annually as part of the budget-setting process, following a report of the Clerk. The Finance Officer shall be responsible for the collection of all amounts due to the council.

- 13.3. Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts shall be reported to the council by the RFO or Finance Officer and may be written off in the year. The council's approval shall be shown in the accounting records.
- 13.4. All sums received on behalf of the council shall be deposited intact with the council's bankers, with such frequency as the RFO considers necessary. The origin of each receipt shall clearly be recorded on the paying-in slip or other record.
- 13.5. Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the council.
- 13.6. The RFO shall ensure that VAT is correctly recorded in the council's accounting software and that any VAT Return required is submitted from the software by the due date.
- 13.7. Any income that is the property of a charitable trust shall be paid into a charitable bank account. Instructions for the payment of funds due from the charitable trust to the council (to meet expenditure already incurred by the authority) will be given by the Managing Trustees of the charity meeting separately from any council meeting.

14. Payments under contracts for building or other construction works

- 14.1. Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the RFO shall maintain a record of all such payments, which shall be made within the time specified in the contract based on signed certificates from the architect or other consultant engaged to supervise the works.
- 14.2. Any variation of, addition to or omission from a contract must be authorised by the Clerk to the contractor in writing, with the council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the contract sum by 5% or more, or likely to exceed the budget available.

15. Stores and equipment

- 15.1. The officer in charge of each section (Assistant Clerk, Facilities Officer, Park-Keeper) shall be responsible for the care and custody of stores and equipment in that section.
- 15.2. 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.
- 15.3. Stocks shall be kept at the levels consistent with operational requirements.

16. Assets, properties and estates

- 16.1. The Clerk shall make arrangements for the safe custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the council.
- 16.2. The RFO shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date, with a record of all properties held by the council, their 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.
- 16.3. 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.

- 16.4. No interest in land 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. In each case a written report 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 where required by law).
- 16.5. 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, except where the estimated value of any one item does not exceed £500. In each case a written report shall be provided to council with a full business case.

17. Insurance

- 17.1. The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the council and the property and risks covered, reviewing these annually before the renewal date in conjunction with the council's review of risk management.
- 17.2. The Clerk shall give prompt notification to the RFO of all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.
- 17.3. The RFO shall be notified of any loss, liability, damage or event likely to lead to a claim, and shall report these to the council or relevant committee at the next available meeting. The RFO shall negotiate all claims on the council's insurers.
- 17.4. 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 Policy & Resources Committee.

18. Charities

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

19. Suspension and revision of Financial Regulations

- 19.1. The council shall review these Financial Regulations annually and following any change of Clerk or RFO. The Clerk shall monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and advise the council of any need to amend these Financial Regulations.
- 19.2. The council may, by resolution 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 presented to all members. Suspension does not disapply any legislation or permit the council to act unlawfully.

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

Appendix 1 - Tender process

- 1) Any 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.
- 2) The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the Clerk in the ordinary course of post, unless an electronic tendering process has been agreed by the council.
- 3) Where a postal process is used, 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. 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.
- 4) Where an electronic tendering process is used, the council shall use a specific email address that will be monitored to ensure that nobody accesses any tender before the expiry of the deadline for submission.
- 5) Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to Standing Order [insert reference of the council's relevant standing order] and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.
- 6) Where 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, 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.



Okehampton Town Council

Okehampton Town Council

Financial Risk Assessment and Management Policy **DRAFT**

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICY

Definition of Risk Management

Risk is the threat that an event or action will adversely affect an organisations ability to achieve its objectives and to successfully execute its strategies.

Risk management is the process by which risks are identified, evaluated and controlled. It is a key element of the framework of governance together with community focus, structures and processes, standards of conduct and service delivery arrangements.

Risk Policy Statement

Okehampton Town Council recognises that it has a responsibility to manage risks effectively in order to protect its members, staff, assets, liabilities and the community against potential losses, to minimise uncertainty in achieving its goals and objectives and to maximise its opportunities.

Approach to Risk Management

The council's approach to risk management is to attempt to identify and manage risks in the most cost-effective manner within overall resources available.

Identified risks are recorded in the risk assessments, and the likelihood and impact are assessed. The council is aware that some risks can never be eliminated fully but endeavours to minimise risk by putting control measures in place where possible.

Risk identification forms part of the day to day work of the Clerk, staff and members and is considered throughout all aspects of council business.

Responsibility for Risk Management

The Council recognises that it is the responsibility of all members and employees to have regard for risk in carrying out their duties.

If uncontrolled, risk can result in a drain on resources that could better be directed to service provision. This policy recognises that any reduction in the risk of injury, illness, loss or damage benefits the whole .

Review

The Policy and Risk Assessment will be reviewed and updated as and when a new risk is identified, the likelihood or impact changes, or at least annually.

FINANCIAL RISK ASSESSMENT

Subject	Risk/s Identified	Risk Level H/M/L	Potential Impact H/M/L	Management/Control Measures	Review/Assess/Revise
Payments	Goods not supplied but invoiced, invoices incorrect, invoices unpaid.	L	M	All invoices recorded and filed on receipt. Invoices checked for accuracy and for receipt of goods and signed by Officers. Two signatories sign cheques and initial stub or payment is made by BACS, the setup being carried out by the Clerk or Finance Officer and a Councillor being second authoriser. A monthly audit is carried out by a nominated Councillor.	Maintain existing procedures.
Cheque books	Loss of cheques, fraudulent use.	L	M	Cheque books kept in safe, no blank cheques signed.	Maintain existing procedures.
Debit Card (Lloyds)	Loss of card, fraudulent use	L	M	The Clerk and the Finance Officer are the only approved card holders and are the only persons who use the cards. Prior approval of the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Policy & Resources Committee, or the Mayor is required for purchase over £700 by the Clerk. The Finance Officers limit is £500 in the absence of the Clerk, up to £700 with the Clerks approval. Spend over this limit with the prior approval of the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Policy & Resources Committee, or the Mayor is required.	New card and procedures as Min Ref 380.3, 14/10/19. Card for Finance Officer approved Min Ref 158.5 21/07/2025
Invoicing	Services provided by Council but not charged for	L	M	Online booking system commenced April 2023. Printout of bookings from which invoices are issued, a month in advance where possible, by the Finance Officer and filed. Invoice number entered thereon. List of regular invoices to be issued is maintained. Early hastening action taken if required. Clerk undertakes checks.	Maintain existing procedures
Card Payment Facility	Unable to accept money due to loss or service or other fault, risk of fraudulent or inaccurate transactions	L	M	Payment by BACS, cash or cheque accepted instead Receipt to be kept and attached to the invoice Checks to be undertaken by the Clerk	New facility approved Min Ref 570, 11/01/2021
Fuel Card	Loss of card. Fraudulent use.	L	M	Card in the name of the Council or approved person. Only available for the Park Keeper and Grounds staff to use. Receipts for fuel purchased kept and reconciled with invoice. Audited monthly by a nominated Councillor.	New facility approved minute Ref 536 6/12/2021

Petty Cash	Fraudulent use, goods purchased not for Council use. Loss of cash from petty cash tin.	L	M	Cash locked in safe at night. Purchases approved by Clerk. Receipts checked by Finance Officer before cash reimbursed. Reconciled by Finance Officer to check for any irregularities Reconciled and audited monthly by a nominated Councillor.	Increased to £100 Minute ref 466.4 15 th November 2021
Grants	Mismanagement of Grant Aid powers Risk of fraudulent applications, misuse of monies granted to households.	L	L	Formal applications only considered by P&R, Terms and Conditions in place as per Grants Policy, budget adhered to. Applications reviewed by P&R Chair, Vice-Chair and Clerk for eligibility prior to consideration by P&R. Recommendation made to Full Council if amount exceeds P&R delegated limit.	Maintain existing procedures.
Salaries and wages	Incorrect payments to staff (rates, NI, tax). Payments not made to HMRC. Pension contributions not made to Peninsula Pensions Non-compliance with year-end obligations.	L	H	Payroll undertaken internally; primarily by the Finance Officer, or Clerk in absences Monthly reconciliations completed for PAYE/NIC, wages control and Pensions by Finance Officer Salary paperwork and reports kept securely Payroll authorisation form checked and signed by Clerk and Mayor Payment instructions signed by two authorised signatories All correspondence filed Staff timesheets completed Excel spreadsheets used to monitor overtime and flexible hours working Internal audit. Software held on single desktop computer. Data backed up but risk of it being lost. Cloud based system being subscribed to September 2025.	Maintain existing procedures. Take opportunities for any available Training.
Election Costs	Inability to meet costs. Increase in costs due to English Devolution	£ M	£ M	Provision made in budget annually.	Maintain existing procedures. Consider further in budgeting process for 2026/27
VAT	Errors in calculation. Payments not made to HMRC.	L	H	Use of RBS Omega software for accounts (some human error possible). Payments made quarterly to HMRC. Quarterly reconciliations by Finance Officer Internal Audit	Maintain existing procedures. Ongoing Training.
Annual Return	Inability of Accountants to complete year end close down in time. Not submitted in time.	M	M	Book RBS time early. Book internal auditor early.	Maintain existing procedures. Ongoing Training.

Insurance	Inadequate or deficient insurance cover. Over-insurance increasing costs unnecessarily.	L	M	Annual review of insurance needs with brokers. Annual review of asset values. 5 yearly revaluations of assets (buildings and identified items)	Maintain existing procedures.
Computer records	Loss of data through system error or theft.	L	H	Back-up data daily Back-up held on and off site	Maintain existing procedures
Budget	Inadequate budget preparation leading to inability to fulfil obligations.	L	H	Budget considered by all Committees and Council in December. Budget process commences in August/September with budget workshops for all committees to which all Councillors can attend. Balance sheet and income and expenditure considered by P&R Virements made where necessary.	Maintain existing procedures
Buildings	Unexpected repairs - the Council has a number of physical assets.	M	H	The Council has a rolling capital fund in the budget affecting a cyclical maintenance programme.	Maintain regular inspections of buildings to minimise risk of major failings.
Tenders	Best value not achieved.	L	M	Financial regulations lay down procedures	Maintain existing procedures.
Business continuity	Risk of Council not being able to continue business due to unforeseen circumstances (bank failure, long-term illness of staff).	L	H	Business continuity plan. Transfer capital a/c to alternative bank Insurance cover Business Continuity Plan to be updated at least annually	
Precept	Overspend of operational budget and/or inaccurate setting of precept level and realising demands on Precept Government imposition of referendums on town and parish councils limiting the ability of the council to raise its precept by a large enough % to meet its projected expenditure.	L	H	Budget and precept are considered by all Committees and Full Council in December each year. The precept deadline is noted and complied by the Town Clerk. Expenditure against budget considered at all Policy and Resources Committee meetings.	Existing procedures adequate.
Financial controls and records	Inadequate records leading to financial irregularities.	L	M	Financial Regulations reviewed annually. Internal and External Audit presented to Full Council. Treasury & Investment Policy & Strategy reviewed annually.	Continue to review annually.
Bank and banking	Bank errors and/or inadequate checks leading to financial irregularities	L	M	Bank reconciliation carried out each month as are audits of BACS payments by nominated Councillor Financial Regulations lay down procedures.	Check to include check of budget balance on Rialtas at the beginning of the financial year, to include any rollover of funds

Councillor Allowances	Non-payment of tax	L	M	Mayor/Deputy Mayor only receive allowances issued only against receipts. Councillors can claim expenses for approved travel or other items, payable against receipts. Expenses Policy refers.	Maintain existing procedures
Collection of Income	Loss through theft or dishonesty.	M	H	Funds received by BACS or cash/cheque posted to/ brought into the office is accepted by any member of staff available, including the Finance Officer who will have raised the associated invoice Receipts are issued and matched to invoices. All cash is banked regularly. Petty cash is reconciled to receipts monthly. Internal audit twice per annum. Unbanked cash locked in safe. Checks by Clerk	Maintain existing procedures.
Cash	Loss of income or unforeseen major expenditure leading to cash flow problems.	L	H	Ensure adequate Reserves, level required reviewed annually including potential risk of loss of significant self-generated income. Ensure adequate insurance cover.	Maintain existing procedures.
Assets	Protection of physical assets	M	H	Buildings and property insured. Fire alarm & fire equipment annual test. Weekly fire alarm test. Personal Appliances annual electrical test. Six monthly lift tests. Annual play equipment checks by RoSPA. Daily and weekly checks of play equipment by in-house RosPA trained inspector Insurance policy reviewed annually. Weekly checks conducted for remote locations	Maintain existing procedures
Assets	Inadequate security of buildings, equipment etc	H	M	Buildings secured outside working hours. Monitored intruder alarms at Town Hall, Parks Office and Workshop. Staff vigilance. Adequate lighting Regular liaison with Police	Maintain existing procedures.
Assets	Inadequate maintenance of buildings etc	L	L	Planned maintenance programme. Property and Parks Budget. Planned checking schedule. Property and parks Committee to review budget annually. Inspection of assets by Councillors/Committees as deemed necessary	Maintain existing procedures

Assets (Cemetery)	Error through inadequate record keeping or checks when managed by others Error in record keeping by Council staff	M	H	Possibility of claim by those affected	Maintain existing procedures
Councillor propriety	Incomplete register of interests/failure to declare interests	M	L	Software purchase to minimise potential for error Entries Regular reminder to members. Complaints Policy & Procedure	Maintain existing procedures.
Councillor/staff propriety	Breach of confidentiality	M	H	Regular reminder to members/staff Complaints Policy & Procedure	Maintain existing procedures.
Councillor propriety	Councillors acting inappropriately and bringing the Council into disrepute.	M	H	Regular reminders of Code of Conduct Complaints Policy & Procedure	Maintain existing procedures.
Councillor Staff – breach of GDPR	Breach of regulations	M	H	Councillor and Staff training and reminders of policy and procedures which are reviewed regularly	Maintain existing procedures
Reports and records	Improper and untimely reporting of meetings via the minutes	L	L	Draft minutes of all meetings to be issued to all Councillors as soon as drafted. All minutes to be approved at following committee/council meeting. All committee minutes to be ratified at next Full Council meeting. Minutes to be available to press and public at Town Council offices and via the Council website within 5 working days of a meeting.	Maintain existing procedures.
Third parties	Risks to third party, property or individuals	L	M	Public & Products liability insurance in place (limit of indemnity £10m) Insurance cover to be reviewed annually. Risk assessments of individual events.	Maintain existing procedures
Staff	Compliance with Employment Law	M	M	Employer Liability insurance in place (limit of indemnity £10m) Insurance cover to be reviewed annually.	Maintain existing procedures
All personnel	Health & Safety Matters	M	M	Health & Safety policy in place, annual review. Annual risk assessments – undertaken/amended as needed Regular training and reminders	Maintain existing procedures.
Legal	Conduct of council business is ultra vires	M	L	Clerk to verify legal position for any new proposal. Legal advice to be sought where required.	Maintain existing procedures
Public Referendum	Unbudgeted expenditure incurred in costs to carry out a referendum.	L	M	No current requirement under legislation. Proactive engagement with electorate.	Maintain existing procedures.

				Newsletters or public meetings to inform electorate of specific issues of concern Policy & Resources review annually.	
Government English Devolution White Paper	Unbudgeted costs relating to creation of Unitary Council, disbandment of County and District Councils and the unknown impact on the town council, including potential transfer of assets and services	M	M	Unknown timescale for the changes and potential impact on financial and staffing challenges.	Council to keep abreast of updates and potential risks as they occur
Community Governance Boundary Review	Amendment to the boundary between the Town and Hamlets in May 2027 and addition of a Councillor to the Town Council. Additional assets to be identified (bins, benches, noticeboards). Potential financial implication with regards to precepting arrangements	M	M	Communication strategy to be agreed by OTC and OHPC. Precept arrangements to be considered and impact on the budget. Potential for delay in receipt of information from other parties allowing this to be considered in a timely manner. Unknown implications	Regular consideration of progress by council
Software	Loss to data due to software packages being held on one desktop computer	M	M	Daily backups undertaken. Annual reports run and saved electronically or more often as required for record keeping	Consider moving to cloud-based options as they arise.

Adopted by Council: 2 March 2015 (Minute Ref: 547.1)
Reviewed by Council: 29 February 2016 (Minute Ref: 486)
Reviewed by Council: 25 July 2016 (Minute Ref: 126.3)
Reviewed by Council: 27 February 2017 (Minute Ref: 516)
Reviewed by Council@ May 2025

Revised by Council: 21 May 2018 (Minute Ref: 44)
Revised by Council: 20 May 2019 (Minute Ref: 31.1)
Revised by Council: December 2019
Revised by Council March 2021 (Min Ref 790)

Revised by Council January 2022 (Min Ref 659)
Revised by Council May 2022
Revised by Council May 2023
Revised by Council May 2024



Okehampton Town Council

Okehampton Town Council

DRAFT Grant Policy

Okehampton Town Council has the power to give financial help to local organisations to assist them to achieve their aims and purposes where they can demonstrate a benefit to the residents of Okehampton.

The Council has a policy of only assisting truly local, properly constituted community groups. This is defined to mean those organisations based in Okehampton or national bodies with an independent branch in Okehampton.

The Grants budget is a discretionary limited amount and once it has been allocated the Council will not be able to consider any further applications during the financial year. Grants are considered twice yearly (Spring and Autumn) at meetings of the Policy & Resources Committee, with the meeting dates being published on the Council's website www.okehampton.gov.uk.

Applications for consideration in the Spring must be received by the last Friday in April and those for consideration in the Autumn must be received by the last Friday of August.

The applicant will be sent details of the meeting at which the application will be considered and a representative from the group or organisation will be invited to attend the relevant meeting to answer any questions that may arise.

Those organisations who apply for and receive a large grant most years will be invited to submit their application early in the year for consideration in the Spring.

Okehampton Town Council may retain an emergency fund for applications received outside these dates, with those organisations applying for assistance at that time being required to indicate why this is so.

Each Grant application will be considered on its own merits. It should not be assumed that a successful outcome in one year will lead to a follow-on grant in a subsequent year.

Two categories of grant are available:

Small Grants – applications for amounts up to £500 that will enable or enhance the organisation's ability to fulfil its purpose.

Large Grants – applications for amounts exceeding £500 that support an organisation in its basic service delivery and where community needs are being met. Depending upon the amount requested, Full Council may be required to ratify the decision.

All grant applications must meet the application criteria as follows and the burden of provision of evidence of community benefit falls to the applicant:

Application criteria for both large and small grants:

- Grants may only be awarded to properly constituted voluntary groups, not-for-profit organisations and charities where evidence of a direct benefit to the residents of Okehampton can be demonstrated.
- The Council is unable to consider Grants to individuals, commercial organisations, profit-making organisations, community interest companies or political groups
- Grants will only be awarded to religious groups if it can be shown the activity will be open to residents of any religion, or none.
- Applications must be submitted directly from the activity organiser(s) and not through a third party. Payment of any grant awarded should be directly to the activity organiser(s).
- Retrospective applications will not be considered, for example for past events, or items already purchased.
- Any amount awarded is at the discretion of the Council and successful applicants may be awarded less than the amount applied for. Applications may be refused where it is felt the application criteria has not been met.
- There should be no assumption that a successful application will guarantee approval in subsequent years.
- A maximum of one application per financial year (1st April to 31st March) will be considered.
- Applicants are encouraged to apply to other local organisations where appropriate, including Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council if it meets their application criteria.
- Applicants need to be aware that all grants must directly benefit Okehampton Town residents and not just those from the wider area. Evidence of user numbers is required to be provided where both Okehampton Town residents and those from other areas will benefit.
- Grant monies not used for the purpose stated on the application or are found to duplicate successful applications to other funders, may be required to be repaid to the Council.
- Recipients of grants must complete, within 8 weeks of the completion of the project or event for which the grant was awarded, a feedback form or report to the Town Council. This can include photographs, receipts or other evidence of how the grant benefited the residents of Okehampton. **Future grant applications will not be considered unless a feedback form has been received.**

Application Procedure

All grant applications must be made on the application form (available on the website, or from the Town Hall) and returned to the Finance Officer with additional information for those over £500.

All applications must include:

- a statement of accounts for the most recent accounting year
- a copy of the governing document
- a copy of the current year's budget
- costings if applying for a specific project
- confirmation that other funding has been/will be applied for

Additionally, grant applications of over £500 must be accompanied by a letter, describing:

- the reason for the application
- the amount requested
- the benefit to Okehampton Town residents
- where there is a wider area of benefit, details of how many Okehampton Town residents will benefit.

All applications will be checked against the criteria by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Policy & Resources Committee along with the Finance Officer. Those that meet the requirements will then be considered by the Committee.

All applicants must disclose any close connection the organiser/s have with anyone who would directly benefit financially from the award of the grant.

The Council reserve the right to use feedback for public information purposes and to refuse an application which in their judgement does not fit the criteria. There is no right of appeal.



The purpose of the scheme is to help the business community to improve the look and appearance of Okehampton town centre.

This initiative is funded by £??? from a grant received from WDBC's Rural England Prosperity Fund which has been provided to the Town Council to manage.

Commented [EJ1]: Amount to be agreed by the Committee

1. Grants are available to businesses within the town of Okehampton which are open to the general public and sell a range of goods, foods or services.
2. Grants are available up to £500 or 50% of the project costs (whichever is the lower amount).
3. The applicant is required to contribute match funding to a minimum of 25% of the project costs.
4. Receipts or invoices for the work must be provided to Okehampton Town Council by no later than 31st January 2026 enable the grant to be claimed.
5. Where possible the work should be undertaken by companies local to Okehampton and materials purchased locally in order to support the wider Okehampton business community.
6. Grants are for capital work only and can be applied for to cover:
 - a. light building materials,
 - b. purchase or hire of tools, paint, coverings, fixtures and fittings (this needs to be permanent or long term),
 - c. window display equipment, low energy or "greener" replacement materials.
 - d. Tradesmen or labour costs
7. The Policy & Resources Committee will be responsible for consideration of applications.
8. The business applying for the grant must provide the Town Council with a photograph of the area to be addressed along with a brief outline of the intended works. This should include an estimate of the cost of the work and materials that be required.
9. Work on the project must be completed by the date specified and invoices/receipts and photos as evidence of expenditure must be submitted to the Town Council on or before the due date.
10. Retrospective applications will not be considered.

Commented [EJ2]: This can be whatever the Committee decides

Commented [EJ3]: WDBC requirement

11. The business owner must confirm that they have the permission of their landlord, if applicable, to carry out the work, and confirm if planning consent is required or has been obtained.
12. Grants will be paid directly to the applicant and not to a contractor/supplier.
13. The grant fund is limited and applications will be considered on a first come basis. The Council reserve the right to close the application process as and when the fund has been exhausted.
14. Every business that receives a grant will agree to participate in any publicity regarding the grant scheme and to allow their names, businesses and photographs of the premises to be used by the Town Council to publicise the scheme and works of the Council.
15. Only one application per business will be considered within the financial year. This is a pilot scheme however should it be continued, in following years, applications from business who have not previously received a grant will be prioritised.
16. The Town Council reserve the right to suspend or end this scheme without notice.



Okehampton Town Council

Okehampton Town Council

Waste Management and Recycling Policy

DRAFT

General Statement

It is Okehampton Town Council's policy to implement a high level of commitment to ensure good environmental policy throughout our council activities.

It is our intention to develop this policy by minimising the production of waste used throughout and reuse and recycle materials whenever practical to do so – 'reduce, reuse, recycle'.

To help ensure we give proper consideration to our environmental and waste management responsibilities and to assist in the minimisation of waste and the recycling of materials wherever possible, systems and procedures have been implemented to encourage the recycling of materials with a view to minimising the overall levels of waste we produce. All staff and councillors are expected to abide by the following procedures and co-operate with the council in the execution of this policy.

Specific Aims

As part of our commitment to protecting the environment and reducing waste levels, we have adopted the following specific aims:

- Cultivate a work ethic with a high level of awareness of waste management, waste minimisation and a desire to recycle and reuse materials when practical.
- Promote economy in the use of materials generally and in particular paper and the selection of print formats and document styles in our offices.
- Encourage the use of recycled/reclaimed materials; materials from sustainable sources and those that are suitable for disposal by recycling.
- Develop waste management strategies that include recycling procedures and schemes.
- Encourage employees both in the office and in the park, to promote and establish recycling schemes that is relevant to the individual activities.

Okehampton Town Council have a waste removal contract with Devon Contract Waste Ltd (DCW) who have a 'zero to landfill' policy. They are the South West's leading and only independent commercial waste handling firm, who have a zero to landfill policy. The waste that cannot be recycled is burnt for fuel. The ash created then goes into the production of construction products, for example bricks and blocks. DCW Polymers repurpose plastic waste they collect from across the South West to create a range of sustainable products including picnic benches, some of which are in use in Simmons Park ~~and the picnic area behind Lidl~~. Although their sustainable solution provides materials to the manufacturing industry, saves resources and energy, reduces carbon footprint and promotes a sustainable

business community, they can be destroyed by fire. For this reason, their use will be limited to areas in which they are less likely to be vandalised.

The Parks staff recycle wherever possible. Leaves, weeds, grass and hedge cuttings are composted and waste wood is chipped. The compost and wood chippings are used in Simmons Park.

Hirers of the Charter Hall and other facilities are encouraged to recycle waste. Separate bins for this purpose have been provided in the Charter Hall.

Future Recycling

We are committed to expanding our recycling policy. This includes:

- Encouraging staff and councillors to use less paper and become a 'paperless office'. Paper is the largest form of waste in the office and Councillors are asked to consider receiving electronic Agendas and papers where possible.
- Planning applications are now sent electronically only and are viewed at meetings on a projected image.
- Most invoices are sent and received by email
- Staff and Councillors are asked to carefully consider the need to print emails and documents, and where printing is needed, double sided printing in black and white is encouraged as appropriate.
- Paper records of machinery maintenance, playground checks and repairs and all reporting to be moved onto a tablet in digital form to save paper use.
- As an organisation with less than the equivalent of 10 full time employees the Council will review its systems and process to ensure that it complies with the requirement of the Simpler Recycling in England Policy¹ (updated November 2024) by 31st March 2027.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/simpler-recycling-in-england-policy-update/simpler-recycling-in-england-policy-update#confirmed-position-on-timeline-for-micro-firms-implementation>