

STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL

Greenacre Centre, Valerian Way, Stotfold, SG5 4HG
01462 730064 enquiries@stotfoldtowncouncil.gov.uk



23rd May 2024

Members of the Governance & Resources Committee: Cllr Buck (Chair), Cllr Hayes, Cllr Cooper, Cllr Headington, Cllr Saunders, Cllr Smith, Cllr Talbot, Cllr Dhaliwal, Cllr Matthews

You are hereby summoned to attend the Governance & Resources Committee meeting to be held in the Council Chamber, Greenacre Centre, Stotfold on **Wednesday 29th May at 19:00** for the purpose of transacting business detailed in the Agenda.

E Payne
Town Clerk

Members of the public:

You are now able to observe our meetings by joining via MS Teams. Join on your computer or mobile app [Click here to join the meeting](#). Please note, our meetings may be recorded for minute taking purposes, and will be deleted after minutes are approved.

Members of the public are invited to observe the meeting and may participate at the 'public section' agenda item. As per Standing Orders, if you wish to speak, you must notify the Town Clerk of your intention prior to the start of the meeting (contact in advance enquiries@stotfoldtowncouncil.gov.uk or 01462 730064 or you will be asked at the appropriate point in the agenda if unable to give prior indication).

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. DISCLOSURES OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

- a) Members to declare interests in respect of any item on the Agenda.
- b) Proper Officer to consider written requests from members for dispensations.

Members are reminded that if at any time during the meeting they feel they have an interest in an item being discussed, they should declare it at that point.

3. PUBLIC SECTION (MAX. 15 MINUTES)

Members of the public may speak on matters of concern, ask questions or make statements (maximum of 3 minutes per speaker), after giving notice of their wish to do so to the Town Clerk prior to the meeting. Order of speakers will be in order of notification. [Public Participation Policy](#) applies.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Members are asked to **resolve** that the Minutes of the **Establishment Committee** meeting held on **17th April 2024** are a correct record.

5. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

To receive nominations for the position of Vice-Chairman of the Governance & Resources Committee.

- 6. TERMS OF REFERENCE**
To review this Committee's Terms of Reference and recommend their adoption to Full Council.
- 7. CLERK'S REPORT, CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED AND MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES, FOR INFORMATION**
Correspondence received and matters arising from previous Minutes, for information.
- 8. REPORTS TO COMMITTEE**
 - 8.1 Outsourcing Payroll**
To receive a report with quotations to outsource payroll.
 - 8.2 Civic Regalia**
To consider a report on the Town Council's Civic Regalia.
 - 8.3 Grant Application and Policy**
To review the Town Council's grant application form and adoption of policy.
 - 8.4 Defibrillator Grant**
To consider making a grant to The Rooms for the installation of a defibrillator.
 - 8.5 SLCC National Conference**
To confirm the Clerk's attendance at the National Conference, 8th to 9th October 2024.
 - 8.6 IDB Co-Working with Stotfold Town Council**
To consider the Town Rangers undertaking basic tasks on behalf of IDB.
 - 8.7 Insurance Renewal**
To consider renewal of the Town Council's insurance contract for 2024 – 2025.
 - 8.8 Financial Regulations**
To review the Model Financial Regulations and recommend their adoption by Council.
 - 8.9 Copier / Shredder Replacement**
To note the operational replacement of office equipment.
 - 8.10 Appointment of Internal Auditor**
To consider a specification for the appointment of a new Internal Auditor.
- 9. WORK PROGRAMME**
To receive this Committee's Work Programme.
- 11. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES, RELEVANT TO THIS COMMITTEE ONLY**
- 12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**
Wednesday 24th July 2024.

EXEMPT ITEM

- 13. Staff Update**
To receive a verbal update from the Town Clerk.



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ESTABLISHMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 17TH APRIL 2024 AT 19:30PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, GREENACRE CENTRE, VALERIAN WAY, STOTFOLD.

Committee Members present:

Cllr S Hayes (Vice Chair), Cllr M Cooper, Cllr J Hyde, Cllr D Matthews, Cllr J Smith, Cllr J Talbot

Also present:

Cllr B Woods

E Payne - Town Clerk

S van der Merwe – Democratic Services Manager

118/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr S Buck. It was RESOLVED to:

Accept the apologies

119/24 DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS INTERESTS ON MATTERS CONTAINED IN THE AGENDA

119.24.1 Pecuniary: There were no disclosures of pecuniary interests by Members in relation to items on the Agenda for this meeting.

119.24.1 Non-pecuniary: There were no disclosures of non-pecuniary interests by Members in relation to items on the Agenda for this meeting.

120/24 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – QUESTIONS, COMMENTS & RESPONSES

There were no members of the public present in this meeting.

121/24 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Members received the Minutes of the Establishment Committee meeting held on 27th March 2024. The following amendments to the Minutes were requested:

- The date of the meeting listed to be amended to 27th March 2024.
- The addition of colons to times listed in the Minutes i.e. 19:45.
- Page 25: Item 6.5a): Complaints Policy: Change “Carish Council” to “Parish Council”.
- Page 27: Item 6.7: Change “LGSP Discretionary Pension Policy” to “LGPS Discretionary Pension Policy”.

It was **RESOLVED** that, subject to the amendments listed above, the Minutes are **APPROVED** as a true record of the Establishment Meeting of 27th March 2024.

122/24 CLERK'S REPORT, CORRESPONDANCE RECEIVED AND MATTERS ARISING FOR INFORMATION.

The Town Clerk advised Members that evidence has been presented in the form of invoices for the spend of the Mossman EMR of £1,000 for outdoor re-decoration, fence painting and deep cleaning of the floor and that the funds have therefore been spent as intended.

123/24 REPORTS TO COMMITTEE

123/24.1 Grant Applications

Members received a grant application for consideration by Just Out, who provide sporting opportunities in Stotfold for teenagers. This grant application would cover the provision of additional sporting equipment.

The Town Clerk recommended the Grants Application Policy and procedure be updated with the bi-annual grant award periods, that is April and October every year. Grant applications can be made by interested parties at any time of the year, but the awards will only be made in April and October of the year.

The Town Council **APPROVED** the issue of a grant award of £1,000 to Just Out.

123/24.2 Budget 2023 – 24

Members were asked to review a list of budget variances and the Town Clerk gave additional context to explanations on those variances to the previously approved budget for 2023 – 2024 and allocations to the Ear Marked Reserves ("EMR") Schedule.

Members **NOTED** the year-to-date budget.

Members **APPROVED** the virement of funds or transfers from the EMR Rec Rolling Improvements to the Allotments Maintenance & Repairs budget.

Members **NOTED** the budget variances and the relevant reasons for those variances.

123/24.3 Committee Structure and Calendar of Meetings 2024 – 2025

Members **APPROVED** the proposed Committee Structure and relevant Terms of Reference.

Members **APPROVED** the proposed Calendar of Meetings for the 2024 – 2025 municipal year.

The Town Clerk clarified that the Governance & Resources Committee will - be made up of the Chairs of the current Committees, including the Mayor and Deputy Mayor as *ex-officio* members.

The Town Clerk will email Members with the amended structure of Committees.

Members debated the Town Council and Annual Statutory Meeting dates. The Town Clerk advised that these would be separate meetings.

123/24.4 Town Council Telephone System

The Town Clerk requested this item be brought to the next Committee Meeting as there is still one outstanding quote.

123/24.5 Review of Policies:

Cllr Hyde asked where the Membership for the Complaints Committee will be drawn from. The Town Clerk suggested that the Membership of the Complaints Committee and its Terms of Reference, as well as an Appeal membership Terms of Reference will be included in the Governance & Resources Committee Terms of Reference, which would be agreed by the Annual Council Meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend to Council to adopt the Complaints Policy.

123/24.6 Bank Reconciliation

Members **NOTED** the bank reconciliation.

123/24.7 Work Programme

The Town Clerk & the Democratic Services Manager will update Members with planned dates for the presentation of Work Programme items.

Members **NOTED** the Committee's Work Programme.

124/4 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Following the adoption of the amended Committee Structure and Calendar of Meetings for 2024 -2025 the next Governance & Resources Committee Meeting will be held on 22nd May 2024.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 19:46.

SIGNED BY CHAIR: _____

MINUTES APPROVED (date): _____



GOVERNANCE AND RESOURCES

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Membership of Committee

- This Committee is made up of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Town Council, plus the Chairmen of each Committee, and additional members elected at the Annual Meeting of the Council. To bring members to seven or nine.
- Four Members of this Committee shall constitute a quorum.
- All non-Committee Members may attend Committee meetings and speak at the Chairman's discretion, but not vote.

Frequency of Meetings

- At least six meetings in each full municipal year.
- All Committee meetings are open to the public and press, except by resolution where publicity would prejudice the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business (Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960).

Decision/Delegated Powers

The Governance and Resources Committee has delegated authority (Local Government Act 1972 S101) to:

Finance & Risk Management

- *The setting up and monitoring of internal control systems for the oversight of Council expenditure.*
- *The periodic review of the Internal Audit arrangements and monitoring reports with reports and any recommendations being adopted by Council.*
- *The periodic review of the Risk Management arrangements with recommendations for adoption by Council.*
- Resolve actions incurring expenditure within its budget.
- Prepare estimates of expenditure in October for the forthcoming financial year for consideration by the council.
- To conduct a half yearly appraisal of the budgets based on September figures.
- To receive estimates of expenditure in December for the forthcoming financial year from other committees of the council, to set a recommendation for the Precept for approval by full council.
- Review budgets and reserves prior to year-end, determining actions to be required and any virements required.
- Responsibility for the control of the Legacy Account and associated matters.

Human Resources

- *To oversee the conditions of service for employees.*
- *To monitor staff contracts of employment, terms and conditions and policies relating to the employment of staff including but not exclusively:*
 - *Absence management*
 - *Performance management*
 - *Pension arrangements*
 - *Staffing levels*
 - *Staffing policies and staff handbook*
- *To review office-staff salaries and contracts when information from NALC is available.*
- *To form sub-committees for staff appointments, grievances and appeals as required.*

Policy

- *The development of policy for recommendation to Council*
- *The periodic review of the Council's standing orders and financial regulations with recommendations for amendments to be ratified by Council.*
- *Ensure that the Town Council complies with strategic health and safety regulations.*
- *The implementation and operation of the Council's Public Sector Equality Duty*
- *In all considerations and actions, follow the council's adopted corporate strategic plan.*
- *Review all documents pertaining to this Committee.*
- ~~*To manage policy with regard to promotion and publicity of the Council.*~~ This is the responsibility of Community Engagement
- *To seek nominations and decide on winner of the Citizens Award scheme – to be kept confidential within committee until the Annual Town Meeting, when award presentations will take place. Should this be with Community Engagement*

This Committee may make recommendations to the Town Council on relevant matters for which it has no delegated authority and may be given delegated powers by full Council to take action on relevant matters.

Reviewed May 2024

STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL

COMMITTEE: GOVERNANCE & RESOURCES

DATE: 29th MAY 2024

OFFICER RESPONSIBLE: EMMA PAYNE, TOWN CLERK

SUBJECT: OUTSOURCING PAYROLL

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 It was resolved at this Committee's meeting held on 24th January 2024 that the Town Clerk should investigate outsourcing the Town Council's payroll function. This report outlines quotations received for this function.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Members are asked to consider the quotations outlined in this report and advise the Clerk on their preferred contractor.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Members agreed that outsourcing payroll has both advantages and disadvantages, and the decision to outsource should be based on a careful consideration of the specific needs and circumstances of the business. The Town Council must weigh the potential cost savings and efficiency gains against the loss of control and potential risks associated with outsourcing payroll functions. Selecting a reputable and experienced outsourcing partner is critical to ensure a smooth transition and ongoing success in payroll management.
- 3.2 HMRC introduced Real Time Information which is used to report wages, salaries, PAYE, and National Insurance to HMRC. It is a requirement to report PAYE information to HMRC before or on the date they pay their employees. Failure to do so can incur a fine.
- 3.3 The quotations received (with the exception of Contractor D) offer a fully serviced payroll function. This means that the Finance Officer will send the raw data to the payroll provider who will work out PAYE and pension deductions. Contractor D requires the Finance Officer to input the data on their platform which in turn, generates the reports.

4. FINANCIAL

- 4.1 When the Town Council are fully staffed, there will be 14 members of staff (full and part- time).
- 4.2 The following quotations have been received:

a) Contractor A

Up to 20 employees £102.07 per month x 12 months = £1,232.40

EOY P60s @ .90p per employee = £12.60

Total annual cost £1,245.00

What's included:

- Every payroll is processed by two of our clerks and crosschecked at multiple points before returning to you, achieving unrivalled accuracy

- Payroll held at two data centres as well as multiple back-ups
- Employee payment via BACS
- RTI submissions to HMRC
- All statutory requirements including Tax, NICs, SSP, SMP, SPP, SAP & Student loans
- Auto-enrolment administration support
- A set of management reports
- Payroll data in a csv file
- Telephone and email support from our team in the UK.
- Online payslips (via secure online portal) or security paper payslips
- Payslip smartphone app available with online payslips
- P45s
- With online payslips P45s and P60s are also available via the portal
- Support with PAYE Tax and National Insurance matters
- Mid-period calculations for new starters or leavers
- No set-up charges where the information is with us on time*

b) Contractor B – Premier

Payroll Premier	£2,303 per annum
Pension administration	£606.00
BACs processing service	£492.00
BACs set up fee	£535.00 (one off)
Total annual cost	£3,401 + BACs set up fee

What's included:

- BACS processing:
 - Submission of BACS file (salaries)
 - Liaising with BACS service
 - Set-up of salary payments
- Pension administration:
 - Named contact
 - Automated employee assessments
 - Automated data and payments to pension providers
 - Automated employee communications
- A dedicated payroll contact who will handle all your payroll inquiries and provide tailored assistance to meet your specific needs.
- Bespoke monthly reports to provide you with detailed insights into your payroll data, allowing you to make informed decisions.
- A scheduled monthly support call where you can discuss any payroll-related queries or concerns with our experts, providing you with peace of mind.
- Handling third-party processes, such as childcare vouchers and Attachment of Earnings (AOE) orders, streamlining your payroll operations.
- Payroll processing, including calculations for starters/leavers and annual leave, ensuring seamless payroll management.
- Pension administration, including automated employee assessment, automated data and payments to pension providers, and automated employee communications.

c) Contractor B – Basic

Payroll essentials	£1,502.00 per annum
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What's included:

- Payroll processing, including four standard reports
- Online filing of in-year and year-end summaries (P60s)
- Year-end audit reports
- Onboarding with back-up data

d) Contractor C

Payroll processing £330.00 per annum

Set up cost £70 (one off)

Total cost **£400 (year one)**

Includes:

- processing the payroll, calculating PAYE, NI & pension
- providing payslips and pay reports accessed via online portal, you will be given a secure log in
- Employees will have access to their own payslips and p60s.
- completing the monthly online RTI submission to HMRC
- Dealing with leavers and new starters
- Calculating any statutory payments
- Completing year end p60s

Pension returns to remain in house. Pension report will be provided. All pensions made direct to employees, HMRC and pension in accordance with payroll reports.

e) Contractor D – Current Provider

Standard Service £48 per month = £576 PA

4.3 Contractor A is recommended by Dunstable and Houghton Regis Town Councils. Contractor B is the Town Council's HR provider. Contractor C is recommended by Sandy Town Council.

5. IMPLICATIONS

Strategic Plan:	N/A
Risk Management:	Outsourcing the payroll is part of internal control
Legals:	N/A
Resources/Stakeholders:	Frees up the Finance Officer to
Contracts/Financials:	Currently not included in the budget for 2024/25
Crime & Disorder:	N/A
Equalities:	N/A
Biodiversity:	N/A

STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL

COMMITTEE: GOVERNANCE & RESOURCES
DATE: 29th MAY 2024
OFFICER RESPONSIBLE: SIAN VAN DER MERWE
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES MANAGER
SUBJECT: CIVIC REGALIA

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 It was a resolution of this committee that the Civic Regalia for this Council was considered as part of the anniversary of the Town Council. This report outlines a proposal for new civic regalia.
- 1.2 Members are asked to address the Civic Regalia item, extending this to purchasing a new Chain of Office and regalia disc for the Mayor which would include small engravable discs in order to reflect the Leadership of the Town Council over the last 50 years. The current stylised chain would then become the Deputy Mayor's Chain, to be complemented by a new regalia disc with the title and Stotfold logo included.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That Members give approval to the purchase of:
- a) new Civic Regalia for the Mayor, with either a single-strand or a double strand of engravable discs for recording the names of past and future leaders of the Town Council styles set out in Point 4 below.
 - b) a new regalia disc to be worn with the current chain of office for the deputy Mayor,
 - c) Consort ribbons with an enamelled badge.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The issue of civic regalia was raised at the Establishment Committee meeting of 20th December 2023:

“99/23.1 Mayoral Insignia

Members received a report regarding the current mayoral insignia in relation to the Vice Chair and consort. Members felt that a badge may be more suitable for consorts to wear.

It was **RESOLVED** to:

- a) ***Agree to purchase additional civic regalia for the Deputy Mayor and Consorts with designs to be agreed by a future meeting.***
 - b) ***The budget for this expenditure is 50th Anniversary Budget.”***
- 3.2 The Civic Chain of office is worn to important civic events and is therefore a representation of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor's standing within their community, as well as a testament to their commitment to their community.
- 3.3 It is customary for Chains of Office to have engravable discs, on which the names of past and present leaders will be recorded.
- 3.4 There is no public-facing record of the names of former Chairmen and Mayors for Stotfold Town Council, and the current Chain of Office is a stylised chain only. In the spirit of celebrating the

Town Council's 50 years as a Town Council, Officers feel that the leadership should be reflected and acknowledged by way of inclusion onto a new Mayoral Chain of Office, with the current Chain of Office to become the Deputy Mayor's Chain and a new disc to be purchased.

- 3.5 Should approval be given, Officers will go through the records and present a list of the periods of leadership for the last 50 years, to facilitate recordal of multiple years of successive leadership in one disc.
- 3.6 There is currently one Civic Chain of Office for the Chairman, with a stylised chain on black velvet backing. The Chairman's Consort regalia consists of a simple navy blue ribbon with a small tarnished engraved disc with the Stotfold Coat of Arms.



4. FINANCIAL

- 4.1 New Mayoral Chain (gold plated), **single strand** engravable discs (usually approximately 28 in a strand) with Mayoral disc engraved with Stotfold logo and on navy blue backing (also includes the cost of engraving): **£4,297.72**



- 4.2 New Mayoral Chain (gold plated), **double strand** engravable discs (usually approximately 28 in a strand) with Mayoral disc engraved with Stotfold logo and on navy blue backing (also includes the cost of engraving): **£6,398.86**
- 4.3 New Deputy Mayoral disc (gold plated metal) die stamped to shape in gilt metal, hand painted enamel, hand polished finish. To be added to current stylised gold-plated Mayoral Chain of office on black velvet, from either of the following options: **£1,398.68**



- 4.3 Hard Shell Storage case for Mayor and Deputy Mayor's Chains of Office: **£448.86 each**
- 4.4 Consort Ribbons with gold plated logo badge (including hand-made presentation case):
£1,533.86



5. IMPLICATIONS

Strategic Plan:	N/A
Risk Management:	N/A
Legals:	N/A
Resources/Stakeholders:	Third party manufacturers
Contracts/Financials:	Budget allocation from the 50 Year Celebration Fund
Crime & Disorder:	N/A
Equalities:	N/A
Biodiversity:	N/A

STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL

COMMITTEE: **GOVERNANCE & RESOURCES**

DATE: **29 MAY 2024**

OFFICER RESPONSIBLE: **SIAN VAN DER MERWE**
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES MANAGER

SUBJECT: **GRANT APPLICATION AND POLICY**

1. SUMMARY

Stotfold Town Council has a long history of granting funding in support of local charities or local interest groups to serve the members of its Community. The grant application process must be guided by means of a Policy and there are proposed changes to the Grant Application form and Guidance Note.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That Members review and approve the attached Grant Applications Policy.
- 2.2 That Members note the highlighted changes to the Grants Application Form and Grant Application Guidance Note.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Town Council has two rounds of grant allocations per year – in April and September annually. The Town Council accepts grant applications at any time throughout the year, but only reviews those in April and October to award grants.
- 3.2 The 2024-2025 budget for grant allocations is £15,000.
- 3.3 The previous Grant Application form was rather generic and didn't include information which would help to highlight important information to the grant application process. A marked-up Guidance note is attached showing amendments to the original.
- 3.4 These changes are being proposed to ensure that the Grant Process is streamlined, that the Town Council is mitigating risk due to potentially incomplete information and also to start working in a clear and transparent way.

4. FINANCIAL

- 4.1 There are no costs associated with the updated forms, but the changes to the documents provide a more robust approach to grant applications and eligibility criteria.

5. IMPLICATIONS

Strategic Plan:	Meeting requirements for provisions for grant funding for local charities.
Risk Management:	A more robust approach to ensuring eligibility for grants and protection of funds.
Legals:	Ability to retract funds should project for which grant is awarded not proceed.
Resources/Stakeholders:	Officer time only.
Contracts/Financials:	There is a Grants budget.
Crime & Disorder:	N/A
Equalities:	Grants awarded to eligible entities.
Biodiversity:	N/A



STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL

GRANT APPLICATION 2024-25

APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

Please ensure all sections are completed and refer to the attached guidance notes for assistance in completing your grant application. Should you wish to expand on a question, please continue on a separate sheet. Please ensure that the declaration at the end of the application form is signed and dated.

When completed please return this application and supporting documents to:

The Town Clerk, Stotfold Town Council, The Greenacre Centre, Valerian Way, Stotfold, SG5 4HG

Tel: 01462 730064

Email: enquiries@stotfoldtowncouncil.gov.uk

1. ORGANISATION'S CONTACT DETAILS

Name of organisation:

Contact name:

Position in organisation:

Address for correspondence:

Tel No. (day):

Mobile number:

Email address:

Is your organisation a registered charity?

If so, please give charity number:

Are you part of a larger organisation? If so, please list their name here:

Do you charge a membership subscription fee?



2. DETAILS OF ORGANISATION

Brief description of your organisation's aims:

Please describe how the local community of Stotfold benefits from your organisation:

3. ABOUT THE PROJECT

Please give details of your organisation's proposed project and what any grant award funds will be spent on (continue on separate sheet if necessary)

What is the total project cost? Please provide a breakdown of costs (continue on separate sheet if necessary)

What amount are you requesting from the Town Council? (please do not leave this question blank, you must specify an amount)

Have you received or applied for funding from any other source for this particular project? Please give details.

Please state how many members of the Stotfold community will benefit from the funds you are requesting.

4. FINANCIAL DETAILS

Does your organisation receive funding from other sources, if so, who?

How much funding will be provided from your own resources?

It's the Town Council's preference to make grant award payments by BACS. However, in the event, this is not feasible, the Town Council will arrange a cheque payment at its discretion.

BACS

Please provide your bank account sort code, account number and name of account

Sort Code:

Account Number:

Account Name:

Cheque

Who should the cheque be made payable to?

Please submit the following supporting information with your completed grant application:



- A copy of the latest available statement of the organisation's accounts (either last set of audited accounts or most recently approved balance sheet)
- **A copy of your organisation's Constitution or Governing Document.**
- If your application is to fund specific goods/services, a copy of quotations for the said goods must be supplied

TERMS OF APPLICATION

Y / N - I declare that the information given is correct to the best of my knowledge and that any funds received will be used solely for the purpose detailed on this form.

Y / N - I agree that the grant will be returned if the specified project/activity does not proceed as planned to a satisfactory conclusion.

Y / N - I understand that the information provided on and with this application form will be used by the Town Council to judge whether or not to award a grant and that this decision may be made at a meeting which is open to the public*

Y / N - I confirm that I am happy for the Town Council to retain this application form and the personal data contained within it, in order to process the grant application. I understand that data will be held securely and not passed on to any third parties. I am aware that the Town Council's Privacy Notice and policies are available to view on its website *

Y / N - I confirm that I have read and understood the Grant Guidance Notes issued by the Town Council *

Y / N - I agree that, if successful, details of the project may be published by the Council *

* - The Town Council will hold and process data relevant to grant applications for those purposes only in line with current GDPR practice. Private information pertaining to email addresses, personal mobile number/s and sensitive financial documentation will be redacted in the event a public request for information is made. The Town Council's privacy statement on its website is the relevant reference point for data capture and use.

Signed on behalf of the applicant organisation:

Print name:

Date of Application:



STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL GRANT APPLICATIONS POLICY

1. General Principles

- a) Stotfold Town Council is committed to providing assistance and support to eligible local community groups, faith groups, not-for-profit organisations and organisations working in Stotfold and supporting its local residents. These grants aim to provide support for residents connected to improved wellbeing and opportunities to ensure inclusivity and equality of opportunity for all.
- b) Stotfold Town Council is funded by its residents via the Council's precept and therefore has only limited, pre-agreed budget available for the purpose of grant funding. The level of funding available may vary each year depending on the Council's agreed budget.
- c) Stotfold Town Council is committed to following best practice in grant giving in order to provide sustainable funding and support to voluntary and community groups, whilst providing value for money for local taxpayers and ensuring that public money is spent in a responsible manner.
- d) Stotfold Town Council has two grant award periods – April and October annually.
- e) In order for Stotfold Town Council to be able to assess applications objectively, it must assess all applications received against a range of criteria and will be presented to and decided on by the Governance & Resources Committee.
- f) The following eligibility principles will apply:
 - Assistance will be given on the basis of need, merit and contribution to local community.
 - Applicants must clearly show how any assistance given will benefit the people living in Stotfold or will benefit the environment of Stotfold.
 - Any grant awards will be subject to monitoring and evidence of agreed expenditure and resulting benefit. Photographic evidence may be requested.
 - Organisations should not make a presumption that funding will continue on a year-to-year basis.
 - Any funds awarded must only be spent on the activity/purpose for which it was awarded.

2. The Aims of the Council's Grant Making Policy

- a) Stotfold Town Council provides grant funding to support the following aims:
 - To enable local people to participate in voluntary groups and activities;
 - To help the town's voluntary groups to improve effectiveness and equality of opportunity
 - To ensure provision of services, needed by the town's residents, via the voluntary and charity sectors;
 - To support organisations which meet the needs of people experiencing social and economic difficulties;
 - To improve and enhance the local environment, arts and culture (The Town Council defines a voluntary group as a non-profit making organisation, set up and run by a voluntary, unpaid management committee.).

3. Grant Application Eligibility

- a) Applicants must meet the following criteria:
 - The organisation is based in or has significant local activity in Stotfold.



- The work of the organisation directly benefits a number of residents of Stotfold.
- The organisation has a written Constitution with clearly defined aims and objectives.
- The local organisation has a clear financial need. (Account will be taken of how much money the organisation has, including any special reserves set aside for particular projects and local fundraising efforts. Additionally, if the balance is high in relation to spending, then an explanation is required, justifying the reasons why the organisation is still applying for a grant.)
- The organisation has its own bank account with at least two authorised signatories.
- The organisation is non-party political and non-profit making.
- Individuals will not be funded.

4. The Grants Process

- a) All funding requests must use an updated application form which can be downloaded from the Town Council's website and applicants should provide all information requested.
- b) The amount of money available for grants may vary each financial year, depending on the overall budget. The level of funds available for grant applications in any given year can be obtained from the Town Clerk and applicants are advised to speak with the Clerk for guidance ahead of submitting applications.
- c) Completed applications will be considered by the Town Council's Governance & Resources Committee at the appropriate point of the grant award schedule.
- d) Applicants may be asked to send a representative to attend the Committee meeting in support of their application. A calendar of all Council meetings can be found on the Town Council's website.
- e) The Governance & Resources Committee may defer making a decision on an application if it feels more information is required from the applicant.

5. Payments and decisions

- a) All applicants will usually be notified of Council's decision following the relevant meeting of the Governance & Resources Committee.
- b) Successful applicants for grants will normally receive their award four to six weeks after the decision of the Governance & Resources Committee.
- c) Successful applicants will be invited to attend a meeting of Stotfold Town Council to receive their awarded grant.
- d) In some circumstances the payment date(s) may differ and this will be set out in the grant award confirmation letter.
- e) Grants will be paid by cheque made out to the named organisation.

6. Monitoring and reporting requirements

- a) Groups are expected to provide Stotfold Town Council with written evidence of what the money has been spent on and the benefit it has brought to the people of Stotfold.
- b) Such evidence of how the money has been spent may include copies of invoices and receipts, plus attendance numbers, photos, press clippings, etc. where applicable.
- c) This information should be submitted within 1 month of the event/project end or by the end of the project, provided written confirmation has been received by the Town Council as to expected finish date of the relevant project or expenditure point.
- d) The grant can only be used for the purpose stated in the application and the Council reserves the right to reclaim any grant not being used for the specified purpose of the application.



However, if a group wishes to change the purpose of the grant they must seek approval by writing to the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee who will consider whether or not to approve the change.

- e) Organisations are responsible for ensuring that they are in compliance with all applicable legal and statutory requirements (including those relating to health and safety and equalities).
- f) Should the organisation, for any reason, disband or the project is not completed, the Council may ask for all or part of the monies to be paid back.
- g) Acknowledgement of the financial support received from the Council is required where possible on documentation and any promotional material, including websites.
- h) In order to receive payment, organisations/groups must have a bank account into which grants can be paid; payments will not be made to private individuals.
- i) All successful applicants must complete an evaluation form within the stated time periods.
- j) Additional grant conditions may also be attached to any funding from Stotfold Town Council and these will be set out in the award confirmation letter.
- k) Failure to comply with any conditions attached to a grant may result in the grant being recalled or affect future grant assistance.

DRAFT



STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL

GUIDANCE IN COMPLETING APPLICATION FORMS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

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Who can apply?

- Applications under the scheme will be considered from voluntary organisations. The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 defines a voluntary organisation as 'any person carrying on an undertaking otherwise than for profit'.
- Applications for grants must be to directly benefit Stotfold, or part of it, or all or some of its ~~inhabitants~~ residents. Organisations will be eligible for consideration only if they provide a social, welfare or educational benefit, and have an active local branch or committee. Applications from private individuals will not be considered.

How can the grants be used?

- Grants are awarded at the Council's discretion and in all instances payment of grant is subject to availability of funds allocated for this purpose. Grants may be applied for any amount from £50 to £1,500.
- The Council has the discretion to allocate grants towards specific projects but will not allocate money in respect of schemes resulting from any shortfall in local authority funding. The Council will consider applications for specified running costs but will not provide financial assistance for wages or staff.
- The Council will not fund events that have already occurred, equipment already purchased, works already started or completed.

Grant conditions

- Applicants will be asked to provide the Governance Documents clearly defining the organisations aims and objectives and setting out the supported demographic.
- Grants are agreed on the basis that the money will be spent in accordance with the specified purpose and within 12 months of the award. If it is not possible to use the money for the project in accordance with the application, the funding must be returned, or the Council's approval sought to a revised application.
- The organisation is responsible for ensuring the grant is used for the purpose for which it is granted.
- Organisations are responsible for ensuring that they ~~are in compliance with~~ are following all legal and statutory requirements (e.g. planning and licensing regulations).

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- Recipients of grants will be asked to complete the Grant Feedback Report form within three months of completing the project, advising on the use of the grant and how they achieved their aims.
- Acknowledgement of the financial support received from the Council is required on documentation and any promotional literature or other media operation. The Council may require a plaque or similar notice to be displayed.
- The awarding of grant in one year does not set a precedent on any subsequent applications.
- The Council reserves the right to reject applications or award less than the amount requested.

When and how should an application be made?

- The total amount for distribution will be allocated twice-yearly in equal proportions. A notice in the local press/displayed in the town will give closing dates for receipt of applications. Applications received after the closing date, or where there are insufficient funds in the half yearly allocation, will be held over until the following allocation period.
- All applications for grant must be accompanied by the latest available statement of the organisation's accounts.
- Applications for grants must be made on the appropriate official application form [which can be downloaded from the Town Council's website](#) and returned to:

The Town Clerk
Stotfold Town Council
The Greenacre Centre
Valerian Way
Stotfold, Hitchin
Herts, SG5 4HG

Telephone number for enquiries: 01462 730064

STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL

COMMITTEE: **GOVERNANCE & RESOURCES**

DATE: **29 MAY 2024**

OFFICER RESPONSIBLE: **EMMA PAYNE, TOWN CLERK**

SUBJECT: **DEFIBRILLATOR GRANT**

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 Members are asked to consider a donation to The Rooms in the High Street, Stotfold for the purposes of installing a defibrillator. The proposal is to mount the unit on the outside wall of the shop with all installation and running costs being met by The Rooms.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Members are asked to consider the request and advise the Clerk of their decision.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Currently the Town Council is responsible for three defibrillators:

- Greenacre Centre
- Memorial Hall
- Baptist Church

- 3.2 There are other defibrillators, which are managed independently.

- Football Club
- Hitchin Road changing rooms
- Salvation Army
- Co-Op

- 3.3 A defibrillator, especially when accessible in public places or available for personal use, offers several critical benefits, particularly in the context of sudden cardiac arrest (SCA):

- **Life-Saving Potential:** The primary benefit of a defibrillator is its ability to save lives. During an SCA, the heart's electrical system malfunctions, and defibrillation can restore a normal heartbeat if performed promptly.
- **Immediate Response:** Defibrillators, particularly Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs), allow for an immediate response in emergencies. Since time is crucial in SCA situations, having a defibrillator on hand can significantly increase the chances of survival and reduce the risk of long-term damage.
- **User-Friendly:** Modern AEDs are designed to be user-friendly, even for individuals without medical training. They provide clear, step-by-step voice instructions, making it easier for bystanders to provide assistance.
- **Increased Survival Rates:** Studies have shown that the availability of defibrillators in public places can double or even triple the survival rates for SCA victims compared to waiting for emergency medical services to arrive.
- **Peace of Mind:** Having a defibrillator in places like workplaces, schools, gyms, and homes provides peace of mind, knowing that there is a means to respond effectively to a cardiac emergency.

- Versatility: Defibrillators can be used on individuals of various ages, with many models having settings suitable for both adults and children.
- Community Empowerment**: Public access to defibrillators empowers communities by enabling ordinary people to save lives. Training programs that often accompany AED installations educate the public on how to recognize SCA and use the device correctly. The Town Council recently organised a AED training session which was very well attended.

4. FINANCIAL

- 4.1 A budget for this item is yet to be identified. It could be met from the Grants budget which is typically underspent on an annual basis.

5. IMPLICATIONS

Strategic Plan:	N/A
Risk Management:	N/A
Legals:	N/A
Resources/Stakeholders:	N/A
Contracts/Financials:	Funding is available from existing budgets.
Crime & Disorder:	N/A
Equalities:	Easily used by all age groups
Biodiversity:	N/A

STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL

COMMITTEE: **GOVERNANCE & RESOURCES**
DATE: **29TH MAY 2024**
OFFICER RESPONSIBLE: **EMMA PAYNE, TOWN CLERK**
SUBJECT: **SLCC NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Town Clerk is a member of the Society of Local Council Clerks. They have regular conferences held annually including the National Conference (held in October) and Practitioners (held in January).
- 1.2 The Town Clerk holds Principal Membership of the SLCC and needs to maintain a CPD level of 22 points per annum in order to keep this level of membership.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Members are asked to consider the request and advise the Clerk of their decision.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Clerk attending the National or Practitioners conference benefits both themselves and the organisation.
 - Professional Development and Skill Enhancement - Conferences often feature speakers who are leaders in their field, providing insights into the latest trends, technologies, and best practices with many conferences offering hands-on workshops and sessions that can help develop new skills or deepen existing knowledge.
 - Networking Opportunities - Conferences are excellent venues for networking with peers, industry leaders, and potential collaborators. Engaging with other professionals can lead to new partnerships and collaborative opportunities that can benefit the organisation.
 - Industry Trends and Innovations - Staying Current. Attending a national conference helps the Clerk stay updated on the latest developments and trends in the industry.
 - Knowledge Sharing – Bring back valuable insights and share them with the team through presentations or workshops. Implementing new ideas and best practices learned at the conference can improve your organization's processes and outcomes.
 - Increased Visibility - Attending conferences helps raise your organization's profile within the industry.
 - Access to Resources - Engaging with exhibitors can give you insights into new products and services that might benefit your organization.
- 3.2 The conference in 2024 is held at Hinckley Island, Leicestershire on 8/9 October 2024. Speaker line-up includes:

Rob Northam – BBC Radio Sports Broadcaster

John McCarthy – motivational speaker

Erica Farmer – Speaker and consultant with 20 years' experience in delivering high impact learning and development for some of the UK's largest brands including LV, British Gas, Specsavers and Virgin.

4. FINANCIAL

4.1 The cost of the National Conference is:

Silver Package – Conference on Tuesday and Wednesday and overnight on Tuesday. Also includes entry to black tie dinner on Wednesday night.

£485 + VAT

Gold Package – Both days of conference and accommodation on Monday and Tuesday evenings and both dinners.

£640 + VAT

4.2 There is a Staff Training budget.

5. IMPLICATIONS

Strategic Plan	N/A
Risk Management	Regular training is included in the risk register
Legals	N/A
Resources/Stakeholders	The Town Clerk is contactable by phone during the conference
Contracts/Financials	Budget in situ
Crime & Disorder	N/A
Equalities	N/A
Biodiversity	N/A

STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL

COMMITTEE: GOVERNANCE & RESOURCES

DATE: 29TH MAY 2024

OFFICER RESPONSIBLE: EMMA PAYNE, TOWN CLERK

SUBJECT: IDB CO-WORKING PROPOSAL

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Internal Drainage Board (IDB) has approached the Town Clerk to ask if the Town Rangers can get more involved in some of the easier tasks relating to the water courses that run through the town.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Members are asked to consider the request and advise the Clerk of their decision.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The IDB's primary role is to manage water levels and reduce the risk of flooding within their districts. Much of the IDB's work involves the maintenance and improvement of watercourses and related infrastructure.
- 3.2 The IDB have reported that they get more reports of issues relating to Stotfold than any other local town. They are aware of the existence of the Town Rangers and have suggested that, with suitable relevant training and capacity, the Town Rangers could undertake basic maintenance.
- 3.3 No works would be undertaken until such time as the TRs have undertaken training in manual handling, working near water, use of equipment (drags, rakes, extendable tools) and are familiar with the relevant risk assessments.
- 3.4 The IDB were keen to stress that there would be no work that would require working IN water or anything that required machinery to complete the task. The IDB would undertake these tasks.

4. FINANCIAL

- 4.1 All costs would be borne by the IDB.

5. IMPLICATIONS

Strategic Plan:	N/A
Risk Management:	No works to undertaken without relevant training
Legals:	N/A
Resources/Stakeholders:	Subject to capacity in the TR's schedule.
Contracts/Financials:	Saving to IDB.
Crime & Disorder:	N/A
Equalities:	N/A
Biodiversity:	Would support the area's biodiversity by improving the flow of water in local water courses.

STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL

COMMITTEE: **GOVERNANCE & RESOURCES**
DATE: **29 MAY 2024**
OFFICER RESPONSIBLE: **EMMA PAYNE, TOWN CLERK**
SUBJECT: **INSURANCE RENEWAL FOR 2024-2025**

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 Members are advised that the Town Council's insurance policy is due to renewal on 1 June 2024, and that it will be year 3 of a 3-year deal.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Members are asked to
- a) Note the renewal of the Town Council's insurance policy.
 - b) Approve the revaluation of all buildings in preparation for the renewal of the insurance from 2025.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 As part of the assertion for AGAR, the Town Council is required to ensure that its assets are adequately insured. This includes land, buildings, public, employers and hirers liability, fidelity/employees and business interruption.
- 3.2 There has been an inflationary 5% increase in the value of all premises.

4. FINANCIAL

- 4.1 The renewal fee for 2024/25 is £9,256.69. There is a budget for insurance 61/611 £12,000.
- 4.2 The insurance premium for 2023/24 was £8,849.30.

5. IMPLICATIONS

Strategic Plan:	N/A
Risk Management:	Adequate insurance is part of the risk management strategy
Legals:	It is a legal requirement to have employer's liability insurance
Resources/Stakeholders:	N/A
Contracts/Financials:	There is a budget in place
Crime & Disorder:	N/A
Equalities:	N/A
Biodiversity:	N/A

STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL

COMMITTEE: GOVERNANCE & RESOURCES

DATE: 29th MAY 2024

OFFICER RESPONSIBLE: EMMA PAYNE, TOWN CLERK

SUBJECT: FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) has recently unveiled its updated Model Financial Regulations for the 2024/2025 cycle. These regulations serve as a critical framework, guiding local councils in effectively managing their financial operations.
- 1.2 They have been comprehensively updated by Steve Parkinson, advisor to NALC and this report is a summary of the changes.

2. RECOMMENDATION

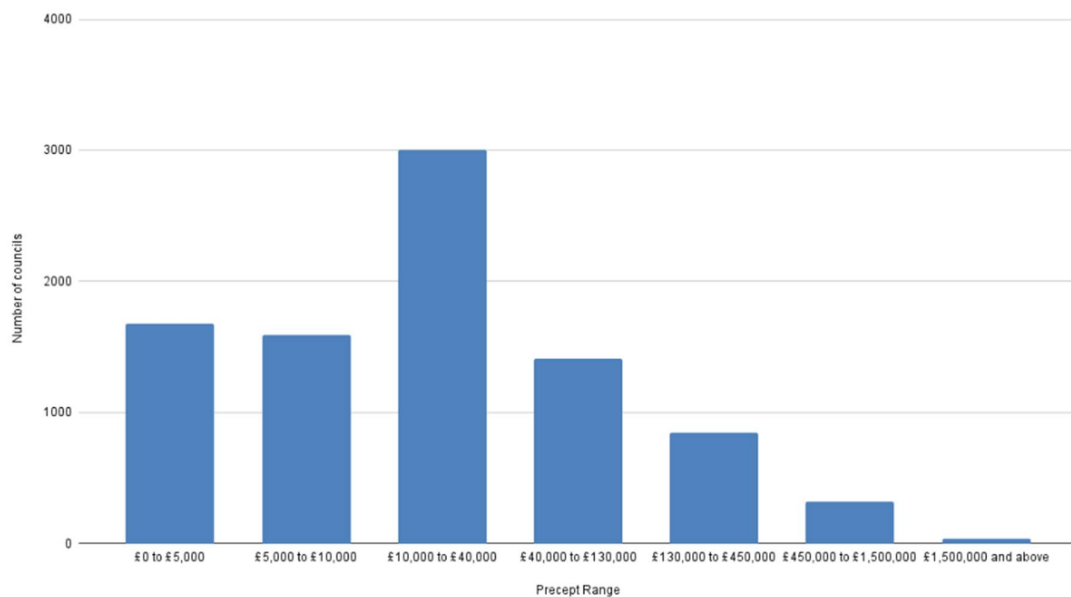
- 2.1 Members are asked to consider the reviewed Financial Regulations and recommend their adoption to Council.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The updated regulations emphasise customisation to fit the varying sizes and activities of councils. Text in **bold** continues to indicate legal requirements, which remain unchanged (Section 1). There are areas which can be adapted or removed depending on the Council's specific circumstances and the attached proposed Financial Regulations have been amended to reflect the previous set adopted by this Council.
- 3.2 It is important to understand the scale of variation among local councils. The following is a snapshot of council precepts across the UK:

- **£0 to £5,000:** 1,676 councils
- **£5,000 to £10,000:** 1,593 councils
- **£10,000 to £40,000:** 3,003 councils
- **£40,000 to £130,000:** 1,410 councils
- **£130,000 to £450,000:** 843 councils
- **£450,000 to £1,500,000:** 319 councils
- **£1,500,000 and above:** 35 councils

Number of councils vs Precept Range - 2023-2024



- 3.3 This demonstrates the range of the financial scope and capabilities of local councils, emphasising the need for regulations that can be adapted to fit each council's specific financial context. The updated model financial regulations can be adapted to fit the needs of the individual council according to their size, structure, and the specific needs of their community.
- 3.4 The new financial regulations provide options on whether the Clerk acts as the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) (section 1.5), whether councils use committees for decisions (sections 4 & 5) and how they handle different types of payments and procurement (sections 6, 7, 8 and 9). They allow larger councils to delegate decisions to committees or specific officers to enhance efficiency. Larger councils, managing more considerable sums, are expected to have a more structured procurement process, often involving formal tenders and quotes to ensure best value for money. Councils are encouraged to critically assess these roles and procedures to ensure they align with their operational structure and governance style.
- 3.5 Significant revisions have been made in procurement and the tendering process to enhance transparency and competitiveness. New thresholds for formal tender processes have been set to encourage fair competition while considering the council's scale of spending (Section 11). This includes specific requirements for obtaining multiple quotes or estimates based on the estimated value of contracts.
- 3.6 Reflecting modern governance practices, there is a greater emphasis on electronic payments and approvals. The regulations now provide detailed guidelines on managing electronic transactions, including the authorisation levels required and the security measures to be observed (Section 6).
- 3.7 There has been a robust enhancement in the sections dealing with risk management and internal controls. Councils must review their risk management policies and internal control systems annually (Section 5). Additionally, the role of the internal auditor is more clearly defined to ensure independence and effectiveness in evaluating the council's risk management, control, and governance processes (Section 12).

- 3.8 Updates include more detailed guidelines on asset management, ensuring that all assets are regularly verified and adequately insured. This section aims to prevent losses and mismanagement of council assets, thereby safeguarding public resources (Sections 14 and 15). The regulations require that the existence of tangible assets listed in the Asset Register be verified annually. This verification process may coincide with health and safety inspections to ensure both the physical condition and proper documentation of assets. Such annual checks are vital for maintaining asset integrity and safeguarding council resources.
- 3.9 Councils are instructed to follow strict procedures for the acquisition or disposal of assets. As per the regulations, any purchase, sale, lease, or disposal of land or tangible movable property must be approved by the council, supported by a thorough business case. This includes valuations, surveys, and relevant legal considerations (Sections 16.5 and 16.6). These steps ensure that all transactions are justified, beneficial, and transparent.
- 3.10 Regular reviews of expenditures related to assets are required to ensure that funds are spent judiciously and contribute to the council's strategic objectives. The RFO is responsible for ensuring that all asset-related expenditures are approved and documented appropriately, maintaining financial control and operational accountability.
- 3.11 To protect its assets against loss or damage, the council must secure adequate insurance coverage. The RFO is tasked with maintaining a comprehensive record of all insurances, reviewing, and renewing these policies annually (Section 16). This is part of a broader risk management strategy that also includes regular reviews of risk assessments and internal control systems.
- 3.12 The regulations underscore the importance of precise financial planning and budget management. Councils are required to set their budgets and precepts based on thorough financial analysis and forecasts, extending up to three years where possible, to ensure sustainability and accountability (Section 4).
- 3.13 The updates reiterate the council's obligation to comply with current laws and statutory requirements, including those relating to the Local Government Finance Act and other relevant legislation. This ensures that councils operate within the legal framework, maintaining high standards of governance and accountability (General and Section 13).
- 3.14 Finally, the updated document stresses the importance of proper implementation and regular training for council members and staff. This is crucial to ensure that everyone involved understands the financial regulations and adheres to them strictly.

5. AREAS FOR ADAPTATION

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 1.5 | Is the Clerk RFO? |
| 3.3 & 3.4 | Governance and accountability does not apply in Wales |
| Section 3 | Does the Council have committee's and how many years are forecast?
The Clerk has provisionally added 3 years as a forecast period. |
| 5.6 | Does the Council issue an open invitation to tender or invite specific firms? |
| 5.9, 5.13 & 5.15 | Are online prices acceptable evidence? |
| 5.17 | Does the Council have committees? |
| 5.16 | Will a councillor ever be instructed to place an order? |
| 5.18 | Clerk's level of emergency authorisation. |
| 5.20 | Is there a minimum level for purchase orders?
Currently POs are raised for all invoices other than expenditure on the Credit Card which is accompanied by another form of authority. |
| Section 6 | Includes several alternatives to cover delegation to committees or officers, |

	approval or invoices individually or in batches, or for approval of regular contractual payments at the beginning of the year.
	Need confirmation of levels of payments delegated to the Clerk
Section 7, 8 & 9	Includes several alternatives including wording where the clerk is a signatory. These are intended to allow the Council's financial regulations to fit what they actually do, not to force any council to change what they do. The Clerk is NOT a signatory.
Section 10	Gives two alternatives for handling petty cash. This Council does not have petty cash.
13.6	Has two alternatives for the handling of VAT.
13.7 & 13.8	Are removable if they don't apply to the Council.

5. FINANCIAL

4.1 There are no financial implications.

6. IMPLICATIONS

Strategic Plan	N/A
Risk Management	Regular review of financial regulations as part of internal control and risk management.
Legals	Statutory obligations marked in bold
Resources/Stakeholders	The Clerk is the Council's S151 Officer
Contracts/Financials	Affects all contracts and financial transactions
Crime & Disorder	N/A
Equalities	N/A
Biodiversity	N/A

STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL
FINANCIAL REGULATIONS 2024

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These Financial Regulations were adopted by the council at its meeting held on [enter date].

1. General

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

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

1.7. In addition, the council shall:

- determine and regularly review the bank mandate for all council bank accounts;
- authorise any grant or single commitment in excess of £10,000; and

2. Risk management and internal control

2.1. The council must ensure that it has a sound system of internal control, which delivers effective financial, operational and risk management.

2.2. The Clerk shall prepare, for approval by the council, a risk management policy covering all activities of the council. This policy and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.

2.3. When considering any new activity, the Clerk with the RFO shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration by the council.

2.4. At least once a year, the council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control, before approving the Annual Governance Statement.

2.5. The accounting control systems determined by the RFO must include measures to:

- **ensure that risk is appropriately managed;**
- **ensure the prompt, accurate recording of financial transactions;**
- **prevent and detect inaccuracy or fraud; and**
- **allow the reconstitution of any lost records;**
- **identify the duties of officers dealing with transactions and**
- **ensure division of responsibilities.**

2.6. At least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, a member other than the Chair or a bank signatory shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the RFO. The member shall sign and date the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of this. This activity, including any exceptions, shall be reported to and noted by the council Governance & Resources Committee.

2.7. Regular back-up copies shall be made of the records on any council computer and stored either online or in a separate location from the computer. The council shall

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

3. Accounts and audit

- 3.1. All accounting procedures and financial records of the council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 3.2. **The accounting records determined by the RFO must be sufficient to explain the council's transactions and to disclose its financial position with reasonably accuracy at any time. In particular, they must contain:**
 - **day-to-day entries of all sums of money received and expended by the council and the matters to which they relate;**
 - **a record of the assets and liabilities of the council;**
- 3.3. The accounting records shall be designed to facilitate the efficient preparation of the accounting statements in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.
- 3.4. The RFO shall complete and certify the annual Accounting Statements of the council contained in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with proper practices, as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year. Having certified the Accounting Statements, the RFO shall submit them (with any related documents) to the council, within the timescales required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 3.5. **The council must ensure that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and internal control system in accordance with proper practices.**
- 3.6. **Any officer or member of the council must make available such documents and records as the internal or external auditor consider necessary for the purpose of the audit** and shall, as directed by the council, supply the RFO, internal auditor, or external auditor with such information and explanation as the council considers necessary.
- 3.7. The internal auditor shall be appointed by the council and shall carry out their work to evaluate the effectiveness of the council's risk management, control and governance processes in accordance with proper practices specified in the Practitioners' Guide.
- 3.8. The council shall ensure that the internal auditor:
 - is competent and independent of the financial operations of the council;
 - reports to council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one written report during each financial year;
 - can demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships; and
 - has no involvement in the management or control of the council

- 3.9. Internal or external auditors may not under any circumstances:
- perform any operational duties for the council;
 - initiate or approve accounting transactions;
 - provide financial, legal or other advice including in relation to any future transactions; or
 - direct the activities of any council employee, except to the extent that such employees have been appropriately assigned to assist the internal auditor.
- 3.10. For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to internal audit the terms 'independent' and 'independence' shall have the same meaning as described in The Practitioners Guide.
- 3.11. The RFO shall make arrangements for the exercise of electors' rights in relation to the accounts, including the opportunity to inspect the accounts, books, and vouchers and display or publish any notices and documents required by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, or any superseding legislation, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 3.12. The RFO shall, without undue delay, bring to the attention of all councillors any correspondence or report from internal or external auditors.

4. Budget and precept

- 4.1. **Before setting a precept, the council must calculate its council tax (England) requirement for each financial year by preparing and approving a budget, in accordance with The Local Government Finance Act 1992 or succeeding legislation.**
- 4.2. Budgets for salaries and wages, including employer contributions shall be reviewed by the Governance & Resources Committee at least annually in October for the following financial year and the final version shall be evidenced by a hard copy schedule signed by the Clerk and the Chair of Governance & Resources Committee. The RFO will inform committees of any salary implications before they consider their draft their budgets.
- 4.3. No later than November each year, the RFO shall prepare a draft budget with detailed estimates of all receipts and payments/income and expenditure for the following financial year along with a forecast for the following **three** financial years, taking account of the lifespan of assets and cost implications of repair or replacement.
- 4.4. Unspent budgets for completed projects shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year. Unspent funds for partially completed projects may only be carried forward (by placing them in an earmarked reserve) with the formal approval of the full council.
- 4.5. Each committee shall review its draft budget and submit any proposed amendments to the Governance & Resources Committee not later than the end of November each year.

- 4.6. The draft budget with any committee proposals and three-year forecast, including any recommendations for the use or accumulation of reserves, shall be considered by the Governance & Resources Committee and a recommendation made to the council.
- 4.7. Having considered the proposed budget and three-year forecast, the council shall determine its council tax requirement by setting a budget. The council shall set a precept for this amount no later than the end of January for the ensuing financial year.
- 4.8. **Any member with council tax unpaid for more than two months is prohibited from voting on the budget or precept by Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and must and must disclose at the start of the meeting that Section 106 applies to them.**
- 4.9. The RFO shall **issue the precept to the billing authority no later than the end of February** and supply each member with a copy of the agreed annual budget.
- 4.10. The agreed budget provides a basis for monitoring progress during the year by comparing actual spending and income against what was planned.
- 4.11. Any addition to, or withdrawal from, any earmarked reserve shall be agreed by the council or relevant committee.

5. Procurement

- 5.1. **Members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times.** Any officer procuring goods, services or works should ensure, as far as practicable, that the best available terms are obtained, usually by obtaining prices from several suppliers.
- 5.2. The RFO should verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before it is made and in the case of new or infrequent purchases, should ensure that the legal power being used is reported to the meeting at which the order is authorised and also recorded in the minutes.
- 5.3. Every contract shall comply with these the council's Standing Orders and these Financial Regulations, and no exceptions shall be made, except in an emergency.
- 5.4. **For a contract for the supply of goods, services or works where the estimated value will exceed the thresholds set by Parliament, the full requirements of The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or any superseding legislation ("the Legislation"), must be followed in respect of the tendering, award and notification of that contract.**
- 5.5. Where the estimated value is below the Government threshold, the council shall (with the exception of items listed in paragraph 6.12) obtain prices as follows:
- 5.6. For contracts estimated to exceed [£60,000] including VAT, the Clerk shall {seek formal tenders from at least [three] suppliers agreed by [the council]} OR {advertise an open invitation for tenders in compliance with any relevant provisions of the Legislation}. Tenders shall be invited in accordance with Appendix 1.

- 5.7. **For contracts estimated to be over £30,000 including VAT, the council must comply with any requirements of the Legislation¹ regarding the advertising of contract opportunities and the publication of notices about the award of contracts.**
- 5.8. For contracts greater than **£3,000** excluding VAT the Clerk shall seek at least **[3]** fixed-price quotes;
- 5.9. where the value is between **£500** and **£3,000** excluding VAT, the Clerk shall try to obtain 3 estimates which might include evidence of online prices, or recent prices from regular suppliers.
- 5.10. For smaller purchases, the clerk shall seek to achieve value for money.
- 5.11. **Contracts must not be split into smaller lots to avoid compliance with these rules.**
- 5.12. The requirement to obtain competitive prices in these regulations need not apply to contracts that relate to items (i) to (iv) below:
- i. specialist services, such as legal professionals acting in disputes;
 - ii. repairs to, or parts for, existing machinery or equipment;
 - iii. works, goods or services that constitute an extension of an existing contract;
 - iv. goods or services that are only available from one supplier or are sold at a fixed price.
- 5.13. When applications are made to waive this financial regulation to enable a price to be negotiated without competition, the reason should be set out in a recommendation to the council {or relevant committee}. Avoidance of competition is not a valid reason.
- 5.14. The council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.
- 5.15. Individual purchases within an agreed budget for that type of expenditure may be authorised by:
- the Clerk, under delegated authority, for any items below **£500** excluding VAT.
 - the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of the Council or Chair of the appropriate committee, for any items below **£2,000** excluding VAT.
 - a duly delegated committee of the council for all items of expenditure within their delegated budgets for items under **£5,000** excluding VAT
 - in respect of grants, a duly authorised committee within any limits set by council and in accordance with any policy statement agreed by the council.
 - the council for all items over **£5,000**;

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

¹ The Regulations require councils to use the Contracts Finder website if they advertise contract opportunities and also to publicise the award of contracts over £30,000 including VAT, regardless of whether they were advertised.

- 5.16. No individual member, or informal group of members may issue an official order or make any contract on behalf of the council.
- 5.17. No expenditure may be authorised that will exceed the budget for that type of expenditure other than by resolution of the council {or a duly delegated committee acting within its Terms of Reference} except in an emergency.
- 5.18. In cases of serious risk to the delivery of council services or to public safety on council premises, the clerk may authorise expenditure of up to **£5,000** excluding VAT on repair, replacement or other work that in their judgement is necessary, whether or not there is any budget for such expenditure. The Clerk shall report such action to the Chair as soon as possible and to the council as soon as practicable thereafter.
- 5.19. No expenditure shall be authorised, no contract entered into or tender accepted in relation to any major project, unless the council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available and that where a loan is required, Government borrowing approval has been obtained first.
- 5.20. An official order or letter shall be issued for all work, goods and services **£250** excluding VAT unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate. Copies of orders shall be retained, along with evidence of receipt of goods.
- 5.21. Any ordering system can be misused and access to them shall be controlled by the RFO.

6. Banking and payments

- 6.1. The council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the RFO and authorised by the council; banking arrangements shall not be delegated to a committee. **The council has resolved to bank with Unity Trust and Barclays Bank with investments held with CCLA.** The arrangements shall be reviewed **annually** for security and efficiency.
- 6.2. The council must have safe and efficient arrangements for making payments, to safeguard against the possibility of fraud or error. Wherever possible, more than one person should be involved in any payment, for example by dual online authorisation or dual cheque signing. Even where a purchase has been authorised, the payment must also be authorised, and only authorised payments shall be approved or signed to allow the funds to leave the council's bank.
- 6.3. All invoices for payment should be examined for arithmetical accuracy, analysed to the appropriate expenditure heading and verified to confirm that the work, goods, or services were received, checked and represent expenditure previously authorised by the council before being certified by the RFO. ~~{Where the certification of invoices is done as a batch, this shall include a statement by the RFO that all invoices listed have been 'examined, verified and certified' by the RFO}.~~
- 6.4. Personal payments (including salaries, wages, expenses and any payment made in relation to the termination of employment) may be summarised to avoid disclosing any personal information.

- 6.5. All payments shall be made by online banking], in accordance with a resolution of the council, unless the council resolves to use a different payment method.
- 6.6. For each financial year the RFO may draw up a schedule of regular payments due in relation to a continuing contract or obligation (such as Salaries, PAYE, National Insurance, pension contributions, rent, rates, regular maintenance contracts and similar items), which the council or a duly delegated committee may authorise in advance for the year}.
- ~~6.7. {A copy of this schedule of regular payments shall be signed by [two members] on each and every occasion when payment is made to reduce the risk of duplicate payments.}~~
- 6.8. A list of such payments shall be reported to the next appropriate meeting of the council for information only.
- 6.9. The Clerk and RFO shall have delegated authority to authorise payments ~~{only}~~ in the following circumstances:
- i. any payments of up to **£500** excluding VAT, within an agreed budget}.
 - ii. payments of up to **£2,000** excluding VAT in cases of serious risk to the delivery of council services or to public safety on council premises.
 - iii. any payment necessary to avoid a charge under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998 or to comply with contractual terms, where the due date for payment is before the next scheduled meeting of the council, 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.
 - iv. 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 council.
- 6.10. The RFO shall present a schedule of payments requiring authorisation, forming part of the agenda for the meeting, together with the relevant invoices, to the council {or finance committee}. The council {or committee} shall review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied itself, shall authorise payment by resolution. The authorised schedule shall be initialled immediately below the last item by the person chairing the meeting. A detailed list of all payments shall be disclosed within or as an attachment to the minutes of that meeting.

7. Electronic payments

- 7.1. Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the RFO shall be appointed as the Service Administrator. The bank mandate agreed by the council shall identify a number of councillors who will be authorised to approve transactions on those accounts and a minimum of two people will be involved in any online approval process. ~~{The Clerk may be an authorised signatory, but no signatory should be involved in approving any payment to themselves.}~~

- 7.2. All authorised signatories shall have access to view the council's bank accounts online.
- 7.3. No employee or councillor shall disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the council or its banking, to anyone not authorised in writing by the council or a duly delegated committee.
- 7.4. The Service Administrator shall set up all items due for payment online. A list of payments for approval, together with copies of the relevant invoices, shall be sent ~~by email~~ to two authorised signatories.
- 7.5. In the prolonged absence of the Service Administrator, the Finance Officer shall set up any payments due before the return of the Service Administrator.
- 7.6. Two councillors who are authorised signatories shall check the payment details against the invoices before approving each payment using the online banking system.
- 7.7. Evidence shall be retained showing which members approved the payment online and a printout of the transaction confirming that the payment has been made shall be appended to the invoice for audit purposes.
- 7.8. A full list of all payments made in a month shall be provided to the next council meeting ~~{and appended to the minutes}~~.
- 7.9. With the approval of the council in each case, regular payments (such as gas, electricity, telephone, broadband, water, National Non-Domestic Rates, refuse collection, pension contributions and HMRC payments) may be made by variable direct debit, provided that the instructions are signed/approved online by two authorised members. The approval of the use of each variable direct debit shall be reviewed by the council every year.
- 7.10. Payment may be made by BACS or CHAPS by resolution of the council provided that each payment is approved online by two authorised bank signatories, evidence is retained and any payments are reported to the council at the next meeting. The approval of the use of BACS or CHAPS shall be renewed by resolution of the council at least every two years.
- 7.11. If thought appropriate by the council, regular payments of fixed sums may be made by banker's standing order, provided that the instructions are or approved online by two members, evidence of this is retained and any payments are reported to council when made. The approval of the use of a banker's standing order shall be reviewed by the council at least every two years.
- 7.12. Account details for suppliers may only be changed upon written notification by the supplier verified by the **Clerk and the Finance Officer**. This is a potential area for fraud and the individuals involved should ensure that any change is genuine. Data held should be checked with suppliers every two years.
- 7.13. Members and officers shall ensure that any computer used for the council's financial business has adequate security, with anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall software installed and regularly updated.

- 7.14. Remembered password facilities {other than secure password stores requiring separate identity verification} should not be used on any computer used for council banking.

8. Cheque payments

- 8.1. Cheques or orders for payment in accordance with a resolution or delegated decision shall be signed by two members.
- 8.2. A signatory having a family or business relationship with the beneficiary of a payment shall not, under normal circumstances, be a signatory to that payment.
- 8.3. To indicate agreement of the details on the cheque with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall also initial the cheque counterfoil and invoice.
- 8.4. Cheques or orders for payment shall not normally be presented for signature other than at, or immediately before or after a council or committee meeting}. Any signatures obtained away from council meetings shall be reported to the council or Governance & Resources Committee at the next convenient meeting.

9. Payment cards

- ~~9.1. Any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Clerk, Public Realm Manager and Democratic Services Manager 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.~~
- ~~9.2. A pre-paid debit card may be issued to employees with varying limits. These limits will be set by [the council]. Transactions and purchases made will be reported to [the council] and authority for topping up shall be at the discretion of [the council].~~
- 9.3. Any corporate credit card or trade card account opened by the council will be specifically restricted to use by the Clerk and RFO, Public Realm Manager and Democratic Services Manager and any balance shall be paid in full each month.
- 9.4. Personal credit or debit cards of members or staff shall not be used {under any circumstances.} OR {except for expenses of up to £250 including VAT, incurred in accordance with council policy.}

10. Petty Cash

- ~~10.1. The council will not maintain any form of cash float. All cash received must be banked intact. Any payments made in cash by the Clerk (for example for postage or minor stationery items) shall be refunded on a regular basis, at least quarterly.} OR {The RFO shall maintain a petty cash [float/imprest account] of £250 and may provide petty cash to officers for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses.~~
- ~~a) Vouchers for payments made from petty cash shall be kept, along with receipts to substantiate every payment.~~
- ~~b) Cash income received must not be paid into the petty cash float but must be separately banked, as provided elsewhere in these regulations.~~
- ~~c) Payments to maintain the petty cash float shall be shown separately on any schedule of payments presented for approval.}~~

11. Payment of salaries and allowances

- 11.1. As an employer, the council must make arrangements to comply with the statutory requirements of PAYE legislation.**
- 11.2. Councillors allowances (where paid) are also liable to deduction of tax under PAYE rules and must be taxed correctly before payment.**
- 11.3. Salary rates shall be agreed by the council, or a duly delegated committee. No changes shall be made to any employee's gross pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the council or relevant committee.
- 11.4. Payment of salaries shall be made, after deduction of tax, national insurance, pension contributions and any similar statutory or discretionary deductions, on the dates stipulated in employment contracts.
- 11.5. Deductions from salary shall be paid to the relevant bodies within the required timescales, provided that each payment is reported, as set out in these regulations above.
- 11.6. Each payment to employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall be recorded in a payroll control account or other separate confidential record, with the total of such payments each calendar month reported in the cashbook. Payroll reports will be reviewed by the Governance & Resources Committee to ensure that the correct payments have been made.
- 11.7. Any termination payments shall be supported by a report to the council, setting out a clear business case. Termination payments shall only be authorised by the full council.
- 11.8. Before employing interim staff, the council must consider a full business case.

12. Loans and investments

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

- 12.6. Payments in respect of short term or long-term investments, including transfers between bank accounts held in the same bank, shall be made in accordance with these regulations.

13. Income

- 13.1. The collection of all sums due to the council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO.
- 13.2. The council will review all fees and charges for work done, services provided, or goods sold at least annually as part of the budget-setting process, following a report of the Clerk. The RFO shall be responsible for the collection of all amounts due to the council.
- 13.3. Any sums found to be irrecoverable, and any bad debts shall be reported to the council and shall be written off in the year. The council's approval shall be shown in the accounting records.
- 13.4. All sums received on behalf of the council shall be deposited intact with the council's bankers, with such frequency as the RFO considers necessary. The origin of each receipt shall clearly be recorded on the paying-in slip or other record.
- 13.5. Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the council.
- 13.6. The RFO shall ensure that VAT is correctly recorded in the council's accounting software and that any VAT Return required is submitted from the software by the due date.
- 13.7. Where significant sums of cash are regularly received by the council, the RFO shall 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 record such as ticket issues, and that appropriate care is taken for the security and safety of individuals banking such cash.
- ~~13.8. {Any income that is the property of a charitable trust shall be paid into a charitable bank account. Instructions for the payment of funds due from the charitable trust to the council (to meet expenditure already incurred by the authority) will be given by the Managing Trustees of the charity meeting separately from any council meeting.}~~

14. Payments under contracts for building or other construction works

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

15. Stores and equipment

- 15.1. The officer in charge of each section shall be responsible for the care and custody of stores and equipment in that section.
- 15.2. Delivery notes shall be obtained in respect of all goods received into store or otherwise delivered and goods must be checked as to order and quality at the time delivery is made.
- 15.3. Stocks shall be kept at the minimum levels consistent with operational requirements.
- 15.4. The RFO shall be responsible for periodic checks of stocks and stores, at least annually.

16. Assets, properties and estates

- 16.1. The Clerk shall make arrangements for the safe custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the council.
- 16.2. The RFO shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date, with a record of all properties held by the council, their location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held, in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 16.3. The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the Register shall be verified at least annually, possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.
- 16.4. No interest in land shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law. In each case a written report shall be provided to council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate where required by law).

No tangible moveable property shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law, except where the estimated value of any one item does not exceed **£500**. In each case a written report shall be provided to council with a full business case.

17. Insurance

- 17.1. The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the council and the property and risks covered, reviewing these annually before the renewal date in conjunction with the council's review of risk management.
- 17.2. The Clerk shall give prompt notification of all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.

17.3. The RFO shall be notified of any loss, liability, damage, or event likely to lead to a claim, and shall report these to the council at the next available meeting. The RFO shall negotiate all claims on the council's insurers .

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

~~18. [Charities]~~

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

19. Suspension and revision of Financial Regulations

19.1. The council shall review these Financial Regulations annually and following any change of clerk or RFO. The Clerk shall monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and advise the council of any need to amend these Financial Regulations.

19.2. The council may, by resolution duly notified prior to the relevant meeting of council, suspend any part of these Financial Regulations, provided that reasons for the suspension are recorded and that an assessment of the risks arising has been presented to all members. Suspension does not disapply any legislation or permit the council to act unlawfully.

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

Appendix 1 - Tender process

- 1) Any invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases.
- 2) The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the Clerk in the ordinary course of post unless an electronic tendering process has been agreed by the council.
- 3) Where a postal process is used, each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specifically marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract. All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the Clerk in the presence of at least one member of council.
- 4) Where an electronic tendering process is used, the council shall use a specific email address that will be monitored to ensure that nobody accesses any tender before the expiry of the deadline for submission.
- 5) Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to Standing Order [insert reference of the council's relevant standing order] and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.
- 6) Where the council, or duly delegated committee, does not accept any tender, quote or estimate, the work is not allocated and the council requires further pricing, no person shall be permitted to submit a later tender, estimate or quote who was present when the original decision-making process was being undertaken.

STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL

COMMITTEE: GOVERNANCE & RESOURCES
DATE: 29th MAY 2024
OFFICER RESPONSIBLE: SIAN VAN DER MERWE
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES MANAGER
SUBJECT: COPIER / SHREDDER REPLACEMENT

1. SUMMARY

The copier machine and scanner are being replaced with new equipment with improved functionality.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 For Members to note that the Town Clerk approved getting a new copier and shredder for the office with a 5 year leasing and maintenance plan to service both machines.

3. BACKGROUND

The Town Council's copier machine and shredder are aged and have had a number of technical failures over the last three months. Both the copier and the shredder were purchased outright and the Town Council pays a monthly maintenance plan to cover toner and maintenance on the copier machine only.

Three quotes were obtained from service providers and the Town Clerk approved the purchase of a new copier with a function to make booklets and add staples, and a shredder that will not need to be manually manipulated. This machine includes the option to have user PIN login, where each user will have to access their printing by inserting a pin on the keypad and selecting print.

4. FINANCIAL

- 4.1 5 year leasing plan – Copier - £82.6 per month / £247.8 per quarter / £743.4 per annum

5 year leasing plan – Shredder - £37.3 per month / £111.9 per quarter / £335.7 per annum

There will be an additional charge on each invoiced period (per quarter) based on the number of copies made – the cost for a black and white copy is £0.04 and £0.038 per colour page.

5. IMPLICATIONS

Strategic Plan: Modernisation of office function. Ability to print own civic service, promotional and events paperwork and pamphlets.

Risk Management: Lower risk of data breach.

Legals: Confidentiality maintained on sensitive documents.

Resources/Stakeholders:

Contracts/Financials: Third party contract for a 5-year period from June 2024.

Crime & Disorder: N/A

Equalities: N/A

Biodiversity: N/A

STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL

COMMITTEE: GOVERNANCE & RESOURCES
DATE: 29th MAY 2024
OFFICER RESPONSIBLE: EMMA PAYNE, TOWN CLERK
SUBJECT: SPECIFICATION FOR INTERNAL AUDITOR

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Joint Panel for Accountability and Governance (JPAG) Practitioners' Guide March 2023 is the go-to guide to deal with all financial matters relating to the operation of the Town Council.
- 1.2 JPAG is responsible for issuing proper practices about the governance and accounts of smaller authorities. A small authority any parish or town council whose gross income for the year and gross expenditure does not exceed £6.5m.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Members are asked to consider the attached specification for the appointment of an internal auditor and advise the Clerk if they agree.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Section four of the Practitioners' Guide sets out the best practice guidance for internal audit. There are two key principles an authority must follow in appointment an internal audit provider: independence and competence.
- 3.2 There are various ways for an authority to source an internal audit service, for example.
 - Purchasing an internal audit service from a local firm of specialist internal audit practice with an understanding of the local government legal framework;
 - Purchasing an internal audit service from a principal local authority;
 - Engaging a competent internal auditor with sufficient organisational independence to undertake the role;
 - Appointing a local individual or a member of a panel of individuals administered by a local association affiliated to NALC, SLCC or ADA.
- 3.3 There is no requirement for a person providing the internal audit role to be professionally qualified. However, essential competencies to be sought from any internal audit service should include:
 - Understanding basic bookkeeping and accounting processes, where an authority exceeds the £200K threshold, this understanding must include accrual accounting and balance sheets;
 - Understanding the role of internal audit in reviewing systems rather than undertaking detailed checks that are more appropriately the responsibility of management;
 - Awareness of relevant principles and practice of financial and other risk management

- Understanding proper practices in relation to governance and accounting requirements within the legal framework and powers of smaller authorities, as set out in Sections 1 and 3 of Practitioners Guide 2023 (knowledge of which is a pre-requisite);
 - Awareness of the most recent model Standing Orders and model Financial Regulations as published by NALC and how they are adopted by authorities;
 - Awareness of the relevance of VAT and PAYE/NIC rules as applied to the authority;
 - For larger authorities, a clear understanding of the risks and controls associated with “cut off” procedures, particularly with respect to revenue-generating activities.
- 3.4 Independence requires the absence of any actual or perceived conflict of interest. The person carrying out the internal audit does not have any involvement in the organisation’s financial decision-making process. There is no requirement to rotate auditors, but the independence of the internal auditor should be reviewed EVERY year with regard to, personal independence, financial independence, and professional independence.
- 3.5 Evidence as to competence might also include recommendations from other similar authorities.
- 3.6 Every authority should ensure that they have a letter of engagement which would normally include:
- roles and responsibilities
 - audit planning and timing of visits
 - reporting requirements
 - right to access to information, members, and officers
 - period of engagement
 - remuneration
 - any other matters required for the management of the engagement by the Council.
- 3.7 Most internal auditors will have professional indemnity insurance which covers both the authority and the person or firm engaged with protection and assurance.

4. FINANCIAL

- 4.1 There is a budget for the audit function.

5. IMPLICATIONS

Strategic Plan	N/A
Risk Management	Independent, competent internal auditor part of the annual risk assessment
Legals	N/A
Resources/Stakeholders	The Clerk as RFO oversees the Internal Audit process
Contracts/Financials	There is a budget in place for this function
Crime & Disorder	N/A
Equalities	N/A
Biodiversity	N/A

STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL

SPECIFICATION FOR INTERNAL AUDIT

Stotfold Town Council is seeking to award a three-year contract for internal audit services.

The basis of this internal audit process will be to check upon and report to the Council on the adequacy of its system of Internal Control in accordance with the relevant Practitioners' Guide. The Council also requests recommendations for improvements where considered necessary by the Internal Auditor.

The Annual Internal Audit should consider the following:

1. Proper Book Keeping

Confirm receipts and payments are kept in good order, reconciliation of books, bank statements, supporting vouchers and receipts is carried out regularly.

2. Financial Regulations

Confirming Standing Orders and Financial Regulations are in place and up to date. Tenders, appropriate payment controls are in place, including acting within the framework references within Council minutes. VAT payments and reclamation are up to date and correct.

3. Risk Assessment

Confirm appropriate procedures are in place for the activities of the Council including event management and insurances.

4. Budgetary Controls

Confirm a verifiable budgeting process with reference to Council minutes and supporting documentation in the determination of the annual precept requirement.

5. Income Controls

Precept and other income.

6. Treasury Controls

Confirm appropriate controls are in place the counter fraud and corruption. Segregation of duties is adhered to.

7. Payroll Controls

Confirm PAYE and NIC are in place where necessary, compliance with HMRC procedures, records relating to contracts of employment.

8. Asset Control

Inspection of asset register and checks on existence of assets. Cross checking on insurance cover.

9. Bank Reconciliation

Confirm regularly completed and cash books reconciled with bank statement.

10. Year-end Procedures

Confirm appropriate accounting procedures are used and can be followed through from working papers to final accounts.

This specification for the provision of the Town Council's Internal Audit function was approved by the Governance & Resources Committee of Stotfold Town Council on 29th May 2024.

Interested parties are requested to respond to this document, outlining how they meet the criteria outlined in the Practitioner's Guide, including information on staff undertaking internal audits and proof of their PLI and any relevant indemnities.

Please send your submission to:

Emma Payne
Town Clerk
Stotfold Town Council
emma@stotfoldtowncouncil.gov.uk

The closing date for submissions is Friday 12th July 2024.

Submissions will be considered by the Governance & Resources Committee held on 24th July 2024 with their recommendation to be considered Full Council 4 September 2024.

GOVERNANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2024-25

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Description	Responsible Officer
29/05/24	Outsourcing Payroll	To receive a report with quotations to outsource payroll	Town Clerk
	Civic Regalia	To consider the Council's civic regalia	Democratic Services Manager
	Grant application and Policy	To review the Town Council's grant application form and adoption of Policy	Democratic Services Manager
	Defibrillator Grant	To consider making a grant to The Rooms for the installation of a defibrillator	Town Clerk
	SLCC National Conference	To confirm the Clerk's attendance at the National Conference, 8/9 October 2024	Town Clerk
	IDB Co-Working with Stotfold Town Council	To consider the Town Rangers undertaking basic tasks on behalf of IDB	Town Clerk
	Insurance renewal	To consider renewal of the Insurance contract for 24 - 25	Town Clerk
	Financial Regulations	To review the Model Financial Regulations and recommend their adoption by	Town Clerk
	Copier / Shredder Replacement	To note the operational replacement of Office equipment.	Town Clerk
	Appointment of Internal Auditor	To consider a specification for the appointment of a new Internal Auditor	Town Clerk
24/07/24	Policies Review	To consider the Policies Review and make recommendations on urgent policies for review	TC & DSM
	Training Plan - 2024 - 2025	To note the training plan for staff and Councillors for the 2024 - 25 year.	Democratic Services Manager
	Performance Management Policy	To ratify the Performance Management Policy	Town Clerk
	IT Services Contract	To consider a report regarding the IT Services provision for the Town Council.	Democratic Services Manager
	Telephone contract	To consider a report regarding the Council's telephone report.	Democratic Services Manager
	Website Creation	To consider a report to create a new website.	Town Clerk & DSM
	Finance Reports	To consider the updated Expenditure Reports.	Town Clerk & DSM
	Lone Working Policy	To consider a proposal to implement a Lone Working Policy.	Democratic Services Manager
03/09/24	Fees & Charges Review	2025 - 2026 Fees & Charges Review from Committees	Democratic Services Manager