

Louth Town Council

The Sessions House, Eastgate,
Louth, Lincolnshire, LN11 9AJ

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clerk@louthtowncouncil.gov.uk



To the Members of the Town Council of Louth:

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of Louth Town Council's Planning Committee and Governance and Finance Committee which will be held on Tuesday 9th April 2024 in The Old Court Room, The Sessions House, Eastgate, Louth at 7pm. The business to be dealt with at the meeting is listed in the agenda below.

There will be a 15 minute public forum between 6.45pm and 7.00pm when members of the public may ask questions or make short statements to the Council, and your attendance is requested during this period.

Please note, any public, wishing to speak in the public forum may do so on items which appear on the agenda or may 'sit in' on the meeting(s). It would be much appreciated if any member of the public wishing to speak would please contact the Town Clerk, by emailing clerk@louthtowncouncil.gov.uk in advance of the meeting to discuss attendance arrangements. Written representation can also be considered rather than attending in person.

Members of the public should note that they will not be allowed to speak during the formal meeting.


Mrs. L.M. Phillips

Town Clerk

Dated this 4th Day of April 2024

AGENDA
PLANNING COMMITTEE
(Chairman: Cllr. P. Starsmore, Membership: All Cllrs.)

1. Apologies for Absence

To receive and note apologies where valid reasons for absence have been given to the Town Clerk at least one hour prior to the meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest / Dispensations

To receive declarations of interest in accordance with the Localism Act, 2011 – being any pecuniary interest in agenda items not previously recorded on Members' Register of Interests and any written requests for dispensation received by the Proper Officer under section 22 of the Localism Act.

3. Minutes

To approve as a correct record the notes of the Planning Committee Meeting held on 19th March 2024.

4. Applications received by the Local Planning Authority

To consider and make observations on all planning applications received including those listed in the schedule (PA/Schedule 04-09-24). (Attached).

5. Planning Correspondence

Committee to receive planning decisions, enforcement complaints, appeal decisions, temporary road closures etc., as advised by the District and County Council. (Attached).

6. Pavement Café Licence – Caffe Nero

Committee to note that the above has applied for a licence for 4 tables and 8 chairs on the pavement outside 28-30 Mercer Row. Committee to ratify the comments of the Planning Working Group which were submitted to meet LCC's deadlines in advance of the meeting and which were: "Object. It was generally felt that given the width of the pavement, having outside seating here would be an obstruction for pavement users, especially for those in wheelchairs/ mobility scooters and those with pushchairs. It was noted that chairs had been placed here before, especially during the COVID period, which at that time was unavoidable and necessary for businesses to survive, but given Caffe Nero has a good internal space and given the current widths of the pavements in Louth, and on Mercer Row, it was deemed that there really isn't sufficient space to allow."

7. Next Meeting

Committee to note that the date of the next scheduled Planning Committee meeting is 30th April 2024.

GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE COMMITTEE
(Chairman: Cllr. Mrs. E. Ballard, Membership: All Cllrs.)

1. Apologies for Absence

To receive and note apologies where valid reasons for absence have been given to the Town Clerk at least one hour prior to the meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest / Dispensations

To receive declarations of interest in accordance with the Localism Act, 2011 – being any pecuniary interest in agenda items not previously recorded on Members' Register of Interests and any written requests for dispensation received by the Proper Officer under section 22 of the Localism Act.

3. Minutes

To approve as a correct record the notes of the Governance and Finance Committee Meeting held on 20th February 2024.

4. Review of Financial Regulations and Code of Conduct

Committee to approve continued use of the following documents (amendments are minimal and can be viewed with the online agenda (highlighted in yellow) grey on paper copies):

- a) Financial Regulations
- b) Code of Conduct

5. Review of Policies and Procedures

Committee to approve continued use of the following:

- a) Complaints Procedure
- b) Media Policy
- c) Co-option Policy

6. Environment Agency

Committee to note that the annual maintenance contribution for the Louth Flood Alleviation Scheme for the period May 2023 to May 2024 is now due and approve payment in the sum of £15,917.29.

7. Hubbard's Hills

Committee to approve the release of the 1st instalment of funds to the Hubbard's Hills Trust for 2024/25 by 30th April 2024 in the sum of £24,500 as per the Maintenance Agreement.

8. Grants

Council to approve a go live date for the LTC grant application form 2024/25 of Tuesday 30th July and closing date for applications of noon on Tuesday 24th September 2024.

9. Next Meeting

Committee to note that the date of the next scheduled Governance and Finance Committee meeting is 30th April 2024.

03-19-24 PLAN MINS

**MINUTES OF THE LOUTH TOWN COUNCIL PLANNING COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE OLD COURT ROOM, THE SESSIONS HOUSE, LOUTH
ON TUESDAY 19th MARCH 2024**

Councillor P. Starsmore (PS) (in the chair).

Present Councillors: Mrs. E. Ballard (Mrs. EB), J. Baskett (JB), L.M. Cooney (LMC), J. Drake (JD), H. Filer (HF), D. Hobson (DH), G.E. Horton (GEH), M. Lamb (ML), Mrs. J. Makinson-Sanders (Mrs. JMS), D. Moore (DM), Mrs. K. Parsons (Mrs. KP), J. Simmons (JS) and D.E. Wing (DEW).

Councillors not present: M. Barnes (MB), L. Frost (LF) and Mrs. P.F. Watson (Mrs. PFW).

The Town Clerk Mrs. L.M. Phillips and the Town Clerk's Assistant Miss S. Chitauro were also present.

P129. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs LF and Mrs. PFW.

P130. Declarations of Interest / Dispensations

The following declarations of interest were made:

- a. Cllr DH – Items 4 and 5 as a member of ELDC.
- b. Cllr. GEH – Items 4 and 5 as a member of ELDC.
- c. Cllr. Mrs. JMS – Items 4 and 5 as a member of ELDC.

P131. Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** that the notes of the Planning Committee Meeting held on 20th February 2024 be approved as the minutes.

P132. Applications received by the Local Planning Authority

The Committee considered all planning applications received, including those listed in the schedule (PA/Schedule 03-19-24) and **RESOLVED** as follows:

- a. N/092/02375/23 – Louth Town Council reiterates its original objection of 12th December 2023 and objects to this amendment on the grounds of Access and Highway Safety. It felt that the proposed access to the public highway, down Park Row is totally unsuitable as this road is unadopted, is single track and has no footpaths. The width of the lane makes it totally unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists to use safely while vehicles are also using it. At its junction with Eastfield Road there is not a clear view of Eastfield Road to allow safe merging. Park Row is also very steep and difficult to navigate especially with a pram or when on a bicycle. The Council noted that although currently technically outside of the Louth boundary, this development will form part of the development already built which is within the boundary and all residents of the new section will use Louth infrastructure and facilities, without contributing correctly to their upkeep. Therefore, Council strongly request that a review of ward boundaries be undertaken to ensure that new residents contribute fairly to local services and amenities.
- b. N/105/00143/24 – Louth Town Council objected on the grounds that the replacement of wooden sash windows with uPVC is not in keeping with and does not preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area.
- c. N/105/00242/24 – Louth Town Council objected to this application on the grounds that it is not in keeping with and does not preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area.
NB: Cllrs. ML and Mrs. KP abstained from voting on this application.
- d. To support all other applications.

P133. Planning Correspondence

The Committee noted the following planning correspondence:

- a. **ELDC Planning Decisions**
 - i. ELDC Approved – N/105/02486/23 – Planning Permission – Land at 119 Eastfield Road, Louth – LTC Supported 30/01/24.
 - ii. LCC Approved – N/105/00305/24/3 – Planning Permission – St. Michaels Church of England Primary School, Monks Dyke Road – LTC Supported 20/02/24.
- b. **Temporary Traffic Restrictions**

- i. ORGANISATION RESPONSIBLE FOR RESTRICTION: Lincolnshire County Council.
REASON FOR RESTRICTION: Emergency – Carriageway Micro Asphalt Surfacing.
NATURE AND LOCATION OF RESTRICTION: Road Closure Order – Chestnut Drive; Hazel Grove; Laburnham Crescent; Minster Drive; Oak Close; Spire View Road; Sycamore Drive.
PERIOD OF RESTRICTION: 01/04/2024 – 31/05/2024 (Restrictions to be implemented for 5 days as and when required during this period. Signage will be displayed on site in advance).

P134. Next Meeting

It was noted that the date of the next scheduled Planning Committee meeting was 9th April 2024.

The Meeting Closed at 9.05pm.

Signed _____ (Chairman)

Dated _____

Our Ref	Authority	Application No	Type	Applicant	Proposal	Location / Ward	Conservation Area?	Previous LTC Comments	Planning Working Group	Expiry Date for LTC Comments
1	ELDC	N/105/ 00153/24	Planning Permission	Mr. and Mrs. Bonner	Extension to existing dwelling to provide additional living accommodation. AMENDMENT - First floor window on east elevation changed to a high level roof light. Additional information in relation to light impact received.	The Glass Gables, Stewton Lane, Louth, LN11 8SB - St. Michael's Ward	No	Louth Town Council supported this application on 20th February 2024. LTC PWG supported 26/03/2024, comments to be ratified 09/04/2024.	Support - comments of Working Group already submitted to meet deadline, requires ratification now.	28/03/2024
2	ELDC	N/105/ 00322/24	Consent to Display	Co-op	Consent to display 3no. internally illuminated logo signs, 1no. non-illuminated single sided free standing sign, 1no. non-illuminated banner sign, 2no. sets on non-illuminated letters, 10no. non-illuminated wall mounted signs and 11no. non-illuminated free standing car parking signs. AMENDMENT - Size of sign adjacent to the Millers Daughter reduced (item 9).	Co-op Supermarket, Northgate, Louth, LN11 0LT - St. James' Ward	No	Louth Town Council supported this application on 19th March 2024 in principle with the exception of the sign adjacent to the Miller's Daughter Public House. The Council felt that this sign needs to be of a size consistent with that in place currently. The proposed sign is too large. Louth Town Council agreed with Heritage Lincolnshire's assessment.	Support.	10/04/2024
3	ELDC	N/105/ 00370/24	Planning Permission	Co-op	Alterations to existing shop to provide a new shopfront and the installation of 2no. air conditioning units for new funeral care. AMENDMENT - Description of development amended as follows to accurately describe the proposals: Alterations to the existing building to provide an additional shop front and side door to serve a separate internal retail unit used for funeral care and installation of 2no. air conditioning units.	Co-op Supermarket, Northgate, Louth, LN11 0LT - St. James' Ward	No	New	Support if alterations are just for use as an office/shop. However, object if the deceased are to be present on the premises. This area is a high risk flooding area and the possible ramifications / contamination that could be caused as a result of this are not acceptable.	10/04/2024
4	ELDC	N/105/ 00382/24	Planning Permission	Mr. R. Singh	Erection of a single storey dwelling to be occupied in connection with existing retail premises.	Kenwick News, 23 Kenwick Road, Louth, LN11 8EH - St. Michael's Ward	No	New	Object on the grounds that the proposals would create further parking constraints in an already over crowded area.	10/04/2024
5	ELDC	N/105/ 00451/24	Planning Permission	Mr. J. Fairburn	Erection of 3no. dwellings with detached garages on the site of the existing buildings which are to be demolished.	179 Newmarket, Louth, Lincolnshire - St. Michael's Ward	No	New	Support on the condition that vehicles exit on the main carriageway in a forward ger.	12/04/2024

PLANNING COMMITTEE 9th APRIL 2024
PLANNING CORRESPONDENCE TO NOTE

1. ELDC Planning Decisions

- a. ELDC Approved – N/105/02279/23 – Planning Permission – 60 Aswell Street, LN11 9HP – LTC Supported 09/01/24.
- b. ELDC Approved – N/105/02300/23 – Planning Permission – 4 Kenwick Pastures, LN11 8EE – LTC Supported 12/12/23.
- c. ELDC Approved – N/105/02492/23 – Planning Permission – 217 Eastfield Road, LN11 7AS – LTC Supported 09/01/24.
- d. ELDC Approved – N/105/00119/24 – Planning Permission – 167 Eastfield Road, LN11 7AS – LTC Supported 20/02/24.
- e. ELDC Refused – N/105/01991/23 – Section 73 Application – 52a Stewton Lane, LN11 8SB – LTC Supported 20/02/24.
- f. ELDC Approved – N/105/00102/24 – Planning Permission – 57 Ugate, LN11 9HD – LTC Supported 20/02/24.
- g. ELDC Approved – N/105/00128/24 – Planning Permission – Ouroboros, 114 Horncastle Road, LN11 9QT – LTC Supported 19/03/24.
- h. ELDC Approved – N/105/00230/24 – Planning Permission – 6 Waterside, LN11 0US – LTC Supported 19/03/24.
- i. ELDC Refused – N/105/00143/24 – 25 Queen Street, LN11 9BJ – LTC Objected 19/03/24.

2. Temporary Traffic Restrictions

- a. ORGANISATION RESPONSIBLE FOR RESTRICTION: Anglian Water

REASON FOR RESTRICTION: Remedial Repairs

NATURE AND LOCATION OF RESTRICTION: Riverhead Road (between Eastfield Road and Thames Street).

PERIOD OF RESTRICTION: 23/04/2024 – 25/04/2024 (Restrictions to be implemented for 3 days as and when required during this period. Signage will be displayed on site in advance).

- b. ORGANISATION RESPONSIBLE FOR RESTRICTION: Anglian Water

REASON FOR RESTRICTION: Water Main Repairs

NATURE AND LOCATION OF RESTRICTION: Road Closure Order – Monks Dyke Road (between Almond Crescent and Millgood Close).

PERIOD OF RESTRICTION: Restrictions to be implemented for 2 days as and when required during this period. Signage will be displayed on site in advance).

3. Enforcement

- a. 60 Eastgate, LN11 9PG – A complaint concerning alterations to the shop front to provide fascia signage and roller shutters has been received about the aforementioned property. An officer will visit the location and the matter will be fully investigated to establish if a breach of planning control has taken place.
- b. Land at Park Avenue, Louth (case reference 207/00 367/23) – A complaint concerning Land at Park Avenue has been received. An officer will visit the location and the matter will be fully investigated to establish if a breach of planning control has taken place.

4. Committee

- a. N/102/02375/23 – Land South of Chestnut Drive, Louth – The following application is due to be presented to the ELDC Planning Committee Meeting on 4th April 2024.

02-20-24 G&F MINS

**MINUTES OF THE LOUTH TOWN COUNCIL GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE OLD COURT ROOM, THE SESSIONS HOUSE, LOUTH
ON TUESDAY 20th FEBRUARY 2024**

Councillor Mrs. E. Ballard (Mrs. EB) (in the chair).

Present Councillors: M. Barnes (MB), J. Baskett (JB), Mrs. S. Crew (Mrs. SC), J. Drake (JD), L. Frost (LF), D. Hobson (DH), G.E. Horton (GEH), Mrs. J. Makinson-Sanders (Mrs. JMS), Mrs. K. Parsons (KP), J. Simmons (JS), P. Starsmore (PS), Mrs. P.F. Watson (Mrs. PFW).

Councillors not present: L.M. Cooney (LMC), H. Filer (HF), M. Lamb (ML).

The Town Clerk, Mrs. L.M. Phillips and the Town Clerk's Assistant, Miss. S. Chitauro were also present.

G41. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs. LMC, HF and ML.

G42. Declarations of Interest / Dispensations

There were no declarations of interest or dispensations made.

G43. Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** that the notes of the Governance and Finance Committee meeting held 12th December 2023 be approved as the minutes.

G44. Finance

It was **RESOLVED** to note/approve/authorise the following:

a) Receipts and Payments – Cashbooks 1 and 2

i. Month 7

1. Cash Book 1	Receipts	£3,182.65	Payments	£26,421.88
2. Cash Book 2	Receipts	£220.00	Payments	£100.22

ii. Month 8

1. Cash Book 1	Receipts	£76,781.46	Payments	£208,996.46
2. Cash Book 2	Receipts	£0.00	Payments	£132.66

iii. Month 9

1. Cash Book 1	Receipts	£1,763.94	Payments	£27,307.61
2. Cash Book 2	Receipts	£250.00	Payments	£230.00

b) Detailed Income and Expenditure Report (Budget Variance Report) as at Month 9 to 31st December 2023.

c) Earmarked Reserves Report as at 31st December 2023.

d) Balance Sheet to 31st December 2023 and Cash Book 1 and 2 Bank Reconciliations which reconcile to account statements showing balances as follows:

i. Lloyds Treasurers Account (balance at 31/12/23 on statement 85) - £340,564.48.

ii. Petty Cash (balance as at 31/12/23) - £118.11.

iii. Lloyds Deposit Account (balance on statement 9) - £166,652.51.

iv. National Savings and Investment Account (balance on statement 12) - £111,438.22.

e) The Committee **RESOLVED** that any cheque uncashed after 1 year should be stopped at the bank and written back into the accounts by staff, automatically.

G45. Risk Management

The Committee received a recommendation from FOG to approve the revised Risk Management arrangements and it was **RESOLVED** to approve with the following revisions:

- Aim – To influence other Council departments and Government organisations to fulfil the requirements of the town population. Risk – Lack of effective lines of communication with parishioners. Method to minimise risk – e) to be amended to 'Look to create a Town Council Forward Plan and seek parishioner's views on vision and aims'.
- Aim – As before. Risk – Lack of confidence by Town Councillors to be amended to 'Personal lack of confidence/experience by Town Councillors'

- c) Aim – Secure Online Banking. Risk – to be amended to ‘Approved Councillor signatories making payments incorrectly using the Town Council bank account’.

G46. Citizen’s Advice Lincoln and Lindsey – Funding Contribution

The Committee noted that the Council approved an amount of £1,000 in the 2023/24 budget for release to the above, as per the Council’s powers under s142(2A) of the LGA 1972 and received an update on how the organisation is faring. It was **RESOLVED** to increase the budget for this by £50 each year, starting 2024/25.

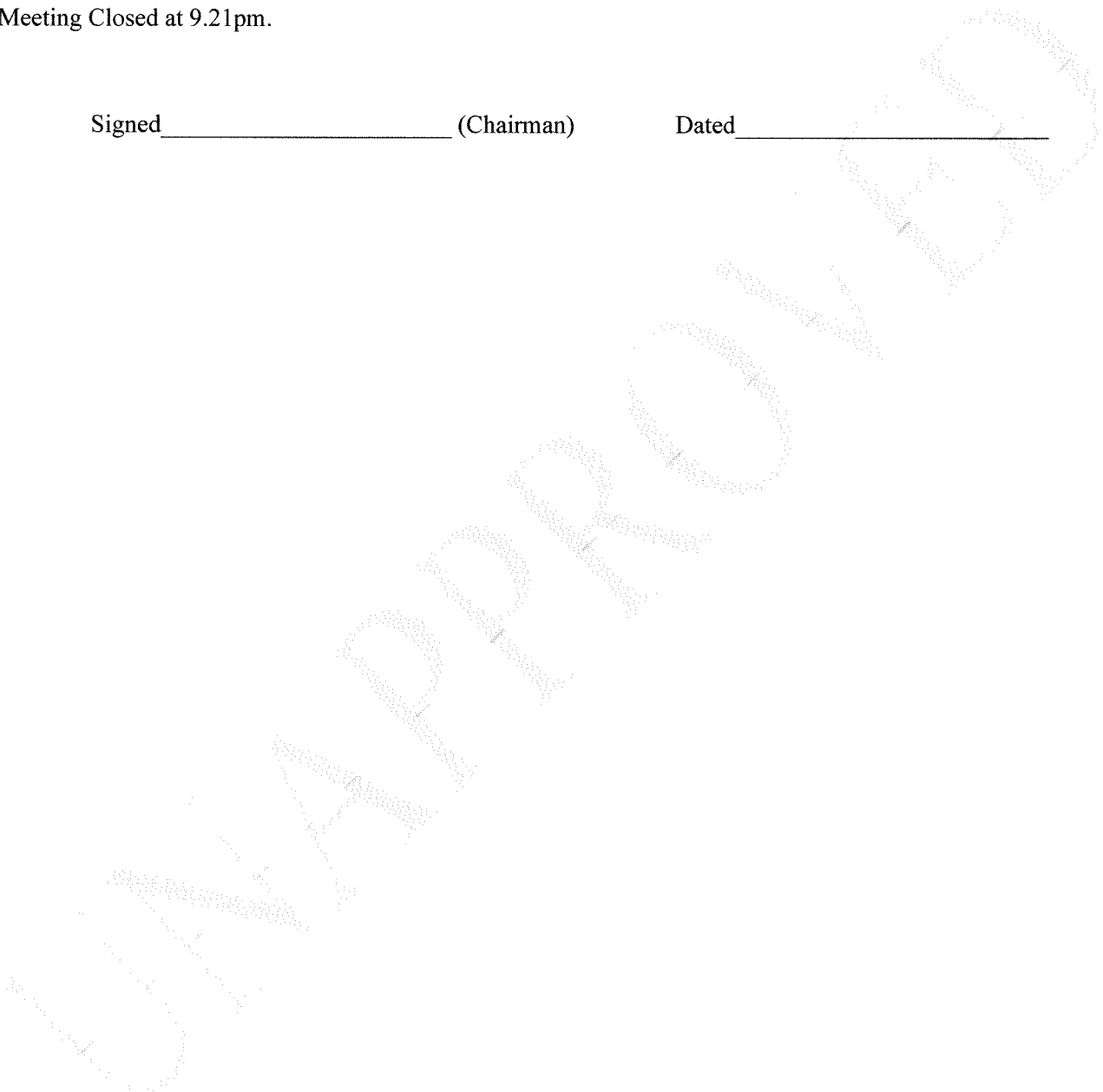
G47. Next Meeting

It was noted that the date of the next scheduled Governance and Finance Committee meeting was 9th April 2024.

The Meeting Closed at 9.21pm.

Signed _____ (Chairman)

Dated _____



Louth Town Council



Financial Regulations

Adopted 24th March 2015
Revised 19th March 2019
New NALC Model Adopted 22nd October 2019
Revised 31st March 2020
Revised 2nd February 2020
Reviewed 22nd March 2022
Reviewed 21st February 2023
Reviewed 9th April 2024
Next review due 2024/25

LOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

MODEL FINANCIAL REGULATIONS 2019 FOR ENGLAND

1. General	3
2. Accounting and audit (internal and external)	5
3. Annual estimates (budget) and forward planning	6
4. Budgetary control and authority to spend	7
5. Banking arrangements and authorisation of payments	8
6. Instructions for the making of payments	9
7. Payment of salaries	11
8. Loans and investments	12
9. Income	12
10. Orders for work, goods and services	13
11. Contracts	13
12. Payments under contracts for building or other construction works]	15
13. Stores and equipment	15
14. Assets, properties and estates	15
15. Insurance	16
16. Risk management	16
17. Suspension and revision of Financial Regulations	17

These Financial Regulations were adopted by the council at its meeting held on 2nd February 2021.

1. General

1.1. These financial regulations govern the conduct of financial management by the council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the council. Financial regulations are one of the council's three governing policy documents providing procedural guidance for members and officers. Financial regulations must be observed in conjunction with the council's standing orders¹ and any individual financial regulations relating to contracts.

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

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

- for the timely production of accounts;
- that provide for the safe and efficient safeguarding of public money;
- to prevent and detect inaccuracy and fraud; and
- identifying the duties of officers.

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

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

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

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

1.8. The Clerk has been appointed as RFO for this council and these regulations will apply accordingly.

1.9. The RFO;

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

¹ Model Standing Orders for Councils (2018 Edition) is available from NALC (©NALC 2018)

- maintains the accounting records of the council up to date in accordance with proper practices;
- assists the council to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of its resources; and
- produces financial management information as required by the council.

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

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

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

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

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

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

- setting the final budget or the precept (council tax requirement);
- approving accounting statements;
- approving an annual governance statement;
- borrowing;
- writing off bad debts;
- declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence; and
- addressing recommendations in any report from the internal or external auditors, shall be a matter for the full council only.

1.14. In addition, the council must:

- determine and keep under regular review the bank mandate for all council bank accounts;
- approve any grant or a single commitment in excess of £5,000; and
- in respect of the annual salary for any employee have regard to recommendations about annual salaries of employees made by the relevant committee in accordance with its terms of reference.

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

In these financial regulations the term 'proper practice' or 'proper practices' shall refer to guidance issued in *Governance and Accountability for Local Councils - a Practitioners' Guide (England)* issued by the Joint Practitioners Advisory Group (JPAG), available from the websites of NALC and the Society for Local Council Clerks (SLCC).

2. Accounting and audit (internal and external)

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

2.2. On a regular basis, at least once yearly, a member other than the Chairman shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the RFO. The member shall sign the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of verification.

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

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

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

2.6. The internal auditor shall:

- be competent and independent of the financial operations of the council;
- report to council in writing, or in person, with a minimum of one annual written report during each financial year;
- demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, be free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships; and

- has no involvement in the financial decision making, management or control of the council

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

- perform any operational duties for the council;
- initiate or approve accounting transactions; or
- direct the activities of any council employee, except to the extent that such employees have been appropriately assigned to assist the internal auditor.

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

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

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

3. Annual estimates (budget) and forward planning

3.1. The Governance and Finance committee shall review the Council's three-year forecast of revenue and capital receipts and payments. Having regard to the forecast, it shall thereafter formulate and submit proposals for the following financial year to the council to meet District Council deadlines each year including any proposals for revising the forecast.

3.2. The RFO must each year, to meet District Council deadlines, prepare detailed estimates of all receipts and payments including the use of reserves and all sources of funding for the following financial year in the form of a budget to be considered by the relevant committee/council.

3.3. The council shall consider annual budget proposals in relation to the council's three year forecast of revenue and capital receipts and payments including recommendations for the use of reserves and sources of funding and update the forecast accordingly.

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

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

4. Budgetary control and authority to spend

4.1. Expenditure on revenue items may be authorised up to the amounts included for that class of expenditure in the approved budget. This authority is to be determined by:

- Delegated authority to the Clerk in respect of any single item identified in the budget approval process (for the avoidance of doubt this includes all budgeted day to day/operational annual expenditure and approved projects).
- the Council or a duly delegated committee of the council for items over [£5,000]; or
- the Clerk, in conjunction with the Chairman of Council or Chairman of the appropriate committee, for any items between £1,000 and £5,000.

Such authority is to be evidenced by a minute or by an authorisation slip duly signed by the Clerk, and where necessary also by the appropriate Chairman.

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

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

4.3. Unspent provisions in the revenue or capital budgets for completed projects shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year.

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

4.5. In cases of extreme risk to the delivery of council services, the clerk may authorise revenue expenditure on behalf of the council which in the clerk's judgement it is necessary to carry out. Such expenditure includes repair, replacement or other work, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of [£5,000]. The Clerk shall report such action to the chairman as soon as possible and to the council as soon as practicable thereafter.

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

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

4.8. The RFO shall regularly provide the Governance and Finance Committee with a statement of receipts and payments to date under each head of the budgets, comparing actual expenditure to the appropriate date against that planned as shown in the budget.

4.9. Changes in earmarked reserves shall be approved by council as part of the budgetary control process.

5. Banking arrangements and authorisation of payments

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

5.2. All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the RFO to confirm that the work, goods or services to which each invoice relates has been received, carried out, examined and represents expenditure previously approved by the council or by the Clerk under delegated authority and subsequently authorised by Council.

5.3. The RFO (or other officer delegated by him/her) shall examine invoices for arithmetical accuracy and analyse them to the appropriate expenditure heading. The RFO may under delegated authority pay all invoices received and which are in order, and present these for authorisation at a Governance and Finance Committee meeting.

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

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

b) An expenditure item authorised under continuing contracts and obligations provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of the finance committee; or

c) Any item where the Council or a Committee has specifically authorised spending, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of the finance committee for approval.

d) Fund transfers within the councils banking arrangements up to the sum of [£10,000], provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of the finance committee.

5.5. In respect of grants a duly authorised committee shall approve expenditure within any limits set by council and in accordance with any policy statement approved by council. Any Revenue or Capital Grant in excess of £5,000 shall before payment, be subject to ratification by resolution of the council.

5.6. Members are subject to the Code of Conduct that has been adopted by the council and shall comply with the Code and Standing Orders when a decision to authorise or instruct

payment is made in respect of a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary or other interest, unless a dispensation has been granted.

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

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

6. Instructions for the making of payments

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

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

6.3. All payments shall be affected by cheque or other instructions to the council's bankers, or otherwise, in accordance with a resolution of council or duly delegated committee.

6.4. Cheques or orders for payment drawn on the bank account in accordance with the schedule as presented shall be signed by two members of council in accordance with a resolution instructing that payment. A member who is a bank signatory, having a connection by virtue of family or business relationships with the beneficiary of a payment, should not, under normal circumstances, be a signatory to the payment in question.

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

6.6. Cheques or orders for payment shall normally be presented for signature at a council or committee meeting. Any signatures obtained away from such meetings shall be reported to the council or Finance Committee at the next convenient meeting.

6.7. If thought appropriate by the council, payment for utility supplies (energy, telephone, water and support contracts) and any National Non-Domestic Rates may be made by variable direct debit provided that the instructions are signed by two members and any payments are reported to council as made. The approval of the use of a variable direct debit shall be renewed by resolution of the council at least every two years. **The review and approval of Financial Regulations will be deemed to satisfy this requirement.**

6.8. If thought appropriate by the council, payment for certain items (principally salaries) may be made by banker's standing order provided that the instructions are signed, or otherwise evidenced by two members are retained and any payments are reported to council as made. The approval of the use of a banker's standing order shall be renewed by resolution of the council at least every two years. The review and approval of financial regulations will be deemed to satisfy this requirement.

6.9. If thought appropriate by the council, payment for certain items may be made by BACS or CHAPS methods provided that the instructions for each payment are signed, or otherwise evidenced, by two authorised bank signatories, are retained and any payments are reported to council as made. The approval of the use of BACS or CHAPS shall be renewed by resolution of the council at least every two years.

6.10. If thought appropriate by the council payment for certain items may be made by internet banking transfer provided evidence is retained showing which members approved the payment.

6.11. Where a computer requires use of a personal identification number (PIN) or other password(s), for access to the council's records on that computer, a note shall be made of the PIN and Passwords and this shall be retained in a sealed envelope in the Council's safe. This envelope may not be opened other than in the presence of two other councillors. After the envelope has been opened, in any circumstances, the PIN and / or passwords shall be changed as soon as practicable. The fact that the sealed envelope has been opened, in whatever circumstances, shall be reported to all members immediately and formally to the next available meeting of the council. This will not be required for a member's personal computer used only for remote authorisation of bank payments.

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

6.13. Regular back-up copies of the records on any computer shall be made and shall be stored securely away from the computer in question, and preferably off site.

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

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

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

6.17. Changes to account details for suppliers, which are used for internet banking may only be changed on written hard copy notification by the supplier and supported by hard copy authority for change signed by the Clerk. A programme of regular checks of standing data with suppliers will be followed.

6.18. Any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Clerk and will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of [£500] unless authorised by council or finance committee in writing before any order is placed.

6.19. Any corporate credit card or trade card account opened by the council will be specifically restricted to use by the Clerk and shall be subject to automatic payment in full at each month-end.

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

- a) The RFO shall maintain a petty cash float of [£250] for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses. Vouchers for payments made from petty cash shall be kept to substantiate the payment.
- b) Income received must not be paid into the petty cash float but must be separately banked, as provided elsewhere in these regulations.
- c) Payments to maintain the petty cash float shall be shown separately on the schedule of payments presented to council under 5.2 above.

7. Payment of salaries

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

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

7.3. No changes shall be made to any employee's pay (other than by way of contractual increments or national pay awards), emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of either the Personnel Committee or the Council.

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

- a) by any councillor who can demonstrate a need to know;
- b) by the internal auditor;
- c) by the external auditor; or
- d) by any person authorised under Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation.

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

7.6. An effective system of personal performance management should be maintained for the senior officers.

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

7.8. Before employing interim staff, under delegated powers the Town Clerk must consider the reasons for doing so and make these available to Council if so requested.

8. Loans and investments

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

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

8.3. The council will arrange with the council's banks and investment providers for the sending of a copy of each statement of account to the Chairman of the council at the same time as one is issued to the Clerk or RFO.

8.4. 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.

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

8.6. All investments of money under the control of the council shall be in the name of the council.

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

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

9. Income

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

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

9.3. The council will regularly review all fees and charges, 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 promptly complete any VAT Return that is required and shall make any repayment claim due in accordance with VAT Act 1994 section 33 as soon as possible.

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

9.10. Any income arising which is the property of the Mayor's Charity shall be paid into a bank account for that purpose. Instructions for the payment of funds due from the account will be given by the Mayor separately from any Council meeting and all records for this account shall be considered to be completely external to the responsibilities of the Council and under the management of the Clerk or other duly delegated officer in conjunction with the Mayor.

10. Orders for work, goods and services

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

10.2. Orders shall be controlled by the RFO or other officer delegated by him/her.

10.3. All members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times. An officer issuing an official order shall ensure as far as reasonable and practicable that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction, usually by obtaining three or more quotations or estimates from appropriate suppliers, subject to any de minimis provisions in Regulation 11.1 below.

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

10.5. The RFO shall verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before the issue of any order.

11. Contracts

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

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

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

- ii. for specialist services such as are provided by legal professionals, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants;
- iii. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which consist of repairs to or parts for existing machinery or equipment or plant;
- iv. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the council;
- v. for additional audit work of the external auditor up to an estimated value of £500 (in excess of this sum the Clerk and RFO shall act after consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of council); and
- vi. for goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and / or are only sold at a fixed price.

b) Where the council intends to procure or award a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract as defined by The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (“the Regulations”) which is valued at £25,000 or more, the council shall comply with the relevant requirements of the Regulations².

c) The full requirements of The Regulations, as applicable, shall be followed in respect of the tendering and award of a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract which exceed thresholds in The Regulations set by the Public Contracts Directive 2014/24/EU (which may change from time to time)³.

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

e) Such invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases. The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the Clerk in the ordinary course of post. Each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specifically marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract.

f) All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the Clerk in the presence of at least one member of council.

g) Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to Standing Orders [SO 18 Financial Controls and Procurement] and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.

h) When it is to enter into a contract of less than £30,000 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

² The Regulations require councils to use the Contracts Finder website to advertise contract opportunities, set out the procedures to be followed in awarding new contracts and to publicise the award of new contracts

³ Thresholds currently applicable are:

- a) For public supply and public service contracts 209,000 Euros (£181,302)
- b) For public works contracts 5,225,000 Euros (£4,551,413)

paragraph (a) the Clerk or RFO shall obtain 3 quotations (priced descriptions of the proposed supply); where the value is below [£3,000] and above [£500] the Clerk or RFO shall strive to obtain 3 estimates. Otherwise, Regulation 10.3 above shall apply.

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

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

12. Payments under contracts for building or other construction works

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

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

13. Stores and equipment

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

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

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

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

14. Assets, properties and estates

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

14.2. No tangible moveable property shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of the council, together with any other

consents required by law, save where the estimated value of any one item of tangible movable property does not exceed [£600].

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

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

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

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

15. Insurance

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

[15.2. 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.]

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

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 council at the next available meeting.

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

16. Risk management

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

16.2. When considering any new activity, a draft risk assessment shall be prepared, including risk management proposals for consideration.

17. Suspension and revision of Financial Regulations

17.1. It shall be the duty of the council to review the Financial Regulations of the council from time to time. The Clerk shall make arrangements to monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and shall advise the council of any requirement for a consequential amendment to these Financial Regulations.

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

The Model Financial Regulations templates were produced by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) in July 2019 for the purpose of its member councils and county associations. Every effort has been made to ensure that the contents of this document are correct at time of publication. NALC cannot accept responsibility for errors, omissions and changes to information subsequent to publication.

Louth Town Council



COUNCILLOR CODE OF CONDUCT

Adopted	21 st February 2023
Reviewed and adopted	April 2024
Next review due	2024/25

Preface

The role of councillors across all tiers of local government is a vital part of our country's system of democracy. It is important that as councillors we can be held accountable and all adopt the behaviours and responsibilities associated with the role. Our conduct as an individual councillor affects the reputation of all councillors. We want the role of councillor to be one that people aspire to. We also want individuals from a range of backgrounds and circumstances to be putting themselves forward to become councillors.

As councillors, we represent local residents, work to develop better services and deliver local change. The public have high expectations of us and entrust us to represent our local area, taking decisions fairly, openly, and transparently. We have both an individual and collective responsibility to meet these expectations by maintaining high standards and demonstrating good conduct, and by challenging behaviour which falls below expectations.

Importantly, we should be able to undertake our role as a councillor without being intimidated, abused, bullied, or threatened by anyone, including the general public. This Code has been designed to protect our democratic role, encourage good conduct and safeguard the public's trust in local government.

Introduction

The Local Government Association (LGA) has developed this Model Councillor Code of Conduct, in association with key partners and after extensive consultation with the sector, as part of its work on supporting all tiers of local government to continue to aspire to high standards of leadership and performance.

All councils are required to have a local Councillor Code of Conduct.

The LGA will undertake an annual review of this Code to ensure it continues to be fit- for purpose, incorporating advances in technology, social media and changes in legislation. The LGA can also offer support, training and mediation to councils and councillors on the application of the Code and the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and the county associations of local councils can offer advice and support to town and parish councils.

Definitions

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, a “councillor” means a member or co-opted member of a local authority or a directly elected mayor. A “co-opted member” is defined in the Localism Act 2011 Section 27(4) as “a person who is not a member of the authority but who:

- a) is a member of any committee or sub-committee of the authority, or;
- b) is a member of, and represents the authority on, any joint committee or joint sub-committee of the authority;

and who is entitled to vote on any question that falls to be decided at any meeting of that committee or sub-committee”.

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, “local authority” includes county councils, district councils, London borough councils, parish councils, town councils, fire and rescue authorities, police authorities, joint authorities, economic prosperity boards, combined authorities and National Park authorities.

Purpose of the Code of Conduct

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to assist you, as a councillor, in modelling the behaviour that is expected of you, to provide a personal check and balance, and to set out the type of conduct that could lead to action being taken against you. It is also to protect you, the public, fellow councillors, local authority officers and the reputation of local government. It sets out general principles of conduct expected of all councillors and your specific obligations in relation to standards of conduct. The LGA encourages the use of support, training and mediation prior to action being taken using the Code. The fundamental aim of the Code is to create and maintain public confidence in the role of councillor and local government.

General principles of councillor conduct

Everyone in public office at all levels; all who serve the public or deliver public services, including ministers, civil servants, councillors and local authority officers; should uphold the *Seven Principles of Public Life*, at Appendix A, also known as the Nolan Principles.

Building on these principles, the following general principles have been developed specifically for the role of councillor.

In accordance with the public trust placed in me, on all occasions:

- I act with integrity and honesty
- I act lawfully
- I treat all persons fairly and with respect; and
- I lead by example and act in a way that secures public confidence in the role of councillor.

In undertaking my role:

- I impartially exercise my responsibilities in the interests of the local community
- I do not improperly seek to confer an advantage, or disadvantage, on any person
- I avoid conflicts of interest
- I exercise reasonable care and diligence; and
- I ensure that public resources are used prudently in accordance with my local authority's requirements and in the public interest.

Application of the Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct applies to you as soon as you sign your declaration of acceptance of the office of councillor or attend your first meeting as a co-opted member and continues to apply to you until you cease to be a councillor.

This Code of Conduct applies to you when you are acting in your capacity as a councillor which may include when:

- you misuse your position as a councillor
- Your actions would give the impression to a reasonable member of the public with knowledge of all the facts that you are acting as a councillor; The Code applies to all forms of communication and interaction, including:
 - at face-to-face meetings
 - at online or telephone meetings
 - in written communication
 - in verbal communication
 - in non-verbal communication
 - in electronic and social media communication, posts, statements and comments.

You are also expected to uphold high standards of conduct and show leadership at all times when acting as a councillor.

Your Monitoring Officer has statutory responsibility for the implementation of the Code of Conduct, and you are encouraged to seek advice from your Monitoring Officer on any matters that may relate to the Code of Conduct. Town and parish councillors are encouraged to seek advice from their Clerk, who may refer matters to the Monitoring Officer.

Standards of councillor conduct

This section sets out your obligations, which are the minimum standards of conduct required of you as a councillor. Should your conduct fall short of these standards, a complaint may be made against you, which may result in action being taken.

Guidance is included to help explain the reasons for the obligations and how they should be followed.

General Conduct

1. Respect

As a councillor:

1.1. I treat other councillors and members of the public with respect.

1.2. I treat local authority employees, employees and representatives of partner organisations and those volunteering for the local authority with respect and respect the role they play.

Respect means politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech, and in the written word. Debate and having different views are all part of a healthy democracy. As a councillor, you can express, challenge, criticise and disagree with views, ideas, opinions and policies in a robust but civil manner. You should not, however, subject individuals, groups of people or organisations to personal attack.

In your contact with the public, you should treat them politely and courteously. Rude and offensive behaviour lowers the public's expectations and confidence in councillors.

In return, you have a right to expect respectful behaviour from the public. If members of the public are being abusive, intimidatory or threatening you are entitled to stop any conversation or interaction in person or online and report them to the local authority, the relevant social media provider or the police. This also applies to fellow councillors, where action could then be taken under the Councillor Code of Conduct, and local authority employees, where concerns should be raised in line with the local authority's councillor officer protocol.

2. Bullying, harassment and discrimination

As a councillor:

2.1. I do not bully any person.

2.2. I do not harass any person.

2.3. I promote equalities and do not discriminate unlawfully against any person.

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) characterises bullying as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Bullying might be a regular pattern of behaviour or a one-off incident, happen face-to-face, on social media, in emails or phone calls, happen in the workplace or at work social events and may not always be obvious or noticed by others.

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 defines harassment as conduct that causes alarm or distress or puts people in fear of violence and must involve such conduct on at least two occasions. It can include repeated attempts

to impose unwanted communications and contact upon a person in a manner that could be expected to cause distress or fear in any reasonable person.

Unlawful discrimination is where someone is treated unfairly because of a protected characteristic. Protected characteristics are specific aspects of a person's identity defined by the Equality Act 2010. They are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The Equality Act 2010 places specific duties on local authorities. Councillors have a central role to play in ensuring that equality issues are integral to the local authority's performance and strategic aims, and that there is a strong vision and public commitment to equality across public services.

3. Impartiality of officers of the council

As a councillor:

3.1. I do not compromise, or attempt to compromise, the impartiality of anyone who works for, or on behalf of, the local authority.

Officers work for the local authority as a whole and must be politically neutral (unless they are political assistants). They should not be coerced or persuaded to act in a way that would undermine their neutrality. You can question officers in order to understand, for example, their reasons for proposing to act in a particular way, or the content of a report that they have written. However, you must not try and force them to act differently, change their advice, or alter the content of that report, if doing so would prejudice their professional integrity.

4. Confidentiality and access to information

As a councillor:

4.1. I do not disclose information:

- a given to me in confidence by anyone**
- b acquired by me which I believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature, unless**
 - i I have received the consent of a person authorised to give it;**
 - ii I am required by law to do so;**
 - iii the disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional legal advice provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person; or**
 - iv the disclosure is:**
 - 1 reasonable and in the public interest; and**
 - 2 made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the local authority; and**
 - 3 I have consulted the Monitoring Officer prior to its release.**

4.2. I do not improperly use knowledge gained solely as a result of my role as a councillor for the advancement of myself, my friends, my family members, my employer or my business interests.

4.3. I do not prevent anyone from getting information that they are entitled to by law.

Local authorities must work openly and transparently, and their proceedings and printed materials are open to the public, except in certain legally defined circumstances. You should work on this basis, but there will be times when it is required by law that discussions, documents and other information relating to or held by the local authority must be treated in a confidential manner. Examples include personal data relating to individuals or information relating to ongoing negotiations.

5. Disrepute

As a councillor:

5.1. I do not bring my role or local authority into disrepute.

As a Councillor, you are trusted to make decisions on behalf of your community and your actions and behaviour are subject to greater scrutiny than that of ordinary members of the public. You should be aware that your actions might have an adverse impact on you, other councillors and/or your local authority and may lower the public's confidence in your or your local authority's ability to discharge your/its functions. For example, behaviour that is considered dishonest and/or deceitful can bring your local authority into disrepute.

You are able to hold the local authority and fellow councillors to account and are able to constructively challenge and express concern about decisions and processes undertaken by the council whilst continuing to adhere to other aspects of this Code of Conduct.

6. Use of position

As a councillor:

6.1. I do not use, or attempt to use, my position improperly to the advantage or disadvantage of myself or anyone else.

Your position as a member of the local authority provides you with certain opportunities, responsibilities, and privileges, and you make choices all the time that will impact others. However, you should not take advantage of these opportunities to further your own or others' private interests or to disadvantage anyone unfairly.

7. Use of local authority resources and facilities

As a councillor:

7.1. I do not misuse council resources.

7.2. I will, when using the resources of the local authority or authorising their use by others:

- a act in accordance with the local authority's requirements; and
- b ensure that such resources are not used for political purposes unless that use could reasonably be regarded as likely to facilitate, or be conducive to, the discharge of the functions of the local authority or of the office to which I have been elected or appointed.

You may be provided with resources and facilities by the local authority to assist you in carrying out your duties as a councillor.

Examples include:

- office support
- stationery
- equipment such as phones, and computers
- transport
- access and use of local authority buildings and rooms.

These are given to you to help you carry out your role as a councillor more effectively and are not to be used for business or personal gain. They should be used in accordance with the purpose for which they have been provided and the local authority's own policies regarding their use.

8. Complying with the Code of Conduct

As a Councillor:

- 8.1. I will undertake Code of Conduct training if provided by my local authority.
- 8.2. I cooperate with any Code of Conduct investigation and/or determination.
- 8.3. I do not intimidate or attempt to intimidate any person who is likely to be involved with the administration of any investigation or proceedings.
- 8.4. I comply with any sanction imposed on me following a finding that I have breached the Code of Conduct.

It is extremely important for you as a councillor to demonstrate high standards, for you to have your actions open to scrutiny and for you not to undermine public trust in the local authority or its governance. If you do not understand or are concerned about the local authority's processes in handling a complaint you should raise this with your Monitoring Officer.

Protecting your reputation and the reputation of the local authority

9. Interests

As a councillor:

- 9.1. I register and disclose my interests.

Section 29 of the Localism Act 2011 requires the Monitoring Officer to establish and maintain a register of interests of members of the authority.

You need to register your interests so that the public, local authority employees and fellow councillors know which of your interests might give rise to a conflict of interest. The register is a public document that can be consulted when (or before) an issue arises. The register also protects you by allowing you to demonstrate openness and a willingness to be held accountable. You are personally responsible for deciding whether or not you should disclose an interest in a meeting, but it can be helpful for you to know early on if others think that a potential conflict might arise. It is also important that the public know about any interest that might have to be disclosed by you or other councillors when making or taking part in decisions, so that decision making is seen by the public as open and honest. This helps to ensure that public confidence in the integrity of local governance is maintained.

You should note that failure to register or disclose a disclosable pecuniary interest as set out in **Table 1**, is a criminal offence under the Localism Act 2011.

Appendix B sets out the detailed provisions on registering and disclosing interests. If in doubt, you should always seek advice from your Monitoring Officer.

10. Gifts and hospitality

As a councillor:

- 10.1. I do not accept gifts or hospitality, irrespective of estimated value, which could give rise to real or substantive personal gain or a reasonable suspicion of influence on my part to show favour from persons seeking to acquire, develop or do business with the local authority or from persons who may apply to the local authority for any permission, licence or other significant advantage.**
- 10.2. I register with the Monitoring Officer any gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £50 within 28 days of its receipt.**
- 10.3. I register with the Monitoring Officer any significant gift or hospitality that I have been offered but have refused to accept.**

In order to protect your position and the reputation of the local authority, you should exercise caution in accepting any gifts or hospitality which are (or which you reasonably believe to be) offered to you because you are a councillor. The presumption should always be not to accept significant gifts or hospitality. However, there may be times when such a refusal may be difficult if it is seen as rudeness in which case you could accept it but must ensure it is publicly registered. However, you do not need to register gifts and hospitality which are not related to your role as a councillor, such as Christmas gifts from your friends and family. It is also important to note that it is appropriate to accept normal expenses and hospitality associated with your duties as a councillor. If you are unsure, do contact your Monitoring Officer for guidance.

Appendices

Appendix A – The Seven Principles of Public Life

The principles are:

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must disclose and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Appendix B – Registering interests

Within 28 days of becoming a member or your re-election or re-appointment to office you must register with the Monitoring Officer the interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 1 (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests)** which are as described in “The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012”. You should also register details of your other personal interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 2 (Other Registerable Interests)**.

“**Disclosable Pecuniary Interest**” means an interest of yourself, or of your partner if you are aware of your partner's interest, within the descriptions set out in Table 1 below.

“**Partner**” means a spouse or civil partner, or a person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom you are living as if you are civil partners.

1. You must ensure that your register of interests is kept up-to-date and within 28 days of becoming aware of any new interest, or of any change to a registered interest, notify the Monitoring Officer.
2. A ‘sensitive interest’ is as an interest which, if disclosed, could lead to the councillor, or a person connected with the councillor, being subject to violence or intimidation.
3. Where you have a ‘sensitive interest’ you must notify the Monitoring Officer with the reasons why you believe it is a sensitive interest. If the Monitoring Officer agrees they will withhold the interest from the public register.

Non participation in case of disclosable pecuniary interest

4. Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to one of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in **Table 1**, you must disclose the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a ‘sensitive interest’, you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest. Dispensation may be granted in limited circumstances, to enable you to participate and vote on a matter in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest.
5. [Where you have a disclosable pecuniary interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it]

Disclosure of Other Registerable Interests

6. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to the financial interest or wellbeing of one of your Other Registerable Interests (as set out in **Table 2**), you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a ‘sensitive interest’, you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Disclosure of Non-Registerable Interests

7. Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to your financial interest or well-being (and is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest set out in Table 1) or a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate, you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise, you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.
8. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **affects** –
 - a. your own financial interest or well-being;
 - b. a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate; or
 - c. a financial interest or wellbeing of a body included under Other Registrable Interests as set out in **Table 2**

You must disclose the interest. In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied

9. Where a matter (referred to in paragraph 8 above) **affects** the financial interest or well-being:
 - a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
 - b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest.

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise, you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

10. [Where you have an Other Registerable Interest or Non-Registerable Interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it]

Table 1: Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

This table sets out the explanation of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012.

Subject	Description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the council (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land and Property	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council. 'Land' excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.
Licenses	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to the councillor's knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the council; and (b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where— (a) that body (to the councillor's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and (b) either— (i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/ her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were, spouses/civil partners have a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

* 'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

* 'securities' means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

Table 2: Other Registrable Interests

You must register as an Other Registerable Interest:

- a. any unpaid directorships
- b. any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority
- c. any body
 - i. exercising functions of a public nature
 - ii. directed to charitable purposes or
 - iii. one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)

of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management

Louth Town Council

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

To determine whether a complaint procedure is appropriate:

- 1) It will not be appropriate to deal with all complaints from members of the public under a complaints procedure. The Council will need to refer to or use other procedures / bodies in respect of the following types of complaint:

<i>Individual member's conduct alleged to breach the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council</i>	<i>The relevant principal authority Monitoring Officer should be contacted – East Lindsey District Council has responsibility for such matters</i>
<i>Alleged financial irregularity</i>	<i>Local electors have a statutory right to object to a Council's audit of accounts (Audit Commission Act 1998 s.16)</i>
<i>Alleged criminal activity</i>	<i>The Police</i>

- 2) A member of the public may also consider a criticism about a service (e.g. an untidy park area or unclean public toilet) or a fee (e.g. the level of charge for an allotment) to be a complaint, but these do not fall within the formal complaints procedure unless the Council has acted improperly and should be treated as normal service requests.
- 3) It is to be noted that staff members are not responsible for any works or maintenance carried out by any Town Council appointed contractor(s); such complaints must be made in writing to the Council. Person(s) who make such complaints 'personal' against staff members may be subject to restrictions within other Town Council Policies.

Before the meeting

1. Any complaint about the Council's procedures or administration should be made in writing to the Clerk to the Council at The Sessions House, Eastgate, Louth, LN11 9AJ
2. If the complainant does not wish to make the complaint via the Clerk to the Council, it should be marked confidential and addressed to the Chairman (Mayor) of the Council.
3. The Clerk to the Council/Chairman will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and advise when the matter will be considered by either the Council or a nominated Committee working on behalf of the Council.
4. Please be aware that any complaint will be treated as confidential, and that the council is obliged to comply with its duties under the Data Protection Act 1998 at all times to safeguard against the unlawful disclosure of personal data.
5. The complainant will be invited to attend the meeting at which the complaint will be considered, and be offered the opportunity to be accompanied by a representative, if required.
6. Seven clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant is required to provide the Council with copies of any documentation or other items on which the complaint is based.
7. The Council will provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which it wishes to rely at the meeting and shall do so promptly, allowing the opportunity to read all material in good time for the meeting.

Louth Town Council

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

At the meeting

1. The council shall exclude the public and press whilst discussion of the matter takes place. Any decision on a complaint shall subsequently be announced at a meeting in public, whilst taking into account any duties to safeguard personal data as under (4) above.
2. The Chairman will introduce everyone at the meeting, and explain the procedure to be followed.
3. The complainant will be asked to outline the grounds for the complaint, and thereafter, questions may be asked by (i) the Clerk and (ii) members of the Council.
4. The Clerk to the Council will then have an opportunity to explain the Council's position and questions may be asked by (i) the complainant and then (ii) members.
5. The complainant will be offered the opportunity to summarise their position.
6. The Clerk will be offered the opportunity to summarise the position on behalf of the Council.
7. The Clerk and complainant will both be asked to leave the room whilst members decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made. If a point of clarification is necessary, both parties shall be invited back.
8. The complainant will be given the opportunity to await the outcome but if a decision is unlikely to be finalised quickly, will be advised when a decision is likely to be made and communicated to them.

After the meeting

1. Any decision will be confirmed to the complainant within seven working days, together with details of any further action to be taken.
2. The Council's decision on the matter will be final, and no further appeal process will be offered.

Louth Town Council

MEDIA POLICY

Aims: Louth Town Council aims to build and maintain a positive reputation and will have a proactive approach to dealing with the media with enquiries being dealt with, wherever possible, within two working days. This approach will ensure an open and transparent approach which is helpful to the media and is positive and honest.

Objectives: 1) To improve residents' understanding of the work of the Council and to provide public information. 2) To enhance the reputation of Louth Town Council by promoting and celebrating success and the achievements of the Council and its partners. 3) To ensure a co-ordinated response from a single point of communication, the Town Clerk (or her assistant in her absence). 4) Reduce the risk of negative publicity resulting from non-response to enquiries. 5) To defend the Council from unfounded criticism by ensuring the public are properly informed of all relevant facts. 6) Adhere to the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority publicity.

Roles and Responsibilities: The Council's policy is to deal with all media enquiries centrally through the Town Clerk. This will ensure that a consistent message is given. Any statements given by the Town Clerk must not be party political.

Meeting Privacy: The press is free to attend all meetings, except for any part which is in Closed Session. Recordings are taken of each meeting by the Town Clerk. Councillors and the press are permitted to record meetings (unless Closed Session), but it is courteous to inform the Town Clerk if a person wishes to independently record it. All matters discussed in Closed Session during Council Meetings must remain confidential and should not be leaked in any form to the media. If notes are taken during Closed Session these should be left behind (face to face meetings) and all pink papers handed in. In online conferencing meetings, notes taken during Closed Sessions should be immediately shredded and any pink papers either shredded if printed or removed from your device if in electronic file format. When meeting online, please ensure that no other person can either hear or see your screen during Closed Sessions items. In both types of meetings, mobile phones and any type of recording device must be switched off during Closed Session items.

Disciplinary action will be considered if Councillors are found to have "leaked" any confidential information.

Press, Radio and Television Interviews: All elected members should be sensitive to the fact that they are perceived to be speaking on behalf of the Council. If Councillors are making comments or statements that are not in accordance with Council Policy, they should make it clear that it is their own personal view and not that of the Council's. This being the case they should not use the prefix of Councillor. Out of courtesy, the Town Clerk should be informed of any radio or television interviews/statements/comments made by Councillors so that she can be aware of the situation.

Management of Negative Publicity: It is important that this is done well and points adhered to. Inaccurate reporting in the media should be discussed by the Town Clerk and the Mayor (along with those Councillors invited to give their views where appropriate) before a course of action is decided on. Any press statement will be written by the Town Clerk.

Social Media: Louth Town Council has its own Facebook page. Any official information or statements regarding the Council will be posted on that page. Councillors and staff should remember that all social media sites are a public forum and that they are personally responsible for the content published. It must be made clear by Councillors that any comments or statements they make (unless quoting council policy) are their own personal views and not that of the Council. This being the case they should not use the prefix of Councillor. No defamatory, derogatory or offensive comments should be posted on the internet about colleagues or matters which have come in front of the Council. Anyone acting in contravention of this protocol may be subject to misconduct and disciplinary action.

Equal Opportunities and Diversity: These must be respected and adhered to at all times, when dealing with any form of media. The Town Council shall not publish any material which in whole, or in part, appears to be designed to support a political party.

Embargoes: To be used where deemed necessary and, all press releases should carry the embargoed logo on the top sheet. The Town Clerk, the Mayor and Councillors will convene a meeting to decide on a course of action should any media break the Council's stated embargo.

Press Conferences: Can be convened in the event of a major incident or an emergency in the town. Any press conferences held need to be pre-planned so that press statements can be prepared. All press conferences should be run to an agreed framework.

Election Years

During an election year, from the issue of the Notice of Election until the day following the election, only the Town Clerk should issue press releases.

Louth Town Council

CO-OPTION POLICY

1. Introduction

The preferred method of filling any vacancy is by election. However, if the requisite numbers of requests for an election are not received by the District Council by the closing date (set by the District Council) or the vacancy arises within six-months of the next ordinary election, then co-option is used to fill a vacancy.

Co-option is the process by which the Town Council selects a new Councillor and it is done as an agenda item within a meeting.

The Town Council manages the process of co-option by itself and strives to demonstrate that it is fair and equitable by following the procedure as set out below.

2. Procedure

Louth Town Council invites interested candidates to contact the Town Clerk in writing certifying that:

- a. They have read the background documentation available on the Council's website relating to the Council, the role of a Councillor and the co-option process
- b. They meet at least one of the qualifying criteria (see below)
- c. They do not meet any of the disqualifying criteria (see below)
- d. Explaining why they would like to join the Council
- e. What they could bring to the Council
- f. How they meet the Job Description/Person Specification.

Once applications have been processed, candidates who meet the criteria will be invited to attend a meeting for interview, as follows:

At the Council meeting:

- g. Candidates will be invited to verbally introduce themselves and expand on any previous experience, explain why they want to be a Councillor, what they might bring to the role, confirm how they meet the Job Description/Person Specification, confirm what they would like to achieve if they are successful and confirm whether they have any special skills which might be useful to the Council.
- h. Councillors will have the opportunity to view applications immediately prior to the meeting and ask questions of the candidates at the meeting. To ensure fairness, questions will be decided upon prior to interview and will be asked of each candidate.
- i. Each candidate will be allocated a maximum of 5 minutes.
- j. 'Interviews' will not take place in front of other candidates seeking co-option.
- k. The successful candidate will be chosen by recorded vote of the Council.
- l. Councillors will have one vote only and should no single candidate receive a majority on the first vote the candidate with the lowest number of votes will be eliminated. Voting will then take place again for the remaining candidates until one person receives a majority.
- m. The Clerk will maintain an accurate record of all votes cast.
- n. The Town Council will pass a resolution confirming the name of the person to be co-opted and that person will be invited to sign a declaration of acceptance of office form.
- o. The successful candidate will then be declared co-opted to the Council and will be asked to join the meeting.

- p. The successful candidate will begin their term as a Councillor in their own right and is no different to any other member.

It should be noted that the Town Council is not obliged to select candidates who are interviewed for co-option. If the process is unsuccessful and a candidate fails to achieve a majority supporting vote that candidate will be duly informed of such and the Town Council will rerun the co-option process.

3. Qualifying Criteria

- a. Registered as a local government elector for the Parish on the current Electoral Register
- b. Has during the whole of the previous 12 months occupied as tenant or owner of any land or other premises in the Parish.
- c. His/her principal or only place of work in the previous 12 months has been in the Parish.
- d. Has resided either in the Parish or within 3 miles thereof during the whole of the previous 12 months.

4. Disqualifying Criteria

A person may be disqualified from being elected or being a member in the following ways:

- a. If he holds a paid office or other place of profit in the gift or disposal of the council or any committee or sub-committee thereof or under a company controlled by the council.
- b. Being subject to a bankruptcy restrictions order or an interim order or a debt relief restrictions order.
- c. If he has within five years before the election or since his election been convicted in the UK, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man of any offence and has been sentenced to not less than three months imprisonment (whether suspended or not) without the option of a fine.
- d. If he is convicted of offences involving corrupt or illegal practices; disclosable interests under the Localism Act 2011 (in England).

TOWN COUNCILLOR – JOB DESCRIPTION

Title:	Councillor
Responsible to:	The Town Council and its electors
Responsible for:	Effective leadership to foster the interests of electors
Salary:	Unpaid
Hours:	Minimum 3 hours per week

Main Duties and Responsibilities

1.	To participate fully and constructively in all Council business, assisting in the formation of policies and scrutiny of budgets, strategies and services.
2.	To take responsibility for, with other councillors, management of Council matters.
3.	To keep up to date with significant developments affecting the Council at local, regional and national levels.
4.	To promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of the Town.
5.	To build community capacity and encourage local involvement in developing the community and the area.
6.	To be accountable to the public by providing accurate information about Council activities and explaining decisions and policies.
7.	To effectively represent the interests of the ward that the Councillor is elected to serve and deal with parishioner's enquiries, representations and complaints.
8.	To represent the whole electorate; listen, and then represent the views of the whole community when discussing council business and working with outside bodies.
9.	To take an active part in the day-to-day activities of the Council.
10.	To be available to attend all Council meetings whether held in the day time or at night time (including meetings of committees to which the Councillor has been appointed) unless absence is unavoidable.
11.	To prepare for meetings and be properly informed about the issues to be discussed.
12.	To take part in meetings and form sound judgements based on what is best for the community/Council and then abide by majority decisions.
13.	To attend councillor training as available/necessary.
14.	To represent the Council on outside bodies to which the Council may appoint you. Taking care to only promote the Town Council's resolved positions and agreed policies.
15.	To comply with legislation, abide by the adopted policies of Louth Town Council, the Council's Code of Conduct, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.
16.	To set an example to the community, maintaining high ethical standards and proper standards of behaviour as an elected representative of the people.
17.	To follow procedure and act only through proper channels. Promote transparency and access to information where appropriate but ensure that confidential information obtained through the Council remains as such.
18.	To participate effectively as a member of any committee or working party to which appointed.

TOWN COUNCILLOR - PERSON SPECIFICATION

Competency	Essential	Desirable
Knowledge and experience	<p>Knowledge and understanding of the local community and current local affairs.</p> <p>Proven experience of working with the local community e.g., through schools, community groups, residents' associations, local charities etc.</p>	<p>Can bring a new skill, ideas, expertise or key local knowledge to the Council.</p> <p>Experience of working with or for a public body such as a local authority.</p> <p>Knowledge of system of local government and the democratic process.</p> <p>Experience of committee work and collective decision making.</p>
Skills, aptitude and abilities	<p>Numeracy and literacy skills.</p> <p>Good communication and interpersonal skills including active listening skills and ability to explain and justify decisions.</p> <p>Basic computer literacy skills including use of email, social media platforms.</p> <p>Ability to interpret information objectively, put forward opinions and make balanced decisions taking into account opposing views and then justify decisions made.</p> <p>Good team player.</p> <p>Enthusiasm, interest and energy for the role of Town Councillor.</p> <p>Desire to maintain and improve the quality of life for the local community.</p> <p>Ability and willingness to work closely with other members and to maintain good working relationships with all members.</p> <p>Ability and willingness to work with the council's partners e.g., voluntary groups, other councils etc).</p>	<p>Ability to set and monitor budgets and understand financial reports.</p> <p>Presentation/public speaking skills.</p>
Circumstances	<p>Able to attend council meetings.</p> <p>Capacity to attend community events at evenings and weekends.</p> <p>Capacity and willingness to attend training.</p> <p>Sufficient time to undertake the role of Town Councillor.</p> <p>IT equipment upon which emails can be received such as agenda and meetings summons.</p>	<p>Capacity to attend day time training, meetings and community events</p>