

F. FINANCIAL PROCEDURE RULES

Part F1: Financial Management

1. Financial Procedure Rules provide the framework for managing the Council's financial affairs, and govern the way financial decisions, budget setting and monitoring, financial administration and financial controls are exercised.
2. The Rules apply to all members and officers of the Council and anyone acting on its behalf. References to directors also apply to chief officers and other senior staff and shall in every case be considered as referring to authorised persons.
3. These Rules apply until they are rescinded, amended or suspended by the Council.

The Responsible Finance Officer

4. The Deputy Chief Executive is the Council's Responsible Finance Officer and has statutory duties in relation to the financial administration and stewardship of the Council. This statutory responsibility cannot be overridden and derives from:
 - Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972
 - The Local Government Finance Act 1988
 - The Local Government and Housing Act 1989
 - The Local Government Act 2000
 - The Local Government Act 2003
 - The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011
 - The Localism Act 2011
 - The Local Government Finance Act 2012
5. The Responsible Finance Officer is responsible for:
 - The proper administration of the Council's affairs
 - Setting financial management standards and monitoring financial compliance with them
 - Advising on the corporate financial position and on the key financial controls necessary to secure sound financial management
 - Providing financial information
 - Preparing the revenue budget and the capital programme
 - Treasury management
 - The production and publication of the Council's final accounts in compliance with relevant statutory requirements
6. Section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 requires the Responsible Finance Officer to report to the full Council, Cabinet and External Auditor if the Council or one of its officers:

- Has made, or is about to make, a decision which involves incurring unlawful expenditure
- Has taken, or is about to take, an unlawful action which has resulted or would result in a loss or deficiency to the Council
- Has made or is about to make an unlawful or unauthorised entry in the Council's accounts

Section 114 of the 1988 Act also requires:

- The Responsible Finance Officer to nominate a properly qualified member of staff to deputise should he or she be unable to perform the duties under section 114 personally
- The Council to provide the Responsible Finance Officer with sufficient staff, accommodation and other resources, including legal advice when necessary, to carry out the duties under section 114

Chief Officers

Chief Officers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that Cabinet members are advised of the financial implications of all proposals and that the financial implications have been agreed in advance by the Responsible Finance Officer
- Signing contracts on behalf of the Council in accordance with the Council's contract Procedure Rules
- Ensuring that the approval of the Responsible Finance Officer is sought on any matter liable to affect the Council's finances materially, before any commitments are made

7. The Corporate Management Team will report to the Cabinet about the level of resources proposed to be utilised in each financial year. It will also keep the Cabinet informed about the Council's finances and financial performance throughout the year.

8. The Corporate Management Team and Chief Officers are responsible for observing the Council's Financial Procedure Rules; for the accountability and control of staff; and the security, custody and control of all resources appertaining to their area of activity. Resources include funding under devolved budget arrangements, plant, materials, cash and stores.

Accounting

9. The Responsible Finance Officer is responsible for:

- Selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies
- Determining accounting procedures and records

The Responsible Finance Officer shall:

- Make arrangements for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs
- Apply accounting policies consistently
- Maintain proper accounting records

- Make an annual report to the Cabinet on the financial outturn for the previous financial year

Chief Officers shall:

- Maintain adequate records to provide an audit trail leading from the source of income / expenditure through to the accounting statements
- Provide information as required to enable the Statement of Accounts to be completed in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Responsible Finance Officer

Chief Officers together with the Responsible Finance Officer shall follow these accounting principles:

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

10. Schedules of authorised signatories are held within Accountancy Services and shall be updated on an annual basis. Chief Officers must inform Accountancy Services of any intervening changes such as the appointment of new staff. Chief Officers will also determine who is authorised to sign official documents on their behalf and they will provide the Responsible Finance Officer with an up to date list of specimen signatures.
11. The Executive Director (Legal and Democratic Services), and any other officer authorised by him / her, are authorised to seal any document.

Part F2: Financial Planning

Revenue Budget

12. The revenue budget will be approved by the full Council and proposed by the Cabinet on the advice of the Responsible Finance Officer. The revenue budget will include proposed taxation levels and spend on major service areas.
13. The Responsible Finance Officer shall:
 - Ensure a revenue budget is prepared on an annual basis and a medium term financial plan on a three yearly basis
 - Issue appropriate guidance to officers in order to set the budget as required
 - Ensure the approved budget guidelines are complied with in order that statutory and other deadlines can be met

14. Budget holders shall:

- Submit to the Responsible Finance Officer estimates in accordance with the budget guidelines and within agreed timescales
- Ensure the estimates are prepared with regard to the Council's Corporate Strategy and other corporate aims and objectives
- Provide any other information the Responsible Finance Officer requires

15. The approval of a budget for the year by full Council confers authority to spend in accordance with the budget for that year. Chief Officers are responsible for coordinating programmes of expenditure and income that will achieve the objectives on which the budget was based.

16. Budget holders shall not enter into any new arrangements or other contractual commitments with long term revenue consequences without the prior consent of the Responsible Finance Officer.

17. If an officer wants to incur expenditure outside the approved budget or anticipates either an underspend or overspend against an approved budget head, the procedures set out in paragraphs 22 to 29 of these procedures apply.

18. Chief Officers will notify the Responsible Finance Officer in writing of the names of any officers in their service area authorised to act on their behalf with respect to the responsibilities set out in this section; together with specimen signatures and details of any limitation on the authority delegated to them.

Capital Budget

19. The capital budget will be approved by the full Council and proposed by the Cabinet on the advice of the Responsible Finance Officer. The capital budget will include estimates of individual projects together with designated sources of funding.

20. The Responsible Finance Officer shall:

- Prepare current estimates of resources available to finance capital expenditure
- Prepare a capital programme for the Cabinet before approval at the full Council
- Prepare an annual capital strategy for the Cabinet before approval at the full Council

21. Chief Officers shall give the Responsible Finance Officer early warning of known underspends, overspends and changes to planned resources so that the availability of uncommitted capital resources may be monitored.

Budget Monitoring

22. The Responsible Finance Officer is responsible

- For providing appropriate financial information to enable budgets to be monitored effectively
- For providing quarterly monitoring reports to the Cabinet
- For allocating the revenue budget and capital programme wholly amongst responsible Chief Officers
- For reporting significant variances to the Cabinet where a Chief Officer fails to take action under paragraphs 22 to 29 below.

21. Chief Officers are responsible for:

- The budgets and programmes allocated to them, for delivering the levels of service on which they were based, and for compliance with their financial obligations
- Controlling income and expenditure within their service while taking account of financial information provided by the Responsible Finance Officer
- Reporting on budget variances within their service and taking any necessary corrective action
- Providing any additional information the Responsible Finance Officer may require

Virement

22. A virement is the transfer of a revenue budget which is not committed:

- From one service area to another
- From one budget to another in the same service area
- From one subjective group to another (and “subjective groups” are employees, premises, transport, supplies and services, third party payments, transfer payments, capital charges and income).

23. Virements between capital and revenue budgets are not allowed.

24. Any virements need to commit resources to meet all and any continuing commitment over future years.

25. All requests must be approved by the Chief Officer and the Responsible Finance Officer.

26. The limits on virement are:

- £50,000 capital funding for the Cabinet
- £20,000 revenue funding for the Cabinet
- £5,000 revenue funding by officers – subject to prior consultation with the portfolio holder.
- Beyond these limits, approval to any virement across budget heads requires the approval of the full Council.

27. Virements below the level of £500 will not normally be considered.

Supplementary Estimates

28. Revenue Expenditure – Where no provision currently exists in the revenue budget, or where the provision made for an existing budget head is insufficient and a virement is not available, then the new or additional budget provision may only be established with the approval of the Cabinet. Any decision taken will have due regard to future year's financial implications and any recommendation by the Responsible Financial Officer.
29. Capital Expenditure – Where no provision currently exists in the capital programme, or where the provision made for an existing budget head is insufficient and a virement is not available, then the new or additional budget provision may only be established with the approval of the Cabinet. Any decision taken will have due regard to future year's financial implications and any recommendation by the Responsible Financial Officer.

Maintenance of Reserves

30. It is the responsibility of the Responsible Finance Officer to advise the Cabinet and / or the full Council on prudent levels of reserves for the Council.

Part F3: Control of Resources

Risk Management

31. The Council is responsible for approving the Council's risk management strategy.
32. The Audit Committee is responsible for the review and monitoring of the Council's risk management arrangements.
33. The Head of Paid Service and the Responsible Finance Officer are responsible for preparing and promoting the Council's risk management policy statement, and for developing risk management controls in conjunction with other Directors and Chief Officers.

Internal Control

34. Internal control refers to the systems of control devised by management to help ensure the Council's objectives are achieved in a manner that promotes economical, efficient and effective use of resources and that the Council's assets and interests are safeguarded.
35. The Responsible Finance Officer is responsible for advising on effective systems of internal control. These arrangements need to ensure compliance with the law and proper standards. Arrangements for financial and internal control, and for managing risk, are addressed in the Annual Governance Statement.

36. It is the responsibility of Chief Officers to establish sound arrangements for planning, appraising, authorising and controlling their operations in order to achieve continuous improvement, economy, efficiency and effectiveness; and for achieving their financial performance targets.

Audit Requirements

37. The Responsible Finance Officer shall arrange for the external audit of the Council's accounts in accordance with the most recent Accounts and Audit Regulations.
38. The Responsible Finance Officer is responsible for ensuring an adequate and effective internal audit function is operating and is independent in its planning and operation.
39. The Head of Internal Audit will consult with the Responsible Finance Officer and the external auditors in drafting the annual Internal Audit Plan, which will be taken to the Audit Committee for approval.
40. The Responsible Finance Officer or their authorised representative shall have authority to enter at all reasonable times any offices, premises or land under the control of the Council and shall have unrestricted access to all records, documents and correspondence relating to any matter under consideration, without limitation.
41. All staff shall provide such information as the Responsible Finance Officer considers necessary for the proper exercise of his functions and shall produce upon demand cash, stores, documents or other property of the Council under their control.
42. All staff shall notify the Internal Audit Service immediately upon discovery or suspicion of any financial irregularity, whether affecting cash, stores, property, financial records or otherwise. The Responsible Finance Officer will notify the Chief Executive in all significant cases.
43. The Internal Audit Section shall be sufficiently independent to enable its auditors to perform their duties in a manner which will allow their professional judgements and recommendations to be effective and impartial.
44. The Council will conduct an annual review of the effectiveness of Internal Audit and the findings will be considered by the Audit Committee as part of the Council's internal system of control.

Preventing Fraud and Corruption

45. The Head of Internal Audit is responsible for the development and maintenance of an anti-fraud and anti-corruption policy. The documents will detail the Council's approach to the prevention, detection and investigation of fraud, corruption and bribery.

46. If an instance of theft, fraud, bribery, corruption or other financial irregularity is discovered or suspected all staff are responsible for ensuring the Responsible Finance Officer is notified forthwith. The Responsible Finance Officer is empowered to arrange any special investigations or reports which are deemed necessary.

Stocks and Stores

47. Chief Officers shall make adequate and effective arrangements for the custody, care and physical control of all stocks and stores in their service areas.

Stocks and Stores Records

48. In consultation with the Responsible Finance Officer, Chief Officers shall maintain adequate records of all issues and other movements of stocks and stores.

49. Chief Officers shall provide to the Responsible Finance Officer each year a stock certificate detailing stocks and stores in hand at 31st March.

Maintenance of Stocks

50. Chief Officers shall maintain stocks at reasonable levels and subject them to a regular independent physical check.

51. All discrepancies shall be investigated, pursued to a satisfactory conclusion and removed from the Council's records by making stock adjustments as necessary. Gains and losses resulting from stock adjustments shall only be written off or adjusted in the records under arrangements approved by the Responsible Finance Officer.

52. Chief Officers shall ensure that all stocks and equipment no longer required are disposed of economically under arrangements approved by the Responsible Finance Officer.

Land, Buildings and Other Major Assets

53. Chief Officers must arrange the proper security of all buildings and other major assets under their control. They should also ensure contingency plans are in place for the security of assets and continuity of service in the event of disaster or system failure.

54. The Responsible Finance Officer shall ensure appropriate financial advice, including tax advice, is available at the point of decision on the acquisition or disposal of land and buildings.

55. All property and land asset disposals up to a capital value of £75,000 must be approved by the Head of Housing and Regeneration.

56. All asset disposals over £75,000 must be approved by the Cabinet

57. The Head of Housing and Regeneration is responsible for maintaining a fixed asset register for land and buildings and the Executive Director (Legal and Democratic Services) is responsible for making arrangements for the custody of title deeds.

Insurances

58. The Responsible Finance Officer is responsible for:

- Effecting all insurance on a corporate basis, through external insurance or through internal self-assurance arrangements as considered appropriate
- Ensuring periodic risk management studies are undertaken to assess the need for insurance cover and to identify appropriate action
- Negotiating all claims in consultation with relevant Chief Officers

59. The Chief Officers will immediately notify the Responsible Finance Officer of the acquisition or disposal of assets requiring insurance cover and of items that, in their view, may require the Council's insurable risks to be amended. They will also promptly notify the Responsible Finance Officer of all new material risks as they are identified.

60. Chief Officers will immediately notify the Responsible Finance Officer of any incident or occurrence which:

- Adversely affects the Council's assets and is likely to give rise to a claim on the Council's insurers
- Might give rise to a claim against the Council
- Might give rise to a claim being made by the Council on its insurance policies e.g. thefts, accidents.

61. Chief Officers must consult with the Responsible Finance Officer and Executive Director (Legal & Democratic Services) in respect of any indemnity that the Council is requested to give.

Treasury Management and Leasing

62. The Council adopts the key recommendations of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's 'Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice', including the recommended form of Treasury Management Policy Statement, setting out the policies and objectives of the Council's treasury management activities.

63. Responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of the Council's treasury management policies and practices lies with the Cabinet.

64. The Council has delegated responsibility for the execution and administration of treasury management decisions to the Responsible Finance Officer.

65. The Responsible Finance Officer shall:

- Annually prepare a Treasury Management Policy Statement covering all aspects of treasury management for consideration by the Cabinet and recommendation to the full Council
- Annually prepare a Treasury Management Strategy setting out the Council's strategy for consideration and approval by the Cabinet
- Recommend to the Council a range of Prudential Indicators, including borrowing limits, to be set for the financial year in accordance with statute and the CIPFA Prudential Code
- Provide regular treasury management monitoring reports to the Cabinet
- Arrange the borrowing and investments of the Council in such a manner as to comply with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management and the Council's Treasury Management Policy Statement and its annual strategy
- Make all investments, borrowings and other financing transactions only in the name of the Council or in the name of nominees approved by the full Council

66. The Council has nominated Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be responsible for ensuring effective scrutiny of the treasury management strategy and policies.

67. Leasing and other similar arrangements, including new or extended leases of land and property, may only be entered into with the written consent of the Responsible Finance Officer. Such arrangements may be defined for this purpose as any lease, contract hire or other contract or series of contracts under which the use of an asset is obtained in exchange for a series of payments which extend beyond the end of the following financial year.

Staffing

68. The Cabinet is responsible for determining how officer support for executive and non-executive roles within the Council will be organised.

69. The Head of Paid Service is responsible for providing overall management to staff. He or she is also responsible for ensuring that there is proper use of the evaluation or other agreed systems for determining the remuneration of a job.

70. The Monitoring Officer is responsible for the administration of all arrangements for the payment of salaries, wages and pensions, car loans and car leases to eligible employees; travel and subsistence claims and other emoluments to existing and former employees and for all related matters.

71. The Monitoring Officer shall make proper arrangements for all statutory and other deductions from pay, including tax, national insurance and pension contributions; and payment of such sums to the bodies concerned.

72. Chief Officers are responsible for controlling total staff numbers by:

- Advising the Cabinet on the budget necessary in any given year to cover estimated staff levels
- Adjusting staffing to a level that can be funded within approved budget provision, varying the provision as necessary within that constraint in order to meet changing operational needs
- The proper use of appointment procedures

73. Chief Officers are also responsible for:

- The terms and conditions applying to new contracts of employment
- Any changes or events affecting the salaries, wages or emoluments of the Council's employees
- All resignations, retirements and terminations of employment

74. Chief Officers shall provide to the Responsible Finance Officer and the Monitoring Officer:

- All relevant information, including notification of sickness absence, in agreed format and within agreed timescales to enable the prompt and accurate payment of all elements of pay
- Notification of the impending departure of any employee involved with the custody of cash or stores

Members Allowances

75. Payments to elected members of the Council shall be made by the Monitoring Officer in accordance with the Council's approved member's allowances scheme.

Part F4: Systems and Procedures

76. The Responsible Finance Officer is responsible for the operation of the Council's accounting systems, the form of accounts and the supporting financial records.

77. Any changes to the existing financial systems made by Chief Officers or the establishment of new systems must be approved in advance by the Responsible Finance Officer.

78. Chief Officers are responsible for the proper operation of financial processes in their own service areas.

79. Chief Officers should ensure that their staff receive relevant financial training that has been approved by the Responsible Finance Officer.

80. Chief Officers must ensure that, where appropriate, computer and other systems are operated and used in accordance with data protection legislation.

81. Chief Officers must ensure their staff are aware of their responsibilities under freedom of information and data protection legislation.

Computer Systems

82. New computer systems and changes to existing systems shall only be introduced with the approval of the ICT manager and, for financial systems and those that interact with such systems, with the additional approval of the Responsible Finance Officer.

83. The ICT manager shall:

- Ensure that any new or significantly changed system is in accordance with the Council's IT strategy
- Assist in the selection of all new computer systems, manage effectively the technical process of implementation and assist in ensuring that all staff are properly trained in their use
- Ensure the Council's infrastructure, systems and data are secure
- Make proper arrangements to protect central computer equipment against loss or damage through theft or misuse
- Put in place a tested and documented disaster recovery system and review it regularly
- Issue mandatory standards and guidelines governing the use of all computer systems and monitor their use to ensure they are adhered to

84. Chief Officers shall:

- Ensure that computer systems are fit for the purpose of their business function
- Make staff aware of and ensure they comply with the Council's ICT standards including data security breaches under the Information Security Incident Management Policy and Procedure
- Train all staff in the proper and effective operation of any computer systems they are expected to use
- Restrict user access to systems and data held on computer systems as appropriate
- Ensure processing is genuine, complete, accurate and timely and an audit trail exists to original documentation
- Ensure information generated by computer systems is accurate and complete
- Comply with data protection, computer misuse, software licensing, copyright, design and patent legislation and any other relevant legislation, and in particular ensure that only software which is properly acquired is installed and used on the Council's computers

Income

85. Chief Officers shall implement arrangements made by them under this section only with the approval of the Responsible Finance Officer.

86. Chief Officers shall make adequate and effective arrangements for the prompt identification of all sums due to the Council.
87. Chief Officers shall make adequate and effective arrangements for recording all sums due in the Council's accounts.
88. Accounts for sums due may only be raised on the Council's corporate sundry debtors system, unless alternative arrangements have been approved by the Responsible Finance Officer.
89. Chief Officers shall make adequate and effective arrangements for the collection and receipting of all income and for the security of all cash and other valuables having regard to agreed insurance limits for locked safes.
90. Official receipts, tickets etc. shall be ordered, controlled and issued only under arrangements approved by the Responsible Finance Officer.
91. The Responsible Finance Officer shall arrange for the prompt and secure transfer of cash from the Council's offices to the Council's bankers.
92. Chief Officers shall make effective and adequate arrangements for the sums collected and banked to be reconciled with the records of sums due.
93. In all cases Chief Officers shall take prompt and appropriate action to recover all sums overdue to the Council and ensure the corporate debt recovery policy is followed.
94. Chief Officers are responsible for recommending the write off of irrecoverable debts to the Responsible Finance Officer and for ensuring the corporate debt policy is followed.
95. The Responsible Finance Officer may approve that a debt is written off to the value of £5,000 and may approve write off of any value where there is satisfactory evidence that it is irrecoverable as specified in the Council's scheme of delegation. In any other case the debt may only be written off with the approval of the Cabinet.
96. The duty of providing information, calculating, checking and recording sums due to or from the Council shall be separated as completely as possible from the duty of collecting such sums.

Value Added Tax

97. The Responsible Finance Officer is responsible for the determination of all arrangements for the collection, recording, payment and recovery of VAT.

98. The Responsible Finance Officer shall:

- Maintain complete and accurate accounting records of all the Council's VAT transactions
- Submit the Council's VAT return to HM Revenue and Customs in accordance with statutory deadlines
- Prepare the Council's partial exemption calculation as at the end of each financial year and monitor the Council's partial exemption position quarterly
- Conduct all negotiations with HM Revenue and Customs in respect of VAT matters affecting the Council
- Provide advice, guidance and training to Council staff on all aspects of VAT as they affect the Council
- Publish and regularly update VAT guidance notes on the Council's intranet

99. Chief Officers shall:

- Properly account for VAT on all transactions under arrangements determined by the Responsible Finance Officer
- Consult the Responsible Finance Officer in all cases where the VAT treatment of any transaction is unclear so that the matter can be reviewed and appropriate treatment determined
- Consult the Responsible Finance Officer in all cases where new projects, schemes or services are proposed, well in advance of commitments being made, so that any impact on the Council's VAT position can be assessed and any necessary action taken to protect the Council's VAT recovery position
- Co-operate with any VAT inspector and give access at all reasonable times to premises, personnel, documents and assets which they consider necessary for the purposes of their work

Banking and Cheques

Operation of Bank Accounts

100. The Responsible Finance Officer is responsible for opening, closing and operating all bank accounts and related facilities in the Council's name.
101. All communications with the Council's bankers concerning its bank accounts and any changes in banking arrangements shall be made under arrangements approved by the Responsible Finance Director.

Authorisation of Signatories

102. Only officers personally mandated by the Responsible Finance Officer may sign cheques and other documents transferring funds out of the Council's bank accounts.

Payments from Council bank accounts

103. All payments from the Council's bank accounts shall be, so far as is practicable, by crossed cheque or automated bank transfer but the Responsible Finance Officer may exclude from this regulation such payments as may be considered appropriate from time to time.
104. No payments shall be made from the Council's bank accounts unless approved by a signatory authorised in accordance with paragraph 102 above.

Custody of Cheques

105. All cheques and related stationery shall be ordered and controlled by the Responsible Finance Officer.
106. The safe custody and issue of cheques and related stationery shall be carried out under arrangements made by the Responsible Finance Officer.

Banking of Income

107. The Responsible Finance Officer shall arrange for the prompt and secure transfer of cash from the Council's offices and facilities to the Council's bankers.

Reconciliation

108. The Responsible Finance Officer shall regularly reconcile the Council's bank accounts with the accounting records.

Security and Inventories

109. Resources are to be used solely for the purposes of the Council unless authorised otherwise by the Council, and are to be properly accounted for.

Inventories

110. Each Chief Officer is responsible for maintaining an inventory of moveable assets under procedures determined by the Responsible Finance Officer
111. Inventories are to be reviewed at least once a year and an updated copy supplied to the Responsible Finance Officer.

Security

112. Chief Officers shall make proper arrangements for:
 - The security of all buildings and other assets under their control
 - The safe custody of all documents held as security
113. Chief Officers shall make adequate and effective arrangements for the custody, care and physical control of all stocks and stores in their service areas.

Part F5: External Arrangements

Work Carried out for Others

114. Financial procedures apply equally to any service carried out by the Council on behalf of the County Council or any other authority, body or person, and Chief Officers shall not set up partnership or other arrangements with external parties to operate in conflict with these procedures as far as this Council's involvement is concerned.

Chief Officers shall:

- Properly assess the financial implications of the proposal prior to commitment following consultation with the Responsible Finance Officer
- Draw up contracts having regard to the Council's powers, relevant policies and protocols and in compliance with any insurance or other requirements of the Responsible Finance Officer and Executive Director (Legal & Democratic Services)

External Funding and Partnership Arrangements

115. The Cabinet is responsible for approving partnerships and joint venture arrangements. It is also responsible for approving the contractual arrangements for any work for third parties or external bodies.

116. The Cabinet can delegate functions, including those relating to partnerships, to officers. These are set out in the scheme of delegation in Part 3 of the Constitution.

Bidding for External Funding

117. Chief Officers shall seek external resources to further the priorities and aims of the Council's Corporate Strategy.

118. Before bidding for resources which, if successful, would require any financial commitment from the Council, Chief Officers shall ensure that appropriate budgets have been approved or earmarked in accordance with these procedures.

119. In working up bids, Chief Officers shall use appropriate project appraisal processes to assess the viability of the project in terms of resources, staffing and expertise to identify and assess all potential risks and to ensure achievement of the required outcome.

Setting Up Partnerships

120. The monitoring officer is responsible for promoting and maintaining the same high standards of conduct with regard to financial administration in partnerships that apply throughout the Council in conjunction with the Responsible Finance Officer. The monitoring

officer will advise as to the legality (and procedural arrangements required in respect of) any partnership or joint venture.

121. The Responsible Finance Officer must ensure the accounting arrangements to be adopted in relation to partnerships and joint ventures are satisfactory.

122. In conjunction with the Monitoring Officer, the Responsible Finance Officer must also consider the overall corporate governance arrangements and legal issues when contracts are arranged with external bodies. In conjunction with the relevant Chief Officer he or she must ensure the risks have been fully appraised before agreements are entered into with external bodies.

123. Chief Officers shall consult the Responsible Finance Officer on:

- Any financial control, insurance and audit requirement to be incorporated into the partnership arrangements
- The overall financial implications for the Council

124. Prior to entering into any commitment the relevant Chief Officer shall ensure that any match funding or other financial obligations of the Council are provided for within revenue or capital programmes and that arrangements are made for future years financial provisions to reflect these obligations. This should include any audit or consequential fees as appropriate.

Working with Partners

125. These financial procedures and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules shall apply to any orders for works, goods or services which are the responsibility of the Council under the partnership arrangements.

126. The relevant Chief Officer shall comply with any key condition of funding and statutory requirement.

127. Any variation in resources to be contributed by the Council, or in the overall resources of the partnership where the Council is the accountable body, shall be dealt with in the same way as other budget variations as set out in paragraphs 22 – 29 (Budget Monitoring) of these procedures.

128. The relevant Chief Officer shall ensure that any financial control, insurance and audit requirements of the partnership are met.

129. The relevant Chief Officer shall communicate regularly with the other partners throughout any project so that problems are identified and shared to achieve their successful resolution.