



Classification	Item No.
Open	

<b>Meeting:</b>	Audit Committee
<b>Meeting date:</b>	18 March 2021
<b>Title of report:</b>	Financial Procedure Rules and Scheme of Delegation
<b>Report by:</b>	Interim Director of Financial Transformation
<b>Decision Type:</b>	Non-Key
<b>Ward(s) to which report relates</b>	<b>All</b>

## Executive Summary:

In November 2019, Cabinet received a report on the Council's new constitution. These were formally approved by Council in January 2021. In the report to Cabinet it was stated that 'Contract Procedure rules and Finance Regulations are a technical finance matter and are subject to the review of the statutory finance officer and monitoring officer'. The report also stated that the Audit Committee be authorised to approve further revisions to the rules.

This report sets out the Financial Procedure Rules and the Scheme of Delegation – Financial Limits for consideration by the Committee. Attached to the rules are detailed guidance notes to support budget holders in performing their financial duties.

### Recommendation(s)

#### That the Committee:

- **approve the Financial Procedure Rules and Scheme of Delegation – Financial Limits.**
- **Note that the documents will form part of training for budget holders across the Council**

## Key Considerations

### 1. Background

- 1.1 Any organisation with a large financial turnover needs to lay down the procedures to be observed in its financial dealings. Such procedures are especially necessary in the case of a local authority which is limited by legislation in what it is able to do, is subject to statutory audit and must account for its actions and stewardship to the general public.
- 1.2 The purpose of these rules is therefore to set out, for the benefit of members, officers and the public, basic financial rules and guidance in order that everyone works to an approved common standard in the financial dealings of the council.
- 1.3 These Financial Procedure Rules apply to all areas of the Council and should be read in conjunction with the rest of the Council's constitution.
- 1.4 The following documents are attached as appendices to this report for consideration and approval by the Committee:
  - Financial Procedure Rules
  - Scheme of Delegation – Financial Limits
  - Financial Procedure Rules - Guidance Notes
- 1.5 It is proposed that the documents will support the roll out of budget holder training across the whole of the Council and this will be delivered during the 2021/22 financial year.

## Community impact / Contribution to the Bury 2030 Strategy

Ensuring a financial framework within which all budget holders and those charged with financial responsibilities can operate within.

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### Equality Impact and considerations:

24. *Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:*

*A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -*

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;*
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;*
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.*

25. *The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.*
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## **Assessment of Risk:**

The following risks apply to the decision:

<b>Risk / opportunity</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
Lack of governance over financial transactions leading to qualified statutory accounts and Best Value opinion.  Risk of fraud and financial mis-management	Detailed financial rules to support the Council's financial budget and policy framework.

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## **Consultation:**

There are no consultation requirements.

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## **Legal Implications:**

Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires every authority in England and Wales to make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs and secure that one of their officers has responsibility for the administration of those affairs. This means responsibility for managing the totality of the financial affairs of a local authority in all of its dealings. The Section 151 officer owes a fiduciary duty to the public to carry out those duties effectively and the Financial Procedure Rules and the Scheme of Delegations are essential tools in this process.

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## **Financial Implications:**

There are no financial implications arising from this report. The proposals underpin the Council's Constitution and Budget and Policy Framework.

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## **Report Author and Contact Details:**

Lisa Kitto, Interim Director of Financial Transformation and S151 Officer

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**Background papers:**

**Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.**

Term	Meaning
CIPFA	Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy

## **FINANCIAL PROCEDURE RULES**

### **1. Introduction Procedures**

Any organisation with a large financial turnover needs to lay down the procedures to be observed in its financial dealings. Such procedures are especially necessary in the case of a local authority which is limited by legislation in what it is able to do, is subject to statutory audit and must account for its actions and stewardship to the general public.

### **2. Purpose of Financial Procedure Rules**

The purpose of these rules is therefore to set out, for the benefit of members, officers and the public, basic financial rules and guidance in order that everyone works to an approved common standard in the financial dealings of the council.

The rules are to be followed post obtaining the necessary decision approval required before incurring expenditure.

They do not over-ride the requirement to observe statute, including European Union Directives, in everyday matters.

These Financial Procedure Rules apply to all areas of the council and should be read in conjunction with the rest of the council's constitution.

### **3. Emergency situations**

The provision of these rules does not prevent the council acting through the Chief Executive and director(s) from incurring expenditure which is essential to meet any immediate needs created by a sudden emergency or situation relating to Section 138 of the Local Government Act 1972. This is subject to the action being reported as soon as practicable to the appropriate authority.

### **4. Non-compliance with rules**

Any non-compliance with these rules will follow the relevant council performance management procedure and may result in disciplinary action being taken, or criminal investigation as appropriate.

### **5. Approval of Chief Finance Officer or Nominated Officer**

The Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer or a nominated representative must approve all financial implications on all decision reports and the relevant implications section of the report template must be completed.

### **6. Approval changes**

The Head of Paid Service may agree changes to the approval authority where directors or chief finance officers are either working their notice or employed on an interim basis.

### **7. Internal audit and internal control Regulations**

The Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer shall in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations for the time being in force and future amendments, arrange for a continuous and current internal audit of all activities of the council.

### **8. Financial irregularities with regard to council functions**

Where matters arise which involve or are thought to involve financial irregularities this will be referred to audit and follow the relevant procedures as disclosed in the anti-money laundering, anti-bribery, fraud and corruption and whistleblowing policies (with reference to Treasury Management Practice Statement 9) as necessary.

### **9. Treasury management Activities of treasury management**

All treasury management activities will be carried out in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy ([CIPFA](#)) Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes 2017 and the "Treasury Management Policy Statement" as currently approved by the Chief Finance Officer and included in the Treasury Management Policy approved by Council.

**10. Banking Arrangements - Arrangements with council's bankers**

No officer has authority to open a bank account without prior specific written delegation of that authority by the Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer.

**11. Officer Involvement**

Officers must declare an interest and absent themselves from any managerial involvement in any financial matter from which they or their family could directly or indirectly benefit as required in the employee code of conduct.

**12. Revenue Expenditure - Control Budgetary Control**

Directors and the Chief Executive must ensure, that their Assistant Directors / Heads of Service are managing their budgets, including commitments, appropriately by requiring regular reports are presented to Management Board and their Department Management monthly budget monitoring meetings.

**13. Role of Directors**

Budgets are allocated to Directors to enable them to deliver services approved by Members through the budget setting process. Directors are required to ensure budgets are deployed in accordance with these rules to deliver policies and plans determined by members, and to ensure that there are processes and procedures in place within their directorates to be compliant with systems of internal control.

## Financial Procedure Rules: Scheme of Delegation – Financial Limits

Approving Revenue Payments –securing spend authority - with an order		
Value (before VAT)	Approval level	
Up to £1,000	Budget holder	
In excess of £1,000 but not more than £10,000	Service Manager	
In excess of £10,000 but not more than £25,000	Head of Service/Strategic Leads	
In excess of £25,000 but not more than £100,000	Assistant Director	
In excess of £100,000 but not more than £250,000	Executive Directors with approval from the S151 Officer (except for care packages which need Executive Director approval only)	
In excess of £250,000 but not more than £500,000	Executive Directors with approval from the S151 Officer. Cabinet Member to be consulted.	
In excess £500,000 but not more than £1m	Cabinet Approval needed. Post Cabinet approval of the key decision – the requisition or payments can only be authorised by: Director, Executive Directors, following consultation with the budget holder	
In excess £1m	Cabinet Approval needed. Post Cabinet approval of the key decision – the requisition or payments can only be authorised by: S151 Officer following consultation with the Director	
Approving Capital Payments –securing spend authority - with an order		
Approvals should be in consultation with Capital Programme Board		
Value (before VAT)	Approval level	
Up to £250,000	Project Manager	
In excess of £250,000 but not more than £1,000,000	S151 Officer direct reports (being deputy S151 officers and strategic finance managers)	
Above £1,000,000	S151 Officer	
Amendments to the Capital Programme		
Change required	Approval required	Comment
New capital scheme that requires borrowing (includes spend funded by S106 agreement where spend incurred before funds received)	Council	Cabinet / Cabinet member or officer report post Council approval required before spend can be incurred.
New 100% funded externally scheme	S151 Officer and reported to Cabinet	
Revenue contributions to capital schemes	S151 Officer	
Approving payments that do not have an order – White account forms ( for example periodic payments to HMRC and the pension fund)		
Value (before VAT)	Approval level	
Up to £25,000	Head of Service	

In excess of £25,000 but not more than £500,000	S151 Officer Direct Reports			
Over £500,001	S151 Officer			
<b>Budget Movements ( revenue and capital virements)</b>				
<b>Value</b>	<b>Approval required</b>		<b>Required to obtain consent from</b>	
Up to £25,000 but not more than £100,000	Heads of Service following consultation with the Budget Holder		Strategic Finance Manager	
In excess of £100,000 but not more than £500,000	Executive Director		S151 Officer and Cabinet Member(s)	
In excess of £500,000	Cabinet approval		S151 Officer	
<b>Sales of goods</b>				
<b>Value (before VAT)</b>	<b>Approval level</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Approval required</b>	<b>Reported to</b>
Up to £2,000	Director or Assistant Director	All	S151 Officer	Cabinet
More than £2,000 but not in excess of £10,000	Finance Manager			
In excess of £10,000	S151 Officer			
<b>Debt write off approval</b>				
<b>Value</b>	<b>Approval required</b>		<b>Reported to</b>	
Up to £1,000	Team Manager		Finance Manager	
In excess of £1,000 but not more than £10,000	Heads of Service Revenues and Benefits in consultation with Budget Holder		Finance Manager	
In excess of £10,000 but not more than £20,000	Directors in consultation with Finance Manager		Monitoring Officer	
In excess of £20,000 but not more than £50,000	S151 Officer and Monitoring Officer		Relevant Cabinet Member	
In excess of £50,000	Cabinet		Cabinet	
<b>Bids for external grant funding – expenditure of funds to follow revenue expenditure delegations set out above</b>				
<b>Value</b>	<b>Approval required</b>		<b>Comment</b>	
All	S151 Officer and Executive Director(s) must satisfy audit requirements in respect of external funding claims			



# Financial Procedure Rules Guidance Notes

Any Acts, Rules or Regulations mentioned in the text of this document can be accessed on the Office of Public Sector Information website at: <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/uk>

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## **Scope of Financial Procedure Rules**

The purpose of the finance procedure rules is to ensure that:

- Directors, Assistant Directors and Heads of Service remain within their budget and only spend what they have in their budget.
- Directors, Assistant Directors and Heads of Service maintain adequate commitment records.
- Directors, Assistant Directors and Heads of Service monitor their budgets.
- Where there are any problems with overspend or failure to perform, these problems are reported at the earliest opportunity.
- Directors, Assistant Directors and Heads of Service should have effective reporting arrangements from their budget holders.
- Directors and Assistant Directors should have effective reporting arrangements from their Heads of Service.

### **1. Approval of Chief Finance Officer or Nominated Officer**

Where matters are to be considered by the Executive Team or Cabinet that in any way effect the finances of the Council or that require the supply of financial information by the Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer, the Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer must be notified by the Director or Head of Service / Assistant Director (or equivalent) concerned, in sufficient time, to enable the Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer to report.

## **The Legal Framework**

### **2. Current Regulations**

The Statutes and Statutory Instruments and Regulations which currently effect these rules are as follows:

#### **The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 – Regulation 5**

Regulation 5 requires the accounting system, the form of its accounts and supporting accounting records to be determined by the responsible Financial Officer who shall ensure that the accounting systems determined by them are observed and that the accounts and supporting records of the body are maintained in accordance with proper practices and kept up to date.

#### **3. Review of the Systems of Internal Control – Regulation 4**

Regulation 4 of the accounts and audit regulations 2015 requires the council to carry out a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control. The results of this review contained in the annual governance statement are considered by the audit and governance committee.

#### **4. Accounting records – Regulation 5**

Regulation 5 of the Accounts and Audit regulations 2015 also requires that the accounting records required by the financial officer will be sufficient to show the council's transactions and to enable the responsible Financial Officer to ensure that any statement of accounts, income and expenditure account, balance sheet or record of receipts and payments and additional information to be provided by way of notes to the accounts comply with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

This means that accounting records must contain: Entries from day to day of all sums of money received and expended by the body and the matters to which the income and expenditure or receipts and payments account relate;

- a record of the assets and liabilities of the body; and
- a record of incoming expenditure of the body in relation to claims made or to be made by them for contribution grant or subsidy from any Minister of the Crown, a body to whom such a Minister may pay sums out of monies provided by Parliament or an European Union Institution.

Regulation 5 requires that the accounting controls systems ensure that the financial transactions of the Council are recorded as soon and as accurately as reasonably possible, that there are measures in place to enable the prevention and detection of inaccuracies and fraud and there is the ability to reconstitute any lost records.

Regulation 5 also requires that the duties of Officers dealing with financial transactions are identified and the division of responsibilities of those Officers are identified in relation to significant transactions and that procedures for uncollectable amounts including bad debts will not be written off except with the approval of a responsible Financial Officer or a member of staff nominated by the responsible Financial Officer.

### **5. Internal Audit – Regulation 6**

Regulation 6 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require the Council to carry out an effective internal audit of its accounting records and system of internal control in accordance with “proper practices” in relation to Internal Control. Officers must implement accepted recommendations from internal audit. This is monitored by the Audit and Governance Committee.

### **6. Local Government Finance Act 1988 – Section 114**

The Section 151 Officer will report to the Council if they have reason to believe that the Council or any part of the Council:

- a. has made or is about to make a decision which involves or would involve the Council incurring expenditure, which is unlawful, or
- b. has taken or is about to take a course of action which if pursued to its conclusion would be unlawful and likely to cause loss or deficiency on the part of the Council, or
- c. is about to enter an item of account the entry of which is unlawful.

Under Section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, the Section 151 Officer will make a report if it appears to them that the expenditure of the Council incurred (including expenditure it proposes to incur) in a financial year is likely to exceed the resources (including sums borrowed) available to it to meet that expenditure.

## **Accounting and System Development**

### **7. Accounting Procedures**

All accounting procedures and records of the Council and its Officers shall be determined by the Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer in consultation, where necessary, with the appropriate Director or Head of Service / Assistant Director (or equivalent) concerned. Such procedures shall have regard to Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 and shall be in accordance with the relevant legislation and guidance for the time being in force and such other statutory provisions which affect the financial affairs of the whole Council or any specific service.

### **8. Responsibility of Chief Finance Officer or Nominated Officer**

The Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer shall be responsible for the compilation of the main accounting records for the Council.

The Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer may from time-to-time issue written “financial instructions” dealing with detailed procedures to be followed in certain matters. Such instructions shall be issued after consultation with the Director, Assistant Director or Heads of Service affected.

The Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer shall be responsible for the maintenance of a management information system, the General Ledger.

### **9. Allocation of Accounting Duties**

The following principles shall be observed in the allocation of accounting duties by all employees or consultants engaged by the Council:

- The duties of providing information regarding sums due to or from the Council and of calculating, checking, and recording these sums, shall be separated as completely as possible from the duty of collecting or disbursing them.
- Officers charged with the duty of examining and checking the accounts of cash transactions shall not themselves be engaged in any of these transactions.

## **Internal Audit and Internal Control**

### **10. Role of Internal Audit**

This service is currently provided by an Internal Council Team of staff and will assist Directors, Assistant Directors, Heads of Service and Senior Managers in the effective discharge of their responsibilities by giving assurance on financial and management control systems, identifying weaknesses, giving advice on how to resolve financial and management problems and improve control, investigating suspected irregularities and by undertaking Value for Money (VFM) reviews and management studies.

### **11. Accounts and Audit Regulations required by the Secretary of State**

Any Member or Officer will make available documents relating to financial or other records of the Council which relate to their accounting. Other records, as appear to the Section 151 Officer necessary for the purpose of Internal Audit, will be supplied together with any such information and explanation as the Section 151 Officer considers necessary for that purpose.

### **12. Powers of Internal Audit**

The Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer and all authorised Internal Audit staff are empowered to enter at reasonable times any premises or land owned by or in the control of the Council, if appropriate, and require employees to produce Council property and records under their control.

### **13. Financial Irregularities with Regard to Council Functions**

Where matters arise, which involve or are thought to involve financial irregularities this will be referred to audit or follow Anti-money Laundering procedures and Treasury Management Policy Statements as necessary.

## **Treasury Management**

### **14. Chief Finance Officer Decisions Involving Finance**

All Chief Finance Officer recommendations on borrowing, investment or financing is required to act in accordance with the Code and the “Treasury Management Policy Statement”.

## **Banking Arrangements**

### **15. Arrangements with Council's Bankers**

All arrangements with the Council's bankers must be made by or under arrangements approved by the Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer, who is authorised to operate such banking accounts and other electronic transactions as they may consider necessary.

### **16. Funds Held on Behalf of Others**

All funds held on behalf of others (Trust or Private) shall be subject to an annual audit, which shall be undertaken by a suitably qualified person. A copy of all audit reports and the final accounts shall be made available, on request, to Internal Audit for information. In respect of Schools, the audit report and the findings shall be presented to their School Governors.

### **17. Value Added Tax**

The appropriate officers who are responsible for the administration of Trust or Private funds shall be responsible for ensuring that all Value Added Tax is correctly accounted for and shall have due regard to the treatment of Value Added Tax on donated funds (as detailed in Section 15 of the Local Government Act 1972).

### **18. Investment**

Officers shall be responsible for ensuring that Trust and Private Funds are appropriately invested for the benefit of the fund. Advice as to the most appropriate method of investment will be obtained from the Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer.

## **Financial Planning 'Accounting' and the Budget Process**

### **19. Financial Strategy**

The medium-term financial strategy will set out the parameters for the budget build process for the coming year in the light of likely grant settlement, service pressures, available balances, and consultation with clients and partners of the Council. The Budget and Policy Framework will be followed and the strategy will be approved by Council.

### **20. Capital and Revenue Budgets**

The detailed form of Capital and Revenue budgets shall be determined by the Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer consistent with the general directions of the Management Board. The Budget and Policy Framework will be approved by Council following recommendation from Cabinet.

Where a service area submits a bid for external funding, they must have approval from the Council's Executive Team made up of Directors and the Chief Executive and the relevant Cabinet Member prior to submission. Where there is an element of Council revenue or capital match funding identified this must already exist within the revenue budget or capital investment budget (or recommended by Cabinet for approval at the next Council meeting to add to the capital investment budget). When external grants are awarded and funding covers costs already in the current revenue budgets, the one-off savings from these grants should be vired corporately so the available budget can be used on other priorities, or to top up reserves.

### **Capital Programme**

The Chief Finance Officer will maintain a Capital Strategy to feed into the annual Capital Programme. Directors and their nominated budget holders, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer, shall jointly prepare for consideration by the Executive Team, a draft Capital Budget alongside the revenue income and expenditure budgets. These must be prepared in accordance with the policies and timescales determined by the

Cabinet. The Budget and Policy Framework, including the Capital Programme, will be approved by Council.

### **21. Approval of Estimates**

The budget, once approved by the Council shall become the Council's Revenue Budget and Capital Budget for the next financial year.

Approval of the annual budget by the Council will confer authority on the Directors, Assistant Directors and Heads of Service of the Council to incur revenue expenditure so provided for the next financial year subject to compliance with the relevant provisions of the Contract Procedure Rules.

## **Revenue Expenditure - Control**

### **22. Role of Directors**

It is the responsibility of each Director to ensure that the budgets for which they are responsible are used to deliver the Departmental Plan and are not overspent. Where budget pressures indicate that overspending may occur, then the Director must apply the rules set out under cash limited budgets below.

Directors are responsible for allocating responsibility for managing each cost centre within their service. They must inform the Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer of the allocation and any changes as soon as they occur.

Directors must ensure that their Managers who are budget holders are properly trained in budget management and apply adequate budgetary control through local commitment accounting by requiring regular reports from budget holders.

### **23. Moving Budgets between Cost Centres**

The rules for moving budgets between revenue cost centres (virement) are shown in the table in the financial procedure rules.

The following transfers will not count as virement for these purposes:

- a. Budget movements which occur as a result of year end procedures.
- b. Transfers of budgets when a whole or part service transfers from one directorate to another as a result of a service restructure or change in line management responsibilities.
- c. Income and expenditure budget changes reflecting additional grants not included in the Council's approved budget.
- d. Transfers arising from changes in legislation.
- e. Any support service recharges (allocation of overheads) for accounting purposes.

Any in year unplanned contributions from reserves will need to be reported to Cabinet as part of the monitoring arrangements.

### **24. Unauthorised Overspend**

The unauthorised overspend of a cost centre budget will be reported to the Chief Finance Officer.

### **25. Monthly Forecasting**

The Chief Finance Officer will provide monthly forecasting to the Executive Team and will ensure that reports are presented to Directorate Management Teams on a monthly basis.

## **26. Cash Limited Budgets**

Budgets are limited to the net annual budget for the relevant service. The Council maintains a general reserve which is to be used in exceptional circumstances where there is an uncontrollable overspend position at the end of the financial year. Therefore, Directors must ensure that they and their budget holders do not overspend their service budgets.

Revenue Expenditure may not be incurred which cannot be met from the amount provided in the revenue budget under the Service for that Head of Service / Assistant Director (or equivalent) to which the expenditure would be charged unless alternative funding sources have been secured or agreed.

The Head of Service / Assistant Director (or equivalent) can present overspend to the relevant Director who can consider whether the overspend can be contained within the overall service grouping. The Director and Head of Service / Assistant Director (or equivalent) will then report to Chief Finance Officer for consideration and approval.

The Chief Finance Officer must be consulted on overspends. The Executive Team need to take a view on what is a significant overspend in terms of the overall budget for the Council and anything which they consider significant should be reported to Cabinet. Approval from the Chief Finance Officer will only be given in exceptional circumstances. In all cases Financial Procedure Rules must be complied with. The approval of the additional expenditure budget may include provision for the repayment of the overspend.

## **27. Exceeding Cost Centre Estimate**

Directors may authorise expenditure which would otherwise exceed the estimate for a cost centre, provided that the expenditure:

- can be met from savings or under spending on other cost centres within the same service with the exception of windfall increases in income or decreases in expenditure, will not constitute Capital Expenditure or result in:
  - a change in the level of service provision; or
  - a commitment to incur expenditure in future years; or
  - a change in policy; or
  - a breach of the Council's Workforce Strategy.
- is not a virement from a support service recharge code.
- is notified in the prescribed form to the Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer who may if they consider that the expenditure is significant, require a report to be submitted to Cabinet.

## **28. Carry Forward of Underspends**

Genuine provisions for liability as recognised by the Code in force must be accounted for in accordance with this guidance. Where budget holders wish to carry forward any unspent monies into the next financial year, then they must provide a business case to the Chief Finance Officer.

These cases will be assessed against the relevant accounting guidance and the explanations provided in the case. The final decision for the carry forward of under spends is for the Chief Finance Officer.

## **29. Coding of Expenditure and Income**

All expenditure and income must be charged / credited to the cost centre and appropriate account code to which it relates. Miscoding expenditure / income distorts the Council's financial information and, therefore, may result in disciplinary action being taken against the Officer responsible.

The detailed form of Capital and Revenue budgets shall be determined by the Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer consistent with the general directions of the Executive Team and after consultation with Cabinet.

Journal transfers may only be actioned by the finance team.

Budget holders may only charge expenditure against budgets for which they are responsible.

### **30. Earmarked Reserves**

When establishing reserves, the Council needs to ensure that it is complying with the Code of Practice on Local Authority accounting and in particular the need to distinguish between reserves and provisions.

A reserve is a budget amount kept funding a future event.

A provision is recorded as a cost against a cost centre when the council has a present obligation as a result of a past event, it is probable that the cost will be paid to settle the obligation, and a reliable estimate of the value of the cost can be made.

New reserves may be created at any time but must be approved by The Cabinet member when a reserve is established. The setting, reporting, and reviewing of reserves must be in accordance with the Council's reserves policy.

The Chief Finance Officer has a fiduciary duty to local taxpayers and must be satisfied that the decisions taken on balances and reserves represent proper stewardship of public funds.

The overall level of reserves balances will be reported to Cabinet at least annually or when new reserves are proposed.

The annual budget report to Council will include:

- A statement of movements in reserves for the year ahead and the following two years.
- A statement of the adequacy of general reserves and provisions in the forthcoming year and in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy; and
- A statement on the annual review of reserves.

The level of reserves for the next three years will be reviewed at least annually as part of the Annual budget setting cycle. The Chief Finance Officer will review the Council's earmarked reserves for relevance of propose and adequacy.

Any amendments to earmarked reserves will be reported to the Cabinet.

Once a reserve has fulfilled the purpose for which it was established, any remaining balance should be reallocated to another similar purpose earmarked reserve or surrendered to General Reserves.

## **Capital Expenditure - Control**

### **31. Council Approval of Capital Budget**

Council's approval of the Capital Budget, known as the capital programme, constitutes allocation of:

Capital expenditure to be incurred in the **budget** year and for commitments to be made on capital schemes included for the budget year and for the previous years to the extent that

provision has already been made. This is not an authority to spend, this requires executive approval to proceed.

Expenditure to be incurred or commitments to be made for advance site acquisition, design fees and other associated preliminary expenditure but only if an appropriate budget allocation has been approved in the relevant year within the Capital Strategy and Programme.

All Authority is to be in line with the capitalisation policy that describes the process to be followed in relation to feasibility works, new capital schemes and monitoring of those schemes.

### **32. Variations to the Approved Capital Strategy and Programme**

The Council's Capital Strategy and Programme, which forms an integral part of the Council's Budget and Policy Framework, is agreed by Council. External grant funded schemes can be approved by the Chief Finance Officer, the rules for capital budgets are shown in the table in the financial procedure rules.

### **33. Other Additional Expenditure Requests**

Any other additions to capital budgets outside the agreed Budget and Policy Framework must be approved by Council.

### **34. Official Orders**

Official orders shall be issued for all work, goods, or services to be supplied to the Council except for supplies of public utility services, for periodical payments (rent + rates), petty cash purchases, or such exceptions as the Chief Finance Officer or nominated Officer may approve. Orders must clearly state the quantity of the goods and nature of the work or services and whether covered by contract or an agreed price and discounts specified therein or an estimated value. In line with the Council's policy no payment will be made to suppliers without a purchase order having been raised.

### **35. Raising a Purchase Requisition**

The Head of Service / Assistant Director (or equivalent) shall nominate those Officers eligible to raise Purchase Requisitions on the Council's financial system. The Finance system converts the Purchase Requisition into a Purchase Order upon the approval of the Budget Holder or nominated Authorising Officer.

### **36. Placing an Order**

Unless the service has a budget, an order should not be placed. Placing an order commits the Council to spending the money.

All official orders for goods and services must be raised using the Council's Financial System. Exceptions to this requirement require written approval from the Chief Finance Officer or nominated Officer. Purchases made using a Purchasing Card do not require a purchase order. Requirements for use of the Purchasing Card Policy and should also be adhered to at all times. The Council's Finance System will generate the appropriate commitment accounting record of outstanding orders. Verbal orders must not be made except as a matter of genuine urgency and must be confirmed immediately with a written order produced through the Council's Finance System.

Other than in cases of genuine emergency, no supplier shall be asked to provide goods or services before a purchase order has been issued to them.

### **37. Regular Periodic Payments**

Any circumstances causing the cessation or variation of a regular periodical payment must be notified immediately to the Payments Manager.

### **38. Approval of Order**

The ability to raise a requisition for goods or services and the subsequent approval and creation of the Order must only be undertaken by Officers nominated by the Director. Nominations shall be set up by submitting an authorised signatory form in the financial system which will workflow for the relevant approval before the roles are allocated.

Orders can be approved in line with the approval limits detailed in the financial procedure rules.

Goods properly supplied or work done without an official order due to a genuine emergency must be covered as soon as possible by a confirmation order.

Whenever practicable the duties of requisitioning goods or services and the subsequent confirmation of their receipt (goods received note process) shall not be performed by the Officer authorising the Order.

Each Head of Service / Assistant Director (or equivalent) shall be responsible for all orders issued from their Service.

### **39. Goods Received Process**

The Head of Service / Assistant Director (or equivalent) or Delegated Officer shall ensure that the Corporate Finance System is promptly updated when goods or services are received. Before completing the Goods Received Note process the verifying Officer shall, save to the extent that the Chief Finance Officer or nominated Officer may otherwise determine, be satisfied:

- that the goods have been duly received examined and approved as being in accordance with the specification or match the official order and are satisfactory.
- that the works done, or services rendered have been satisfactorily carried out and that, where applicable, the materials used were of the requisite standard.
- that the proper entries have been made in the inventories or stores records, where appropriate.
- that the Council's purchasing guidance has been followed.

## **Payment of Accounts**

### **40. Payment of Invoices**

It is the Council's policy to pay all invoices within 30 days of invoice date. It is therefore the responsibility of all staff to assist Pay Services in ensuring invoices can be processed for payment as soon as possible through full compliance with all the relevant financial procedures.

### **41. Other Payment Requests**

Payment requests shall be prepared in accordance with the format determined by the Chief Finance Officer or nominated Officer who if satisfied, shall process, and pay in accordance with a timetable prepared by them.

### **42. Destination of Invoices**

Invoices for payment must be sent in the first instance to Pay Services in the Town Hall.

### **43. Amendments and Deletions**

Amendments to or deletions from an invoice must only be made in exceptional circumstances and must be authorised by the Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer. No alterations to a Value Added Tax invoice may be made but a new invoice or credit note must be sought from the supplier. To avoid the possibility of duplicate payments photocopies or faxes are not accepted as valid invoices except in emergencies.

#### **44. Payment of Invoices**

The Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer shall pay all invoices and other payment requests which they are satisfied are in order, apart from petty cash imprest accounts or Local Bank Accounts.

The Chief Finance Officer shall ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for ensuring that invoices received by Pay Services are matched against official orders.

Payment of invoices shall only be made when:

- the ordering Service has confirmed that the goods have been duly received, examined and approved.
- the prices are in accordance with the order.
- the payment is in accordance with Council Policy and legally payable.
- the account is correct, and that VAT is properly accounted for where appropriate.
- the item has not been previously passed for payment and is a proper liability of the Council.

The normal method of payment of money due from the Council shall be by cheque, electronic transfer or other instrument drawn on the Council's bank account by the Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer

Directors shall provide the Chief Finance Officer with a list of authorised officers showing their signing levels as specified below, with specimen signatures. This list should be reviewed at intervals to ensure it is up to date and accurate and any changes being reported promptly.

Authorisation limits are shown in the financial procedure rules.

#### **Purchasing Cards**

The Council operates a Purchasing Card scheme which can be used to purchase and pay for goods, works and services.

The Chief Finance Officer shall be responsible for the Purchasing Card scheme and for determining the parameters within which spending limits can be set by Heads of Service/Budget Holders. Cardholders are required to comply with the Purchasing Card Manual issued by the Chief Finance Officer regulating the use of Purchasing Cards. Purchases must also be made in accordance with Contract Procedure Rules.

#### **45. Examination of Accounts**

The Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer may at their discretion examine the verified accounts passed for payment, as to their compliance with the minutes and Council regulations, contracts, accepted tenders or other authorities and for this purpose shall be entitled to receive such information and explanation as may be required.

#### **Local Bank Accounts - Imprest / Petty Cash Accounts**

##### **46. Imprest / Petty Cash Advances**

The Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer will provide imprests and petty cash advances, where appropriate, to Officers for the purpose of defraying expenses. A receipt

shall be signed in respect of each advance by the Officer concerned, who shall be responsible for accounting for monies. A receipt should be signed in respect of floats issued to Officers.

#### **47. Changes to Officers**

Any changes to Officers responsible must be immediately notified to the Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer. An outgoing imprest holder must reconcile the imprest to the total amount held, whilst the incoming responsible Officer should satisfy themselves that all is in order before accepting responsibility for the imprest.

#### **48. Disbursements**

Vouchers for disbursements must be obtained and attached to claims for reimbursement. Claims must be properly certified and forwarded for payment to the Payments Team at specified intervals, normally not exceeding one month.

#### **49. Security of Cash**

Heads of Service are responsible for ensuring that all cash is kept in a safe and secure place and that bank accounts are reconciled on a regular basis, not less than monthly. A bank statement must be received at least monthly for all imprest bank account.

#### **50. Use of Imprest Accounts**

Imprest accounts can be used for amounts agreed by the Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer:

- to pay for local purchases by cheque at the time of collection or delivery.
- to secure discounts or take advantage of special offers.
- to reimburse staff who have purchased small value items directly.
- all such payments must be supported by VAT invoices or receipts.

#### **51. Use of Imprest Funds**

Imprest funds must never be used to pay salaries, wages, or other employee expenses i.e., travel/subsistence and removal/relocation expenses, without the specific approval of the Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer. Such payments may attract liability to Income Tax or National Insurance contributions and must therefore be made via the payroll system.

#### **52. Examination of Local Bank Accounts**

The Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer may at their discretion examine and reconcile Local Bank Accounts and for this purpose shall be entitled to receive such information and explanation as may be required.

#### **53. Partnership Arrangements**

Where it is intended that the Council should enter into a partnership arrangement to further the delivery of Council policy and/or services, this must be approved by the Executive Team and a supporting assurance self-assessment process must be completed.

Where the Council's financial contribution to the partnership exceeds £100,000 per annum, including any grant or external funding for which the Council would act as Accountable Body, a full assessment must be carried out using the self-assessment process.

## **Income**

#### **54. Collection of Monies**

The framework and regulation of the collection of all monies due to the Council shall be subject to the approval of the Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer and shall comply with these Financial Procedure Rules.

The general ledger shall be updated promptly of all monies due to the Council and of contracts, leases and other agreements and arrangements entered into which involve the receipt of money by the Council. The Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer shall have the right to inspect any documents or other evidence in this connection as they may decide.

#### **55. Invoicing for Sums Due**

Each Head of Service / Assistant Director (or equivalent) shall establish procedures to ensure that invoices are raised on the Council's Finance System in respect of work done, goods supplied, services rendered and all other amounts due to the Council. These procedures must ensure that all invoices due are raised promptly in order to assist recovery of the debts.

#### **56. Payment of Amounts Due**

All accounts rendered in respect of amounts due to the Council shall contain a statement that payment must be made direct to the Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer and that cheques, money orders, and postal orders should be made payable to Bury Council.

All cheques, money orders and postal orders received in any Service Unit shall be crossed "Bury Council". Personal Cheques must not be cashed out of the money held on behalf of the Council.

Our preferred payment method is through utilising the Bankers Clearing Automated System (BACS)

#### **57. Introduction of New Electronic Payment Facility**

The Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer shall be consulted at an early stage on any proposals to introduce a new electronic payment facility. No such facility shall go live without the specific authorisation of the Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer.

The Council prohibits the use of any PayPal or any similar electronic payment facilities (unless specific authority has been obtained).

#### **58. Payment into Council Account**

All monies received by an Officer on behalf of the Council shall, without delay, be paid to the Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer. No deduction may be made from such money save to the extent that the Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer may specifically authorise.

Officers who bank money shall enter on the paying in slip and on the reverse of each cheque a reference to the related debt (receipt number or the name of the debtor) or otherwise indicate the origin of the cheque.

The name of the originating Service/Section shall be recorded on the paying in slip.

#### **59. Issue of Receipts**

Every sum received by a cashier or other officer of the council shall be immediately acknowledged by the issue of an official receipt, ticket or voucher except in the case of cheques or other arrangements may only be established with the express approval of the Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer.

All official receipts, tickets, books and other cash tokens shall, except by special arrangements approved by the Chief Finance Officer, be controlled and issued by the Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer, who shall keep a register of their receipt and issue. Departments shall keep proper records of the issue and use of all receipts, tickets and cash tokens.

#### **60. Recording Receipt of Monies**

Each Officer who receives monies on behalf of the Council, or for which they are accountable to the Council, shall keep records in a form approved by the Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer.

#### **61. Transfer of Monies**

Every transfer of official money from one member of staff to another will be evidenced in the records of the departments concerned by the signature of the receiving Officer.

### **External Funding**

#### **62. Grants and External Funding**

Authorisation to submit a bid for grant or other external funding, or accept an offer of such funding, must be obtained in advance of bid documents or acceptance documents being signed. This includes a situation where the Council intends to act as Accountable Body in respect of partnership funding, in which case authorisation to accept this Accountable Body status must also be obtained.

The Chief Finance Officer shall be consulted on, and certify if necessary, any application for grant or external funding.

The Chief Finance Officer shall:

- agree the terms and conditions of all grant offers made to the Council, and
- accept such grant offers and sign appropriate documentation on behalf of the Council,

Where the application for grant, or other external funding, is being made on behalf of a partnership, for which the Council will take on the Accountable Body role, the Director to whom the Accountable Body role is relevant, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer and the Solicitor to the Council, shall agree the terms and conditions of that Accountable Body role, and sign associated documentation on behalf of the Council.

The Chief Finance Officer shall be responsible for the completion, authorisation and submission of any grant or external funding claim forms to the relevant organisation(s) and, if necessary, the Internal or External Auditor, in accordance with any guidelines applicable to the claim(s) in question.

Director(s) shall ensure that records are retained to enable audit requirements to be met and provide explanations, as necessary, for any matters raised during the audit.

#### **63. Developer Contributions S106**

Developer contributions continue to support investment need associated with developments throughout the Country. Once a S106 has been completed, planning permission has been granted and the development subject to agreement has commenced, with the right governance in place the Council will be able to internally borrow to fund the project to

commence prior to the developer contributions being received. The borrowing will be funded short term within the cash balances and repaid once the developer contributions have been received.

### **Write-Offs - Income**

#### **64. Discharge of Debts**

No debt due to the Council, after it has been correctly established, shall be discharged otherwise than by payment in full or by the writing-off of the debt or the unpaid portion of it, on the authority of the Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer where either:

1. the debt is not enforceable, or that attempted recovery is likely to involve expensive litigation with limited hope of success; or
2. the cost of recovery would be disproportionate to the amount involved.

#### **65. Written-off Debts**

The approval limits for debt write offs are set out in the financial procedure rules.

Budget Holders will be provided with details of those debts where write off is appropriate. Such details are to include information on recovery action already taken.

In exceptional circumstances Corporate Finance may recommend to the Chief Finance Officer that a debt should not be written off to the service budget but will be written off corporately.

### **Charging for Services**

#### **66. Review of Service Charges**

Fees and charges will be reviewed annually as part of the budget setting process.

#### **67. Unmet income budgets**

Where it appears that income targets as set out in the Council's estimates will not be met then the Head of Service / Assistant Director (or equivalent) shall meet the shortfall from within the service budgets.

### **Salaries and Wages**

#### **68. Responsibility for Payments to Employees**

The Chief Finance Officer shall be responsible for making arrangements for the payment of all salaries, wages, pensions and other payments to all current and former employees of the Council.

### **Travelling and Subsistence**

#### **69. Claims for Payment**

All claims for payment of officer car allowances, subsistence allowances, travelling and incidental expenses shall be made through the Council's financial systems.

Officer's claims should be submitted promptly at the end of each month in which the journeys were made, or the expenses incurred. The Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer may refuse to make payment of claims over 3 months old.

## **Stocks / Stores**

### **70. Responsibility for Stocks**

Each Head of Service / Assistant Director (or equivalent) shall ensure:

- the proper custody of their stocks and stores in their Service Unit and shall ensure that they are subject to an effective system of stock recording and control.
- that stores are held in reasonable quantities and that consideration has been given to turnover, value, delivery quantities and delivery periods.
- that practicable steps are taken to ensure that a delivery note is submitted by a supplier for every delivery at the time of delivery.
- as soon as practicable after the delivery has been made that goods are checked to ensure that the correct quantity has been delivered and that they meet the appropriate quality standard.
- that no articles or goods are removed from stock without proper authority.
- that an annual review of stocks held is undertaken with a view to reducing the number of slow-moving items and disposing of obsolete stock items;
- that obsolete or other stocks no longer required for the purpose acquired are disposed of under the disposals policy.
- that accounts and records are maintained in connection with the receipt and issue of stores in such form and timetable as the Chief Finance Officer.
- that on the 31st March each year the value of stocks held is certified and reported to the Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer.

### **71. Surplus or Deficiency**

Where any surplus or deficiency is revealed in excess of £5,000 in any item of stock the Chief Finance Officer shall be advised, and action taken where necessary.

### **72. Checking of Stock**

The Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer is entitled to check stores and be supplied with any information relating to the accounting, costing, and financial records of the Council.

## **Disposal of Surplus or Obsolete Goods, Plant and Stocks**

### **73. Authorisation for Disposal**

Surplus or obsolete goods or plant, whether held in store, on inventories or otherwise up to the value of £2,000 per item or group of like items, must not be disposed of either by sale or destruction except upon the authorisation of the appropriate Director of the Assistant Director. Where the value is between £2,001 and £10,000 the authorisation of the Deputy Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer must also be obtained. Where the value exceeds £10,000, authorisation from the Chief Finance Officer must be obtained.

In relation to inventory items (e.g., IT equipment etc.) all items surplus to requirements should, in the first instance, be offered to other Council departments, schools etc. prior to being disposed of.

#### **74. Sale of Stock**

Sale must be affected by public tender except when, in the opinion of the appropriate Head of Service / Assistant Director (or equivalent) concerned and the Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer, the financial interest of the Council is better served by disposal by any other means. This could be by public auction.

#### **75. Recording Disposal**

A record of each disposal should be maintained (i.e., the approval, the price obtained and if appropriate the alternative method of disposal used). Inventories or stock records should be updated in a timely fashion to reflect the disposal. Officer decisions for disposals in excess of £50,000 must be published.

#### **76. Income from Disposal**

Income from disposals shall be credited to the cost centre unless a capital receipt. Capital receipts are sales of assets recorded on the asset register in excess of £10,000, either individually or cumulative. These are credited to the capital receipts reserve and used to fund the capital investment budget.

#### **77. VAT**

Value Added Tax shall be accounted for on the sale proceeds if appropriate and the amount identified when banking the income. The Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer should be contacted if clarification of the VAT position is required.

### **Voluntary funds**

#### **78. Voluntary Funds**

A voluntary fund is any fund which is held or controlled by the Council as trustee for the benefit of a third party and/or for a specified purpose. Such funds may be administered solely, or in part, by an officer by reason of his or her employment with the Council.

The Chief Finance Officer shall be informed of the purpose and nature of all voluntary funds maintained or managed by any Officer in the course of their duties with the Council.

Voluntary funds registered with the Charity Commissioners must comply with all requirements set by the Commission in respect of the format of accounts and the need for audit or independent examination by a competent person and must meet the timescales set out for such reports.

Voluntary funds not registered with the Charity Commissioners shall have formal accounts prepared and examined annually by a competent person independent of the fund. A copy of the accounts and Independent Examiner's Statement shall be supplied to the Chief Finance Officer immediately after the examination. The Chief Finance Officer shall be entitled to verify that the reports have been made and to carry out such checks on the accounts as he considers appropriate.

### **Insurance**

#### **79. Responsibility for Insurance**

The Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer is responsible for the arrangement of risk funding on advice from Internal Audit. The administration and resolution of all losses is the responsibility of the nominated officer in consultation with other Officers where necessary by reporting to the Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer.

### **80. Record of Insurances**

The Chief Finance Officer will keep a permanent record of all insurances, risks covered, premiums paid and of all self-funded risks and losses paid. This includes third parties arranging insurance where the Council has an insurable interest. Documents to be permanently retained must include policy schedules and all liability insurance certificates for every period of insurance. Such responsibilities may be delegated to the nominated officer.

### **81. Incident / Accident Reporting**

Every event with the potential to give rise to a financial loss, or involving injury to a member of staff, an elected Councillor or client of the Council, must be reported in accordance with the Health & Safety Arrangements Policy.

### **82. Review of Risk Financing Arrangements**

The Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer and Internal Auditor shall annually review the Council's risk financing arrangements and look at adequacy of provision in the light of changes in the environment including new legislation, imposed or contractual responsibilities, legal precedent, newly identified and quantified risks, or other concerns identified.

### **83. Indemnity**

Before any indemnity requested from the Council is provided, the Head of Service / Assistant Director (or equivalent) responsible shall obtain written agreement from the Chief Finance Officer or the nominated officer. Generally, Heads of Service should not allow burdens or responsibilities to be imposed on the Council through contract that would not otherwise be imposed by common law or statute.

## **Security**

### **84. Responsibility for Security**

All Heads of Services are responsible for maintaining proper security at all times for all information, buildings, stocks, stores, furniture, equipment and cash under their control. They should report to Facilities Management where they consider security is thought to be defective or where they consider special arrangements are needed.

Appropriate security controls for all assets shall be identified by the risk assessment process and by referring to security standards and procedures. Arrangements shall be agreed as above.

Maximum limits for cash holdings shall be identified by the risk assessment process and agreed with the Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer and shall not be exceeded without permission.

Key holders for safes and similar security receptacles are to be agreed by each Head of Service / Assistant Director (or equivalent) in conjunction with the Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer. The loss of keys shall be reported immediately using the security incident reporting procedures.

### **85. Data Protection Legislation**

The Chief Executive in conjunction with the Monitoring Officer and in consultation with Heads of Service and the Chief Information Officer, will ensure that all computer systems and written records, (including those in the possession of elected Councillors) which store sensitive personal data are operated in accordance with the Council's Data Protection Policy, Data Protection legislation, and that proper security and confidentiality is maintained.

### **86. Anti money laundering, bribery and corruption**

All staff must have regard to the Council's Anti-Money Laundering Policy and Anti Bribery and Corruption Policy. A member of staff should consider, in line with the Policy and Guidance, reporting any transaction which involves the receipt of £5,000 or more of cash to the Money Laundering Officer (the Head of Internal Audit); notwithstanding such financial limit, any member of staff who has reasonable grounds to believe that money laundering is taking place (or is being attempted) in respect of a smaller amount of cash should report the matter to the Council's Money Laundering Officer.

Staff should also have regard to the Council's Gifts and Hospitality Protocol. All staff must immediately report to their manager or the Monitoring Officer any circumstances where inappropriate gifts or hospitality have been offered to them.

## **Estates**

### **87. Responsibility of Directors in Relation to Asset Register**

The Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer will maintain an asset register of all land and properties owned by the Council recording the purpose for which the property is held, the location, extent and plan reference(s), purchase details where available, details of interest and rents payable and particulars of tenancies of other interests granted. This register is also updated by the assets team as appropriate.

All changes to the asset register must be communicated through the Council's systems.

### **88. Valuation of Assets**

The Chief Finance Officer or nominated officer shall ensure that all assets are valued (reinstatement and open market valuation) for capital accounting purposes in accordance with the latest CIPFA code.

### **89. Notification of Purchase or Disposal of land and / or buildings**

Any purchases or disposals of property must be actioned on the Council's financial systems and asset registers (including requiring a valuation prior to disposal).