

FINANCIAL PROCEDURE RULES

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Subject to meeting any requirements contained in the Key Decision Rules and the Decision Making Rules, the Council will conduct its financial affairs based upon its Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules, together with these Financial Procedure Rules and the Procurement Procedure Rules. These Financial Procedure rules set out the responsibilities and management arrangements that will be followed to ensure that the Council, Members and its officers exercise due probity and accountability for the public monies for which they have responsibility. These rules and the Procurement Procedure Rules apply to all financial transactions of the Council either for itself or where it is acting as the Accountable Body or Agent.
- 1.2 The Chief Financial Officer shall keep under review these Financial Procedure Rules and the Procurement Procedure Rules and ensure that they are appropriate to the running of the Council. Any proposed changes must be recommended by the Cabinet and subsequently agreed by the Council.

The Financial Procedure rules are set out as follows.

SECTION	TOPIC COVERED
2.	Definitions
3.	Responsibilities
4.	Financial Planning and Budget approval
5.	Authority to Incur Expenditure
6.	Changes to budgets after approval by Council
7.	Financial management of budgets during the year
8.	Final accounts, out-turn and Statement of Accounts
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10.	Write-Offs of Sums due to the Council
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17.	Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (anti-money laundering)
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2. DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of these regulations the following definitions will apply:

TERM	DEFINITION
Head of Department	The term Head of Department refers to the officer to whom responsibility for a department, function or action has been delegated in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation.
Service	Service shall be those services as set out in the Council's published budget book or where subsequent amendments have been approved.
Estimate	Each line of budget included within each service, or each project line included in the Capital Programme, in the Council's published budget book or where subsequent approval has been given.
Forecast	An estimate of the likely budget for the years following the financial year for which an estimate has been approved.
Expenditure	All direct expenditure as detailed in the Council's published budget book or where subsequent approval has been given.
Income	All direct income as detailed in the Council's published budget book or where subsequent approval has been given.
Virement	A virement is the transfer of a sum from one estimate to another and may include an increase in expenditure provided it is financed by additional income not already provided in the approved budgets.
Supplementary Estimate	This is an increase in the budget approved by Council and can be in respect of either capital or revenue. A transfer from reserves would finance the additional expenditure.
Negative Supplementary estimate	A Negative Supplementary Estimate is the reverse of a Supplementary Estimate and has the effect of reducing an otherwise available budget with the specific purpose of reducing the Council's net expenditure. A transfer to reserves would arise as a result of reducing expenditure.
Section 106 agreement	Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by the Planning and Compensation Act 1991)

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1 The Leader, each Portfolio Holder and Head of Department shall consult with the Chief Financial Officer, in advance, in respect of any report/proposal which seeks provisional or final approval to any proposed revenue or capital expenditure or service investment or income which is not included in the Council's approved budgets (without reservation). The Chief Financial Officer will bring all such matters to the immediate attention of Management Team.

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- 3.2 The Chief Financial Officer shall be responsible, under the general direction of the Cabinet and Management Team for the financial administration of the Council's activities.
- 3.3 The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for ensuring that the Finance and Revenues and Benefits Portfolio Holder is informed of and consulted on all significant financial issues.
- 3.4 The Chief Financial Officer shall inform and advise Management Team about the Council's finances and financial performance of its activities, who will in conjunction with the Finance and Revenues and Benefits Portfolio Holder ensure that the Leader, each Portfolio Holder, Committees and Council are advised appropriately.
- 3.5 The Chief Financial Officer shall ensure that adequate and prudent financial planning, including annual budgets and longer-term forecasting, is undertaken by the Council to protect its finances.
- 3.6 Any requirement in these Financial Procedure Rules and the Council's other procedures to obtain approval for or to report to the Council, Committee, Cabinet or Portfolio Holder, on any action shall include the requirement to consult with the Chief Financial Officer where Council finances are concerned.
- 3.7 The Chief Financial Officer has a duty to ensure that the financial implications of decisions made by Heads of Department in respect of services are not to the detriment of the Council as a whole.
- 3.8 The Chief Financial Officer, their Deputy or Chief Executive is authorised to deal with any General Fund Revenue or HRA virement on exceptional grounds of urgency, such as civil emergencies. If this exemption is relied upon, the relevant Officer must provide a report to the responsible decision maker as soon as practicably possible.

4. FINANCIAL PLANNING AND BUDGET APPROVAL

- 4.1 In accordance with the timetable and format determined by the Chief Financial Officer, Heads of Department will prepare:
 - 4.1.1 Detailed revised estimates of income and expenditure of revenue accounts for the current financial year
 - 4.1.2 Detailed revised estimates of expenditure on capital projects for the current financial year
 - 4.1.3 Detailed forecasts of expenditure on capital projects for the forthcoming financial years, the number of which is to be determined by Cabinet.
 - 4.1.4 Detailed forecasts of income and expenditure of revenue budgets for the forthcoming financial years, the number of which to be determined by Cabinet.

- 4.2** The information prepared by the Heads of Department will be collated and checked by the Chief Financial Officer.
- 4.3** Each financial year, and in accordance with the agreed Financial Strategy / Forecast determined in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rule 3, the Chief Financial Officer will submit to Management Team for their consideration:
- 4.3.1** A forecast of net revenue expenditure for the forthcoming year(s);
 - 4.3.2** A forecast of capital expenditure for the forthcoming year(s) together with known and anticipated funding streams. All such schemes must be in accordance with the Council's approved Capital Strategy and will have been subjected to an investment appraisal in accordance with the Prudential Code and will only be included if it can be demonstrated that the investment is prudent and within affordable and sustainable levels;
 - 4.3.3** The forecast position of the Council's Reserves over the period of the forecast;
 - 4.3.4** The Council Tax rate for the forthcoming financial year(s) resulting from the proposals;
 - 4.3.5** Initial draft revised prudential indicators for the current year and the following 3 years based on the draft capital programme.
 - 4.3.6** Any other information required in accordance with the Financial Strategy / Forecast agreed for the year in question.
- 4.4** Management Team will then, in the light of the Chief Financial Officer submission in 4.3 above, and in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rule 3, make recommendations to the Cabinet setting out proposed draft budgets.
- 4.5** The Cabinet will, in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rule 3, draw up firm proposals for consideration by the Council.
- 4.6** In submitting the budget to the Council the Cabinet may attach a reservation to any item and, subject to the approval of the Council, no avoidable expenditure shall be incurred in respect of any such item until the Council has withdrawn the reservation.

5. AUTHORITY TO INCUR EXPENDITURE

In relation to all expenditure both revenue and capital, however funded, and in accordance with delegated powers part 3.19 no. 13 and part 3.75 no. 6 an approved scheme is one where there is:-

- (a) Provision of a service consistent with an historic nature and level that is, and has in prior years, been specifically allocated and defined within the ongoing base Budget;

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- (b) Any change to a service set out in 1 above where the appropriate authority to the change has been obtained in accordance with delegated powers;
- (c) Otherwise, a scheme that has the necessary approval from Council, Cabinet, Portfolio Holder or Officer in accordance with delegated powers.

For any expenditure to be incurred the necessary budget must also be in place. Where the necessary budget is not in place then amendments to the budget agreed by Council can only be made in accordance with section 6 below.

6. CHANGES TO BUDGETS AFTER APPROVAL BY COUNCIL

6.1 Supplementary estimates

- 6.1.1 A supplementary estimate will increase the Council's net expenditure and will, if it relates to revenue expenditure, result in a reduction in the Council's reserves. If it relates to capital expenditure it will either increase the Council's use of capital receipts, increase the amount needed to be borrowed or, as in the case of revenue expenditure, reduce the Council's reserves. Therefore a supplementary estimate is needed in all cases of increased overall net expenditure, whether capital or revenue.
- 6.1.2 A supplementary estimate should not normally be considered unless the matter is essential and unavoidable and all other options for applying a virement have been considered.
- 6.1.3 Once the Council Tax for any financial year is set any subsequent increase in items (a) to (d) for that same year will require a supplementary estimate. This does not have to be approved before a commitment is made, if in the opinion of the Chief Financial Officer, the matter is urgent. The Chief Financial Officer shall report any increase in the Council's overall net expenditure to the Cabinet at the earliest opportunity and recommend to Cabinet whether the increased expenditure should be financed by virement or supplementary estimate. If the supplementary estimate is outside the scope of the Cabinet's authority as set out in 5.4.5 below appropriate recommendations will be made to Council.
 - (a) Salaries, wages and pensions increases arising from nationally negotiated decisions, and variations in contributions under the National Insurance and Superannuation Acts;
 - (b) Price increases in connection with continuing contracts for revenue services where, in the opinion of the Chief Financial Officer, such increases are reasonable;
 - (c) Reductions in the amount of income from government, local or public authority sources;
 - (d) Interest rates or other similar financing factors;

6.1.4 No specific supplementary estimate approval is required at any time for the following:

- (a) Expenditure which is being funded entirely by income received under section 106 agreements and held in the section 106 receipts in advance holding account where that expenditure is in accordance with the terms of the section 106 agreement. In these circumstances the Chief Financial Officer must agree the expenditure, and the financing.
- (b) Debt written off for which specific provision was made in the Council's bad debt provision at the end of the previous financial year.
- (c) Expenditure on a specific activity that has previously been approved in accordance with the Council's constitution and for which the funding of that expenditure in future years has been placed in a dedicated earmarked reserve, and the expenditure is to be financed by the use of that reserve. In these circumstances the Chief Financial Officer must agree the expenditure, and the financing.
- (d) For expenditure where the Council receives full funding from an external source for a specified project and there are no additional revenue costs to the Council in either the current financial year or future financial years.

6.1.5 A supplementary estimate can be approved as follows:

- (a) **Finance and Revenues and Benefits Portfolio Holder** may approve a supplementary estimate of any single item (revenue or capital) up to £50,000 subject to a maximum aggregate value of £150,000 for such single items in any one financial year and providing any single supplementary estimate does not cause the total of supplementary estimates approved by the Finance and Revenues and Benefits Portfolio Holder and Cabinet to exceed £1,000,000 for General Fund Services (capital or revenue) (or £1,000,000 in respect of the Housing Revenue Account (capital or revenue) for the financial year concerned.
- (b) **Cabinet** may approve a supplementary estimate of any single item (revenue or capital) up to £500,000 subject to that supplementary estimate not causing the total of supplementary estimates approved by the Cabinet and Finance and Revenues and Benefits Portfolio Holder to exceed £1,000,000 for General Fund Services (capital or revenue) (or £1,000,000 in respect of the Housing Revenue Account (capital or revenue)-for the financial year concerned.
- (c) **Council** may approve a supplementary estimate up to any amount for General Fund or Housing Revenue Account. However Council must be advised if any decision is likely to result in the Council's agreed minimum working balance not being maintained for the current financial year and the length of the Council's approved financial strategy. In the case of the Housing Revenue Account, Council must be advised if any decision is

likely to result in the Revenue Account balance being in deficit over the same period.

- 6.1.6** Where a Head of Department wishes to apply for a supplementary estimate a report shall be made, following consultation with the Chief Financial Officer, to Management Team. Management Team will then make a recommendation where appropriate to the Finance and Revenues and Benefits Portfolio Holder or Cabinet. Cabinet must recommend any request for a supplementary estimate that requires the approval of Council to Council.

6.2 Negative Supplementary Estimates

A negative supplementary estimate (having the effect of reducing an otherwise available budget) with the specific purpose of reducing the Council's net expenditure may be approved based on the same limits set out in 6.1.5 above.

6.3 Virements

- 6.3.1** A virement, unlike a supplementary estimate, will not increase the Council's overall net expenditure. However to ensure that the budget, functions and service levels approved by council are not compromised virements can only be undertaken under the following conditions.

- 6.3.2** Virement rules do not need to be followed in the following circumstances but a scheme will still need to be approved including agreement of what is to be delivered:-

- (a) Where expenditure is being funded entirely by income received under section 106 agreements and that income has been received and accounted for in the current financial year and where that expenditure is in accordance with the terms of the section 106 agreement. In these circumstances the Chief Financial Officer must agree the expenditure, and the financing.
- (b) For expenditure where the Council receives full funding from an external source for a specified project and there are no additional revenue costs to the Council in either the current financial year or future financial years. In these circumstances the Chief Financial Officer must agree the expenditure and the financing.

If there are additional costs to the Council then that expenditure must be financed in accordance with these Financial Procedure Rules

- (c) Subject to the agreement of the Chief Financial Officer:
 - (i) Where a decision requires an amendment to the budgetary analysis within the Council's financial information system in order that the

Council's accounts can properly reflect the financial transactions of that decision.

- (ii) Where the budgetary analysis within the Council's financial information system needs to be amended in order to comply with required accounting standards or to properly reflect the costs of an activity or function.

6.3.3 Virement rules are required to be followed in the following circumstances:

- (a) The transfer of a sum from one estimate to another, which can be within or between services
- (b) Where an expenditure estimate is to be increased and offset by a known increase in an income estimate including fees and charges.
- (c) Where reduced income is to be offset by a sustainable reduction in expenditure.

6.3.4 The conditions for a virement are:

All virements must be made within the terms and limits prescribed in these Financial Procedure Rules (see 6.3.5):

- (a) Subject to (b) to (h) below a Head of Department can apply a virement provided that the department is able to ensure that:
 - (i) Overall, the minimum agreed level of service would still be provided
 - (ii) The net service cost will be contained within the overall approved budget and the Council's overall costs will not be increased
 - (iii) There are no additional budgetary implications in future years
 - (iv) The service being provided is within the Council's approved policy
- (b) All virements between **revenue and capital budgets** must be as set out
- (c) A virement cannot be made where the proposed expenditure or reduction in income relates to an item which has **previously been considered** and been rejected by the Council, the Cabinet or responsible portfolio holder.
- (d) Where a virement is proposed and the expenditure is in respect of an item not provided for within an approved budgeted service level, but can be met by fortuitous savings (such as from a tendering process or against growth items identified in the Financial Strategy / Forecast), such expenditure if in excess of £15,000, shall be referred to Cabinet for

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approval. This excludes savings from minor restructuring. In respect of savings against Financial Strategy \ Forecast Growth Items, the limit will apply to the aggregated value of all requested virements from such budgets.

- (e) Cabinet must approve all virements, which are likely to result in a further and/or additional burden on future years' Council tax and revenues.
 - (f) Where significant virements are necessary, it is NOT acceptable to disaggregate the total sum into a number of smaller virements so that these smaller sums fall within the rules/limits of these Financial Procedure Rules. The limits will apply to the aggregated value of the transfer to or from any one estimate.
- (a) **From employee costs to temporary agency staff estimates**

Virement Value	Approval Required
Not more than £15,000 for the engagement of temporary agency staff in respect of a post on the approved establishment for which there is a budget for the year in question and Management Team has approved the filling of that post.	Chief Financial Officer
Over £15,000 but not more than £30,000 for the engagement of temporary agency staff in respect of a post on the approved establishment for which there is a budget for the year in question and Management Team has approved the filling of that post.	The Chief Financial Officer with the approval of the Management Team and Finance and Revenues and Benefits Portfolio Holder.
Over £30,000 for the engagement of temporary agency staff in respect of a post on the approved establishment for which there is a budget for the year in question and Management Team has approved the filling of that post.	The Chief Financial Officer with the approval of the Management Team, Finance and Revenues and Benefits Portfolio Holder and Cabinet.

(b) **Transfers within an approved estimate**

Virement Value	Approval Required
No limit	The Head of Department providing the expenditure does not impose an ongoing commitment on the Council, which has not already been approved and budgeted for.

(c) **General Fund Revenue and HRA (excluding Employees)**

Virement Value	Approval Required
Not more than £15,000	The Head of Department.
Over £15,000 but not more than £30,000	The Head of Department, with the approval of the Management Team together with the Portfolio Holder(s) and/or Committee(s)
Over £30,000 but not more than £50,000	The Head of Department, with the approval of the Management Team, the responsible Portfolio Holder(s) and/or Committee(s) and the Finance and Revenues and Benefits Portfolio Holder
Over £50,000	The Head of Department, with the approval of the Management Team, the responsible Portfolio Holder(s) and/or Committee(s) and Cabinet

(d) **General Fund Capital schemes**

Virement Value	Approval Required
Not more than £15,000	The Head of Department.
Over £15,000 but not more than £50,000	The Head of Department, with the approval of the Management Team, the responsible Portfolio Holder(s) and/or Committee(s) and the Finance and Revenues and Benefits Portfolio Holder.
Over £50,000	The Head of Department, with the approval of the Management Team, the responsible Portfolio Holder(s) and/or Committee(s) and Cabinet.

(e) **Housing Revenue Account Capital Schemes**

Virement Value	Approval Required
Not more than £100,000	Corporate Director (Operational Services), provided that the total Capital Scheme allocation as approved is not exceeded and provided the Chief Financial Officer advises that no increase to Housing Revenue Account costs results.

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Over £100,000	Housing Portfolio Holder provided the total HIP allocation as approved is not exceeded and provided the Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits Services advises that no increase to Housing Revenue Account and General Fund revenue costs results.
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(f) **Between Capital and Revenue**

Virement Value	Approval
(i). Increase in an approved Capital budget, which is to be financed by a virement from an existing revenue budget.	<p>a) When the increase in the cost of the project is a supplementary estimate and must be agreed in accordance with these Financial Procedure Rules.</p> <p>b) When the financing from an existing revenue budget is a virement between the revenue financing of capital expenditure budget and the revenue budget which is being reduced and normal virement rules as set out in these Financial Procedure Rules are to apply. In these circumstances the Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits Services must agree the expenditure and the financing.</p>

Virement Value	Approval
(ii). Increase in an approved capital budget which is to be financed by an increase in borrowing or use of capital receipts	This is a supplementary estimate, which must be agreed in accordance with these Financial Procedure Rules
(iii). Increase in an approved revenue budget, which is to be financed by a reduction in an approved capital budget which results in a reduction in the revenue financing of capital expenditure sufficient to meet the entire increase in the revenue budget.	This is a virement between the revenue financing of capital expenditure budget and the revenue budget, which is being increased, and normal virement rules as set out in these Financial Procedure Rules are to apply. In these circumstances the Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits Services must agree the expenditure and the financing.
If none of the above circumstances set out in (i), (ii) and (iii) above apply.	A supplementary estimate or virement must be obtained in accordance with these Financial Procedure Rules.

Irrespective of the above in all cases where there is a increase to the General Fund revenue costs	A supplementary estimate or virement must be obtained in accordance with these Financial Procedure Rules.
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- 6.4 The Chief Financial Officer shall ensure that all virements comply with these Financial Procedure Rules and will amend the Council's financial information systems as appropriate.
- 6.5 The Chief Financial Officer will maintain an up-to-date record of all virements and supplementary estimates that have been actioned to date and make this available to the Finance and Revenues and Benefits Portfolio Holder on request.

7. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT OF BUDGETS DURING THE YEAR

- 7.1 Once the Council has approved the budget, officers to whom authority has been delegated, may incur expenditure within the amount provided under each head of estimate as varied by any supplementary estimate or virement approved under these Financial Procedure Rules provided that:
- (a) The matter is not one to which the Cabinet has attached a reservation
 - (b) Where appropriate any necessary external consent has been obtained.
 - (c) Procurement Procedure Rules have been complied with
- 7.2 Responsibility for the control of capital and revenue expenditure (including the award of grants) and income for a service or function shall rest with the appropriate Head of Department. Each Head of Department shall notify the Chief Financial Officer of any actual or prospective overspending of expenditure or shortfall in income in excess of the budget which cannot be met by virement as set out in these Financial Procedure Rules.
- 7.3 The Chief Financial Officer has a duty under Section 28 of the Local Government Act 2003 to monitor budgets and the underlying assumptions formulating the budget throughout the year. Where an approved expenditure budget is likely to be overspent or there is likely to be a shortfall in an income budget the Chief Financial Officer shall ensure that corrective action is taken. In exercising this duty the Chief Financial Officer may, irrespective of section 6.2, above examine all budgets and seek explanations from Heads of Department as necessary. The Head of Department shall provide the Chief Financial Officer with any information and explanation requested
- 7.4 The Chief Financial Officer shall provide Heads of Department with adequate and timely accounting information and reports, in appropriate detail, to enable those Heads of Department to carry out budgetary control of their budgets.

- 7.5 The Chief Financial Officer shall determine the level and detail at which budgets and financial management reports are maintained for use by officers and for reporting to Members.
- 7.6 The Chief Financial Officer shall in conjunction with the Management Team ensure that Portfolio Holders, Cabinet and the Council are fully informed of the Council's financial position.

8. FINAL ACCOUNTS, OUT-TURN REPORT AND STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

- 8.1 An Outturn Report for the previous financial year will be prepared by the Chief Financial Officer, in respect of revenue and capital items (including Housing), in accordance with the timetable necessary to produce the Statement of Accounts by the statutory deadline. The outturn report will seek Cabinet approval for
 - 8.1.1 Any transfers to and from reserves.
 - 8.1.2 The funding treatment of capital expenditure and the treatment of capital receipts.
 - 8.1.3 The carrying forward of capital slippage and revenue commitment sums (and the consequential amendments to budgets) in respect of any unspent monies in one year to a later year or to reserves.
 - 8.1.4 The carrying forward of overspent sums in respect of Capital projects and revenue budgets that will be financed by a reduction in the following years budget (and the consequential amendments to budgets) in respect of any overspent monies in one year to a later year or to be financed from reserves.
- 8.2 The Chief Financial Officer will prepare the Council's Statement of Accounts in accordance with statutory requirements and will incorporate all decisions approved by the Cabinet in 7.1 above.
- 8.3 All Heads of Department shall supply the Chief Financial Officer with accurate and timely information as may be required for the compilation of the final and other accounts and matters incidental thereto to enable the above requirements to be achieved. That information shall be supplied in a format specified by the Chief Financial Officer.

9. FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

9.1 Internal Audit

- 9.1.1 The designated Head of Internal Audit is the Council's officer for the purposes of compliance with statutory Section 151 responsibilities in respect of Internal Audit along with any other relevant regulations or standards.

- 9.1.2 The designated Head of Internal Audit shall ensure that independent internal audit staff examine and audit the expenditure, income and property and other assets of the Council and its officers. To enable the designated Head of Internal Audit to achieve this, Internal Audit shall have the right of entry to all establishments and the right to examine all records, cash, stores and other properties belonging to or appertaining to the finances of the Council and to carry out such checks and require and receive such explanations as considered necessary.
- 9.1.3 Following completion of each audit a written report shall be submitted to the Head of Department, who must determine and notify the designated Head of Internal Audit of the action they propose to take.
- 9.1.4 In planning the conduct of these audits the designated Head of Internal Audit shall arrange, as far as possible, for the views of the Head of Department to be taken into account.
- 9.1.5 Heads of Department **must** report **any financial irregularity or suspected irregularity**, including those affecting cash, stores or property to the designated Head of Internal Audit **immediately the irregularity or suspected irregularity becomes known**.

9.2 Accounting Arrangements

- 9.2.1 The Chief Financial Officer shall determine, provide, and manage the Council's Financial Information System.
- 9.2.2 All financial returns to Government, the Council's Statement of Accounts and all budget monitoring reports will be prepared from the information in the Council's Financial Information System or such other system that the Chief Financial Officer has agreed can be used to provide the information.
- 9.2.3 Each Head of Department is required to obtain the approval of the Chief Financial Officer for all accounting procedures and records that are proposed. This shall include any computer-based systems that store, utilise or process any financial information and must be capable of interfacing and/or integrating with the Council's Financial Information System.
- 9.2.4 All Heads of Department shall ensure that their approved accounting procedures and records are reconciled to the Council's Financial Information System and that adequate records are maintained to demonstrate this.
- 9.2.5 In this respect each Head of Department shall provide the Chief Financial Officer with details of all authorised officers within their department, setting out matters that those officers are authorised to deal with and, where appropriate, the financial limits and shall notify the Chief Financial Officer of those officers' appointment or departure.

- 9.2.6 Any officer having in their charge money, equipment, stores or other property for which they are accountable to the Council shall take all reasonable precautions for its safe custody and proper use.

9.3 Responsibilities for Computer System Legislation

- 9.3.1 All Heads of Department whose services utilise computer installations and software shall be responsible for the security and privacy of all data held in those installations, and for ensuring compliance with all relevant legislation in respect of the licensing and use of that software. This includes taking all necessary action to safeguard against computer viruses or other form of data corruption.
- 9.3.2 Heads of Department shall also ensure that all necessary registrations are made under the Data Protection Act and that those registrations are regularly monitored and updated where necessary. Staff shall also be reminded of their individual responsibilities under this Act and the Freedom of Information Act.
- 9.3.3 Similarly, each Head of Department shall ensure that all other relevant computer system legislation is complied with, in particular copyright and patents acts concerning the use of software, scanners and other electronic storage means, for which the appropriate (licence) fee has not been paid, and the Computer Misuse Act.

9.4 Orders for Work, Goods and Services

- 9.4.1 All official orders and associated documents shall bear the name and logo of Tendring District Council and shall be in an agreed standard format and produced by the approved ordering system. They shall be issued only by Heads of Department and their authorised staff and be in accordance with these Financial Procedure Rules and the Procurement Procedure Rules.

9.5 Certification and Payment of Invoices

- 9.5.1 Invoices for payment by the Council shall not be made out by any officer of the Council, other than in circumstances agreed in advance with the Chief Financial Officer, nor shall an officer add any item to an invoice rendered by a supplier.
- 9.5.2 The reasons for any amendment to an invoice shall be recorded and retained in a safe and secure manner in accordance with the directions issued by the Chief Financial Officer.
- 9.5.3 Any Head of Department who issues an order shall be responsible for ensuring the examination, verification and certification of the relative invoice(s), except in circumstances as determined by the Chief Financial Officer, and for correctly and promptly recording on the Council's approved ordering system the receipt of goods, works, or services.

- 9.5.4** Before certifying an invoice the certifying officer must be satisfied, within the tolerances specified by the Chief Financial Officer, that:
- (a) The invoice conforms with the official order
 - (b) That the goods have been received, examined and approved for quality and quantity and that any services have been rendered or any work done satisfactorily and receipted on the approved order system.
 - (c) That the prices charged are correct
 - (d) That the expenditure is, to the best of the certifying officer's belief, lawful and has been duly authorised
 - (e) That no invoice for the same goods, service or work has previously been passed for payment
 - (f) The invoice is arithmetically correct
 - (g) That the expenditure has been properly analysed to the appropriate accounting code(s)
 - (h) That the allocation of VAT has been correctly made
 - (i) That the expenditure can be financed from within the appropriate approved estimate

Where a grant has been approved, the above should be followed by the certifying officer where appropriate.

- 9.5.5** It is the responsibility of a Head of Department receiving goods or materials to ensure that appropriate entries are made in inventories, stores or other records.
- 9.5.6** Wherever practicable the respective duties of ordering, receiving and certifying the relevant invoices for payment of goods, services or work shall not be performed by one and the same officer, and in no case shall an invoice be finally certified for payment by an officer assuming personal control over the goods, works or services to which the invoice relates.
- 9.5.7** The Chief Financial Officer shall examine, so far as he/she considers necessary, invoices passed for payment and shall make all such enquiries and receive all such information and explanations, as shall be required.
- 9.5.8** All Heads of Department shall ensure that the Council's prompt payment of invoice are met.

9.6 Income

- 9.6.1** All arrangements for the collection of monies due to the Council and the issuing of debtor invoices shall be as directed by the Chief Financial Officer.
- 9.6.2** All monies received shall, without delay, either be paid in as instructed by the Chief Financial Officer be banked in the Council's name to the bank accounts designated by the Chief Financial Officer.
- 9.6.3** Heads of Department must ensure that where an invoice is to be issued for sums due to the Council, that the invoice is issued immediately the sum due is known. Where a large sum is likely to be due, interim invoices are to be issued.
- 9.6.4** Where an invoice is to be issued the Head of Department issuing the invoice must ensure that the invoice is correct and the sum demanded is properly due to the Council and meets all legal obligations especially those required to enforce non-payment if such circumstances arise.
- 9.6.5** Each officer who banks money to the credit of the Council's bank account shall enter on the paying-in slip, and on the duplicate thereof, particulars of the payment. In the case of each cheque paid in he/she shall record:-
- (a) The amount of the cheque
 - (b) A reference which shall connect the cheque with the debt or debts in respect of which it was received
- 9.6.6** Where monies are due to the Council under contracts, leases, tenancy agreements, agreements for the sale of property and any other agreements entered into which involve the receipt of money by the Council, the Head of Department shall provide the Chief Financial Officer with all relevant particulars, as soon as possible.
- 9.6.7** Each Head of Department who, under arrangements approved by the Chief Financial Officer, is responsible for the collection or recovery of sums due to the Council shall take prompt action to expedite collection. This action shall comply with the Council's debt recovery procedures as determined and directed by the Chief Financial Officer.
- 9.6.8** Official receipt forms, receipt books, tickets and other documents of a similar nature used to collect revenue due to the Council shall be in a format approved by the Chief Financial Officer.
- 9.6.9** Heads of Department stocking such stationery shall ensure that appropriate security is maintained at all times.
- 9.6.10** Each officer authorised to receive monies on behalf of the Council shall do so only on official receipt forms, tickets or other documents of a similar nature as approved by the Chief Financial Officer, except in respect of payments by

cheque or drafts where no receipt is requested, or for payments received by the Head of Governance and Legal Services for which he/she is satisfied it is appropriate to give a receipt otherwise than in the official form.

9.6.11 Money received shall not be used to cash personal or any other cheques whatsoever except where, due to exceptional circumstances, the Chief Financial Officer has given prior approval.

9.6.12 Where payment is made to the Council by debit or credit card the Head of Department accepting payment must ensure that all sums due to the Council by the Credit Card or Debit Card Company is received in full by the Council and reconciled.

9.7 Remuneration, Gratuities and Allowances

9.7.1 Heads of Department shall provide the Chief Financial Officer with all appropriate details to enable the payment of all salaries, wages, compensation, gratuities and other emoluments in respect of employees or former employees.

(a) The Head of People, Performance & Projects must notify the Chief Financial Officer immediately of all appointments, dismissals, resignations, suspensions, transfers and changes in the rate of remuneration of employees (other than normal increments).

(b) Heads of Department shall notify the Chief Financial Officer of all overtime or additional hours worked for which payment is to be made and all absences through sickness or other absences affecting the payment due to employees.

(c) Claims for travelling and Subsistence allowances shall be assessed monthly by Heads of Department who, within four working days of the end of each month shall notify the Chief Financial Officer of amounts due to be paid.

(d) Each Head of Department shall notify the Chief Financial Officer of the names and specimen signatures of those officers who are authorised to certify salaries, wages and allowances documents.

9.7.2 The Chief Financial Officer shall examine, so far as he/she considers necessary, all claims for payment of salaries, wages or allowances and subject to that examination, shall make all such payments which are certified by the appropriate Head of Department or other officer authorised by them in writing or in an electronic format approved by the Chief Financial Officer.

9.8 Petty Cash and Other Imprest Accounts

9.8.1 The Chief Financial Officer shall make imprest advances to Heads of Department, where appropriate, for the purpose of defraying petty expenses.

The use of any alternative means of meeting expenses shall be agreed, in advance, with the Chief Financial Officer.

- 9.8.2** The amount of each advance and the system of operation shall be determined in consultation between the Head of Department and the Chief Financial Officer.
- 9.8.3** Whenever an Officer leaves the employment of the Council or ceases to be entitled to hold an imprest advance he/she shall account to the Chief Financial Officer for the unexpended balance of their advance.
- 9.8.4** All procurements made using a petty cash imprest shall be in accordance with the Procurement Procedure Rules. All procurements must be evidenced by the production, and retention with the petty cash imprest records, of a valid receipt. Where VAT is to be accounted for a valid VAT receipt shall be obtained.

10. WRITE-OFFS OF SUMS DUE TO THE COUNCIL

- 10.1** The Council has a duty to collect all sums due to it. However there are occasions when it is not possible or cost effective to proceed with recovery of the debt. In these cases the debt needs to be written off and the following conditions, delegations, and limits apply. The Head of Department must be reasonably satisfied that recovery action / options have been 'exhausted' before proceeding to seek a write off of any debt.
- 10.2** Where a debt has been raised in error or is incorrectly calculated then the debt should be either reduced or cancelled by the issue of a credit note or similar reversal of the original charge. Such reversal must be authorised by a responsible officer other than the one who raised the original debt.
- 10.3** All write-offs of debt must be set against the budget to which the original income was credited or an appropriate provision if one has been made.
- 10.4** If the write-off will result in that income budget not being achieved the Head of Department must advise the Chief Financial Officer immediately.
- 10.5** That part of any debt written off, for which provision has been made in the Council's bad debt provision at the end of the previous financial year can be written off without further action as set out in 5.4.4 (b) of these financial procedure rules
- 10.6** If the Chief Financial Officer advises that the whole or part of the debt was not included in the Council's bad debt provision at the end of the previous financial year then the Head of Department must apply a virement or seek a supplementary estimate in accordance with section 5 of these Financial Procedure Rules to finance that part of the debt not provided for within that provision.

10.7 The authority to write off debts is delegated by the Council as follows:

Item For Potential Write Off	Authority To Write Off Delegated To
<p>Debt due to the Council where the amount owing is a Council Tax, or NNDR, <u>Housing Benefit or Rent</u> debt which is either:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A ceased account and the debt is equal to the amount charged as summons costs making the debt uneconomical to collect, or 2. Not a ceased account but the amount owing is less than the cost of second class postage 3. The debt due to the Council is Housing Benefit and the amount owing is less than £10 <p><i>In respect of 1. and 3. above, there should be no other 'live' Council Tax or NNDR account in the name of the specific debtor.</i></p>	<p><u>Relevant</u> Corporate Director (Operational Services)</p>

Item For Potential Write Off	Authority To Write Off Delegated To
<p>Specific <u>Debtors</u> where :-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) There is a personal bankruptcy, company insolvency, Individual/ Company Voluntary Arrangement or a Debt Relief Order. (b) The <u>Recovery Enforcement Agent</u> Bailiff has been unable to obtain payment and has returned the debt as "nulla bona" <u>and insufficient assets to satisfy the debt.</u> (c) The company has been struck off by Companies House. (d) The death of a debtor who dies insolvent and the claim against the estate has been made. (e) Death of a debtor who has died with 	<p>The Chief Financial Officer on receipt of a written report from the appropriate Head(s) of Department.</p> <p>Where joint / several liability applies to any of the criteria listed, the criteria applied must be applicable to all parties.</p>

<p>no executor with whom to register a claim.</p> <p>(f) Council Tax Debts – Removal outside the jurisdiction of the Magistrates Courts of the debtor.</p> <p>(g) All other debts – Removal outside the UK of the debtor.</p> <p>(h) The remission of debts by the Magistrates or other court.</p> <p>(i) The committal to prison of the debtor in respect of the non-payment of the debt or associated debt.</p> <p>(j) The abscondment of a debtor where a tracing or other appropriate agency has failed to make a trace.</p>	
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<p>ANY OTHER DEBTS</p>	
<p>Individual debts not exceeding £2,000 <u>£5,000</u></p>	<p>The Chief Financial Officer on receipt of a written report from the appropriate Head(s) of Department which should where reasonably practical identify if the specific debtor is still receiving goods or services from the Council.</p>
<p>Individual debts exceeding £2,000 <u>£5,000</u> but below £25,000</p>	<p>The Finance and Revenues and Benefits Portfolio Holder on receipt of a written joint report from the appropriate Head(s) of Department, the Chief Financial Officer and the Head of Governance and Legal Services which should include a recommendation as to how the write-off will be financed and should where reasonably practical identify if the specific debtor is still receiving goods or services from the Council.</p>
<p>Individual Debts of £25,000 and above</p>	<p>The Cabinet on receipt of a written joint report from the appropriate Head(s) of Department, the Chief Financial Officer and the Head of Governance and Legal Services which should include a recommendation as to how the write-off will</p>

	be financed and should where reasonably practical identify if the specific debtor is still receiving goods or services from the Council.
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11. INSURANCE

- 11.1 The Chief Financial Officer shall be responsible for the provision of the Council's insurances. This shall include authority to accept annual renewal terms from the appointed insurer subject to such terms being within the terms of the original contract and the approved budget available. Heads of Department shall be responsible for providing the Chief Financial Officer with all necessary information to do this in the most effective manner.
- 11.2 Each Head of Department shall give prompt notification to the Chief Financial Officer of all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured, and of any alterations affecting existing insurances, indicating the amount or variation in cover required.
- 11.3 Each Head of Department shall also notify the Chief Financial Officer of any other risk which in their opinion should be included within the Council's insurance cover arrangements.
- 11.4 Heads of Department shall, as soon as they become aware of such circumstances, notify the Chief Financial Officer in writing of any claim or likely claim. Heads of Department shall not admit any liability or take any action that may commit the Council or its insurers in respect of any potential or actual claim.
- 11.5 Each Head of Department shall consult the Head of Governance and Legal Services regarding the terms of any indemnity which the Council has been requested to give before authority is sought for the giving of the indemnity.
- 11.6 Each Head of Department shall consult the Chief Financial Officer in any case where, in their opinion, the nature or situation of any equipment, stores or other property for which they are accountable to the Council requires the provision of special security arrangements.
- 11.7 The Chief Financial Officer shall, periodically, provide Heads of Department with full details of the risks insured by the Council so that they may check and review the items for which they are responsible.

12. INVENTORIES STOCKS AND STORES

- 12.1 Inventories shall be properly maintained by Heads of Department to record appropriate items in the possession of the Council regardless of whether an item has been leased, rented, borrowed or purchased.

- 12.1.1** All assets of the Council shall be recorded in inventories or registers maintained by Heads of Department in a form approved by the Chief Financial Officer and in accordance with procedures agreed with him/her.
- 12.1.2** Separate registers will be maintained by the Director of Corporate Services for:

 - (a) Land and Buildings
 - (b) IT equipment
- 12.1.3** The level or value of items to be listed shall be determined by each Head of Department in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer.
- 12.1.4** Heads of Department are responsible for the checking and certifying of inventories within their control at least once a year to ensure the security of all property under the Council's control.
- 12.1.5** The Council's property, equipment and other facilities shall not be removed other than in the ordinary course of the Council's business nor shall they be used for any other purpose. Heads of Department should ensure that where equipment is removed from Council premises to be used for work purposes elsewhere, including officers' homes, that an appropriate record is maintained of such movements and that adequate insurance cover exists (including whilst in transit).
- 12.1.6** Heads of Department shall ensure that a record is maintained, in a format approved by the Chief Financial Officer, of all items written off. This record shall detail date, description, reason and include appropriate authorisation.
- 12.2** Where appropriate a Head of Department shall notify the Chief Financial Officer of any acquisition, disposal or change of an item, which is included in the Authority's balance sheet or where changes in the Council's insurance cover may be necessary.
- 12.3 Stocks And Stores**

 - 12.3.1** All records of stocks and stores shall be in a form approved by the Chief Financial Officer.
 - 12.3.2** Procedures for the receipt and issue of stocks and stores shall be approved by the Chief Financial Officer.
 - 12.3.3** Each Head of Department shall be responsible for the custody and physical control of all stocks and stores under their control.
 - 12.3.4** Each Head of Department shall arrange for continuous stock checking of stocks in hand and shall ensure that all items of stocks are checked at least once in every financial year.

- 12.3.5** Each Head of Department shall furnish the Chief Financial Officer with a certificate showing the value of stock and stores in hand under their control as at 31 March in each year in accordance with the timetable necessary to produce the Statement of Accounts by the statutory deadline.
- 12.3.6** The relevant Corporate Director is authorised to approve the write off of an inventory item and adjusting stocks and stores accounts up to £250 in respect of any one item or £1,250 per annum in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer.

12.4 Disposal of Stocks and Stores and Items owned or managed by the Council

- 12.4.1** Where a Head of Department identifies items of equipment on an inventory or stocks or stores no longer required and they are satisfied that the items/stores are of no use to other Heads of Department then they shall arrange for disposal which can include being offered for sale to staff / Council Members where the sale is based on the highest price offered.

Only then:

If the total estimated value of the items is in excess of £1,000 then disposal shall be by means of public auction or open tender

- 12.4.2** Whatever method of disposal is applied, where the value of the items to be disposed of needs to be written from the accounts, the cost shall be allocated to a separately identifiable write-off code provided by the Chief Financial Officer.
- 12.4.3** Income from any disposal shall similarly be identifiable using a code provided by the Chief Financial Officer

- 12.5** Where there is a net cost of disposal the Head of Department must finance the cost by virement or supplementary estimate in accordance with these Financial Procedure Rules.

13. BANKING ARRANGEMENTS

- 13.1** Only the Chief Financial Officer shall be authorised to open bank accounts for monies under the control of the Council and these shall be in the name of the Council. Day to day operation of bank accounts shall be determined by the Chief Financial Officer.
- 13.2** The conduct of the Council's business with their bankers shall be made by, or under arrangements approved by, the Chief Financial Officer.

- 13.2.1 A bank account or accounts shall be maintained by the Council into which all monies received by the Council shall be paid. Withdrawals from these accounts and transfers from one account to another shall be made only on the authority of the Chief Financial Officer or other officer authorised by him/her in writing.
- 13.2.2 Payments made on the Council's behalf shall be made using BACS transfers wherever possible or otherwise by crossed cheques. The Chief Financial Officer, or other officer authorised by him/her in writing, may make alternative arrangements where they consider it necessary or appropriate, in the interest of the Council.
- 13.2.3 ~~Cheques drawn on banking accounts of the Council shall bear the pre-printed signature of the Chief Financial Officer.~~
- 13.2.4 Manual signatures of the Chief Financial Officer, or other officers authorised by him/her in writing, shall be required in accordance with arrangements determined by the Chief Financial Officer

14. INVESTMENTS, LOANS AND BORROWING

- 14.1 The Council has adopted the CIPFA Treasury Management in Public Services Code of Practice (The Code) 2009.
 - 14.1.1 All securities in the name of the Council and the title deeds of all property in the ownership of the Council shall be held in the custody of the Property Service
 - 14.1.2 This Council will create and maintain, as the cornerstones for effective treasury management:-
 - (a) A treasury management policy statement, stating the policies, objectives and approach to risk management of its treasury management activities.
 - (b) Treasury Management Practices (TMPs), setting out the manner in which the Council will seek to achieve those policies and objectives, and prescribing how it will manage and control those activities.
 - 14.1.3 The contents of the policy statement and TMPs will follow the recommendations contained in the Code, subject only to amendment where necessary to reflect the particular circumstances of this Council. Such amendments will not result in the Council materially deviating from the Code's key principles.
- 14.2 The Council will receive reports on its treasury management policies, practices and activities as follows:-

- 14.2.1** Each year in accordance with statutory requirements and before the start of the forthcoming year Full Council will, following a recommendation by Cabinet and consideration by Corporate Management Scrutiny Committee, approve an Annual Treasury Strategy for the forthcoming year. The Annual Treasury Strategy will include an investment strategy and a borrowing strategy. The investment strategy will include a schedule of those instruments the Council will consider using for investments in the forthcoming financial year. The borrowing strategy will include a statement of the anticipated borrowing requirement for the following financial year. The Annual Treasury Strategy will also include the prudential and treasury indicators for the forthcoming year and at least the subsequent 2 years.
- 14.2.2** The Annual Treasury Strategy will be reviewed as necessary throughout the year. As a minimum the Chief Financial Officer will review the strategy as at the end of September and report the findings of that review to Cabinet, which may at its discretion, forward the report to Council.
- 14.2.3** The Chief Financial Officer will report to Cabinet at the earliest opportunity after 31 March in any year on the Council's Treasury Management performance and activities in the preceding financial year.
- 14.2.4** The Chief Financial Officer will report during the course of the financial year on the Council's Treasury Management performance and activities. Such reports to be considered by Cabinet and the Corporate Management Scrutiny Committee.
- 14.3** The Chief Financial Officer shall, in accordance with the Council's TMPs and the Council's approved Annual Treasury Strategy, be authorised to
- (a) Borrow sums of money.
 - (b) Reschedule or restructure the existing debt portfolio.
 - (c) Invest surplus funds.
 - (d) Determine those counterparties and countries that meet the Council's credit rating criteria.
 - (e) Determine the money brokers the Council will use for temporary borrowing and investment and long term borrowing.
 - (f) Amend as necessary and in accordance with the Council's Treasury Management Practices those schedules set out therein.
 - (g) Take urgent action to safeguard the Council's investments, including where necessary temporarily breaching the conditions set out in the TMP's. The Finance and Revenues and Benefits Portfolio Holder is to be advised of the action taken as soon as practicable.
- 14.4** The execution and administration of treasury management decisions is the responsibility of the Chief Financial Officer, who will act in accordance with the Council's policy statement and TMPs and, if he/she is a CIPFA member, CIPFA's Standard of Professional Practice on Treasury Management.
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15. LAND AND PROPERTY TRANSACTIONS

- 15.1 All land and property transactions must be undertaken in accordance with the Council's **Property Dealing Procedure**.
- 15.2 Any amendments to the **Property Dealing Procedure** will be made by Full Council as constitutional amendments.

16. EXTERNAL FUNDING

- 16.1 External funding refers to applications to external organisations, including Government departments and agencies for the funding of expenditure. The expenditure may be for the Council's own services or for those services provided in partnership with other public bodies, voluntary sector bodies or private sector organisations.
- 16.2 In any partnership arrangement the Chief Financial Officer must ensure that there are adequate controls in place in respect of the Council's own financial liabilities to the partnership and that there are adequate controls in place for the partnership itself.
- 16.3 Any application for external funding to finance or contribute to the financing of a function, investment or activity for which the Council is either the sole provider or is the accountable body must be approved by Management Team following consultation with the Chief Financial Officer to ensure the external funding being sought is in accordance with the Council's priorities and not an additional impact on resources. Such approval will be recorded with an Officer Decision.
- 16.4 When making application for payment of funds from the body awarding the grant it is a statutory obligation that all figures in the claim be supported by adequate, and comprehensive working papers. All such working papers will be in a format and detail as determined by the Chief Financial Officer.

17. PROCEEDS OF CRIME ACT 2002 (ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING)

- 17.1 The Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 sets out some of the obligations placed on individuals and organisations to report known or suspected money-laundering activities. This means that both the Council itself and individual officers within the Council are bound by this act. All employees of the Council must report any suspicions. Failure to do so is a criminal offence.
- 17.2 It is the Council's policy is to do all it can to prevent, wherever possible, the Council and its staff being exposed to money laundering, to identify the potential areas where it may occur and to comply with all legal and regulatory requirements especially with regard to reporting of actual or suspected cases.

- 17.3** All Heads of Department will ensure that all staff for whom they are responsible and who are involved in financial transactions are aware of the Council's and their own obligations in respect of money laundering.
- 17.4** The Chief Financial Officer, or officer(s) nominated by him/her will be responsible for anti-money laundering measures within the Council to ensure compliance with the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 and fulfil the Council's policy in respect of money laundering.
- 17.5** The following instances could be an attempt at money laundering and should raise suspicions and must be reported to the Chief Financial Officer or nominated officer(s). The Chief Financial Officer will determine the limits and procedures to be followed in the event of these activities arising.
- 17.5.1** Payment in cash of an unusually large sum of money.
- 17.5.2** Payment in cash of a sum in excess of the amount owing; particularly if a double payment is made, followed by a request for a non-cash refund.
- 17.5.3** The use of Trusts or offshore funds for handling proceeds or settlement of a transaction should be questioned.
- 17.5.4** Care should be exercised and further enquiries may be needed in the following instances.
- (a) A third party intermediary becomes involved in a transaction
 - (b) The identity of a third party is hard to establish or is undisclosed
 - (c) A party is evasive as to the source or destiny of funds
 - (d) A third party uses a vehicle company and the ultimate ownership is concealed or difficult to establish.

18. STATE AID

- 18.1** State aid rules are in place to protect the European Community free market by ensuring state resources are not used to distort competition or give an unfair advantage. State aid rules can apply to voluntary and non-profit making organisations. State aid has four characteristics:
- (a) It is granted by the State or through state resources (this includes local authorities);
 - (b) It favours certain undertakings, or the production of certain goods (this can include voluntary and non-profit making organisations if they are engaged in economic activity);

- (c) It distorts or threatens to distort competition;
- (d) It affects trade between member states;

If all four characteristics are present the state aid is prohibited, subject to certain exemptions. State aid takes many forms, it relates to a financial advantage of any kind.

- 18.2** Any support given to organisations must not breach state aid rules.
- 18.3** Issues regarding state aid must be checked prior to the award of support and advice sought as appropriate (guidance is available from the Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform).
- 18.4** Where state aid rules are considered to apply appropriate approvals must be obtained from the European Commission prior to the award of the support unless specific regulations do not require advance approval, for example they are covered by a block exemption (limits apply) or the de minimis regulations.
- 18.5** If state aid is being given under a block exemption the aid must comply with every condition stated in the block exemption regulation and appropriate procedures for notifying the Commission of the award must be followed.
- 18.6** If state aid is being given under the de minimis regulation all relevant procedures must be followed, in particular;
 - (a) the recipient must be informed of the de minimis nature of the grant.
 - (b) full information must be obtained from the recipient about other de minimis aid received during the previous three years.
 - (c) new de minimis aid must only be granted if it will not raise the total aid received in the relevant period of three years over the de minimis limit applicable at the time.
 - (d) all records of de minimis aid paid must be kept in accordance with the regulations and for the relevant minimum time period.
- 18.7** All aid given must be notified to the Chief Financial Officer Financial records must separately identify any aid given.

