



# WISTON PARISH COUNCIL STANDING ORDERS

## FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

### 1. GENERAL

- 1.1. These Financial Regulations govern the conduct of the financial transactions of the Council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the Council.
- 1.2. The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), under the policy direction of the Council, shall be responsible for the proper administration of the Council's affairs.
- 1.3. The RFO shall be responsible for ensuring the accurate production of financial management information.

### 2. ANNUAL ESTIMATES

- 2.1. Each Committee shall formulate and submit proposals to the Council in respect of revenue and capital costs for the following financial year not later than the end of November each year.
- 2.2. Detailed estimates of all receipts and payments for the year shall be presented to Full Council each year by the RFO.
- 2.3. The Council shall review the estimates not later than the end of December each year and shall fix the Precept to be levied for the ensuing financial year. The Clerk shall supply each member with a copy of the approved estimates.
- 2.4. The annual budgets shall form the basis of financial control for the ensuing year.
- 2.5. The Council shall prepare and have regard to long-term projects, which shall be included with the annual Budget or Estimates.

### 3. BUDGETARY CONTROL

- 3.1. Expenditure on revenue items may be incurred up to the amounts included in the approved budget.
- 3.2. No expenditure may be incurred which will exceed the amount provided in the revenue budget by 10% without the approval of full Council
- 3.3. The RFO shall have prepared for Council, a statement of receipts and payments to date under each head of the budgets, comparing actual against that planned.
- 3.4. The Clerk may incur expenditure on behalf of the Council which is necessary to carry out any repair, replacement or other work which is of such extreme urgency that it must be done at once, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £250. The Clerk shall report the action to the Council as soon as practicable thereafter.
- 3.5. Unspent provisions in the revenue budget shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year.
- 3.6. No expenditure shall be incurred in relation to any capital project and no contract entered into or tender accepted involving capital expenditure unless the Council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available, or the requisite borrowing approval has been obtained.

3.7.All capital works shall be administered in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations relating to Contracts.

#### **4. ACCOUNTING AND AUDIT**

4.1.All accounting procedures and financial records of the Council shall be determined by the RFO as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 1996 (as amended).

4.2.The RFO shall be responsible for ensuring the completion of the annual financial statements of the Council as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and shall submit them and report thereon to the Council at the May Annual Parish Council Meeting.

4.3.The RFO shall be responsible for ensuring the completion of the Accounts of the Council contained in the Annual Return (as supplied by the Auditor appointed by the Audit Commission) and for submitting the Annual Return for approval and authorisation by the Council within the timescale set by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 1996 (as amended), or set by the Auditor.

4.4.The RFO shall be responsible for ensuring that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the Council's accounting, financial and other operations in accordance with Regulation 5 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 1996 (as amended). Any officer or member of the Council shall, if the RFO or Internal Auditor requires, make available such documents of the Council which appear to the RFO or Internal Auditor to be necessary for the purpose of the internal audit and shall supply the RFO or Internal Auditor with such information and explanation as the RFO or Internal Auditor considers necessary for that purpose.

4.5.The Internal Auditor shall carry out the work required by the RFO, or by the Council, with a view to satisfactory completion of the Internal Auditor's Report section of the Annual Return as compiled annually by the Audit Commission. The Internal Auditor, who shall be competent and independent of the operations of the Council, shall report to Council in writing on a regular basis with a minimum of one annual report in respect of each financial year.

4.6.The RFO shall make arrangements for the opportunity for inspection of the accounts, books and vouchers required by the Audit Commission Act 1998, Section 15, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 1996 (as amended).

4.7.The RFO shall, as soon as practicable, bring to the attention of all councillors any correspondence or report from the Internal or External Auditor, unless the correspondence is of a purely administrative matter.

#### **5. BANKING ARRANGEMENTS AND CHEQUES**

5.1.The Council's banking arrangements shall be made by the RFO and approved by the Council. They shall be regularly reviewed for efficiency.

5.2.A schedule of the payments required shall be authorised by the RFO and, together with the relevant invoices, be presented to full Council or a Committee. If the schedule is in order, the payments shall be authorised and shown in the Minutes of the Meeting.

5.3.Cheques drawn on the bank account in accordance with the schedule referred to in Paragraph 5.2 or in accordance with Paragraph 6.4, shall be signed by two members of the Council other than the RFO as authorised by the Council's Mandate.

5.4.To indicate agreement of the details shown on the cheque or order for payment with the counterfoil or similar documentation and the invoice, the signatories shall each also initial the cheque counterfoil and the relevant invoices. The cheque number shall be written on the invoice.

## **6. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

6.1.All payments shall be effected by online payment or cheque or other order drawn on the Council's bankers.

6.2.All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the RFO. The RFO shall satisfy herself that the work, goods or services to which the invoice relates shall have been received, carried out, examined and approved.

6.3.The RFO shall ensure invoices are examined in relation to arithmetic accuracy and analysed to the appropriate expenditure heading. The RFO shall take all steps to settle all invoices submitted, and which are in order, at the next available Council meeting.

6.4.If a payment is necessary to avoid a charge of interest under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998, and the due date for payment is before the next scheduled meeting of the Council and, where the RFO certifies that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, the RFO may (notwithstanding Paragraph 6.3) take all necessary steps to settle such invoices providing that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of the Council.

6.5.The Council will not maintain any form of cash float. All cash received must be banked intact. Any payments made in cash by the Clerk or RFO (for example, for postage or minor stationery items) shall be refunded on a regular basis, at least quarterly.

## **7. PAYMENT OF SALARIES**

7.1.The payment of all salaries shall be made in accordance with payroll records and the rules of PAYE and National Insurance currently operating, and salaries shall be as agreed by Council.

7.2.Payment of salaries and payment of deductions from salaries such as may be made for tax, national insurance and pension contributions, may be made in accordance with the payroll records and on the appropriate dates, provided that each payment is reported to and ratified by the next available Council meeting and is in accordance with the Council's Mandate.

## **8. LOANS AND INVESTMENTS**

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

8.2.The Council's Investment Policy shall be in accordance with the Trustee Act 2000 and shall be reviewed on a regular basis (at least annually).

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

8.4.All borrowings shall be effected in the name of the Council, after obtaining the necessary borrowing approval. Any application for borrowing approval shall be approved by the Council as to terms and purpose.

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

## **9. INCOME**

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

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

9.3.The Council will review all fees and charges either annually or as specified in leases and tenancy agreements, following a report of the Clerk.

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

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

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

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

9.8.The RFO shall ensure the prompt completion of any VAT Return that is required. Any repayment claim due in accordance with the VAT Act 1994, Section 33 shall be made at least annually coinciding with the financial year end.

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

## **10.ORDERS FOR WORK, GOODS AND SERVICES**

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

10.2.Order books shall be controlled by the RFO.

10.3.All members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times. An officer issuing an official order is to ensure as far as reasonable and practicable that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction, usually by obtaining three or more quotations or estimates from appropriate suppliers, subject to any de minimis provisions in Regulation 11 (1) below.

10.4. The RFO shall verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before the issue of any order, and in the case of new or infrequent purchases or payments, the RFO shall ensure that the statutory authority shall be reported to the meeting at which the order is approved so that the Minutes can record the power being used. Where necessary and appropriate the RFO shall require the contractor to confirm compliance with all Health & Safety Risk Assessment requirements.

## **11.CONTRACTS**

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

- (a) Every contract shall comply with these Financial Regulations and no exceptions shall be made otherwise than in an emergency provided that these Regulations shall not apply to contracts which relate to items (i) to (vi) below for the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telephone services:
  - (i) for specialist services such as are provided by solicitors, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants;
  - (ii) for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which consist of repairs to or parts for existing machinery or equipment or plant;
  - (iii) for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contact by the Council;
  - (iv) for additional audit work of the external Auditor up to an estimated value of £250 (in excess of this sum the Clerk and RFO shall act after consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council);
  - (v) for goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and/or are only sold at a fixed price.

Where it is intended to enter into a contract exceeding £10,000 but not exceeding £50,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in Paragraph (a) above, the RFO shall invite formal quotations from at least three firms to be taken from the appropriate approved list. The firms shall be required to confirm that they comply with all Health & Safety and Risk Assessment requirements.

- (b) Where it is intended to enter into a contract exceeding £60,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set in Paragraph (a) above, the RFO shall invite tenders from at least three firms to be taken from the appropriate approved list. The firms shall be required to confirm that they comply with all Health & Safety and Risk Assessment requirements.
- (c) When applications are made to waive Financial Regulations relating to contract to enable a price to be negotiated without competition, the reason shall be embodied in a recommendation to the Council.
- (d) Such invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the RFO shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases. The invitation shall in addition, state that tenders must be addressed to the Clerk in the ordinary course of post. Each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specifically marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract.

- (e) All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the RFO in the presence of at least one member of the Council.
- (f) If less than three quotations are received for contracts above £10,000 – or less than three tenders for contracts above £50,000 – or if all the tenders are identical, the Council may make such arrangements as it thinks fit for procuring the goods or materials or executing the works.
- (g) When it is to enter into a contract less than £10,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in Paragraph (a) above, the Clerk or RFO shall seek three quotations (price descriptions of the proposed supply). Where the value is below £1,000 and above £200, the RFO shall strive to obtain three estimates unless the supplier has been approved previously by the Council. Otherwise, Regulation 10 (3) above shall apply.
- (h) The Council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest of any tender, quote or estimate.

## **12.PAYMENTS UNDER CONTRACTS FOR BUILDING OR OTHER CONSTRUCTION WORKS**

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

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

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

## **13.STORES AND EQUIPMENT**

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

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

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

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

## **14.PROPERTIES AND ESTATES**

14.1. The Clerk shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds of properties owned by the Council. The RFO shall ensure a record is maintained of all properties owned by the Council, recording the location, extent, plan,

reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held in accordance with Regulation 4(3)(b) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 1996 (as amended).

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

## **15.INSURANCE**

15.1.Following an annual risk assessment, the RFO shall ensure the arrangement of all insurances and negotiate all claims on the Council's insurers.

15.2.The RFO shall be notified promptly of all new risks, properties or vehicles that require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.

15.3.The RFO shall ensure a record is maintained of all insurances effected by the Council and the property and risks covered thereby and annually reviewed.

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

15.5.All appropriate employees of the Council shall be included in a suitable fidelity guarantee insurance, which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined by the Council.

## **16.RISK MANAGEMENT**

16.1.The Clerk / RFO shall prepare and promote risk management policy statements in respect of activities of the Council.

## **17.REVISION OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

17.1 It shall be the duty of the Council to review the Financial Regulations of the Council annually.