



Sessay Parish Council

Financial Standing Orders

Amended 21 October 2015

1. The Clerk shall be the responsible financial officer (RFO) of the Council and shall maintain the Council's accounts in a proper manner and submit them for external auditing in accordance with current requirements.
2. The annual statement of accounts shall be prepared and signed by the RFO as soon as possible after the 31 March each year. The statement of accounts shall then be considered by the Council at the Annual General Meeting and, once approved, be signed by the Chairman.
3. All payments shall be authorised by the Council at a properly convened Council meeting and minuted. All cheques shall be signed by two of the Members authorised to do so. When signing cheques, Members shall verify that the cheque stub bears the same details as the cheque and shall sign the cheque stub in addition to signing the cheque itself.
 - 3a. Cheques raised in emergency, or to meet payment dates between meetings, shall be signed by two Members authorised to do so, in the presence of the Clerk, at a meeting convened for this purpose. Details shall be reported and minuted at the next meeting.
4. In general, any financial commitments shall be authorised by the Council.
5. For any work, above the value of £500, at least two estimates shall be sought. For any work likely to cost more than £2500, at least three estimates shall be sought. The Council shall ensure that only reputable contractors are used and that they have their own third party liability insurance to an appropriate level. The Council does not commit itself to accept the lowest bid. It will determine the best bid in accordance with Local Government Best Value principles taking into account all relevant factors.
6. Before submitting a payment to the Council for approval, the RFO shall ensure that the invoice for that work is seen and approved by the person who initiated the order and that the work has been inspected.

7. A budget estimate for the following year shall be approved by the Council at its meeting held during November.
8. The RFO shall prepare a financial update for the meeting in November setting out the Council's expenditure to date during the financial year, its outstanding financial commitments and comparing those to the budget.
9. The RFO and the Council shall ensure that funds granted to the local community under S.137 of the Local Government Act 1972 are used correctly.
10. An internal auditor shall be appointed who is not a Member of the Council. The internal auditor shall carry out audits as laid down in current published guidance to local Councils on good governance and accountability.
11. Bad debts shall only be written off with the authority of the Council.
12. The RFO shall maintain a record of all insurance cover held by the Council and shall review such cover annually and make necessary arrangements to alter the extent and level of the cover as instructed.
13. The Council shall have fidelity guarantee insurance for all appropriate employees.
14. A review of the Financial Standing Orders shall take place every four years at the first Annual General Meeting following the election of a new Council.

Appendix 1.

Additional Financial Controls and Procurement

1. The Council shall consider and approve financial regulations drawn up by the RFO, which shall include detailed arrangements in respect of the following:
 - i) The keeping of accounting records and systems of internal controls;
 - ii) The assessment and management of financial risks faced by the Council;
 - iii) The work of the independent internal auditor in accordance with proper practices and the receipt of regular reports from the internal auditor, which shall be required at least annually;
 - iv) The inspection and copying by councillors and local electors of the Council's accounts and/or orders of payments; and
 - v) Procurement policies for contracts of all levels and to meet requirements under the Public Contract Regulations 2015.

2. Financial regulations shall confirm that a proposed contract for the supply of goods, materials, services and the execution of works with an estimated value in excess of £25,000 shall satisfy the requirements of the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and will be procured on the basis of a formal tender. The Council will advertise the contract opportunity on the Contract Finder website.

3. Subject to any additional requirements in the financial regulations of the Council, the tender process for contracts for the supply of goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall include, as a minimum, the following steps:

- i) A specification for the goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall be drawn up;
- ii) An invitation to tender shall be drawn up to confirm (a) the Council's specification (b) the time, date and address for the submission of tenders (c) the date of the Council's written response to the tender, and (d) the prohibition on prospective contractors contacting councillors or staff to encourage or support their tender outside the prescribed process;
- iii) The invitation to tender shall be advertised in a local newspaper and in any other manner that is appropriate;
- iv) Tenders are to be submitted in writing in a sealed marked envelope addressed to the Proper Officer;
- v) Tenders shall be opened by the Proper Officer in the presence of at least one Member after the deadline for submission of tenders has passed;
- vi) Tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate meeting of the Council, or a committee or sub-committee with delegated responsibility.

4. Neither the Council, nor a committee or a sub-committee with delegated responsibility for considering tenders, is bound to accept the lowest value tender.

5. Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed £172,514 (or other threshold value specified by the Office of Government Commerce from time to time) the Council must comply with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and where applicable, the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2006 (SI No. 6, as amended). If the 2006 Regulations apply to the contract, the Council must comply with EU Procurement rules.

Approved by the Council on

Signed.....(Chairman)