



AGENDA FOR THE MEETING OF COUNCIL MATTERS COMMITTEE MONDAY 11TH SEPTEMBER 2023 AT 6.30PM IN THE GUILDHALL

There are stairs to the Council Chamber but if any member of the public has mobility issues the Council can relocate to the lower Guildhall.

You are hereby SUMMONED to attend the **Council Matters Committee** on **Monday 11th September 2023 at 6.30pm** in the Guildhall for the purpose of transacting the following business:

Committee Members: Councillors B Piper (Chair), C Beavis, T Bennett, J Chinnock, J Hannam, J Hodgson, D Peters and E Price.

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair will read out the following statement:

Welcome to everyone attending and observing the meeting.

A reminder that open proceedings of this meeting will be video recorded. If members of the public make presentations, they will be deemed to have consented to being recorded. By entering the Council Chamber attendees are also consenting to being recorded.

This meeting is limited to 90 minutes and therefore members are asked to raise their points succinctly and not repeat the same view expressed by colleagues if it does not add to the debate.

To receive apologies and to confirm that any absence has the approval of the Council.

The Committee will adjourn for the following items:

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

A period of 15 minutes will be allowed for members of the public to ask questions or make comment regarding the work of the Committee or other items that affect Totnes.

The Committee will convene to consider the following items:

2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

To approve the minutes of 10th July 2023 and update on any matters arising. Document attached.

3. BUDGET MONITOR

To consider the Budget Monitor including the reserves projection and Christmas budgets. Documents attached.

4. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY FORUM RECOMMENDATIONS

To consider recommendations from the Climate and Ecological Emergency Forum to fund from its budget the Energywise Show (£2456) and Bike Hub (£600). Document attached.

5. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS UPDATE

To review an update to Financial Regulations (sections 2, 5, 6 and 9). Document attached.

6. HUMAN RESOURCES (HR) POLICIES

To review the following HR policies:

- a. Capability Policy and Procedures. Document attached.
- b. Confidentiality, Data Protection and IT Usage Policy. Document attached.
- c. Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy. Document attached.
- d. Pay Policy. Document attached.
- e. Lone Working Policy. Document attached.

7. IDENTITY VERIFICATION

To consider whether the Council Offices should be verifying the identity of individuals for overseas pensions. Document to follow.

8. CIVIC HALL ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

To note an increase in incidents of anti-social behaviour around the Civic Hall. Verbal update.

9. CO CARS/CO BIKES UPDATE

To note an update on Co Bikes and the E-bike hire scheme. Document attached.

10. EXTERNAL AUDIT

To note the external auditor report on the Annual Governance & Accountability Return. Document attached.

11. ARTS AND EVENTS WORKING GROUP

To note the minutes of the Arts and Events Working Group held on 19th July. Document attached.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note the date of the next meeting of the Council Matters Committee – Monday 9th October 2023 at 6.30pm in the Guildhall. No document.

*The Committee will be asked to **RESOLVE** to exclude the press and public "by reason of the confidential nature of the business" to be discussed and in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960. (CONFIDENTIAL by virtue of relating to legal and/or commercial matters, staffing and/or the financial or business affairs of a person or persons other than the Council)*

13. BANK STATEMENTS AND RECONCILIATIONS (Standing Item)

To consider the bank statements and reconciliations for July and August (financial). Documents attached.

14. STAFFING UPDATE

For any general or urgent updates that required confidential sharing with Councillors (staffing), including (verbal update):

- a. To note a parental leave request from a member of the team.

15. ASSET TRANSFER

To consider a transfer of assets from South Hams District Council (commercial). Verbal update.

Catherine Marlton

Town Clerk

5th September 2023

USE OF SOUND RECORDINGS AT COUNCIL & COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The open proceedings of this Meeting will be audio and video recorded. If members of the public make a representation, they will be deemed to have consented to being recorded. By entering the Council Chamber or Zoom meeting, attendees are also consenting to being recorded.

Televised, vision and sound recordings or live broadcastings by members of the press or public at Council or Committee debates are permitted and anyone wishing to do so is asked to inform the Chairman of the respective Committee of their intention to record proceedings.



DRAFT MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF COUNCIL MATTERS MONDAY 10TH JULY 2023 AT 6.30PM IN THE GUILDHALL

Present: Councillors B Piper (Chair), C Beavis, T Bennett, J Chinnock (from 1835), J Hodgson (from 1843), D Peters and E Price.

Apologies: Cllr Hannam.

In Attendance: Cllr Cooper, C Marlton (Town Clerk) and C Bewley (Finance, HR and Lettings Manager).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair read a statement about how the meeting would be conducted and recorded. The apologies were accepted.

The Committee will adjourn for the following items:

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no members of the public present.

The Committee will reconvene to consider the following items:

2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

To approve the minutes of 12th June 2023 and update on any matters arising.

The minutes were **AGREED** as an accurate record of the proceedings.

3. BUDGET MONITOR

To consider the Budget Monitor including the reserves projection

This was considered and unanimously **AGREED**. It was **AGREED** to include an explanation that the 'Total' row is comprised of expenditure over income.

4. MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS AND BUDGET

To consider the Mayor's engagements since April 2023 and the current budget.

This was considered and unanimously **AGREED**.

5. STAFF ABSENCE MANAGEMENT POLICY

To review the Staff Absence Management Policy.

This was unanimously **AGREED** subject to the correction of typos, additional explanation and a softening of, and more positive, language.

6. HOME WORKING POLICY

To review the Home Working Policy.

This was unanimously **AGREED** subject to amendment of wording around movement restrictions (rather than specific reference to a pandemic).

7. SAVINGS ACCOUNT BALANCES

To note the savings account balances.

Noted.

8. COUNCIL ASSETS AND PUBLIC REALM WORKING GROUP

To note the minutes of the Council Assets and Public Realm Working Group held on 14th June and to consider the recommendations under items 7 and 12.

The minutes were **AGREED**. Under item 5 Cllr Hodgson updated that Devon Highways have put clearance of the drains on Fore Street on the works schedule. Item 7 – it was unanimously **AGREED** to paint the Civic Hall doors at this time (rather than replace them). Item 12 – it was unanimously **AGREED** to accept the amendments to section 7b as amended.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note the date of the next meeting of the Council Matters Committee – Monday 11th September 2023 at 6.30pm in the Guildhall.

Noted.

*The Committee will be asked to **RESOLVE** to exclude the press and public “by reason of the confidential nature of the business” to be discussed and in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960. (CONFIDENTIAL by virtue of relating to legal and/or commercial matters, staffing and/or the financial or business affairs of a person or persons other than the Council)*

10. BANK STATEMENTS AND RECONCILIATIONS (Standing Item)

To consider the bank statements and reconciliations for June (financial).

These were reviewed and unanimously **AGREED**.

11. STAFF ATTENDANCE

To note sickness and overtime balances (personal details).

Noted.

8. STAFFING UPDATE

For any general or urgent updates that required confidential sharing with Councillors (staffing) including:

a. To consider proposals regarding the Community Coordinator role.

It was unanimously **AGREED** to reallocate £18912 from the staffing budget to an emergency fund but for urgent (cost of living only) requests that would struggle to be funded elsewhere. It was agreed to keep this under review and schedule for discussion after the Strategic Plan has been set. Any underspend of this money will be redirected into year end reserves and considered through the annual budget setting.

Catherine Marlton
Town Clerk
July 2023

Budget Monitor - August 2023		20/21 YEAR END	21/22 YEAR END	22/23 YEAR END	2023/24			Comments
	Actual 31st March 2021 YEAR END	Actual 31st March 2022 YEAR END	Actual 31st March 2022 YEAR END	Actual 31st March 2023 YEAR END	Original Budget	Current Agreed budget	ACTUAL as of 31st August 2023	Expected year end
Administration								
Salaries and pensions for all staff	246894	294138		350889	411865	412023	153361	412023
Staff Training, Travel and Expenses	2287	4244		2988	3500	3500	2194	3500
Staff Recruitment	2575	1930		984	2750	2750	0	2750
Phone and Broadband	2343	2932		2984	3500	3500	1203	3500
Office Supplies & Hospitality	1564	1100		1370	2300	2300	394	2300
Photocopier	1496	1536		1575	1600	1600	239	1600
Subscriptions		4463		4191	4400	4400	2838	4400
Professional Fees		53812		15062	10000	10000	3395	10000
Insurance	7431	7514		26105	29000	29000	30328	31000
Website and IT		3696		4618	7500	7500	1424	7500
Office Equipment	5082	1999		1412	15000	15000	2215	10000
Van Maintenance		258		207	1325	1325	0	1325
TMO Tools and Consumables		1322		1162	1650	1650	777	1650
Miscellaneous Income		-40		-180	0	0	-100	-100
SUB TOTAL	269672	378904		413367	494390	494548	204768	491448
Civic and Democratic								
Mayoral Allowance	0	557		0	450	450	0	450
Civic and Mayoral Events (expenditure)	743	959		3014	5750	5750	1034	5750
Civic Events (Income)	0	0		-717	0	0	0	0
Civic Regalia	0	110		212	220	220	195	220
Mayoral Travel	0	7		185	300	300	244	300
Councillor IT equipment	2069	356		14	2500	2500	182	2500
Councillor Training and Travel	1085	210		514	1120	1120	2283	1120
Elections	0	9524		0	12000	12000	0	12000
Community Outreach/Christmas	2436	4747		6165	35000	35000	2048	56364
Councillor Allowances	3152	2644		1970	7200	7200	0	7200
MOVED TO ADMIN Professional Fees	11032							
MOVED TO ADMIN Subscriptions	3009							
MOVED TO ADMIN Website and IT	293							
SUB TOTAL	23819	19114		11357	64540	64540	3510	85904
Tourism								
Actual 31st March 2021 YEAR END								
Actual 31st March 2022 YEAR END								
Actual 31st March 2023 YEAR END								
Visit Totnes Marketing and event sponsorship	6108	18966		20595	29500	29500	1907	29500
Other TIC expenditure (Post/Phone/Uniform/Utilities etc)	275	306		220	275	275	669	955
Bank Charges/Paypal fees	0	33		4	50	50	0	50
Visit Totnes Guide and Website	3135	12308		9056	6200	6200	252	6200
Totnes Guide and Website Income	-468	-12283		-10990	-6500	-6500	-2189	-6500
Advertising		-3289		-1750	-500	-500	-3040	-3040
SUB TOTAL	9050	16041		17135	29025	29025	6799	27165
Guildhall								
Actual 31st March 2021 YEAR END								
Actual 31st March 2022 YEAR END								
Actual 31st March 2023 YEAR END								
Cleaning	2456	2644		2581	6500	6500	1533	6500

	Actual 31st March 2021 YEAR END	Actual 31st March 2022 YEAR END	Actual 31st March 2023 YEAR END	Original Budget	Current Agreed budget	Agreed Budget 2023	Expected Yearling	
Civic Hall	1226	4605	3835	5500	5500	5455	5500	
Cleaning and supplies								

Feed in Tariff	2762	2501	3081	2700	2700	2700	
Water	1361	1055	1156	1500	1500	1500	
Utilities	1762	3044	6012	12000	12000	12000	
Building Maintenance	2969	13955	6917	60000	60000	60000	
Licences	70	70	70	70	70	70	
Misc & Marketing Civic Hall	0	26	567	750	750	750	
Equipment Maintenance	3320	4299	2026	20000	20000	20000	
Paige Adams Grant towards Caretaking, Cleaning and Management costs	-7500	-30000	-33500	-33500	-33500	-33500	
Feed in tariff income and Water refund income	-6728	-6304	-7161	-6800	-6800	-6800	No shop water income since 22/23 due to shop closing down
Equipment sales		-1000	0	0	0	0	
SUB TOTAL	-758	-7749	-16997	62220	62220	62220	
Property Maintenance	Actual 31st March 2021 YEAR END	Actual 31st March 2022 YEAR END	Actual 31st March 2023 YEAR END	Original Budget	Current Agreed budget	Expected year end	
Guildhall Cottage Maintenance	361	588	341	1000	1000	1000	
Flat 5a Loan repay	9148	9148	43159				PWLB loan paid off in 22/23
Flat 5a Maintenance	275	1853	1805				Included in Guildhall Maintenance from 23/24
Guildhall Office Maintenance	309	13					
Rental Property Management Fees	2089	2001	1774	1140	1140	1140	
Town Clocks	3127	1437	1599	400	400	1000	New £600 lease from Sept 23
Museum Maintenance	-3230	198	139	5500	5500	5500	
Museum Rent income	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	
Eastgate Clock Rental	-3	-3	0	-3	-3	-600	Sub-lessees covering cost of new lease
Guildhall Cottage Income (£975 a month)	-10200	-10756	-11700	-12000	-12000	-12000	
Flat 5a Rental Income	-8340	-8660	-7103				
SUB TOTAL	-6465	-4182	30013	-3964	-3964	-3961	Ceased in 22/23
Cemetery	Actual 31st March 2021 YEAR END	Actual 31st March 2022 YEAR END	Actual 31st March 2023 YEAR END	Original Budget	Current Agreed budget	Expected year end	
Business Rates	4441	4441	4441	4441	4441	4291	
Water	144	173	167	175	175	175	
Waste collection		706	329	350	350	350	
Grounds Maintenance (Grass cutting and tree work)	18009	20613	14516	25000	25000	25000	
Works and Maintenance (Memorials, Paths, Fences)	1357	-32	0	500	500	500	
Chapel	150	0	0	20000	20000	20000	
Cemetery Fees Income	-11435	-12000	-17250	-10000	-10000	-10000	
SUB TOTAL	12666	13901	2203	40466	40466	40316	
Open Spaces	Actual 31st March 2021 YEAR END	Actual 31st March 2022 YEAR END	Actual 31st March 2023 YEAR END	Original Budget	Current Agreed budget	Expected year end	
General Maintenance	80	162	502	550	550	550	
St Marys Churchyard (Walls and trees)	322	857	5868	3000	3000	3000	
Castle Meadow Maintenance and Water	800	108	45	100	100	100	
Castle Meadow and allotments income	-208	-200	-200	-200	-200	-200	
SUB TOTAL	994	927	6215	3450	3450	3450	
Precept and Income	Actual 31st March 2021 YEAR END	Actual 31st March 2022 YEAR END	Actual 31st March 2023 YEAR END	Original Budget	Current Agreed budget	Expected year end	
Bank Charges	98	104	189	250	250	250	
Precept and Income	-535280	-545986	-545986	-610253	-610253	-610253	
Council Tax Grant (only guaranteed until 19/20)	-10020		-713	-1500	-1500	-800	Increase in interest rates
Investment Income	0	0	0	-100000	-100000	-100000	
Charity of Paige Adams RATE ABATEMENT	-545202	-545882	-546510	-711503	-711503	-718003	
SUB TOTAL							
Community Development	Actual 31st March 2021 YEAR END	Actual 31st March 2022 YEAR END	Actual 31st March 2023 YEAR END	Original Budget	Current Agreed budget	Expected year end	

Community Grants(incl. \$137 Funding)	44168	52508	49770	50000	25000	142400	25000	Covered by grant funding income (see below)
Community Projects	0	0	13200	0	0	502	502	
Neighbourhood Plan	see below	3720	3234	0	0	0	0	
Arts and Culture and Events	see below	9500	31806	26000	21000	288	21000	See breakdown below
Public Realm and Community Assets Projects	see below	see below	75980	73700	13700	2361	13700	See breakdown below

Climate Change/Green Travel	3986	2312	9139	10000	10000	10000
Public Toilets		0				
Caring Town/Totnes Caring services		0				
Citizens Advice Service		see above				
Neighbourhood Plan/Planning	71413	22938				
Community projects SHARED SPACE and public realm		0				
Community Grants Scheme/COVID 19		see above				
Arts and Culture and Events	0	0				
Heritage Support		-34370	-32705	0	-500	10000
Grant Funding/Projects Income	-84500	£56,608	£150,424	£69,700	£69,975	£69,702
SUB TOTAL	£35,067			£159,700		
TOTAL EXPENDITURE OVER INCOME	-£187,710	-£47,985	£90,527	£186,644	-£43,345	£110,874
				£96,802		£14072 expected overspend against agreed

Reserves impact		
Total actual general reserves as start of 2023/24	£614,781	
Based on the current projected 2023/24 budget, year end reserve estimate	£503,907	

2023/24 - proposed	BUDGET	NOTES
PUBLIC REALM and COMMUNITY ASSETS PROJECTS	13700	Annual total allocation
Totnes Gardens	-2500	
Replacement plants and repairs to planters over the year	-1200	
Public Seating and benches	-5000	
Planting of flowers/beds/new planters	-5000	
TOTAL	0	

2023/24 - proposed	BUDGET	NOTES
ARTS AND CULTURE	21000	Annual total allocation
Christmas late nights	-13000	
Public art	-5000	
Christmas light switch on	-3000	
TOTAL	0	

2023/24 - proposed	BUDGET	NOTES
COMMUNITY OUTREACH	35000	Annual total allocation
Town meeting room hire	-59	
Civic Square Lights and Trees	-3000	
Christmas lighting	-45000	Based on tenders received
Christmas shop front competition	-675	Agreed FC 3 rd July
Totnes Directory Updates	-2000	
Defibrillator Pads/Serviceing	-500	
Facebook/Comms	-500	
Community Consultation	-4630	Agreed FC 3 rd July – see below
TOTAL	-21364	

ITEM 3 SUMMARY OF CHRISTMAS COSTS

Budget: Community Outreach	Cost
Agreed Budget - Lights	£45,000
Agreed Budget - Window Competition	£675
Agreed Budget - Tree	£3,000
Tree Purchase, erection and removal	-£1,490
Blachere - lighting contract	-£42,359
Christmas Window Competition Prizes	-£675
Power Source Provision (estimate)	-£2,000
Contingency	-£2,000
Balance	£151

Budget: Arts & Culture (Christmas Markets)	Cost
Christmas Late Nights	£13,000
General Costs	-£11,173
Fixed Costs	-£14,190
Entertainment	-£5,360
Projected Income from Stalls	£16,000
GWR Park & Ride Grant	£2,710
Balance	£987

Budget: Arts & Culture	Cost
Christmas Lights Switch On	£3,000
Hire costs, licencing, waste	-£365
Crafts	-£200
Entertainment	-£1,395
Refreshments	-£480
Balance	£560

ITEM 4 - CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY FORUM (CEEF) RECOMMENDATIONS

Extract from CEEF notes from 19th July 2023.

Item 5. Transition Town Totnes - Energy Wise funding discussion. Transition Town Totnes had applied to the TTC Community Grant to fund an Energy Wise Show but sadly were not successful as the budget was oversubscribed by approximately £65,000. They were encouraged to apply for an allocation from the TTC Climate Change budget, which the CEEF makes recommendations on. JF from Transition Town Totnes (TTT) explained the Energy Wise project.

- The first Energy Wise Show was last year. There were speakers, stalls, space for interaction. 200-300 people turned up during the day, and this was after only 6 weeks to set up. TTT want a much longer lead time this year, and also to increase business presence, e.g., companies doing solar, heat pumps, etc.
- The show would be in November 2023.

The aim of the show is to make practical support and advice on energy use, waste, and renewables, as accessible to as many people in need as possible in Totnes and nearby parishes. This is in response to the rising energy bills and cost of living crisis in the UK, and aimed primarily at those in financial hardship. The objectives of the event are to help the community:

- reduce its electricity costs;
- reduce its electricity waste;
- reduce its dependency on fossil fuel sourced electricity;
- shift to using renewable energy;
- reduce its spiralling costs of living.

The event will consist of stalls, interactive displays & talks all focused on energy & helping people with their cost of living. TTT will be working with several local energy groups (South Devon Community Energy, TRESOC, Energy Local Totnes, LEAP, Regen, the National Energy Action charity), Caring Town Totnes, Citizens Advice Bureau & various organisations & businesses who are able to provide a diverse range of advice on energy related support. To publicise the event they will be using the Post Office's leaflet delivery service so that everyone who lives in Totnes will receive direct information about the event.

TTT are looking to fundraise £2456 to cover the costs of the project. The Forum discussed the project and voiced general support for it. It was unanimously agreed to recommend that TTC allocate £2,500 from the budget. JH stated that she would be happy to give some of her Devon County Council Cllr budget towards it, offering £500.

RECOMMENDATION: The CEEF recommends that TTC allocate £2,500 from the Climate Change budget towards the Energy Wise Show.

Extract from CEEF notes from 20th June 2023.

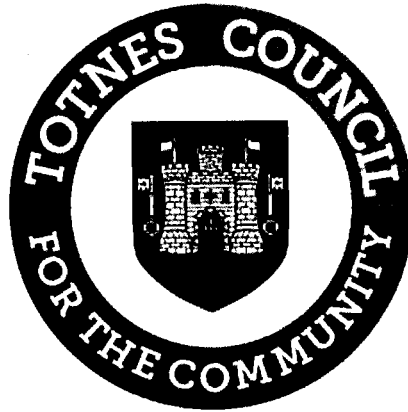
Item 5 – Funding Discussions.

Totnes Bike Hub – Tea 'n Tinkering. Sustainability Officer read out a description sent in by the Bike Hub on their sessions. Tea and Tinkering is a weekly bike maintenance workshop.

Aimed at people who may be feeling socially isolated or disconnected from their community, our workshops provide meaningful activity. Volunteers can work on their own bikes or on donated bikes, learn a new skill or hone an existing one. The donated bikes will either be stripped of its parts which can be re used again, or some bikes can be fully refurbished and sold on/donated to those in need. Participants can even work on a donated bike and keep it themselves, if they felt they couldn't afford it. We've run a pilot project since March 2023. It's clear that people are finding the sessions helpful and therapeutic. A quote from a participant in his 60s who has come to 4 sessions who lives with depression and anxiety: 'Really enjoyed today again, bikes, cake and coffee. What's not to like?' We always have a 30 min break to sit and drink tea and talk, not always about bikes! We receive referrals from the NHS Social Prescribers and Totnes Caring. Links have been made with Lifeworks college in Dartington (where one 20-year-old participant comes every week with his support worker) and Bridgetown Alive as a way to connect with Bridgetown residents. We'd need about £1200 to maintain the sessions over the summer months until autumn.

Cllr Hodgson suggested that TTC offer 50% of the requested funding (i.e. £600) and that the local SHDC Cllrs contribute the rest from their funds. This was agreed by the group.

RECOMMENDATION: The CEEF recommends that TTC allocate £600 from its Climate Change budget towards Totnes Bike Hub's Tea 'n Tinkering sessions. This would fund 50% of the requested amount. They recommend the Bike Hub apply to the District Cllrs to fund the remaining 50%.



Financial Regulations

TOTNES TOWN COUNCIL

AGREED SEPTEMBER 2023

NEXT REVIEW APRIL 2025

These Financial Regulations are produced in accordance with Governance and Accountability for Local Councils and were adopted by the Council at its meeting of 11th September 2023.

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1. GENERAL

- 1.1. These financial regulations govern the conduct of financial management by the Council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the Council. Financial regulations are one of the Council's three governing policy documents providing procedural guidance for members and officers. Financial regulations must be observed in conjunction with the Council's Standing Orders and any individual financial regulations relating to contracts.
- 1.2. The Council is responsible in law for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that the Council has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions, including arrangements for the management of risk.
- 1.3. The Council's accounting control systems must include measures:
 - for the timely production of accounts;
 - that provide for the safe and efficient safeguarding of public money;
 - to prevent and detect inaccuracy and fraud; and
 - identifying the duties of officers.
- 1.4. These financial regulations demonstrate how the Council meets these responsibilities and requirements.
- 1.5. At least once a year, prior to approving the Annual Governance Statement, the Council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control which shall be in accordance with proper practices.
- 1.6. Deliberate or wilful breach of these Regulations by an employee may give rise to disciplinary proceedings.
- 1.7. Members of Council are expected to follow the instructions within these Regulations and not to entice employees to breach them. Failure to follow instructions within these Regulations brings the office of councillor into disrepute.
- 1.8. The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) holds a statutory office to be appointed by the Council. The Clerk has been appointed as RFO for this Council and these regulations will apply accordingly.
- 1.9. The RFO;
 - acts under the policy direction of the Council;
 - administers the Council's financial affairs in accordance with all Acts, Regulations and proper practices;
 - determines on behalf of the Council its accounting records and accounting control systems;
 - ensures the accounting control systems are observed;

- maintains the accounting records of the Council up to date in accordance with proper practices;
 - assists the Council to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of its resources; and
 - produces financial management information as required by the Council.
- 1.10. The accounting records determined by the Clerk/RFO shall be sufficient to show and explain the Council's transactions and to enable the Clerk/RFO to ensure that any income and expenditure account and statement of balances, or record of receipts and payments and additional information, as the case may be, or management information prepared for the Council from time to time comply with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 1.11. The accounting records determined by the Clerk/RFO shall in particular contain:
- entries from day to day of all sums of money received and expended by the Council and the matters to which the income and expenditure or receipts and payments account relate;
 - a record of the assets and liabilities of the Council; and
 - wherever relevant, a record of the Council's income and expenditure in relation to claims made, or to be made, for any contribution, grant or subsidy.
- 1.12. The accounting control systems determined by the Clerk/RFO shall include:
- procedures to ensure that the financial transactions of the Council are recorded as soon as reasonably practicable and as accurately and reasonably as possible;
 - procedures to enable the prevention and detection of inaccuracies and fraud and the ability to reconstruct any lost records;
 - identification of the duties of officers dealing with financial transactions and division of responsibilities of those officers in relation to significant transactions;
 - procedures to ensure that uncollectable amounts, including any bad debts are not submitted to the Council for approval to be written off except with the approval of the Clerk/RFO and that the approvals are shown in the accounting records; and
 - measures to ensure that risk is properly managed.
- 1.13. The Council is not empowered by these Regulations or otherwise to delegate certain specified decisions. In particular any decision regarding:
- setting the final budget or the precept (council tax requirement);
 - approving accounting statements;
 - approving an annual governance statement;
 - borrowing;
 - writing off bad debts;
 - declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence; and
 - addressing recommendations in any report from the internal or external auditors,

shall be a matter for the Full Council only.

1.14. In addition the Council must:

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

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

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

2. ACCOUNTING AND AUDIT (INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL)

- 2.1. All accounting procedures and financial records of the Council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations, appropriate guidance and proper practices.
- 2.2. On a regular basis, at least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, a member ~~other than the Chairman shall be appointed to~~ verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the RFO. The member shall sign the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of verification. This activity shall on conclusion be reported, including any exceptions, to and noted by the Council Matters Committee.
- 2.3. The RFO shall complete the annual statement of accounts, annual report, and any related documents of the Council contained in the Annual Return (as specified in proper practices) as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and having certified the accounts shall submit them and report thereon to the Council within the timescales set by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 2.4. The Council shall ensure that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records, and of its system of internal control in accordance with proper practices. Any officer or member of the Council shall make available such documents and records as appear to the Council to be necessary for the purpose of the audit and shall, as directed by the Council, supply the RFO, internal auditor, or external auditor with such information and explanation as the Council considers necessary for that purpose.

- 2.5. The internal auditor shall be appointed by and shall carry out the work in relation to internal controls required by the Council in accordance with proper practices.
- 2.6. The internal auditor shall:
- be competent and independent of the financial operations of the Council;
 - report to Council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one annual written report during each financial year;
 - to demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, be free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships; and
 - has no involvement in the financial decision making, management or control of the Council.
- 2.7. Internal or external auditors may not under any circumstances:
- perform any operational duties for the Council;
 - initiate or approve accounting transactions; or
 - direct the activities of any Council employee, except to the extent that such employees have been appropriately assigned to assist the internal auditor.
- 2.8. For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to internal audit the terms 'independent' and 'independence' shall have the same meaning as is described in proper practices.
- 2.9. The RFO shall make arrangements for the exercise of electors' rights in relation to the accounts including the opportunity to inspect the accounts, books, and vouchers and display or publish any notices and statements of account required by Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 2.10. The RFO shall, without undue delay, bring to the attention of all Councillors any correspondence or report from internal or external auditors.

3. ANNUAL ESTIMATES (BUDGET) AND FORWARD PLANNING

- 3.1. The RFO must each year, by no later than December, prepare detailed estimates of all receipts and payments including the use of reserves and all sources of funding for the following financial year in the form of a budget to be considered first by the Council Matters Committee and then approved by the Full Council.
- 3.2. The Council shall consider the annual budget proposals in relation to the Council's three year forecast of revenue and capital receipts and payments including recommendations for the use of reserves and sources of funding and update the forecast accordingly.
- 3.3. The Council shall fix the precept (council tax requirement), and relevant basic amount of council tax to be levied for the ensuing financial year not later than by the end of

January each year. The RFO shall issue the precept to the billing authority and shall supply each member with a copy of the approved annual budget.

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

4. BUDGETARY CONTROL AND AUTHORITY TO SPEND

- 4.1. Expenditure on revenue items may be authorised up to the amounts included for that class of expenditure in the approved budget. This authority is to be determined by:
- the Council for all items over £10,000;
 - the Council Matters Committee for items over £5,000; or
 - the RFO for any items below £5,000.
 - members of the management team for specific budget lines as decided by the RFO for any items below £1000.

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

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

- 4.2. No expenditure may be authorised that will exceed the amount provided in the revenue budget for that class of expenditure other than by resolution of the Council. During the budget year and with the approval of Council having considered fully the implications for public services, unspent and available amounts may be moved to other budget headings or to an earmarked reserve as appropriate ('virement').
- 4.3. Unspent provisions in the revenue or capital budgets for completed projects shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year.
- 4.4. The salary budgets are to be reviewed at least annually in October for the following financial year and such review shall be evidenced by a hard copy schedule signed by the Clerk and the Chairman of Council or relevant committee. The RFO will inform the Council of any changes impacting on the budget requirements for the coming year in good time.
- 4.5. In cases of extreme risk to the delivery of Council services, the Clerk may authorise revenue expenditure on behalf of the Council which in the Clerk's judgement it is necessary to carry out. Such expenditure includes repair, replacement or other work, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £5000. The Clerk/RFO shall report such action to the chairman as soon as possible and to the Council as soon as practicable thereafter.
- 4.6. No expenditure shall be authorised in relation to any capital project and no contract entered into or tender accepted involving capital expenditure unless the Council is

satisfied that the necessary funds are available and the requisite borrowing approval has been obtained.

- 4.7. All capital works shall be administered in accordance with the Council's standing orders and financial regulations relating to contracts.
- 4.8. The RFO shall regularly provide the Council Matters Committee with a statement of receipts and payments to date under each head of the budgets, comparing actual expenditure to the appropriate date against that planned as shown in the budget. These statements are to be prepared for each Council Matters Committee meeting, at least at the end of each financial quarter, and shall show explanations of material variances. For this purpose "material" shall be in excess of £250 on overspends of the budget.
- 4.9. Changes in earmarked reserves shall be considered by the Council Matters Committee and approved by Full Council as part of the budgetary control process.

5. BANKING ARRANGEMENTS AND AUTHORISATION OF PAYMENTS

- 5.1. The Council's banking arrangements, ~~including the bank mandate~~, shall be made by the RFO and approved by the Council; banking arrangements may not be delegated to a committee. They shall be regularly reviewed for safety and efficiency. All Councillors will be signatories on the bank mandate for the current account.
- 5.2. A schedule of the payments required shall be prepared by the RFO and, together with the relevant invoices, be presented to a Councillor who is a bank signatory to sign the schedule confirming the invoices match the schedule and approving them for payment.
- 5.3. All invoices for payment that do not have a supporting signed requisition form shall be examined, verified and certified by the RFO or budget holder if under £1000, to confirm that the work, goods or services to which each invoice relates has been received, carried out, examined and represents expenditure previously approved by the Council.
- 5.4. The RFO shall examine invoices for arithmetical accuracy and analyse them to the appropriate expenditure heading.
- 5.5. The Clerk/RFO shall have delegated authority to authorise the payment of items only in the following circumstances:
 - a. If a payment is necessary to avoid a charge to interest under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998, and the due date for payment is before a member is able to review the invoice, where the Clerk/RFO certify that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, provided that a member reviews the invoice retrospectively;

- b. An expenditure item authorised under 5.6 below (continuing contracts and obligations) provided that a member reviews the invoice retrospectively; or
 - c. Fund transfers within the Council's banking arrangements up to the sum of £2,500.
 - d. A payment for an online/telephone order that is made by debit card in advance of receiving the invoice provided that a member reviews the invoice retrospectively.
- 5.6. For each financial year the Clerk/RFO shall draw up a list of due payments which arise on a regular basis as the result of a continuing contract, statutory duty, or obligation such as but not exclusively Salaries, PAYE and NI, Superannuation Fund and regular maintenance contracts and the like for which Council may authorise payment for the year provided that the requirements of regulation 4.1 (Budgetary Controls) are adhered to, provided also that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next meeting of the Council Matters Committee.
- 5.7. A record of regular fixed and variable Direct Debits made shall be drawn up and signed by one ~~two~~ members annually or when new DDs are added to authorise the regular payments.
- 5.8. In respect of grants the Council Matters Committee shall approve expenditure within any limits set by Council and in accordance with any policy statement approved by Council. Any Revenue or Capital Grant in excess of £5,000 shall before payment, be subject to ratification by resolution of the Council.
- 5.9. Members are subject to the Code of Conduct that has been adopted by the Council and shall comply with the Code and Standing Orders when a decision to authorise or instruct payment is made in respect of a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary or other interest, unless a dispensation has been granted.
- 5.10. ~~The Council will aim to rotate the duties of members in these Regulations so that onerous duties are shared out as evenly as possible over time.~~
6. INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE MAKING OF PAYMENTS
- 6.1. The Council will make safe and efficient arrangements for the making of its payments.
- 6.2. Following authorisation under Financial Regulation 5 above, the Council, a duly delegated committee or, if so delegated, the Clerk/RFO shall give instruction that a payment shall be made.
- 6.3. All payments shall be effected by bank payment or debit card.
- 6.4. Cheques for payment drawn on the bank account shall be signed by two members of Council. A member who is a bank signatory, having a connection by virtue of family or business relationships with the beneficiary of a payment, should not, under normal circumstances, be a signatory to the payment in question.

- 6.5. To indicate agreement of the details shown on the cheque or order for payment with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall each also initial the cheque counterfoil.
- 6.6. If thought appropriate by the Council, payment for utility supplies (energy, telephone and water) and any National Non-Domestic Rates may be made by variable direct debit provided they are included in the record required in Regulation 5.7.
- 6.7. If thought appropriate by the Council, payment for certain items may be made by banker's standing order provided that the instructions are signed, or otherwise evidenced by two members are retained and any payments are reported to Council as made.
- 6.8. If thought appropriate by the Council, payment for certain items may be made by BACS or CHAPS methods provided that the instructions for each payment are signed, or otherwise evidenced, by two authorised bank signatories, are retained and any payments are reported to Council as made. As an exception, Payroll payments made by BACS transfer will be authorised by the Clerk/RFO and the Finance Manager.
- 6.9. Unless an alternative payment method is required by the supplier, invoices will be paid by internet banking transfer provided the requirements of Regulations 5.2 – 5.5 have been adhered to. The bank transfers will be authorised by two members of the Management team.
- 6.10. No employee or councillor shall disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the working of the Council or its bank accounts. Only the members of the Management Team specified by the Clerk/RFO will be given bank PINs to be able to authorise payments as detailed in Regulation 6.9.
- 6.11. Regular back-up copies of the records on any computer shall be made and shall be stored securely away from the computer in question, and preferably off site.
- 6.12. The Council, and any members using computers for the Council's financial business, shall ensure that anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall software with automatic updates, together with a high level of security, is used.
- 6.13. Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the Clerk/RFO shall be appointed as the Service Administrator. The bank mandate approved by the Council shall identify a number of councillors who will be authorised to approve transactions on those accounts.
- 6.14. Access to any internet banking accounts will be directly to the access page (which may be saved under "favourites"), and not through a search engine or e-mail link. Remembered or saved passwords facilities must not be used on any computer used for Council banking work. Breach of this Regulation will be treated as a very serious matter under these regulations.

- 6.15. Supplier invoices paid via internet banking facilities will be entered onto the bank payment system by the Finance Manager. The Clerk/RFO or another member of the Management Team will then authorise the payments on the internet banking system and carry out a random sample check of the bank account details for suppliers on the internet banking screen against the supplier invoices.
- 6.16. Any Debit Card issued for use will be in the name of the Clerk/RFO and will be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £1000 unless authorised by the Full Council or the Council Matters Committee before any order is placed. Use of the card for cash withdrawals will be solely for the purpose of topping up the petty cash balance. Proper VAT invoices must be obtained for all purchases made with the debit card. The card will be securely stored by the Finance Manager and will only be provided to staff with the PIN on receipt of a signed requisition form detailing the proposed purchase. The card will be signed out and signed back in and the Finance Manager will, within 24 hrs of the card use, confirm the amount on the requisition form matches the amount paid out of the bank. Invoices from all card purchases must be signed retrospectively by a member.
- 6.17. A pre-paid debit card may be issued to employees with varying limits. These limits will be set by the Council's Council Matters Committee. Transactions and purchases made will be reported to the Council Matters Committee and authority for topping-up shall be at the discretion of the Council Matters Committee.
- 6.18. ~~The Clerk/RFO may provide petty cash to officers for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses.~~
- a. ~~The Finance Manager shall manage the petty cash. Vouchers/receipts for payments made from petty cash shall be kept to substantiate the payment. Petty cash payments will not exceed £25.~~
 - b. ~~Vouchers/receipts for payments made must be initialled/signed by the Clerk/RFO or budget holder as authorisation for reimbursement and forwarded to the Finance Manager for reimbursement.~~
 - c. ~~Income received must not be paid into the petty cash float but must be separately banked, as provided elsewhere in these regulations.~~
 - d. ~~Cash to maintain the petty cash float shall be drawn from the bank using the debit card. Cash will be collected by Finance Manager using the debit card after the Clerk/RFO has signed a cash withdrawal form.~~

7. PAYMENT OF SALARIES

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

- 7.2. Payment of salaries and payment of deductions from salary such as may be required to be made for tax, national insurance and pension contributions, or similar statutory or discretionary deductions must be made in accordance with the payroll records and on the appropriate dates stipulated in employment contracts.
- 7.3. No changes shall be made to any employee's pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the Council.
- 7.4. Each and every payment to employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall be recorded in a separate confidential record (Wages file). This confidential record is not open to inspection or review (under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or otherwise) other than:
- a. by any councillor who can demonstrate a need to know;
 - b. by the internal auditor;
 - c. by the external auditor; or
 - d. by any person authorised under Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation.
- 7.5. The total of such payments in each calendar month shall be reported with all other payments as made as may be required under these Financial Regulations, to ensure that only payments due for the period have actually been paid.
- 7.6. An effective system of personal performance management should be maintained for the senior officers.
- 7.7. Any termination payments shall be supported by a clear business case and reported to the Council. Termination payments shall only be authorised by Council.
- 7.8. Before employing interim staff the Council must consider a full business case.

8. LOANS AND INVESTMENTS

- 8.1. All borrowings shall be effected in the name of the Council, after obtaining any necessary borrowing approval. Any application for borrowing approval shall be approved by Council as to terms and purpose. The application for borrowing approval, and subsequent arrangements for the loan shall only be approved by Full Council.
- 8.2. Any financial arrangement which does not require formal borrowing approval from the Secretary of State/Welsh Assembly Government (such as Hire Purchase or Leasing of tangible assets) shall be subject to approval by the Full Council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to Council in respect of value for money for the proposed transaction.
- 8.3. All loans and investments shall be negotiated in the name of the Council and shall be for a set period in accordance with Council policy.

- 8.4. The Council shall consider the need for an Investment Strategy and Policy which, if drawn up, shall be in accordance with relevant regulations, proper practices and guidance. Any Strategy and Policy shall be reviewed by the Council at least annually.
- 8.5. All investments of money under the control of the Council shall be in the name of the Council.
- 8.6. All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the Clerk/RFO.
- 8.7. Payments in respect of short term or long-term investments, including transfers between bank accounts held in the same bank, or branch, shall be made in accordance with Regulation 5 (Authorisation of payments) and Regulation 6 (Instructions for payments).

9. INCOME

- 9.1. The collection of all sums due to the Council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the Clerk/RFO who will ensure an effective debt monitoring process is in place.
- 9.2. Particulars of all charges to be made for statutory work done, services rendered or goods supplied shall be agreed annually by the Council, notified to the Clerk/RFO and the Clerk/RFO shall be responsible for the collection of all accounts due to the Council. The Clerk/RFO is delegated authority to set charges for non-statutory work done, services rendered or goods supplied.
- 9.3. The Council will review all statutory fees and charges at least biennially, following a report of the Clerk/RFO. The Clerk/RFO is delegated the authority to review fees and charges for non-statutory work/services/goods and this should be done at least annually.
- 9.4. Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts shall be reported to the Council and shall be written off in the year.
- 9.5. All sums received on behalf of the Council shall be banked intact as directed by the Clerk/RFO. In all cases, all receipts shall be deposited with the Council's bankers with such frequency as the Clerk/RFO considers necessary.
- 9.6. The origin of each receipt shall be entered on the paying-in slip.
- 9.7. Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the Council.
- 9.8. The Clerk/RFO shall promptly complete any VAT Return that is required. Any repayment claim due in accordance with VAT Act 1994 section 33 shall be made at least annually coinciding with the financial year end.

- 9.9. Where any significant sums of cash are regularly received by the Council, the Clerk/RFO shall take such steps as are agreed by the Council to ensure that more than one person is present when the cash is counted in the first instance, and that there is a reconciliation to some form of control such as ticket issues. This is not applicable for donations where tickets/receipts are not issued., ~~and that~~ Appropriate care is must be taken in the security and safety of individuals banking such cash.
- 9.10. Any income arising which 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 (see also Regulation 16 below).

10. ORDERS FOR WORK, GOODS AND SERVICES

- 10.1. All members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times. An officer contracting services shall ensure as far as reasonable and practicable that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction, usually by obtaining three or more quotations or estimates from appropriate suppliers, subject to any *de minimis* provisions in Regulation 11.1 below.
- 10.2. A member may not make any contract on behalf of the Council.
- 10.3. The Clerk/RFO shall verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before the issue of any order, and in the case of new or infrequent purchases or payments, the Clerk/RFO shall ensure that the statutory authority shall be reported to the meeting at which the order is approved so that the minutes can record the power being used.

11. CONTRACTS

- 11.1. Procedures as to contracts are laid down as follows:
- a. Every contract shall comply with these financial regulations, and no exceptions shall be made otherwise than in an emergency provided that this regulation need not apply to contracts which relate to items (i) to (vi) below:
 - i. for the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telephone services;
 - ii. for specialist services such as are provided by solicitors, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants;
 - iii. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which consist of repairs to or parts for existing machinery or equipment or plant;
 - iv. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the Council;
 - v. for additional audit work of the external auditor up to an estimated value of £500 (in excess of this sum the Clerk/RFO shall act after consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council); and

- vi. for goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and / or are only sold at a fixed price.
- b. Where the Council intends to procure or award a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract as defined by The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 ("the Regulations") which is valued at £25,000 or more, the Council shall comply with the relevant requirements of the Regulations¹.
- c. The full requirements of The Regulations, as applicable, shall be followed in respect of the tendering and award of a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract which exceed thresholds in The Regulations set by the Public Contracts Directive 2014/24/EU (which may change from time to time)².
- d. When applications are made to waive financial regulations relating to contracts to enable a price to be negotiated without competition the reason shall be embodied in a recommendation to the Council.
- e. Such invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Clerk/RFO shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases. The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the Clerk/RFO in the ordinary course of post or by e-mail..
- f. All tenders shall be considered at the same time on the prescribed date by the Clerk/RFO in the presence of at least one member of Council.
- g. Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to current Standing Orders, and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.
- h. When it is to enter into a contract of less than £25,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Clerk/RFO shall obtain 3 quotations (priced descriptions of the proposed supply); where the value is below £5,000 and above £1,000 the Clerk/RFO shall strive to obtain 3 estimates. Otherwise, Regulation 10.1 above shall apply.
- i. The Council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.
- j. Should it occur that the Council, or duly delegated committee, does not accept any tender, quote or estimate, the work is not allocated and the Council requires further pricing, provided that the specification does not change, no person shall be permitted to submit a later tender, estimate or quote who was present when the original decision making process was being undertaken.

12. PAYMENTS UNDER CONTRACTS FOR BUILDING OR OTHER CONSTRUCTION WORKS (PUBLIC WORKS CONTRACTS)

¹ The Regulations require councils to use the Contracts Finder website to advertise contract opportunities, set out the procedures to be followed in awarding new contracts and to publicise the award of new contracts

² Thresholds currently applicable are:

- a. For public supply and public service contracts 209,000 Euros (£164,176)
- b. For public works contracts 5,225,000 Euros (£4,104,394)

- 12.1. Payments on account of the contract sum shall be made within the time specified in the contract by the Clerk/RFO upon authorised certificates of the architect or other consultants engaged to supervise the contract (subject to any percentage withholding as may be agreed in the particular contract).
- 12.2. Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the Clerk/RFO shall maintain a record of all such payments. In any case where it is estimated that the total cost of work carried out under a contract, excluding agreed variations, will exceed the contract sum of 5% or more a report shall be submitted to the Council.
- 12.3. Any variation to a contract or addition to or omission from a contract must be approved by the Council and Clerk/RFO to the contractor in writing, the Council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the financial provision.

13. ASSETS, PROPERTIES AND ESTATES

- 13.1. The Clerk/RFO shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the Council. The Clerk/RFO shall ensure a record is maintained of all properties held by the Council, recording the location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 13.2. No tangible moveable property shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of the Council, together with any other consents required by law, save where the estimated value of any one item of tangible movable property does not exceed £250.
- 13.3. No real property (interests in land) shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the Council, together with any other consents required by law. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to Council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).
- 13.4. No real property (interests in land) shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the Full Council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to Council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).
- 13.5. Subject only to the limit set in Regulation 14.2 above, no tangible moveable property shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the Full Council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to Council with a full business case.
- 13.6. The Clerk/RFO shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date. The continued existence of tangible assets shown in

the Register shall be verified at least annually, possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.

14. INSURANCE

- 14.1. Following the annual risk assessment (per Regulation 17), the Clerk/RFO shall effect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the Council's insurers.
- 14.2. The Clerk/RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the Council and the property and risks covered thereby and annually review it.
- 14.3. The Clerk/RFO shall be notified of any loss liability or damage or of any event likely to lead to a claim, and shall report these to Council at the next available meeting.
- 14.4. All appropriate 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.

15. CHARITIES

- 15.1. Where the Council is sole managing trustee of a charitable body the Clerk/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/RFO shall arrange for any audit or independent examination as may be required by Charity Law or any Governing Document.

16. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 16.1. The Council is responsible for putting in place arrangements for the management of risk. The Clerk/RFO shall prepare, for approval by the Council, risk management policy statements in respect of all activities of the Council. Risk policy statements and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the Council at least annually.
- 16.2. When considering any new activity, the Clerk/RFO shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration and adoption by the Council.

17. SUSPENSION AND REVISION OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

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

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



Item 6A

CAPABILITY POLICY & PROCEDURES

TOTNES TOWN COUNCIL
SEPTEMBER 2023

1 Introduction

This procedure is used to support, enhance, and improve the performance of employees. This procedure sets out a framework for resolving issues relating to poor performance, in accordance with the Employment Rights Act 1996, Human Rights Act 1998, and the ACAS Code of Practice on Disciplinary Procedures. The procedure aims to ensure that consistent and fair treatment is given to all individuals.

2 Scope

Where there are issues of misconduct or of negligence, these will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure. For matters of sickness, disability, or ill health, the Absence Management Policy will be used.

3 General Principles

The Procedure is not a substitute for good management practices. It should only be invoked when initial attempts to improve performance have been unsuccessful following discussions between the employee and their manager.

The employee must be given at least 5 working days' notice of the requirement to attend a formal review meeting or an appeal.

The employee has the right to be represented at formal review meetings or appeals.

In the event of a formal warning or a dismissal, the employee has the right of appeal.

4 Related Procedures

When using the procedure, it may be necessary to refer to the contents of other agreed documents within the Staff Handbook including, but not limited to:

- The Equal Opportunities Policy
- The Grievance Procedure
- The Absence Management Policy

5 Representation

Employees have the right to representation at hearings and appeals relating to any stage of the formal procedure. This can be a trade union representative, non-union employee representative, or a work colleague.

Representatives can take an active part in review meetings.

6 Action against a Trade Union Official

In normal circumstances no action will be taken against an officer of a recognised Trade Union until the matter has been discussed with a full-time officer of that union.

7 The Informal Procedure

The line manager (or Hearings Panel in relation to matters concerning the Town Clerk) should deal with minor issues of poor performance in the first instance.

A meeting with the employee to discuss poor performance should be arranged and any problems or areas for concern should be raised by the line manager. Appropriate support and training should be offered to assist the individual towards meeting the required standards in the future. Realistic targets should be agreed with the individual and future expectations made clear by the line manager. The line manager will record the points discussed in the meeting and confirm this in writing to the employee along with the agreed plan to achieve acceptable levels of performance. A review meeting should be arranged within 2 months to assess whether the targets have been met and whether the performance is satisfactory.

In most cases, these meetings should provide sufficient guidance, support, and clarification of standards to rectify the situation.

However, the formal procedure will apply when:

- Previous informal advice or guidance has proved ineffective; or

- The performance is so poor that informal discussions are unlikely to help.

8 The Formal Review

If informal discussions have proved unsuccessful in raising performance levels to the standards set by the line manager then the formal procedure will be invoked. There are three stages to the formal procedure. The employee has the right of representation at each stage.

During each stage, the employee's performance will be monitored closely. The method of doing this will be made clear to them at the conclusion of each review meeting.

Stage 1 - The Capability Review

The Capability Review should build on the informal discussions. It should be sufficiently specific so that the employee knows exactly what it is about their performance that is unsatisfactory and how they can improve to the required standard. The senior line manager will carry out the Review.

The review has four main purposes:

1. To allow the senior line manager to discuss with the employee:
 - (i) the standards of work required;
 - (ii) what improvement is necessary;
 - (iii) how the employee can be helped to achieve them;
 - (iv) how improvement will be assessed and the timescale which must be reasonable.
2. To allow the employee to:
 - (i) obtain a clear understanding of what is expected of them;
 - (ii) give an explanation or comment on their work;
 - (iii) give their views on how the problem can best be tackled.
3. To allow the senior line manager and the employee to explore other options, such as:
 - (i) additional instruction, training, or personal development activity;
 - (ii) referral to occupational health, which may involve alternative action under the Council's Absence Management Policy.
4. To make clear to the employee:
 - (i) the timescale for improvement;
 - (ii) how and by whom their work will be monitored during the review period;
 - (iii) the consequences if their work does not improve or if improvement is not maintained.

Ideally, standards of performance should be agreed between the senior line manager and employee. However, in the absence of such an agreement, the senior line manager must satisfy himself or herself that any targets set are reasonable and non-discriminatory. If training has already been given then its effectiveness should be reviewed and any further training and support agreed.

If the senior line manager feels at the conclusion of the review that there is a shortfall in performance, the employee will be issued with a formal warning and an action plan, including timescales, to achieve. It will also be made clear that failure to achieve the action plan will lead to the next stage of the formal procedure. The length of time given to improve will depend on the nature of the job and the performance gap but in normal circumstances it should not be more than 3 months. The senior line manager should confirm the outcome of the meeting in writing to the individual within 5 working days.

Stage 2 – The Capability Review

If the employee fails to achieve the standards or the timescales set out in the action plan then Stage 2 of the procedure is invoked. This involves a further review based on the same structure as Stage 1.

Stage 2 of the Capability Review will be conducted by the Town Clerk. If it is concluded that there is still a performance issue to be addressed, a further formal warning should be issued along with an action plan giving details of the standards of performance required and the timescales within which these must be achieved. The employee should be reminded that if the action plan is not achieved, then Stage 3 will be invoked. It needs to be made clear that Stage 3 may result in a decision to dismiss the employee. Again, the length of time given to improve will depend on the nature of the job and the performance gap but in normal circumstances should not be more than 3 months. A letter to confirm the outcome of the meeting should be sent to the employee within 5 working days, it should also explain the employee's right to appeal against any warning issued.

Stage 3 – The Final Capability Review

The Final Capability Review will be heard by the Hearings Panel.

The officers who conducted Stages 1 and 2 should also be present to provide details of the previous review meetings and of the steps taken to encourage improvement in the employee's performance.

The employee will have the opportunity to respond and put forward any points they wish to be considered.

Consideration should be given to any alternatives to dismissal, such as redeployment or options of downgrading. However, this may not always be possible and will depend on each individual situation and the circumstances of the organisation.

The Panel must satisfy themselves that they have heard all of the relevant information and that the employee has been given sufficient opportunity to improve. If they consider that the employee's performance remains unsatisfactory, they must inform the employee that their employment is terminated on the grounds of capability or any alternatives to dismissal.

The employee's dismissal will be with notice or, if serving their notice period is not in the interests of the Council, they will receive pay in lieu of notice. The dismissal must be confirmed in writing within 5 working days, stating the reasons for it, and informing the employee of their right of appeal.

9 Levels of Authority

Guidance is given here on the appropriate levels of authority, although alternative arrangements may have to be made on occasion.

Formal	Officer	Authority
Stage 1 & 2	First & second tier management posts	Formal warnings
Stage 3	Hearings Panel	Dismissal

10 The Right of Appeal

In the event of a formal warning or dismissal, the employee has the right to submit an appeal to the Town Clerk (Hearings Panel-in relation to matters concerning the Town Clerk). The Appeal must be made in writing within 10 days of the date of the letter confirming dismissal.

The Appeals Panel will hear the appeal, providing that they have had no previous involvement in the matter. They will be assisted by an independent suitably qualified adviser.

The appeal will take place as soon as is practically possible.

The objective is:

- To review the decision of the Stage 3 Hearings Panel and decide whether that action is warranted or not; and
- If the action is not warranted, to determine what action if any is appropriate.

The procedure to be followed is:

1. Presentation of the details of the poor performance by the Chair of the Final Capability Review;
2. Opportunity for the panel to ask questions of the Chair of the Final Capability Review;
3. Presentation of the appellant's case;
4. Opportunity for the panel to ask questions of the appellant;
5. Adjournment of the Panel to make their decision;
6. The appeal is reconvened if possible and the appellant is informed of the decision;
7. Confirm the decision in writing.

The decision of any appeal hearing is final.

11 Training

Appropriate training will be given to the Officers or any Members who might be involved in capability or appeals meetings to ensure that they fulfill their responsibilities under this procedure.

12 Interpretation

In matters relating to the application of these provisions to the Town/Parish Clerk the words 'Town/Parish Clerk' or 'senior/line manager' within this document shall be replaced with 'Hearings Panel' or 'Appeals Panel' as appropriate.



ITEM 6B

CONFIDENTIALITY, DATA PROTECTION & IT USAGE POLICY

TOTNES TOWN COUNCIL
SEPTEMBER 2023

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all employees have a clear understanding of what is considered appropriate for the use of the council's equipment, safeguarding the security of its IT systems and data and ensuring compliance with Data Protection law.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff, whether full time, part time or temporary workers.

It covers, but is not limited to, all council owned computers, laptops, telephones, mobile phones, e-mail accounts, internet access and remote access connections.

IT Usage

Any device or computer that the Council provides for your use, should be used only for Council business. Keep in mind that the Council owns the devices and the information and or data in any format on these devices. You may not remove or copy any information or data held on any Council device.

You may use personal electronic devices that are not connected to the Council network to access any appropriate internet site during breaks and lunch breaks only.

Users must lock their computers when their desktop is left unattended and shut down computers at the end of the working day. Where computers need to remain on to allow remote access all user accounts should be logged out and screens switched off.

All work documents should be saved to the server rather than on desktops, laptops or storage devices. This will facilitate business continuity in your absence and ensure the safety of the data through the server security and back-up processes. All work related data and documents are the property of the Council and should be readily available on

the server to enable the Council to respond to any Freedom of Information requests received.

No software of any kind can be installed onto a laptop or desktop computer without the approval of the Town Clerk. Personal software must not be installed. Only the system administrator and the Council's IT support contractor will have the ability to install software.

Unauthorised copying or distributing of copyrighted software is a violation of UK Copyright Law and is not be permitted.

Users will not allow non-employees to use any Council machine or device without authorisation of the Town Clerk.

When users leave the organisation, their accounts will be immediately disabled or deleted.

Passwords to access user accounts or e-mail accounts should not be shared. The Town Clerk will maintain a list of all passwords which will be held securely. Only the Town Clerk will be able to change passwords. If you suspect unauthorised access has occurred on your user account or e-mail account you should immediately notify the Town Clerk who will investigate and change the password if necessary.

Only Council owned devices and equipment should be used in the office and connected to the network. Council owned devices are PAT tested on a regular basis and have any required virus checking software.

Any misuse of IT facilities can potentially result in disciplinary proceedings. Examples of misuse could include

- not adhering to the policy;
- attempting to discover a user's password;
- using the computer systems to act abusively;
- attempting to circumvent the network's security;
- knowingly running and installing programmes intended to damage the computer systems;
- deliberately wasting computer resources;
- leaving laptops unattended in a public place.

Internet & E-mail usage

The Council recognises that email and internet are important information and communication systems which are used during the course of council business. This policy provides guidelines and procedures to protect users and the Council.

Internet Usage

Staff members are encouraged to use the internet responsibly as part of their official and professional activities.

Information obtained via the internet and published in the name of the Council must be relevant and professional. Personal views should not be expressed.

The use of the internet to access and/or distribute any kind of offensive material will not be tolerated and staff may be subject to disciplinary action.

The equipment, services and technology used to access the internet are the property of the Council. The Council reserves the right to monitor internet traffic and monitor and access data that is composed, sent or received through its online connections.

Internet activities that can be attributed to a Totnes Town Council domain address (such as posting to newsgroups, use of chat facilities and participation in email lists) must not bring disrepute to the Council or associate the Council with controversial issues (i.e. sexually explicit materials).

There should be limited personal use of the internet at work and it must not interfere with or impede your normal duties. Such use should take place substantially outside of normal working hours, for example, breaks, lunchtime.

Unacceptable use of the internet

Unacceptable use of the internet by staff members includes, but is not limited to:

- sending or posting discriminatory, harassing or threatening messages or images
- using computers to perpetrate any form of fraud, and/or software, film or music piracy
- obtaining, using or disclosing another staff member's password without authorisation
- sharing confidential material or proprietary information outside of the Council
- hacking into unauthorised websites
- sending or posting information that is defamatory to the Council, its services, Councillors and/or members of the public
- introducing malicious software onto Council computers and/or jeopardising the security of the Council's electronic communication systems
- sending or posting chain letters, solicitations or advertisements not related to Council business or activities
- passing off personal views as those representing the Council
- using Council equipment and Internet services to make personal gains
- obtaining, viewing, or reaching any pornographic, or otherwise immoral, unethical, or non-council business-related internet sites. Doing so can lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

If a staff member is unsure about what constitutes acceptable internet usage, then he/she should ask his/her line manager for further guidance and clarification.

E-mail

E-mail should be regarded as written paper documents for the purposes of production, use, retention and disclosure and can be called upon under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Personal information should be kept in accordance with the principles established in the Data Protection Act 1998.

All e-mails on the Council's systems, including personal e-mails, are the property of the Council. As such, all e-mails can and will be periodically monitored for compliance with this policy. The Council reserves the right to open any e-mail file stored on the Council's computer system.

The following guidelines for e-mail use should be observed by all staff members:

- e-mails are to be used for Council business only
- use appropriate language to avoid unintentional misunderstandings
- respect the confidentiality of information contained within emails, even if encountered inadvertently
- check with the sender if there is any doubt regarding the authenticity of a message
- do not open any attachment unless certain of the authenticity of the sender
- only copy emails to others where appropriate and necessary
- e-mails which create obligations or give instructions on behalf of the Council must be sent by the Town Clerk or officers with the authority to do so. You should be aware of any financial or contractual commitment the e-mail might create
- e-mails must comply with common codes of courtesy, decency and privacy
- when sending group e-mails or copying in recipients, any personal or non-business e-mail addresses should be included via the bcc field to avoid the inappropriate disclosure of personal data.

All outgoing e-mail must automatically include the following statement:

'This email and any files transmitted with it are intended solely for the addressee. It may be confidential and also legally privileged. If you are not the intended recipient, please notify the sender and delete the message from your system immediately. Any disclosure, copying, distribution or other action relating to the information contained in this email is strictly prohibited. Senders and recipients should be aware that emails and their contents may have to be disclosed in response to a request made under UK Data Protection and Freedom of Information legislation. This e-mail message has been

scanned for computer viruses. However, Totnes Town Council will not accept any liability in respect of damage caused by any virus that is not detected. Our Privacy Policy provides more information about the different ways we may use your data and how it is stored. You can find our Privacy Policy on our website at <http://www.totnestowncouncil.gov.uk>.'

Unacceptable use of e-mail

- Use of profane, inappropriate, pornographic, slanderous or misleading content
- Use of e-mail to spam (i.e. global send). This includes the forwarding of chain letters.
- Use of e-mail to communicate sexual or other harassment. Users may not include any words or phrases that may be construed as derogatory based on race, colour, sex, age, disability, national origin or any other category.
- Use of e-mail to send unprofessional or derogatory messages.
- Forging of email content (i.e. identification, addresses).

Reporting and sanctions

If a staff member receives an email from another staff member which they believe is contrary to the guidance provided in this policy, it should be reported to the Clerk who will consider use of the Council's formal disciplinary procedure.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

Confidentiality

The Council's Conditions of Employment require all staff to respect the confidentiality of personal information revealed to them in their work. It says that client or customer confidentiality is of the utmost importance and must be maintained at all times by every employee. The law requires that certain types of information must be available to Members, auditors, government departments, service users and the public. The Council itself may decide to be open about other types of information. Employees must be aware of which information the Council is and is not open about, and act accordingly.

Employees must not use any information obtained in the course of their employment for personal gain or benefit, nor must they pass it on to others who might use it in such a way. Any information received by an employee must not be divulged without prior approval unless it is in the public domain.

All officers are encouraged to use minimisation, anonymisation and pseudonymisation techniques wherever possible.

All actual, potential or suspected incidents involving breaches of confidentiality must be immediately reported to the Town Clerk.

Non-compliance with this policy by any individual working for the Council may result in disciplinary action being taken in accordance with the Council's disciplinary procedure and could lead to dismissal for gross misconduct.

Data Protection

The Council is committed to being transparent about how it collects and uses personal data and to meeting our data protection obligations.

Please refer to the Council's Privacy Policy for Staff, Councillors and Role Holders for information on the rules for collecting, storing, retaining, using, disclosing and disposing of personal information. It sets out how the Council protects and prevents unauthorised or unlawful processing or disclosure.

Employees have a duty to ensure that personal information, whether held on computer, in files or in any other manual record, is stored securely. Any breach of security must be reported to the Town Clerk as soon as possible.

Information and equipment that contains personal data must be disposed of in an appropriate manner:

- Equipment – via the Council's IT support service provider.
- Paper – using either a cross cut shredder or the Council's confidential waste collection service.

Special categories of personal data must be given extra security, and at a minimum Must be locked away when not in use (i.e. race/ethnicity, religion, genetics, health, photos, sexual orientation, trade union, political opinions).

Data taken offsite must be protected at all times. Users must:

- Keep information and equipment on their person at all times (e.g. when stopping off on the way home).
- Be held in an appropriate receptacle (e.g. bag) to reduce the risk of opportunistic theft.
- Not store leave the information and equipment in a vehicle when not in use.

Staff must ensure any information is only disclosed verbally if it has been verified that the person calling/present has the legal need to know the information. Any information sent by post should have the address verified and the envelope should be marked Private and Confidential.



ITEM 6c

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

TOTNES TOWN COUNCIL
SEPTEMBER 2023

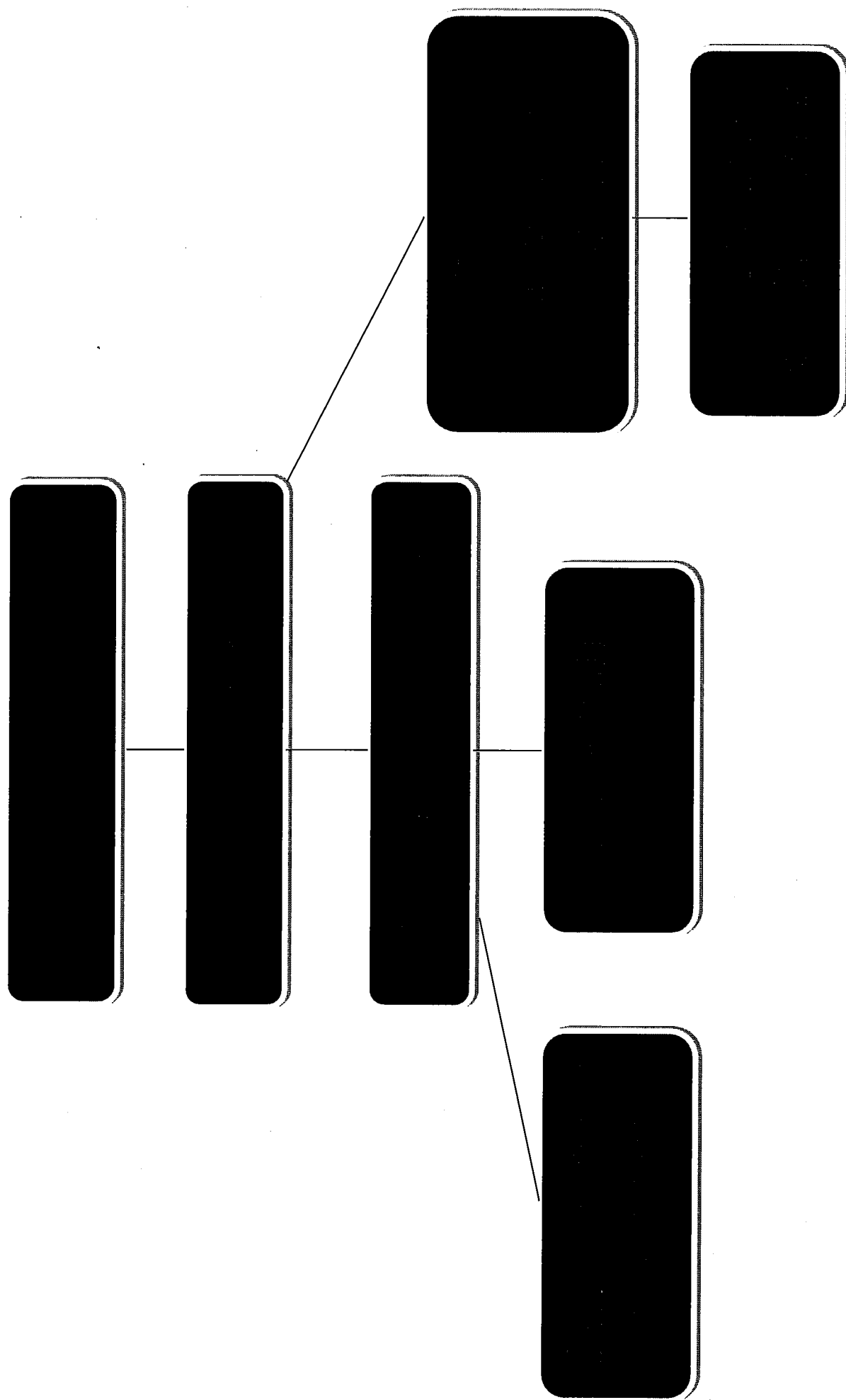
It is our policy to provide, so far as is reasonably practicable :-

- *A workplace and work activities that will be safe for our employees, visitors and others who may be affected by what we do.*
- *Safe plant, equipment and systems of work.*
- *Safe use, handling and storage of articles and substances.*
- *Instruction and training for and consultation with our employees.*
- *A safe working environment.*
- *Adequate facilities and welfare arrangements.*
- *Sufficient resources to implement the policy and the assignment of responsibilities.*

Employees are reminded that they have a duty to take reasonable steps for their health and safety and other people who may be affected and to co-operate with arrangements in all matters relating to health and safety.

This policy will be kept up-to-date and reviewed annually.

Health And Safety Organisational Chart



RESPONSIBILITIES

Town Clerk

The Clerk is the designated person with overall responsibility for health and safety within the Council. She will ensure that:

- our Health and Safety Policy is implemented, monitored, developed, communicated effectively, reviewed and amended as required
- suitable and sufficient funds, people, materials and equipment are provided to meet all health and safety requirements
- adequate insurance cover is provided and renewed
- competent persons are appointed to provide health and safety assistance and advice
- an adequate system of maintenance exists and operates to keep premises, plant and work equipment in a safe condition
- statutory examinations are planned, completed and recorded
- there is regular communication and consultation with staff on health and safety issues
- an effective training programme is established to ensure staff are competent to carry out their work in a safe manner
- safe systems of work are developed and implemented
- accidents, ill health and 'near miss' incidents at work are recorded, investigated and reported
- safety issues raised are thoroughly investigated and, when necessary, further effective controls implemented and communicated to staff
- contractors engaged are reputable, can demonstrate a good health and safety record and are made aware of relevant local health and safety rules and procedures
- effective contingency plans are in place with a designated competent person in charge of the planning and control measures for situations involving imminent danger
- health and safety objectives are set and their achievement is measured and reported annually.

Town Councillors

The Councillors have the ultimate responsibility for the health and safety of Totnes Town Council but discharges this responsibility through the Clerk down to individual managers, supervisors and employees.

The Council has nominated the Clerk to have special responsibility for health and safety.

The Council will ensure that:-

- they provide a lead in developing a positive health and safety culture throughout the organisation.
- all its decisions reflect its health and safety intentions.
- adequate resources are made available for the implementation of health and safety.
- they will promote the active participation of workers in improving health and safety performance.
- they will review the health and safety performance of the Council on an annual basis.

Employees

All employees must:

- take reasonable care of their own safety
- take reasonable care of the safety of others affected by their actions
- observe the safety rules
- comply with the Health and Safety policy
- conform to all written or verbal instructions given to them to ensure their personal safety and the safety of others
- dress sensibly and safely for their particular working environment or occupation
- conduct themselves in an orderly manner in the work place and refrain from any antics or pranks
- use all safety equipment and/or protective clothing as directed
- avoid any improvisations of any form which could create an unnecessary risk to their personal safety and the safety of others
- maintain all equipment in good condition and report defects to their supervisor
- report any safety hazard or malfunction of any item of plant or equipment to their supervisor
- report all accidents to their supervisor whether an injury is sustained or not
- attend as requested any health and safety training course
- observe all laid down procedures for processes, materials and substances used
- observe the fire evacuation procedure and the position of all fire equipment and fire exit routes.

The Town Maintenance Officer must:

- undertake inspections and risk assessments where required and as directed by the Clerk
- be responsible for the Legionella testing in the Council's Guildhall and Civic Hall
- act as Fire Officer for the Council
- take responsibility for ensuring suitable fire safety & emergency procedures are in place for Council buildings
- ensure fire alarm systems are tested and serviced regularly
- where required liaise with the fire alarm service contractor
- ensure all testing and servicing is carried out with the required frequency in the Council's buildings and that fire log books are kept up to date.
- take charge of procedures in the event of an emergency evacuation
- work safely and developed and implemented safe systems of work
- report any accidents, ill health and "near miss" incidents at work to ensure they are investigated and recorded
- monitor the Council's buildings and assets to identify any health and safety issues
- keep plant and work equipment maintained in a safe condition
- use personal protective equipment where required

- ensure hazardous substances are stored, transported, handled and used in a safe manner according to manufacturers' instructions and established rules and procedures
- ensure contractors engaged are reputable, can demonstrate a good health and safety record and are made aware of relevant local health and safety rules and procedures

ARRANGEMENTS

Accident Investigation

It is our policy to investigate.

- All accidents resulting in any reportable injury or losses of any assets.
- Accidents, however minor.
- All near-misses.

Accident Reporting

It is our policy to report all serious injuries, industrial diseases and dangerous occurrences.

We will report all notifiable accidents to the enforcing authority.

The Accident Book must be fully completed for all injuries incurred at work, however minor.

Alcohol and Drug Abuse

No alcohol can be consumed on the premises at any time unless as part of a Council arranged social function. Employees should drink alcohol at these events responsibly and ensure they do not drive a vehicle.

Anyone found taking drugs on the premises is guilty of gross misconduct, and will be disciplined accordingly.

Asbestos

The Policy of Totnes Town Council is to :-

- Produce and maintain an Asbestos Register that is available to all staff, contractors and property users on request.
- Promote awareness of the hazards associated with asbestos.
- Ensure the Council's Policy conforms to Regulation 4 of the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2006.

Consultation and Training

Staff meetings will be held regularly. Any items discussed will be noted and where appropriate, actioned.

The Council is committed to providing employees with adequate information, instruction and training. External assistance will be used to provide professional health and safety training if required.

- We will ensure that all newly appointed or promoted staff receive an efficient induction into their jobs.
- We will provide training to increase the productivity and performance of existing staff, ensuring that they are updated in line with new legislative requirements, techniques and technology.
- Training needs will be reviewed at least once a year.

Contractors

All contractors working on our premises are required to comply with appropriate rules and regulations governing their work activities.

We will ensure that, prior to engaging any contractor, they are competent and that work is carried out safely with full documentation in the form of risk assessments, method

statements and insurance provided.

COSHH

We recognise that some substances have the potential to cause ill health and we will introduce measures to identify any such substances our employees, or contractors' staff, use or are exposed to in the course of their work.

Where practical alternatives exist, we will not use harmful substances.

Substances that we must use will be assessed and control measures introduced to prevent risk.

Display Screen Equipment

It is our policy to provide a safe and comfortable working environment and we will put in place arrangements and procedures for the assessment of risks from the use of DSE.

A user, defined as a person using display screen equipment for a large proportion of their working day, is entitled to free eyesight tests. Please refer to the Staff Handbook for information on arranging this.

Driving At Work

Driving is an integral part to some roles within the Council and has inherent risks associated with it which drivers should be made aware of.

The Council is committed to reducing the risks its staff face or create when driving at work and therefore will :-

- Not put unreasonable time constraints on travel.
- Ensure those driving for business are competent (and where required, authorised) and fit.

Drivers will remain responsible for their safety and must comply with the Highway Code and Road Traffic Act.

It is the responsibility of drivers to inform the Town Clerk of:

- Anything that could affect their driving, e.g. health conditions or injuries, use of prescribed medication.
- Changes to licence such as; limitations, offences recorded, period bans.
- Vehicle defects that affect ability/safety to drive.
- Any accidents/incidents that occurred whilst driving on behalf of the Council.
- Be physically fit and not under influence of any alcohol or drugs that may affect the ability to drive.
- Have had an eye test in the last two years and be using any corrective appliance.
- Adjust their driving position, head restraints and mirrors to ensure maximum comfort and safety.

Whilst driving, drivers must: -

- Drive in accordance with the applicable law and with consideration for the safety of passengers and other road users.
- Remain in control of the vehicle at all times.
- Not smoke in a Council vehicle.
- Only use electronic devices, e.g. mobile phones, satellite navigation, mp3 player, when set up to do so, i.e. using a hands-free device.
- Never use any handheld electronic device, e.g. mobile phone, satellite navigation, mp3 player.

Electricity At Work

All electrical systems on our premises will be inspected to ensure there is no danger.

Portable appliances will be given a thorough electrical test by a competent person at fixed intervals, which reflect the potential risks associated with the class of appliance.

The fixed wiring installation supplying electrical sockets, lighting or other wired in

equipment will be inspected by a competent electrician at least every five years.
Any hirer of the premises will be required to produce evidence that electrical equipment being brought on to the premises is PAT tested

Fire Safety

We will put in place arrangements for the assessment of risks from fire and appropriate control measures to minimise the risks identified. These measures will include the following arrangements, procedures and controls.

- Regular inspection of the premises for fire safety.
- Fire extinguishers will be placed at clearly signed fire points.
- Emergency exit routes will be kept clear at all times.

We will

- Provide adequate numbers of fire extinguishers on the premises.
- Ensure that the fire extinguishers are subject to regular maintenance.
- Formulate emergency evacuation procedures.

First Aid

We recognise our legal duty to make sufficient provision for first aid to employees.
We will make appropriate arrangements to ensure that there are an adequate number of trained first aiders.

In the event of anything other than minor injuries, medical assistance must be sought.

Lone Working

Totnes Town Council will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that employees who are required to work alone or unsupervised for significant periods of time are protected from risks to their health and safety.

Totnes Town Council will determine, by risk assessment, those activities where work can actually be done safely by one unaccompanied person. This will include the identification of hazards from means of access and/or egress, machinery, goods, substances, etc.

Particular consideration will be given to:

- the remoteness or isolation of workplaces
- any problems of communication
- the possibility of interference, such as violence or criminal activity from other persons
- the nature of injury or damage to health

Information and Training

Employees will be given all necessary information, instruction, training and supervision to enable them to recognise the hazards and appreciate the risks involved with working alone.

Employees will be required to follow the safe working procedures devised including:

- when working alone, e.g. in an isolated area a member of the Council is aware of your location and expected time frame necessary to complete the task
- check that work being done has been subject to risk assessment and check the assessment yourself – some work may have been identified as requiring the assistance of a second person or simply prohibited from being a lone working activity
- if possible and arranged beforehand, keep in regular contact with someone else, e.g.

use a mobile phone to call into the office every couple of hours indicating your movements

- If there is no mobile phone connectivity then ensure you arrange for an alternative method of checking in i.e. visiting the office, walkie talkie, other
- do not put yourself at risk; if you do not feel safe discuss the situation with the Town Clerk

Certain tasks will not be carried out whilst working alone and these include working at height i.e. from ladders, heavy lifting activities. Further arrangements will be put in place for these activities.

Refer to the Lone Working Policy and risk assessment for further details.

Manual Handling

We will undertake risk assessments in respect of all manual handling operations identified as having a significant risk and will strive to reduce these risks as far as possible.

Training in lifting techniques will be provided for staff involved in all operations identified as having a significant risk.

Noise

Certain activities generate noise such as the use of equipment and machinery however it is the exposure over a long period of time that is most likely to cause harm.

The Council will assess the level of exposure and put the appropriate level of control in place which may include replacing the noisy equipment or it may be a simple of providing ear protection for individuals.

All employees affected by noise will be provided with information, instruction and training

Occupational Ill Health

We will take all reasonably practicable measures to prevent our employees from contracting any occupational diseases.

Where, by risk assessment, it is considered appropriate we will provide health surveillance by qualified medical professionals.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE will be provided where our risk assessments show that a risk cannot otherwise be avoided.

It will only be used where it is not reasonably practicable to modify the activity, the process, or the method of work to prevent risk.

PPE will be maintained and replaced as necessary to ensure its effectiveness. Employees must report loss or obvious defects in PPE as soon as practicable.

Pregnant Females

We recognise that all work involving pregnant women and nursing mothers will need to take into account their physical and psychological capacity.

Employees are reminded that they have a duty to advise their employer as soon as they know they are pregnant.

Risk Assessment

We will carry out suitable and sufficient assessments of the risks to the health and safety of our employees and to others who might be affected by our work activities.

Safety Inspections

Safety inspections will be arranged at appropriate intervals. All safety equipment such as interlocking guards, emergency stops and pressure mats will be regularly tested to ensure effectiveness

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted anywhere within the buildings.

Stress Management

We recognise that stress is an increasing factor in our daily lives.

We will endeavour to increase general awareness of stress and ways to combat workplace stress.

We will take action to prevent workplace stressors and monitor and evaluate stress indicators in our employees.

Where an employee feels under stress he/she should make their supervisor or manager aware of the situation.

The Indoor Environment

It is our policy to provide a working environment that is safe and comfortable.

The Outdoor Environment**Trees**

The Council are responsible for numerous trees situated around the town and acknowledge its responsibility to ensure they are well maintained.

Trees are of great benefit to the Town and the overall risk to human safety is extremely low, however the Council does have a duty of care and will undertake a balanced and proportionate approach to tree safety.

- Independent Inspection – The Council on a regular basis will arrange for all trees under their control to be assessed by a suitably qualified person with expertise in tree management. The Council will react accordingly to the recommendations with regards to tree maintenance.
- Visual Inspection – Depending on the recommendations of the expert report the Council will undertake regular visual inspections at appropriate intervals. The interval will be dependent on condition, location and size of the tree.

All inspections will be documented.

Visitors

Our policy regarding the control of visitors on our premises is that :-

- We must be aware that the visitor is on the premises.
- Visitors are the responsibility of the Council whilst on the premises.

All visitors must comply with any instructions given to them.

Work Equipment

We will, so far as is reasonably practicable, ensure that all work equipment is safe and without risk.

To minimise the risk of injury from work equipment we will :-

- Carry out inspections to ensure all safety critical features remain fully effective.
- Ensure that all maintenance procedures are kept up-to-date.

- Provide suitable training.

Young Persons

We will pay special regard to the needs of any young persons by risk assessing the tasks we are asking them to do and take into account their inexperience and immaturity

Management arrangements

- Overall and final responsibility for health and safety is that of the Town Councillors
- Day to day responsibility for ensuring the policy is put into practice is delegated to the Town Clerk
- Our nominated Competent Person is the Town Clerk
- Employees should report any health and safety concerns to the Town Clerk
- The Town Clerk will be responsible for ensuring any risk assessments as required by Regulations are undertaken.
- Action required to reduce or control the risks will be approved by Town Clerk and Councillors (if required)
- The Town Clerk will be responsible for ensuring that employees are made aware of the findings of the risk assessments and any control measures identified.
- Any defects in equipment, buildings or systems should be reported to the Town Clerk
- The Health and Safety Law Poster is displayed in the Guildhall Office.

General arrangements

- Induction training for new employees is the responsibility of the Town Clerk
- Job training will be co-ordinated by the Town Clerk
- First aid boxes are kept in the Guildhall Offices and the Civic Hall
- Training records are kept by the Finance, HR & Lettings Manager
- The first aid box is kept in the Guildhall offices corridor
- The Accident Book is kept in the Guildhall offices corridor
- All accidents should be reported to the Town Clerk
- the Town Clerk and the relevant Committee Chairman or Mayor will conduct any accident investigations required
- Emergency escape routes are checked weekly by the Town Maintenance Officer
- Fire safety checks are carried out weekly by the Town Maintenance Officer

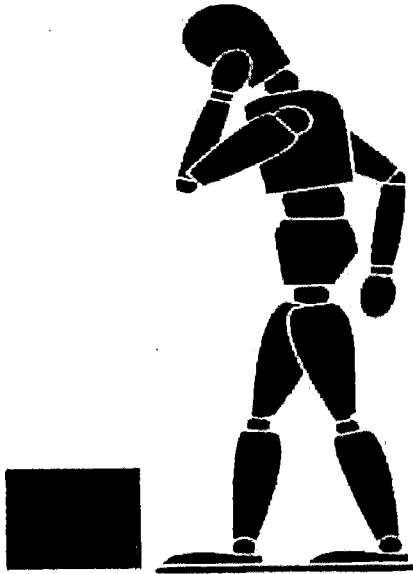
- Fire extinguishers are checked monthly and serviced annually
- The fire alarm is tested weekly by the Town Maintenance Officer

Manual Handling

PRINCIPLES OF GOOD HANDLING TECHNIQUE

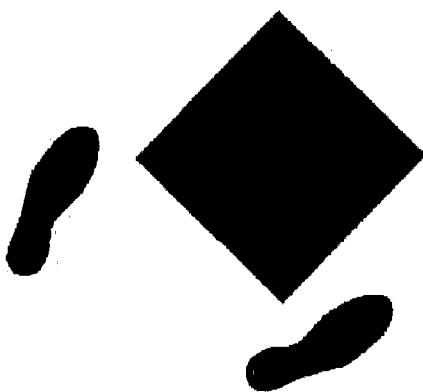
1 Planning

Plan the lift, consider where the load is to be placed, the distances involved, are there any obstructions such as closed doors, is assistance required and can handling aids or equipment be used?



2 Feet

The feet should be positioned apart (shoulder width), one foot ahead of the other in the direction of the intended movement



3 Knees

Adopt a good posture for handling with the knees bent (not squat – don't kneel), in order to gain the most effective power from the thigh muscles

4 Back

The back should be straight - not necessarily vertical (15 - 20° from vertical is alright, keeping the natural curve of the spine. It may help to tuck in the chin. If necessary, lean forward a little over the load to get a good grip and to keep the centre of gravity over the load.

5 Arms

The arms should be close to the body (nearer the centre of gravity) with the shoulders level and facing the same direction as the hips.



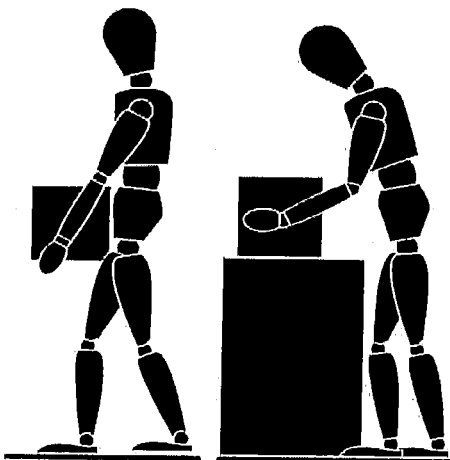
6 Hands

Ensure a firm grip on the load using the roots of the fingers and the palm of the hand. Holding the load this way is also less tiring than keeping the fingers straight.

7 Head

Raise the chin out and up as the lift begins, otherwise this results in round shoulders and a curved spine.

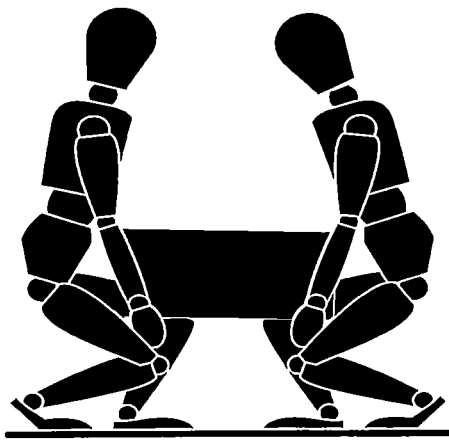
8 Moving the load



- ② Keep the load as close to the trunk for as long as possible, and where relevant, keep the heaviest side of the load close to the body. Slide the load towards you if required.
- ② Lift smoothly
- ② Move the feet not the trunk when turning to the side, i.e., don't twist.
- ② Put the load down and then slide the load into the required position if necessary.

9 Team Handling

Handling by two or more people may make possible an operation that is beyond the capability of one person, or reduce the risk of injury to a solo handler.



Additional difficulties may arise if team members impede each other's vision or movement, or if the load offers insufficient good handholds. This can occur particularly with compact loads which force the handlers to work close together or where the space available for movement is limited.

When lifting loads at or near floor level is unavoidable, handling techniques which allow the use of relatively strong leg muscles rather than those of the back are preferable, provided the load is small enough to be held close to the trunk. In addition, if the task includes lifting to shoulder height, allow the handlers to change hand grip. Bear in mind, however, that such techniques impose heavy forces on the knees and hip joints which must carry both the weight of the load and the weight of the rest of the body.

The closeness of the load to the body can also be influenced by foot placement. The elimination of obstacles which need to be reached over or into will permit the handler's feet to be placed beneath or adjacent to the load before beginning the manual handling operation.

Display Screen Equipment (DSE)/Visual Display Unit (VDU)

Some practical tips:

Getting comfortable

- Adjust your chair and VDU to find the most comfortable position for your work. As a broad guide, your forearms should be approximately horizontal and your eyes the same height as the top of the VDU.
- Make sure you have enough work space to take whatever documents or other equipment you need.
- Try different arrangements of keyboard, screen, mouse and documents to find the best arrangement for you. A document holder may help you avoid awkward neck and eye movements.
- Arrange your desk and VDU to avoid glare, or bright reflections on the screen. This will be easiest if neither you nor the screen is directly facing windows or bright lights. Adjust curtains or blinds to prevent unwanted light.
- Make sure there is space under your desk to move your legs freely. Move any obstacles such as boxes or equipment.
- Avoid excess pressure from the edge of your seat on the backs of your legs and knees. A footrest may be helpful, particularly for smaller users.

Keying In

- Adjust your keyboard to get a good keying position. A space in front of the keyboard is sometimes helpful for resting the hands and wrists when not keying.
- Try to keep your wrists straight when keying. Keep a soft touch on the keys and don't overstretch your fingers. Good keyboard technique is important.

Using a mouse

- Position the mouse within easy reach, so it can be used with the wrist straight. Sit upright and close to the desk, so you don't have to work with your mouse arm stretched. Move the keyboard out of the way if it is not being used.
- Support your forearm on the desk, and don't grip the mouse too tightly.
- Rest your fingers lightly on the buttons and do not press them hard.

Reading the screen

- Adjust the brightness and contrast controls on the screen to suit lighting conditions in the room.
- Make sure the screen surface is clean.

- In setting up software, choose options giving text that is large enough to read easily on your screen, when you are sitting in a normal, comfortable working position. Select colours that are easy on the eye (avoid red text on a blue background, or vice-versa).
- Individual characters on the screen should be sharply focused and should not flicker or move. If they do, the VDU may need servicing or adjustment.

Posture and breaks

- Don't sit in the same position for long periods. Make sure you change your posture as often as practicable. Some movement is desirable, but avoid repeated stretching to reach things you need (if this happens a lot, rearrange your workstation)
- Most jobs provide opportunities to take a break from the screen, e.g. to do filing or photocopying. Make use of them. If there are no such natural breaks in your job, your employer should plan for you to have rest breaks. Frequent short breaks are better than fewer long ones.

Ladders and Stepladders

This guidance is to help you:

- know when to use a ladder;
- decide how to go about selecting the right sort of ladder for the particular job;
- understand how to use it;
- know how to look after it; and
- take sensible safety precautions.

When is a ladder the most suitable access equipment?

As a guide, **only** use a ladder or stepladder:

- in one position for a maximum of 30 minutes;
- for 'light work' - they are not suitable for strenuous or heavy work. If a task involves you carrying more than 10 kg (a bucket of something) up the ladder or steps it will need to be justified by a detailed manual handling assessment;
- where a handhold is available on the ladder or stepladder;
- where you can maintain three points of contact (hands and feet) at the working position;

On a **ladder** where you cannot maintain a handhold, other than for a brief period of time, other measures will be needed to prevent a fall or reduce the consequences of one. On **stepladders** where a handhold is not practicable you will need to consider whether it is safe to work or not.

Is it a safe place to use a ladder or stepladder?

As a guide, **only** use a ladder or stepladder:

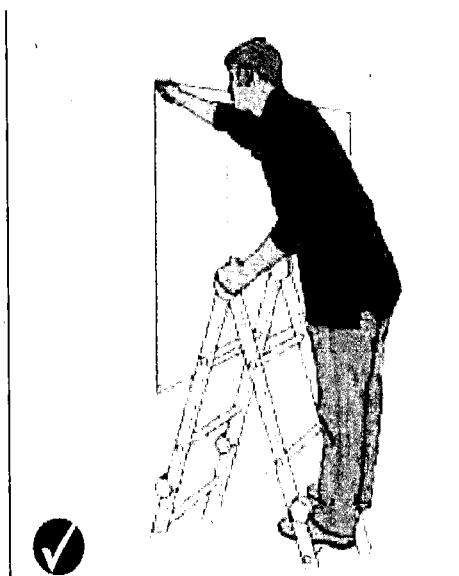
- on firm ground or spread the load (e.g. use a board);
- on clean, solid surfaces (paving slabs, floors etc). These need to be clean (no oil, moss or leaf litter) and free of loose material (sand, packaging materials etc) so the feet can grip. Shiny floor surfaces can be slippery even without contamination;

Never stand ladders or stepladders on moveable objects, such as pallets, bricks, lift trucks, tower scaffolds, vans, stacks of paper or boxes etc. If the ladder or stepladder won't reach, you need to use a more suitable type of access equipment.

Safety in use – stepladders

On a stepladder **do not**:

- overload it – you and anything you are carrying should not exceed the highest load stated on the stepladder;
- use it in locations where the restraint devices cannot be fully opened. Any locking devices must also be engaged;
- use the top two steps of a stepladder, unless a suitable handrail is available on the stepladder;
- don't use the top three steps of swing-back or double-sided stepladders, where a step forms the very top of the stepladder.

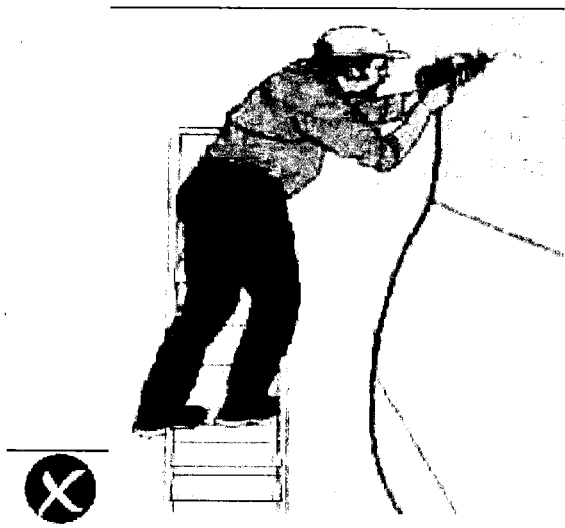


Correct – two clear rungs. Don't work any higher up this type of stepladder.

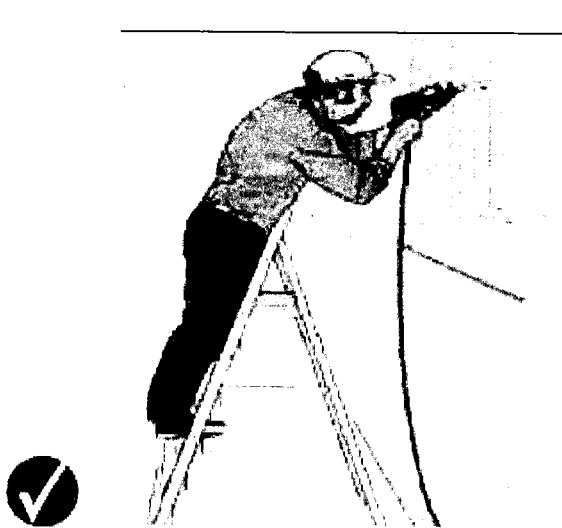


Correct – 3 clear rungs, do not work any higher on this type of stepladder

When using stepladders, avoid work that imposes a side loading, such as side-on drilling through solid materials (e.g. bricks or concrete), by having the steps facing the work activity. Where side-on loadings cannot be avoided you should prevent the steps from tipping over, for example by tying the steps to a suitable point, or you should use a more suitable type of access equipment.



Incorrect – steps side on to work activity



Correct – steps facing work activity

Where you cannot maintain a handhold (e.g. putting a box on a shelf), the use of a stepladder will have to be justified by taking into account:

- the height of the task;
- a safe handhold still being available on the stepladder;
- whether it is light work ;
- whether it avoids side loading;
- whether it avoids overreaching
- whether your feet are fully supported; and
- whether you can tie the stepladder.

Consider tying a **stepladder** where possible and helpful to the task (e.g. side-on working or where two free hands are needed). Stepladders should not be used for access to another level unless they have been designed for this.

Is the ladder or stepladder safe to be used?

You must check that the ladder or stepladder is in a safe condition before using it (a daily pre-use check). As a guide, **only** use ladders or stepladders that:

- have no visible defects.
- have a current detailed visual inspection (look for an inspection label).
- are suitable for work use. Use Class 1 or EN 131 ladders or stepladders at work because domestic (Class 3) ones are not normally suitable for use at work;
- have been maintained and stored in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Also, you must always use a non-conductive ladder or steps for any necessary live electrical work.

Pre-use checks

Look for obvious visual defects before using a ladder or stepladder. Check that:

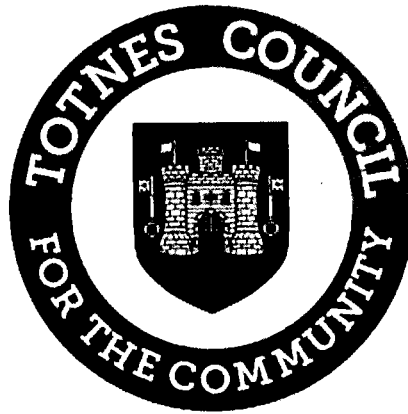
- all the ladder feet are fitted;
- the feet are in good repair (not loose, missing, splitting, excessively worn, secure etc);
- the feet are clean - the feet should be in contact with the ground. Ladder feet should also be checked when moving from soft/dirty ground (e.g. dug soil, loose sand/stone, a dirty workshop) to a smooth, solid surface (e.g. paving slabs), to ensure the foot material and not the dirt (e.g. soil, embedded stones or swarf) is making contact with the ground;
- all the screws, bolts and hinges are secure;
- on a stepladder, that the "spreaders" on the ladder can be locked into place.
- There are no other obvious signs of damage such as cracks.

If you find a problem, DO NOT USE the ladder. It should be repaired (if practicable) or destroyed.

Storage

When storing ladders and stepladders, store them in a well ventilated area to prevent sagging and warping. Store straight ladders in flat racks or on wall brackets, don't hand them from the rungs. Store step ladders in the closed, vertical position.

The information in this Guidance is based on the HSE leaflet 'Safe use of ladders and step ladders'.



Pay Policy

TOTNES TOWN COUNCIL

SEPTEMBER 2023

This Policy helps the Council to make best use of its Council Resources.

Councillors and staff must be committed to the policy in order for it to succeed, so they must be aware of its aims and objectives and their role within it.

POLICY STATEMENT

It is the aim of the Council to ensure that all employees or job applicants are assessed fairly and remunerated according to the skills required to undertake the role and the level of responsibility associated with the post.

All working practices and recruitment procedures will be reviewed at least annually to ensure that individuals are paid on the basis of their merits and abilities.

The Council undertakes to pay at least the Living Wage to all employees.

PRINCIPLES

- a. To make full use of the talents and abilities of all staff.
- b. To attract and retain good quality staff.
- c. To provide training and development for all the staff.
- d. To maintain an equality of pay scale differentials.

ASSESSMENT OF PAY SCALE

The Council will: -

- Review each job description at least every other year.
- Undertake an Appraisal in line with the Council's Appraisal Policy.

- Follow the pay scales agreed and laid down by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services – National Agreement on Salaries and Conditions of Service.
- Assess and compare similar jobs within the sector to ensure that the pay rates set are in line with other Councils.

Evaluation

The Council has set a base line of job descriptions and pay scales for its current employees. These pay scales have been assessed and compared with other jobs in the sector to ensure that they are generally in line with other pay rates.

The Council evaluation process will use the following guidelines and rules:

- Any re-evaluation exercise will be undertaken with a clear and systematic approach.
- An assessment will be undertaken to ascertain whether significant aspects of an employee's work has changed.

The concomitant factors arising are that the employee may:

- No longer be adequately remunerated for the skills they are required to deploy.
- Require new skills.
- Require an assessment of work/life balance and that:
 - there may be the possibility of additional staff having to be employed and with specialist skills as well.
 - the current post holder is leaving and a new and accurate job description has to be designed for interview and contractual purposes.

In assessing the Pay Scale criteria the Council will be mindful of the following:

Jobs as defined by Job Descriptions need to be taken into account.

- A framework needs to be established, but it must be reviewed in the light of structural changes in the work of the Council.
- Only objective criteria can be used.
- Sound judgement must be exercised in the process of analysing information and making comparisons against benchmarks established.

Methodology

The evaluation will cover the entire staff:

- The key points to be used in the evaluation will be identified.
- The job and the role will be analysed.
- The relative value of the jobs and roles will be established on a weighted scale.
- Development needs will be identified and programmed.
- Staffing levels will be projected.
- The appropriate reward levels decided.

Framework

The Council will use the Profiles drawn up by the Society of Local Council Clerks and the National Association of Local Councils in the National Agreement on Salaries and Conditions of Service. These profiles will be used as a framework for assessing all posts, including the Town Clerk.

There can be a right of appeal against any decisions which will be undertaken through the Grievance Procedure of the Council.

Training/Development

All staff will have access to training and development opportunities, which will be taken into account when assessing pay scales. This will be assessed on the level of achievement and the relevance of the qualification to the role being undertaken.

Pay Structure

The Council uses the NALC and SLCC recommended salary scales adjusted for a FTE working week of 35 hrs. In exceptional circumstances, for example for retention reasons, employees may be awarded accelerated salary progression at the discretion of the Council. Each member of staff will receive a salary increment annually assuming the successful completion of their appraisal, back dated to 1st April of that year, until the top of their salary scale is reached.

The Law

The policy will be implemented within the framework of the relevant legislation, which includes:

- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995



Item 6E

LONE WORKING POLICY

TOTNES TOWN COUNCIL
SEPTEMBER 2023

Introduction

The council recognises that some of our staff work alone, and where this is the case, seeks to ensure the health and safety of all lone workers. This document:

- Raises awareness of the safety issues relating to lone working,
- Identifies and assesses potential risks to an individual working alone,
- Explains the importance of reasonable and practicable precautions to minimise potential risk,
- Provides appropriate support to lone workers, and,
- Encourages reporting of all incidents associated with lone working so that they can be adequately managed and used to help reduce risks and improve working arrangements for the future.

Scope

It applies to all staff, whether full time, part time or temporary workers. It does not apply to councillors.

Policy

We will protect staff from the risks of lone working, as far as is reasonably practicable. Working alone is not in itself against the law and it is often safe to do so. However, the council's policy is to consider carefully and deal with any health and safety risks for those who work alone.

Definition

'Lone Worker' refers to people who work by themselves without work colleagues either during or outside normal working hours. Examples include:

- A caretaker who opens and closes a hall either early in the morning or late at night
- A groundsman tending to green space
- Office workers who work alone in the premises, and,

- Homeworkers.

Any worker under the age of 18 years, or anyone working in confined spaces is not permitted to work on their own.

Responsibilities

All staff have a responsibility for the health and safety of work colleagues. The key responsibilities are as follows:

Managers

- Will try to avoid the need for lone working as far as is reasonably practicable;
- Ensure that the worker is competent to work alone;
- Ensure that all lone working activities must be formally risk assessed. This should identify the risk to lone workers; any control measures necessary to minimise those risks; and emergency procedures;
- Arrangements for lone working must be made clear to staff and the details of what can or cannot be done while working alone explained;
- Lone workers must be informed of the hazards and understand the necessary control measures that need to be put in place and have the opportunity to contribute to the risk assessment;
- Must raise the alarm if staff cannot be contacted or do not return as anticipated;
- Must ensure that all staff are aware of this lone working policy and procedure and provide appropriate levels of training and guidance on lone working.

Lone workers

- Take reasonable care of themselves and others who may be affected by their work
- To follow any instruction given by management or the council
- Raise with their line manager any concerns they have in relation to lone working
- Not to work alone where there is adequate information to undertake a risk assessment.
- Inform their line manager at the earliest opportunity in the event of an accident, incident of violence or aggression whilst working alone

Staff

- To be aware of colleagues working on their own and alert to unexpected changes of routine, unanticipated periods where there is no communication.
- Buddies should ensure they maintain and share up to date contact details (see below)

Risk Assessments

Managers must complete (or ensure the completion of) a Lone Working Risk Assessment prior to every lone working activity and updated as appropriate. The risk assessment should be reviewed by the lone worker before undertaking the work and communicated to all relevant staff or councillors.

People who work alone will of course face the same risks in their work as those doing similar roles/tasks. However, they may additionally encounter hazards such as:

- Sudden illness
- Faulty equipment
- Travelling alone
- Remote locations
- Abuse from members of the public
- Animal attacks

Ways in which lone working risks can be reduced

Every lone working environment and situation is different, and therefore it is not possible to implement a 'one size fits all' approach. Where there is regular or anticipated lone working, the council will devise and implement a lone working plan that meets the needs and risks of their particular circumstances. The plan should be proportionate to any risks that are identified from the risk assessment. The plan for a groundsman lone working with machinery will be more detailed than an administrator working late in the office. This should be written down and communicated to all relevant staff and where appropriate, councillors.

Below are some example strategies that could be implemented (on their own or combined):

- Signing-in and Out book
- Electronic (or hard copy) diaries to be kept up to date with meeting/visit/lone working details
- Agreed times and method of contact
- Buddy scheme

Buddy scheme

The following information should be written down and kept by the lone worker and their buddy, next of kin and manager (see the Lone Working Buddy Form):-

- Name and contact details of the lone worker
- Name, relationship and contact details of the buddy
- Name, relationship and contact details of the lone worker's next of kin
- Name, relationship and contact details of the lone worker's manager
- Any 'code word' that would indicate that the lone worker needs assistance
- Note: All these details must be kept securely in line with data protection legislation

If you change your contact details, you must let your buddy and manager know. In circumstances where a buddy system is appropriate as a way of reducing the risks identified in the risk assessment, the buddy must have relevant details about your lone working, that may include;

- where you are going (address or area if there is no address);
- details of the purpose (i.e. preparing the hall, grass cutting, meeting);
- contact details of anyone you intend to meet (any additional contact details for the location you are visiting);
- your mode of transport;
- when you are expected to return;

Your buddy must know what to do if you do not return or make contact at the anticipated/agreed time.

Health and wellbeing

In order to ensure your personal safety, it is important that you share any details of any aspects of your health that could lead to increased risk with your manager or specific councillors. This includes pregnancy. You can then jointly plan to mitigate any potential risks caused by your circumstances. This information will be treated on a strict 'need to know' basis with your confidentiality of the utmost importance.

Reporting incidents

Any incidents or perceived risks encountered while lone working should be recorded, reviewed and acted upon. The report should include:

- A brief note of what happened, when, and who was involved,
- For any work-related aggression (verbal or physical) including threatening behaviour, all of the details of the incident and of the perpetrator should be captured, which could then be used if the police take any formal prosecution action. This might be particularly important for more serious incidents of work-related violence, and,
- In either instance, this might also include recording details of any circumstances you think might have contributed to the incident, e.g. the context of the interaction, perceptions about the condition of the perpetrator, or any environmental circumstances. This information would then support us to review our risk assessment process and see if any additional measures are needed.

If you feel unsafe, unwell, or become injured call the emergency services if you need immediate assistance. If possible, call your manager, buddy or councillor or colleague to let them know (or ask someone to do so on your behalf).

Call your manager if your plans change because you feel unwell or if you have a domestic emergency when working alone.

This is a non-contractual procedure which will be reviewed from time to time.

ITEM 9 –CO CARS/CO BIKES UPDATE

E-bike hire scheme

Totnes Town Council worked with Co Cars/Co Bikes to apply to SHDC's Climate Infrastructure Fund to run a pilot e-bike hire scheme in Totnes. This bid was successful and SHDC awarded Co Cars £25,000 towards the scheme. This was to fund 5-10 bikes across town for a year, as a trial to see whether e-bike hire could work in a small town like Totnes. TTC match-funded £2,500 towards the scheme.

Unfortunately Co Cars went into administration in July 2023. The reasons they gave are the following:

- They were severely affected by the suspension of their services for long periods of time during Covid. Post-Covid, changes in travel habits, exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis and drop in demand for business travel, significantly impacted utilisation and revenue.
- High fuel prices and energy costs, contributing to greatly increased internal costs.
- Vandalism of the bikes and supply chain issues (especially for e-bikes) made it impossible for them to keep enough of the fleet on the road to make the business viable.

As the SHDC grant funding and TTC contribution had already been paid to Co Cars, it is very unlikely that 1) the scheme can continue with another provider (at least in the short term) and 2) that we will see any money returned.

We are considering what other options there are to bring e-bikes to town in a financially and logistically viable way.

Section 3 – External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2022/23

In respect of

Totnes Town Council - DV0364

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02) as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/>

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2023; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor's limited assurance opinion 2022/23

On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

None.

3 External auditor certificate 2022/23

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2023.

External Auditor Name

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP

External Auditor Signature

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP

Date

13/08/2023



Arts Working Group Agenda

Wednesday 19th July @ 12:00pm

Committee Members present: Cllrs Allen, Hannam, Piper and Price

Apologies: Cllr Presswell

TTC officers present: Catherine Marlton, Lucy Ferrier, Lisa Baumbach

Councillor Piper was appointed as chair of this working group.

1. Receive an update on Artisan Markets.

Markets are going well with a community of regular stall holders who are all enjoying attending the markets. Number of pitches occupied range from 20 – 26 with a maximum capacity of 28. It hasn't yet been possible to hire out the workshop space and there is still a lack of wood crafts, metal crafts and preserves. The income generated to date is £2145.

2. Discuss Art under Civic Hall.

There was only one remaining applicant for the project, so it was decided to simplify the brief and advertise again.

Action

- Advertise again for an artist to complete a piece of art on the pillars in sympathy with the mosaics by Michelle Greenwood-Brown, displaying the flora and fauna that can be found in the local area.
 - Appoint the artist at the Full Council meeting on 7th September.
3. Receive post event review of the Spring Festival and Seachange Sunday Market – please see attached document.

4. Note the Summer Fair event plan.

Noted

Action

- For future events, consider offering the face painting to local groups who would like to raise funds for their own causes.

5. Note Plans for the 2023 Odd Object competition, organised by Totnes Carnival

Noted

6. Update on plans and budget for Christmas Lights Switch On Event.

Plans so far are for an event very similar to last year with the addition of lantern making for the lantern procession which will happen on the 19th December. The event is currently under budget by approximately £600.

Actions

- Find a way of making the bouncy castle quieter.
- Enlist councillor support to help on the day – particularly lantern making.

7. Note plans for Christmas Markets and Late Night Shopping events.

Noted

8. Note plans for Community Lantern Procession, organised by Totnes Carnival, to take place during the December 19 market.

Noted

- Cllr Price suggested that the councillors get together to make a TTC lantern to join the parade.

9. Review phone box adoption/upgrades.

Actions

- Ensure phone box on Plymouth road is secured with a lock.
- Check the phone box on the high street has been cleaned as promised by BT.
- Enquire about adopting the phone box in the High Street after it has been cleaned.

10. Any Other Business

11. Date of next meeting – Wednesday 18th October @ 12:00