

# Ceiriog Uchaf Community Council

## Financial Regulations

These Financial Regulations were adopted by the Council at its Meeting held on

13<sup>TH</sup> January 2026

### 1. General

1.1. These financial regulations govern the conduct of financial management by the Council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the Council. Financial regulations are one of the council's governing policy documents providing procedural guidance for members and officers. Financial regulations must be observed in conjunction with the Council's standing orders and any individual financial regulations relating to contracts.

1.2. The Council is responsible in law for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that the Council has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions, including arrangements for the management of risk.

1.3. The Council's accounting control systems must include measures:

- for the timely production of accounts;
- that provide for the safe and efficient safeguarding of public money;
- to prevent and detect inaccuracy and fraud; and
- identifying the duties of officers.

1.4. These financial regulations demonstrate how the Council meets these responsibilities and requirements.

1.5. Members of Council are expected to follow the instructions within these Regulations. Failure to follow instructions within these Regulations may bring the office of Councillor into disrepute and may constitute a breach of the Code of Conduct.

1.6. The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) holds a statutory office to be appointed by the Council. The Clerk has been appointed as RFO for this Council and these Regulations will apply accordingly.

1.7. The RFO;

- acts under the policy direction of the Council;
- administers the Council's financial affairs in accordance with all Acts, Regulations and proper practices;
- determines on behalf of the council its accounting records and accounting control systems;
- ensures the accounting control systems are observed;
- maintains the accounting records of the Council up to date in accordance with proper practices;
- assists the Council to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of its resources; and
- produces financial management information as required by the council.

1.8. The accounting records determined by the RFO shall be sufficient to show and explain the Council's transactions and to enable the RFO to ensure that any income and expenditure account and statement of balances, or record of receipts and payments and additional information, as the case may be, or management information prepared for the council from time to time comply with the Accounts and Audit Regulations pertaining to Wales.

1.9. The accounting records determined by the RFO shall in particular contain:

- entries from day to day of all sums of money received and expended by the council and the matters to which the income and expenditure or receipts and payments account relate;
- a record of the assets and liabilities of the council; and
- wherever relevant, a record of the council's income and expenditure in relation to claims made, or to be made, for any contribution, grant or subsidy.

1.10. The accounting control systems determined by the RFO shall include:

- procedures to ensure that the financial transactions of the Council are recorded as soon as reasonably practicable and as accurately and reasonably as possible;

procedures to enable the prevention and detection of inaccuracies and fraud and the ability to reconstruct any lost records;

procedures to ensure that uncollectable amounts, including any bad debts are not submitted to the council for approval to be written off except with the approval of the RFO and that the approvals are shown in the accounting records; and

measures to ensure that risk is properly managed.

1.11. The Council is not empowered by these Regulations or otherwise to delegate certain specified decisions. In particular any decision regarding:

setting the final budget or the precept (Council Tax Requirement);

approving accounting statements;

approving an annual governance statement;

borrowing;

writing off bad debts;

addressing recommendations in any report from the internal or external auditors shall be a matter for the full council only.

1.12. In addition the Council must:

determine and keep under regular review the bank mandate for all Council bank accounts at the Annual Meeting;

approve any grant or a single commitment

1.13. In these financial regulations, references to the Accounts and Audit Regulations or 'the regulations' shall mean the regulations issued under the provisions of S39 Public Audit (Wales) Act 2024, or any superseding legislation, and then in force unless otherwise specified.

In these financial regulations the term 'proper practice' or 'proper practices' shall refer to guidance issued in Governance and Accountability for Local Councils in Wales - A Practitioners' Guide, available from the websites of One Voice Wales (OVW) and SLCC as appropriate.

## **2. Accounting and Audit (Internal and External)**

2.1. All accounting procedures and financial records of the council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations, appropriate Guidance and proper practices.

2.2. The RFO shall complete the annual statement of accounts, annual report, and any related documents of the Council contained in the Annual Return (as specified in proper practices) as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and having certified the accounts shall submit them and report thereon to the council within the timescales set by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

2.3 The Council shall ensure that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records, and of its system of internal control in accordance with proper practices. Any officer or member of the Council shall make available such documents and records as appear to the Council to be necessary for the purpose of the audit and shall, as directed by the Council, supply the RFO, internal auditor, or external auditor with such information and explanation as the council considers necessary for that purpose.

2.4. The internal auditor shall be appointed at each Annual Meeting and shall carry out the work in relation to internal controls as required by the Council in accordance with proper practices.

2.5. The internal auditor shall:

- be competent and independent of the financial operations of the council;
- report to Council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one annual written report during each financial year;
- to demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, be free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships; and
- have no involvement in the financial decision making, management or control of the council.

2.6. Internal or external auditors may not under any circumstances:

- perform any operational duties for the Council
- initiate or approve accounting transactions

2.7. For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to internal audit the terms 'independent' and 'independence' shall have the same meaning as is described in proper practices.

2.8. The RFO shall make arrangements for the exercise of electors' rights in relation to the accounts including the opportunity to inspect the accounts, books, and vouchers and display or publish any notices and statements of account required by the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2024. A statement of the accounts will be included within the Annual Report

2.9. The RFO shall, without undue delay, bring to the attention of all Councillors any correspondence or report from internal or external auditors.

### **3. Annual Estimates (Budget) and Forward Planning**

3.1. The RFO must each year, by no later than December, prepare detailed estimates of all receipts and payments including the use of reserves and all sources of funding for the following financial year in the form of a budget to be considered by the Council.

3.2. The Council shall consider annual budget proposals including recommendations for the use of reserves and sources of funding and update the forecast accordingly.

3.3. The Council shall fix the Precept for the ensuing financial year not later than by the Council meeting of January each year. The RFO shall issue the precept to the billing authority and shall supply each member with a copy of the approved annual budget.

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

### **4. Budgetary Controls and Authority to Spend**

4.1. Expenditure on items must be approved by:

- the Council for all items;
- the Clerk-RFO, in conjunction with the Chair of Council or Chair of the appropriate committee, for any items below £200.  
Such authority is to be evidenced by a Minute or by an authorisation slip duly signed by the Clerk-RFO, and where necessary also by the appropriate Chair of the Council.

4.2. No expenditure shall be authorised in relation to any capital project and no contract entered into or tender accepted involving capital expenditure unless the Council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available and the requisite borrowing approval has been obtained.

4.3. All capital works shall be administered in accordance with the Council's standing orders and financial regulations relating to contracts.

## **5. Banking Arrangements and Authorisation of Payments**

5.1. The Council's banking arrangements (currently Unity Bank), including the bank mandate, shall be made by the RFO and approved by the Council; banking arrangements may not be delegated to a committee. They shall be regularly reviewed for safety and efficiency.

5.2. The RFO shall prepare a schedule of payments requiring authorisation, forming part of the monthly Agenda for the Meeting and, together with the relevant invoices, present the schedule to Council. The Council shall review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied itself shall authorise payment by a resolution of the council. The approved schedule shall be ruled off and initiated by the Chair of the Meeting. A detailed list of all payments shall be disclosed within or as an attachment to the minutes of the meeting at which payment was authorised. Personal payments (including salaries, wages, expenses and any payment made in relation to the termination of a contract of employment) may be summarised to remove public access to any personal information.

5.3. All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the RFO to confirm that the work, goods or services to which each invoice relates has been received, carried out, examined and represents expenditure previously approved by the council.

5.4. The RFO shall examine invoices for arithmetical accuracy and analyse them to the appropriate expenditure heading. The RFO shall take all steps to pay all invoices submitted, and which are in order, at the next available Council Meeting.

5.5. Members are subject to the Code of Conduct 2023 that has been adopted by the Council and shall comply with the Code and Standing Orders when a decision to authorise or instruct payment is made in respect of a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary or other interest, unless a dispensation

has been granted.

## **6. Instructions for the Making of Payments**

6.1. The Council will make safe and efficient arrangements for the making of its payments.

6.2. Following authorisation under Financial Regulation 5 above, the Council shall give instruction that a payment shall be made.

6.3. All payments shall be effected by bank transfer or cheque or other instructions to the Council's bankers, or otherwise, in accordance with a resolution of Council.

6.4. Orders for payment drawn on the bank account in accordance with the schedule as presented to Council shall be authorised by two members of Council in accordance with a resolution instructing that payment. If a member who is also a bank signatory has declared a disclosable pecuniary interest, or has any other interest, in the matter in respect of which the payment is being made, that Councillor shall be required to consider Standing Orders, and thereby determine whether it is appropriate and / or permissible to be a signatory to the transaction in question. In most cases, the Councillor should not act as a signatory to such transactions.

6.5. To indicate agreement of the details shown on the bank transfer there will be a digital record of authorisation. In the event of a payment by cheque or order the counterfoil and or the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall each also initial the cheque counterfoil.

6.6. Where payment by cheques is required, these shall not normally be presented for signature other than at a Council meeting. Any signatures obtained away from such meetings shall be reported to the Council at the next convenient meeting.

6.7. If thought appropriate by the Council, payment for utility supplies (energy, telephone and water) and any National Non-Domestic Rates may be made by variable Direct Debit provided that the instructions are signed by two members and any payments are reported to council as made. The approval of the use of a variable Direct Debit shall be renewed by resolution of the Council at least every two years.

6.8. If thought appropriate by the Council, payment for certain items may be made by Banker's Standing Order provided that the instructions are signed, or otherwise evidenced by two members are retained and any payments are

reported to council as made. The approval of the use of a Banker's Standing Order shall be renewed by resolution of the Council at least every two years.

6.9. If thought appropriate by the Council, payment for certain items may be made by BACS or CHAPS methods provided that the instructions for each payment are signed, or otherwise evidenced, by two authorised bank signatories. A record of these instructions must be retained and any payments reported to council as made. The approval of the use of BACS or CHAPS shall be renewed by resolution of the Council at least every two years at the Annual Meeting.

6.10. If thought appropriate by the Council, payment for certain items may be made by internet banking transfer provided evidence is retained showing which members approved the payment.

6.11. Regular back-up copies of the records on any computer shall be made and shall be stored securely away from the computer in question, and preferably off site.

6.12. The Council, Clerk-RFO and any members using computers for the Council's financial business, shall ensure that anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall, software with automatic updates, together with a high level of security is used.

6.13. Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the Clerk-RFO shall be appointed as the Service Administrator. The Bank Mandate approved by the Council shall identify two Councillors who will be authorised to approve transactions on those accounts.

6.14. Access to any internet banking accounts will be directly to the access page (which may be saved under "favourites"), and not through a search engine or e-mail link. Remembered or saved passwords facilities must not be used on any computer used for Council banking work. Breach of this Regulation will be treated as a very serious matter and appropriate action will be taken.

6.15. The Council will not maintain any form of cash float. All cash received must be banked intact. Any payments made in cash by the Clerk-RFO (for example for postage or minor stationery items) shall be refunded on a regular basis, at least quarterly.

## **7. Loans and Investments**

7.1. All borrowings shall be effected in the name of the Council, after obtaining any necessary borrowing approval. Any application for borrowing approval shall be approved by Council as to terms and purpose. The application for Borrowing Approval, and subsequent arrangements for the Loan shall only be approved by full Council.

7.2. Any financial arrangement which does not require formal Borrowing Approval from the Secretary of State/Welsh Government (such as Hire Purchase or Leasing of tangible assets) shall be subject to approval by the full Council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to Council in respect of value for money for the proposed transaction.

7.3. The Council will arrange with the Council's banks and investment providers for the sending of a copy of each statement of account to the Chair of the Council at the same time as one is issued to the Clerk-RFO.

7.4. All loans and investments shall be negotiated in the name of the Council and shall be for a set period in accordance with Council policy.

7.5. The Council shall consider the need for an Investment Strategy and Policy which, if drawn up, shall be in accordance with relevant regulations, proper practices and guidance. Any Strategy and Policy shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.

7.6. All investments of money under the control of the Council shall be in the name of the council.

7.7. All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO.

7.8. Payments in respect of short term or long term investments, including transfers between bank accounts held in the same bank, or branch, shall be made in accordance with Regulation 5 (Authorisation of payments) and Regulation 6 (Instructions for payments).

## **8. Income**

8.1. The collection of all sums due to the Council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO.

8.2. Particulars of all charges to be made for work done, services rendered or goods supplied shall be agreed annually by the Council, notified to the RFO and

the RFO shall be responsible for the collection of all accounts due to the council.

8.3. The Council will review all fees and charges at least annually, following a report of the Clerk-RFO.

8.4. Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts shall be reported to the Council and shall be written off in the same financial year.

8.5. All sums received on behalf of the Council shall be banked intact as directed by the RFO. In all cases, all receipts shall be deposited with the Council's bankers with the minimum of delay.

8.6. The origin of each receipt shall be entered on the paying-in slip.

8.7. Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the Council.

8.8. The RFO shall promptly complete any VAT Return that is required. Any repayment claim due in accordance with VAT Act 1994 section 33 shall be made at least annually coinciding with the financial year end.

## **9. Contracts and Orders for Works, Goods and Services**

9.1. A contract of official order letter shall be issued for all required work. Copies of orders shall be retained.

9.2. Order books shall be controlled by the RFO.

9.3. All Members and Officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times. An officer issuing an official order shall ensure as far as reasonable and practicable that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction, usually by obtaining three or more quotations or estimates from appropriate suppliers, subject to any de minimis provisions in Regulation 11 (I) below.

9.4. A Member may not issue an official order or make any contract on behalf of the Council.

9.5. The RFO shall verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before the issue of any contract or order, and in the case of new or infrequent purchases or payments, the RFO shall ensure that the statutory authority shall be reported to the meeting at which the order is approved so that the Minutes can record the power being used.

## 10. Contracts

10.1. Procedures as to contracts are laid down as follows:

Every contract shall comply with these financial regulations, and no exceptions shall be made other than permitted in items (i) to (vi) below:

- i. for the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telephone services;
- ii. for specialist services such as are provided by solicitors, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants;
- iii. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which consist of repairs to or parts for existing machinery or equipment or plant;
- iv. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the Council;
- v. for additional audit work requested of the external Auditor up to an estimated value of £500 (in excess of this sum the Clerk and RFO shall act after consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the council); and
- vi. for goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and / or are only sold at a fixed price.

## 11. Assets, Properties and Estates

11.1. The Clerk-RFO shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the Council. The Clerk-RFO shall ensure a record is maintained of all properties held by the Council, recording the location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which they are held in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.

11.2. No tangible moveable property shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of the Council, together with any other consents required by law.

11.3. No real property (interests in land) shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the Council, together with any other consents required by law, In each case a Report in writing shall be provided to council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).

11.4. No real property (interests in land) shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the full Council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to Council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).

11.5. No tangible moveable property shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the full Council. In each case a Report in writing shall be provided to council with a full business case.

11.6. The RFO shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date. The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the Register shall be verified at least annually, possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.

## 12. **Insurance**

12.1. Following the annual risk assessment (per Financial Regulation 13), the Clerk-RFO shall effect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the Council's insurers. This will be notified to the Annual Meeting.

12.2. The Clerk-RFO shall give prompt notification of all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.

12.3. The Clerk-RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the council and the property and risks covered thereby and annually review it.

12.4. The Clerk-RFO shall be notified of any loss liability or damage or of any event likely to lead to a claim, and shall report these to council at the next available meeting.

12.5. All appropriate members and employees of the Council shall be included in a suitable form of security or fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined annually by the Council.

### **13. Risk Management**

13.1. The Council is responsible for putting in place arrangements for the management of risk. The Clerk-RFO shall prepare, for approval by the Council, risk management policy statements in respect of all activities of the Council. Risk policy statements and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the council at least annually and approved at the Annual Meeting.

13.2. When considering any new activity, the Clerk-RFO shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration and adoption by the Council.

### **14. Suspension and Revision of Financial Regulations**

14.1. It shall be the duty of the Council to review the Financial Regulations of the Council annually and for these to be approved by the Annual Meeting. The Clerk-RFO shall make arrangements to monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and shall advise the council of any requirement for a consequential amendment to these financial regulations.

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