Banbury Town Council

Mark Hassall ACMA
Town Clerk & RFO

The Town Hall
Bridge Street
Banbury
Oxfordshire
OX16 5QB

Tel: 01295 250340
Fax: 01295 250820

Our Ref:
Your Ref:
Please ask for: Martyn Surfleet
Email: martyn.surfleet@banbury.gov.uk

Date: 13 June 2023

To: All Members of the Town Council.
Others, for information.

You are hereby summoned to attend a Meeting of the **Town Council** to be held in the TOWN HALL, BRIDGE STREET, BANBURY on **Tuesday, 20 June 2023 at 6.30pm**, for the transaction of the following business: -

Mark Hassall
Town Clerk & RFO

BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED

1. Apologies for absence
Contact Martyn Surfleet (01295 250340).

2. Declarations of Interest
Members are asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests in items on the agenda, **and the nature of that interest**, in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, the Banbury Town Council Code of Conduct and Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (Please refer to the notes at the end of Agenda).

3. Minutes of the last Meeting
To approve as correct the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 16 May 2023 (**Enclosed**).

4. Communications
To receive communications from the Town Mayors and/or Leader of the Council.

5. Questions

a. Any Town Councillor may ask the Town Mayor, or the relevant Committee Chairman or the Town Clerk any questions concerning the business of the Council, provided notice of the question has been given to the person to whom it is addressed before the meeting begins, and a copy supplied to the Town Clerk.

b. A period of up to 20 minutes is allocated, during which Members of the public may, at the discretion of the Town Mayor, ask questions of the relevant Committee Chairman on any matter relevant to some question over which the Council has power, or which affects Banbury.

[You are requested to state your name and address before asking your question.]

6. **Minutes of Committees**
To consider the Minutes of Committees:

a) Planning Committee	-	24 May (Enclosed)
b) General Services Committee	-	06 June 2023 (Enclosed)
c) Resources Committee	-	13 June 2023 (To Follow)

7. **Resolutions Moved on Notice**

Resolution No 63 to be moved by Councillor Biegel

"Banbury Town Council supports local, healthy food production and wishes to further promote the growth of herbs, fruits and vegetables. Banbury in Bloom would present an excellent opportunity to do this.
This council resolves to instruct Officers to bring forward a report to all members on expanding Banbury in Bloom to promote local healthy food production by residents"

Resolution No 64 to be moved by Councillor Biegel

"In 2022 this council passed a motion which resolved to undertake a new pro-active anti-litter campaign across Banbury to educate and discourage more people from dropping litter in the first place.
This Council still believes that the minimisation of litter around Banbury is desirable for all residents and visitors. It has been observed that excess litter is being dropped in streets along 'school runs' where there are fewer bins available on the pavement.
This council resolves to survey some of these areas, working alongside Cherwell District Council officers, so the appropriate recycling/general/smart bins may be purchased and installed."

Resolution No 65 to be moved by Councillor Hodgson

"Following the letter to the Banbury Guardian from Caleb and Dylan Thompson of Orchard Way asking if the central reservation of their road could be planted with wildflowers, this council notes the Council's commitment to biodiversity in green spaces across the town and the hard work the Council has already done in encouraging and maintaining biodiversity on its own land. It should also note the hard work that has already been done following the boys' letter, as reported in the recent meeting of the General Services Committee.
It also notes that in terms of Orchard way, if the boys' letter were to result in the positive action they have asked for, the options are to rewild and/or to plant wildflowers, although there are some hurdles to jump over as the land is owned by Oxfordshire County Council, managed by Cherwell District Council and the work carried out by Banbury Town Council. There are other areas of land and road verges across Banbury that are in a similar position and that could be similarly used to encourage increased biodiversity, as Caleb and Dylan have asked, and a noble, socially and environmentally conscious request it is too. They should be proud and are to be commended.
This council, therefore, moves that it will carry out a review to identify suitable sites across Banbury for further biodiversification through rewilding or planting of wildflowers, including central reservations and road verges, and it will liaise with Oxfordshire County Council and Cherwell District Council where required to ensure that that goal is realised wherever possible."

8. **Internal Audit**
That the Annual Internal Audit Report (page 3 of the Annual Return) be received and noted

9. **Annual Return**
That the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1 of the Annual Return) as attached as **Appendix 1** be approved, and signed on behalf of the Council by the Leader of the Council and the Town Clerk

10. Accounting Statement
That the Accounting Statements (Section 2 on the Annual Return – attached as **Appendix 2**) for the year ended 31 March 2023 be approved and be signed on behalf of the Council by the Leader of the Council and the RFO;

11. Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2021 (unaudited)
The Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2023 (unaudited) as attached as **Appendix 3** be approved, and signed on behalf of the Council by the Leader of the Council and the RFO

12. Notice of Electors Rights
That the Notice of Electors Rights (attached at **Appendix 4**) be approved

13. Financial Regulations
To review and approve the Financial Regulations as presented in **Appendix 5**

14. Standing Orders (2018)
To review and approve the Standing Orders (2018) as presented in **Appendix 6**

Notes on declaration of interest
(i) Any Member arriving after the start of the meeting is asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests as necessary as soon as practicable after their arrival even if the item in question has been considered;
(ii) In such circumstances, the Member must withdraw from the meeting room, and should inform the Chairman accordingly.

It is not practical to offer detailed advice during the meeting.

Recording of Meeting
(iii) Please be aware that an audio recording of the meeting may be made, as an aide-memoire for the purposes of the Clerk to ensure minutes reflect the overall tone and content of meetings, and will be deleted following the first approval of the draft minutes by the committee chairman.

BANBURY TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of Banbury Town Council held on Tuesday, 16 May 2023 at 6.30pm in the Town Hall, Banbury.

Present: Councillor Strangwood (Town Mayor)
Councillors: Ahmed, Ayers, Beere, Biegel, Bishop, Bunce, Cherry, Colegrave, Donaldson, Garrett, Hodgson, Hussain, Kilsby, Mallon, Mears, Phillips, Reeves, Richards and Tohill-Martin.

Officers: Mark Hassall (Town Clerk & RFO)
Paul Almond (Director of Environment)
Martyn Surfleet (Executive Officer)
Simon Lewthwaite (Civic Officer)
Chris Green (Events Manager)

The Town Mayor, preceded by the Macebearer, escorted by the Town Clerk and accompanied by Members of the Town Council and the Town Mayor's Chaplain processed into the Town Hall.

The Town Mayor's Chaplain, Reverend Serena Tajima and the incoming Mayor's Imam led prayers. Councillor Mallon read Psalm 84 verses 9-12.

The Town Mayor reviewed her year of office and thanked all those who had supported her during the year, especially her Deputy Town Mayor; her Civic Cadets; fellow Members; the Town Hall staff including, Simon Lewthwaite (Civic Officer); and the people of Banbury.

The Town Mayor presented cheques to her chosen charities, Katherine House Hospice, Helen & Douglas House and Frank Wise School and gift vouchers to the outgoing Civic Cadets.

C.55/22 Election of the Town Mayor for 2023/24

It was proposed by Councillor Mallon, seconded by Councillor Reeves, and **WAS RESOLVED** that Councillor Ahmed be elected Town Mayor of Banbury for the year 2023/24.

C.56/22 Election of a Deputy Town Mayor for 2023/24

It was proposed by Councillor Mallon, seconded by Councillor Reeves, and **WAS RESOLVED** that Councillor Bishop be elected Deputy Town Mayor of Banbury for the year 2023/24.

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The Civic Party then retired and Councillor Ahmed was invested with the Chain and Robe of Office. On the return of the Civic Party, Councillor Ahmed took the Chair. He thanked Members for the honour of being elected Town Mayor for Banbury and undertook to uphold the traditions of the Office.

A short musical interlude ensued where guests were entertained by Tabitha – A student from Sibford School.

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C.57/22 Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Town Mayor

Councillor Ahmed then made his Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Town Mayor of Banbury, which was duly accepted by the Council.

(The Town Mayor announced that Mrs Akksa Bibi would be his Consort, and she was invested with the badge of Town Mayors Consort. The Town Mayor also appointed three new Civic Cadets:

Sea Cadet:	Able Rhianydd Buttle
Army Cadet:	Lance Corporal Owen Jones
Air Training Corps Cadet:	Sgt Pippa Bullock

C.58/22 Apologies for Absence

Cllr Dalton, Cllr Ilott

C.59/22 Declarations of Interest

None.

C.60/22 Minutes of the last Meeting

It was proposed by the Town Mayor, and **WAS RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 11 April 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor.

C.61/22 Communications

The Town Clerk reported that there were no communications.

C.62/22 Appointment of Standing Committees

It was proposed by Councillor Mallon, seconded by Councillor Colegrave, and **WAS RESOLVED** that the size and makeup of the Standing Committees as at **Appendix 1** be approved.

C.63/22 Appointment of Representatives to Outside Bodies

It was proposed by Councillor Mallon, seconded by Councillor Colegrave, and **WAS RESOLVED** that the Appointments of Representatives to Outside Bodies as at **Appendix 2** be approved.

The Meeting ended at 7.10pm.

The Meeting was followed by a Reception for the newly elected Town Mayor

Standing Committee Membership
2023 – 2024

1. Resources Committee

(Seats allocated: Conservative 6, Labour 4)

Conservative	Labour
1. Ayers	1. Biegel
2. Colegrave	2. Hussain
3. Mallon	3. Kilsby
4. Phillips	4. Tohill-Martin
5. Reeves	
6. Strangwood	

[Alternate Members]

Conservative	Labour
1. Ahmed	1. Beere
2. Bishop	2. Cherry
3. Bunce	3. Hodgson
4. Donaldson	4. Richards
5. Ilott	5. Mears
6. Dalton	

2. General Services Committee

(Seats allocated: Conservative 6, Labour 4)

Conservative	Labour
1. Ayers	1. Cherry
2. Bishop	2. Biegel
3. Bunce	3. Hussain
4. Colegrave	4. Mears
5. Donaldson	
6. Phillips	

[Alternate Members]

Conservative	Labour
1. Ahmed	1. Beere
2. Dalton	2. Hodgson
3. Ilott	3. Kilsby
4. Mallon	4. Richards
5. Reeves	5. Tohill-Martin
6. Strangwood	

3. Planning Committee
(Seats Allocated: Conservative 6, Labour 4)

Conservative
1. Ahmed
2. Ayers
3. Bishop
4. Bunce
5. Colegrave
6. Ilott

Labour
1. Beere
2. Hodgson
3. Kilsby
4. Richards

[Alternate Members]

Conservative
1. Dalton
2. Donaldson
3. Mallon
4. Phillips
5. Reeves
6. Strangwood

Labour
1. Cherry
2. Hussain
3. Mears
4. Biegel
5. Tohill-Martin

4. Appeals Panel
(Seats Allocated: Conservative 3, Labour 2)

Conservative
1. Bunce
2. Donaldson
3. Ilott

Labour
1. Beere
2. Hodgson

[**Note**: Appeals Panel members cannot be members of Resources Cttee]

APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Organisation	Category	No	Nominations 2023/24
Banbury & District Air Training Corps	B	1	Cllr Donaldson (C)
Banbury & District Samaritans	A	1	Cllr Ahmed (C)
Banbury & District Twinning Association	A	1	Cllr Hussain (L)
Banbury Bluecoat Foundation	B	1	Cllr Bunce (C)
Banbury Borough Bowling Club	B	1	Cllr Mallon (C)
Banbury Canal Partnership	P	1	Cllr Mallon (C) Cllr Hodgson (L)
Banbury Citizen's Advice Bureau	A	1	Cllr Reeves (C)
Banbury Civic Society	B	1	Cllr Mallon (C)
Banbury Sea Cadets	B	1	Cllr Phillips (C)
Banbury Traffic Advisory Committee	P	3	Cllr Ahmed (C) Cllr Biegel (L) Cllr Ilott (C)
BARKS	B	1	Cllr Ilott (C)
Borough of Banbury Trust 2 (plus TM and DTM)	P	2	Cllr Mallon (C) Cllr Hussain (L)
Chamber of Commerce	A	1	Cllr Mallon (C)
Cherwell Climate Change Partnership	P	1	Cllr Dalton (C)
Cherwell Community & Voluntary Service	A	1	Cllr Donaldson (C)
Cherwell Crime Partnership: Banbury	P	1	Cllr Bunce (C)
Community Partnership Network	P	1	Cllr Mallon (C) Cllr Hussain (L)
The Glebe Charity (Cricket Club)	B	1	Cllr Ahmed (C)
The Hill	A	1	Cllr Cherry (C)
Sunshine Centre	B	1	Cllr Strangwood (C) Cllr Richards (L)
Town Centre Partnership (3)	P	3	Cllr Mallon (C) Cllr Ilott (C) Cllr Hussain (L)

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Planning Committee held on Wednesday, 24 May 2023 at 6.30pm in the Town Hall, Banbury.

Present:	Councillor Bunce (Vice-Chairman) Councillors: Ahmed, Ayers, Beere, Bishop, Kilsby, Mears, Phillips and Richards.
Alternate Members:	None
Officers:	Mark Hassall (Town Clerk & RFO) Martyn Surfleet (Executive Officer)

PL.4/23 Apologies

Councillor Ilott, Officer Duxbury

PL.5/23 Declarations of Interest

Councillors Beere and Bishop declared personal interests as members of the Cherwell District Council Planning Committee. Members indicated that any views expressed at the meeting would be based on the information currently available and a final decision, which in the light of further information, might differ from previous views, would be made at the Local Planning Authority Meeting.

Councillor Ahmed also declared interests in application 23/00507/F, Councillor Ahmed agreed to refrain from speaking on the matters and would abstain from any votes that occurred.

The Town Clerk declared interests in application 23/00995/CLUE, Mr Hassall agreed to refrain from speaking on the matters and would abstain from any votes that occurred.

PL.6/23 Minutes of the Last Meeting

IT WAS RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on the 03 and 14 May 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Vice-Chairman.

PL.7/23 Planning Applications to be Considered

The Committee considered various planning applications that had been referred to the Town Council for consideration by Cherwell District Council (CDC) and were matters that had been delegated to the Planning Committee or where a Ward Member had referred a delegated application.

Officers responded to a number of questions raised by Members.

Members agreed that the proposals set out by the Planning officer regarding as the observations included within Appendix 1 be forwarded to the local planning authority for consideration.

IT WAS RESOLVED that the comments, as set out in Appendix 1, be forwarded to the Local Planning Authority.

PL.8/23 Planning Applications Delegated to the Town Clerk

The Town Clerk had submitted a schedule containing details of planning applications which had been delegated to him in consultation with the Chairman, setting out the observations that had been forwarded to Cherwell District Council.

IT WAS RESOLVED that the report be noted.

PL.9/23 **Decision Notices**

The Town Clerk had submitted a schedule containing details of decision notices which had been sent by Cherwell District Council which were contrary to the recommendations of the Town Council. It was noted that there were two contrary determinations.

IT WAS RESOLVED that the report be noted.

The meeting ended at 18.51 pm

Appendix 1

Planning Applications considered by the Planning Committee

Application Number	*Applicant*	*Location*	*Proposal*	*Observations*
23/00978/F	Miss Chloe Waller	Ark Farmhouse, 120 Warwick Road, Banbury.	Conversion of 9-bed HMO and 2 studio apartments to 12-bedroom HMO with 2 studio apartments (Sui Generis) with the help of a two-storey rear extension.	Banbury Town Council raise no objections but would like to request that the outside brickwork or rendering is in-keeping and sympathetic to the main building and surrounding.
23/01012/OUT	Mr Chris Preece	60 Bankside, Banbury.	Outline application for erection of a possible bungalow or two-storey dwelling.	Banbury Town Council object to this proposal on the grounds that the site is too small, in a backland position and would represent over-development of the site to the detriment of the amenities of surrounding properties. This therefore would create a very poor standard of amenity for any prospective residents.

Please note that following the consideration of delegated planning by the Town Clerk and Chairman, there may be additional plans to consider in order to meet the deadlines of the Planning Authority.

GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Meeting of the General Services Committee held at 6.30pm on Tuesday, 06 June 2023 in the Town Hall, Banbury.

Present:	Councillor Phillips (Chairman) Councillors: Biegel, Bunce, Cherry, Colegrave, Mears, Richards.
Alternate Members:	Cllr Richards for Cllr Hussain
Officers:	Mark Hassall (Town Clerk & RFO) Paul Almond (Director of Environment) Martyn Surfleet (Executive Officer)

GS.4/23 Apologies for Absence

Cllr Ayers, Cllr Bishop, Cllr Hussain.

GS.5/23 Declarations of Interest

None.

GS.6/23 Minutes of the Last Meeting

IT WAS RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 March and 16 May 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

GS.7/23 Income & Expenditure Report

The Committee considered a report prepared by the Town Clerk & RFO comparing year-to-date income and expenditure with the projected annual budget for the financial year. The report showed all expenditure incurred up to 22 May 2023.

Officers responded to a range of questions from Members relating to various budget codes and financial procedures. Members' attention was drawn to the fact that overall the Committee's expenditure was within forecast versus the phased YTD budget.

General Services variances are principally

- Staffing vacancies contributing £9k
- Computer software to support play equipment and grounds maintenance monitoring.
- Timing of invoicing for grounds maintenance works impacted by seasonality and awaiting invoicing, across Parks, Football pitches and Horton View.
- Purchase of defibrillators at pavilions across the estate.

Underspends on Resources Committee also principally

- Reduced Central Admin costs including salaries.
- Town Council Events income includes sponsorship across events and are ahead of budget, with costs incurred in advance but managed within planned budgets. The recent coronation celebration increased expenditure of (£7k) was offset by increased income of £5k, with a net £2k overspend incurred on litter disposal.
- Other Costs & Income includes increased interest income.

Financial Effects & Risk Assessment

This is a monitoring report so there are no specific financial effects arising from it. Without effective budget monitoring there is a risk that budgets will not be adhered to, thereby weakening the Council's ability to demonstrate an effective use of resources. This risk is being mitigated by closer monitoring of spend using a phased budget.

IT WAS RESOLVED to receive and note the Income and Expenditure report.

GS.8/23 Parks and Cemeteries Monitoring Report

The team are up to date with the scheduled work.

The start to the mowing season has gone well, with the Park, Cemeteries and St Marys Churchyard have been maintained to high standard.

Staff continue to be busy with burial duties.

The Memorial Stability Survey is now completed, grave owners are being contacted regarding any that have failed.

The three new employees have now commenced employment with us.

All the Safe Use of Machinery and Equipment Training has been completed by the new employees.

The Spring Bedding has now been removed in preparation for the Summer planting. Members of the public benefitted from the plant giveaway this year.

Planting in the park days with local school children is organised for the 14th and 15th of June.

The football season has now finished, and staff are now engaged with the weekly operations for bowling green maintenance.

4th Corner Landscape Contract Update

The contractor has experienced some staff vacancies which delayed the second and third cut, therefore, some sites were longer during May than they should have been. They have now commenced the 4th cut and should catch-up during this cycle.

Road channel weed treatment spraying has been completed on schedule.

Following football post removal, sports pitch post season renovation works are underway, aeration operations, dressing and seeding of goal mouths.

Shrub border maintenance is on schedule.

The Contract Supervisor is still off work long term sick. The area manager continues to cover the role and oversee operations until the supervisor returns.

The Council's Landscape Officer continues to work closely with the contractor in addition to carrying out site inspections to monitor their performance.

Ranger Service / Play Area Update

The Park Ranger Team continue to keep up to date with the weekly Health & Safety inspections and carrying out any repairs resulting from those inspections.

The team is working through works identified in the annual inspection report.

<u>Play Area refurbishment update is:</u>

Princess Diana Park – The play area refurbishment contract started installation on the 2nd June, project should be completed within 3 weeks, in time for the school Summer Holidays.

Spiceball Park – Repairs have been undertaken on the ramp surface.

Moorfields Park – A new accessible roundabout has been ordered for the play area, and will be installed by the Summer School Holidays.

Howard Road Play Area – The surfacing underneath the aerial runway needs replacing. Due to the indicated costs this work will need to be formally tendered.

The Rangers have played a valuable role in supporting the Council's event programme so far this year.

Fencing / Bench Repairs Update

Bridge Street Park – The rangers have now removed the old rotten wooden fence following the installation of the new metal fence.

Peoples Park – Timber fencing refurbishment continues, with the Probation Service.

Peoples Park – The Probation Service has also started to refurbish the park benches, and the standard of work they are undertaking is excellent.

Cleansing Service Update

Facility Cleaning – Following the end of the football usage the pavilions are being deep cleaned in readiness for next season.

The In-house team are performing well, keeping our facilities clean for public use and have assisted with cleaning at our events.

Parks & Open Spaces Cleansing – The service provided by Cherwell District Council is being delivered in line with the Service Level agreement.

Café Operator Update

Following the recent advertisement for a new operator, viewings and interviews were held with interested parties.

Four organisations submitted formal business plans for evaluation. Following the outcome of the evaluation a lease has been offered, accepted and signed by the winner Karen Smith, securing a new operator for an initial term until 31st March 2025.

Her planned re-opening date is the 11th June 2023.

Financial Effects & Risk Assessment

There are no risks arising from these items and all financial effects can be contained within existing budgets.

Recommendations

The Committee is invited to **RESOLVE:**

- To note the Parks and Cemeteries Service Update.
- To note the 4th Corner Landscape Contract Update.
- To note the Ranger Service / Play Area Update.
- To note the Fencing / Bench Repair Update.
- To note the Cleansing Service Update.
- To note the Café Operator Update.

It was also **RESOLVED** by the chairmen and agreed by the committee that the Director of Environment bring a future report to the committee regarding the grass maintenance schedule and opportunities to improve biodiversity within our Parks and Open Spaces.

GS.9/23 Customer Relationship Management and Booking Software Update

Members requested that officers look into ways to implement much required modernisation to our systems, by way of tendering for a CRM (Customer Relationship Management) software package, and events booking system that will begin to address the current issues faced by The Council and its Officers, in relation to the communication and promotion to residents, of events and facilities, in order to create ease of access.

After sourcing feedback from officers within our service areas and operations, along with councillor representation, a set of key objectives were identified that inform the initial pitch to potential software providers.

These are as follows:

- Improve communication and engagement with Residents and stakeholders.
- Streamline reporting processes.
- Provide a cohesive and simple booking system for Events, facilities and the Town Hall.

Several software providers were contacted to advise and propose solutions with varying results. And after much consideration and consultation with both members and officers it was agreed to enlist the services of Abavus Ltd to provide a CRM software and Mobile App, and that Bookteq would handle the bookings of both the Town Hall and Sports Facilities.

My Banbury Customer Portal / App - Abavus

The Solution proposed by Abavus is a modular cloud-based system which would be accessed through the current Town Council website as well as a downloadable mobile app. Features of the system include -

The software comprises of the following –
Customer Portal – Front facing web portal where residents can;

- Register an account
- Report issues (Service Requests)
- Make enquiries
- Allow “Pin in Map” location of issues
- Track progress of requests and enquiries
- Find out more information about our and other authorities services
- Stay up to date with events and other news from BTC
- Highlight entertainment, arts and culture venues within Banbury

Service Desk – Back of house software where officers can;

- Receive reports and enquiries
- Manage and update the status of reports
- Assign reports to specific Officers to handle
- Fully track the lifecycle of a report
- Update residents on outcomes
- Collate and track report data

Mobile App – Mobile version of the Customer Portal that allows access to all the features of the portal but on the go, and will be available on iOS and Android devices. The App will facilitate;

- More accurate location selection, allowing to report on the spot by using “current location”
- A modern, simple and convenient way to engage with Banbury Town Council services

6This system is completely modular and all content is built and designed by officers with the initial support of the tech team at Abavus. Once launched any updates and changes can be implemented and tested by Officers, leading to full flexibility on the evolution of both the App and Customer Portal.

Booking System - Bookteq

The solution proposed by Bookteq is an online booking system that will handle both facilities and sports bookings for the Council. Bookteq is a cloud-based booking system that enables simplified facilities management, detailed reporting, and a smooth customer experience. The tool will be accessed by links within the Councils website as well as customisable pop-up Widgets for quick and easy booking. Links will also be added to the mobile app to enable all round access.

Next Steps – Roll out / Launch

Customer Portal / App
Officers along with the contract manager from Abavus have rigorously tested both the App and the Customer Portal and have proposed the following plan for launching the platform –

- 30th May – Silent launch. The Service Desk will be available to officers to begin logging requests and enquiries, allowing time to tweak forms and trouble shoot in a safe environment.
- 6th June – Soft "Go Live".
- 12th June – Silent Launch. The Customer Portal will be listed on the Council's website and enable residents to begin registering accounts and report issues. It will also allow for officers to trouble shoot any potential issues before press releases / announcement of platform.
- 3rd July – Full Go Live – Co-ordinated press release / marketing schedule, and public launch of the App and Customer Portal to follow.

Facilities Booking Tool

Having worked with representatives from Bookteq, our catalogue of facilities has been inputted into their system, along with prices to reflect our fees & charges for 2023/34.
Sports pitch bookings will operate in a similar manner to how they are currently handled by officers, allowing a smooth transition to self-service bookings from our League teams. This should facilitate priority booking to our long-standing league teams. The proposed timeline for launch is as follows –

- 5th June – Town Hall Bookings go live
- 10th July – Sports Facilities go live

Recommendations – General Services Committee
The Committee is invited to **RESOLVE:**

- To Note the Booking, Customer Relationship Management, Reporting & Mobile Application Update.
- To Approve the suggested "Go Live" date of 3rd July 2023.
- To Authorise that officers in conjunction with selected members meet to agree a marketing plan for the public launch of the CRM Software and Mobile App.
- To Approve the suggested "Go Live" Schedule for the booking system, as detailed in section 8.2.

The meeting ended at 7.30pm

8

COUNCIL MEETING

20 JUNE 2023

REPORT OF THE TOWN CLERK & RFO

APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS AND ANNUAL RETURN FOR 2022/23

1 Introduction and Purpose of Report

1.1 As part of the Audit and Accounts Regulations, the Council is required to complete an Annual Return.

1.2 The purpose of this report is to authorise the Leader of the Council, Town Clerk and the RFO to sign off the Annual Return and Accounts, as appropriate, on behalf of the Town Council.

2 Wards Affected

2.1 All Wards.

3 Effect on Policy

3.1 Nil.

4 Contact Officer

4.1 Mark Hassall (01295 817313).

5 External Audit

5.1 Following changes to the audit regime, the Council's External Audit is now completed remotely. The deregulation removed the need for the External Auditor to visit the premises at all, with a consequent significant savings in Audit costs. The larger town councils now come within the same Audit regime as all other parish and town councils, rather than that applied to principal authorities such as CDC and OCC which was the case prior to the introduction of the lighter touch audit regime.

5.2 Under the limited assurance regime bodies with annual income or expenditure over £200K but below £6.5m are regarded as "smaller" bodies and are subject to an intermediate audit. This requires the completion of an Annual Return which is then sent to the External Auditor for completion at section 3 along with the appropriate supporting evidence and an audit questionnaire. Whilst the Auditor no longer visits the site he is still required to probe further into the annual governance statement in a "show me" approach in testing the assertions made by the Council.

6 The Annual Return

Annual Governance Statement

6.1 The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1 of the Annual Return) has 9 parts; the Council meets the requirements of each as follows;

1. The accounts were prepared in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations as they apply to Banbury Town Council.
2. There are procedures and internal controls in place and there are regular checks of bank accounts and income and expenditure. The effectiveness of the internal controls has been reviewed.
3. To the best of my knowledge, the Council has only taken actions and decisions on matters that it has the legal power to do so. Also, no matters of this nature have been reported by the internal auditor.
4. The notice as to electors' rights will be displayed in accordance with the Audit and Accounts Regulations.
5. An annual risk assessment is completed and reported to Council. Internal controls and insurances are reviewed on a regular basis.
6. An independent internal auditor examines the accounting records and control systems and provides written reports and recommendations which go to Resources Committee. The effectiveness of the system of internal audit has been reviewed.
7. All audit reports and recommendations from both the internal and external auditors, along with proposed actions to address any concerns, go before the Resources Committee for consideration.
8. To the best of my knowledge, the Council has disclosed everything it should have about its business during the year including any events taking place after the year-end.
9. The Council has discharged its responsibilities in relation to accountability for funds/assets held in trust.

6.2 In accordance with paragraph 6(4)(a) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 the Annual Governance Statement must be approved in advance of approving the Statement of Accounts. A copy is attached at **Appendix 1.**

Accounting Statements

6.3 This part of the Return (Section 2) will be completed by the RFO from extracts taken from the Council's computerised accounting system (RBS Omega) and verified by the Council's independent Accounts Advisor. Copy attached as **Appendix 2**.

7 Statement of Accounts

7.1 There is no longer a prescribed format for the Accounts. This has allowed for a more user-friendly format to be applied, which hopefully Elected Members and members of the public will find easier to follow. In any event the new format has considerably reduced the length of the Accounts.

7.2 The Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2023 (unaudited) are attached as **Appendix 3**.

8 Financial Effects and Risk Assessment

8.1 Undertaking an Annual Governance Review helps to ensure that the Council has an effective corporate governance framework and provides a mechanism through which weaknesses can be identified and addressed.

9 Recommendations

That the Council be RECOMMENDED to resolve:

9.1 That the Annual Internal Audit Report (page 3 of the Annual Return) be received and noted;

9.2 That the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1 on the Annual Return – attached as **Appendix 1**), where questions 1 to 9 are answered yes, and signed on behalf of the Council by the Leader of the Council and the Town Clerk;

9.3 That the Accounting Statements (Section 2 on the Annual Return – attached as **Appendix 2**) for the year ended 31 March 2023 be approved and be signed on behalf of the Council by the Leader of the Council and the RFO;

9.4 That the Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2023 (unaudited) (attached as **Appendix 3**) be approved and signed on behalf of the Council by the Leader of the Council and the RFO.

9.5 That the Notice of Electors Rights (attached at **Appendix 4**) be approved.

Background papers – none

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23 Form 3

To be completed by Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities*:

- **where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure exceeded £25,000 but did not exceed £6.5 million; or**
- **where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure was £25,000 or less but that:**
  - **are unable to certify themselves as exempt (fee payable); or**
  - **have requested a limited assurance review (fee payable)**

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23

1. Every smaller authority in England that either received gross income or incurred gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 **must** complete Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return at the end of each financial year in accordance with *Proper Practices.*
2. **The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is made up of three parts, pages 3 to 6:**
   - The **Annual Internal Audit Report must** be completed by the authority's internal auditor.
   - **Sections 1 and 2 must** be completed and approved by the authority.
   - **Section 3** is completed by the external auditor and will be returned to the authority.
3. The authority **must** approve Section 1, Annual Governance Statement, before approving Section 2, Accounting Statements, and both **must** be approved and published on the authority website/webpage **before 1 July 2023.**
4. An authority with either gross income or gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 or an authority with neither income nor expenditure exceeding £25,000, but which is unable to certify itself as exempt, or is requesting a limited assurance review, **must** return to the external auditor by email or post (not both) **no later than 30 June 2023.** Reminder letters will incur a charge of £40 +VAT:
   - the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Sections 1 and 2, together with
   - a bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2023
   - an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements
   - notification of the commencement date of the period for the exercise of public rights
   - Annual Internal Audit Report 2022/23

Unless requested, do not send any additional documents to your external auditor. Your external auditor will ask for any additional documents needed.

Once the external auditor has completed the limited assurance review and is able to give an opinion, the Annual Governance and Accountability **Section1, Section 2 and Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate** will be returned to the authority by email or post.

Publication Requirements

Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, authorities must publish the following information on the authority website/webpage:

Before 1 July 2023 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounting statements are as yet unaudited;
- **Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2022/23**, approved and signed, page 4
- **Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2022/23**, approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2023 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of conclusion of audit
- **Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate**
- **Sections 1 and 2 of AGAR** including any amendments as a result of the limited assurance review.

It is recommended as best practice, to avoid any potential confusion by local electors and interested parties, that you also publish the Annual Internal Audit Report, page 3.

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return constitutes the annual return referred to in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. Throughout, the words 'external auditor' have the same meaning as the words 'local auditor' in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

**for a complete list of bodies that may be smaller authorities refer to schedule 2 to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.*

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2022/23

- The authority **must** comply with *Proper Practices* in completing Sections 1 and 2 of this AGAR. *Proper Practices* are found in the *Practitioners' Guide** which is updated from time to time and contains everything needed to prepare successfully for the financial year-end and the subsequent work by the external auditor.
- Make sure that the AGAR is complete (no highlighted boxes left empty) and is properly signed and dated. Any amendments must be approved by the authority and properly initialled.
- The authority **should** receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report before approving the Annual Governance Statement and the accounts.
- Use the checklist provided below to review the AGAR for completeness before returning it to the external auditor by email or post (not both) no later than 30 June 2023.
- The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) must be approved on the same day or before the Accounting Statements (Section 2) and evidenced by the agenda or minute references.
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) must certify the accounts (Section 2) before they are presented to the authority for approval. The authority must in this order; consider, approve and sign the accounts.
- The RFO is required to commence the public rights period as soon as practical after the date of the AGAR approval.
- **You must inform your external auditor about any change of Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chairman, and provide relevant authority owned generic email addresses and telephone numbers.**
- Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation to be sent to your external auditor with the AGAR covers all the bank accounts. If the authority holds any short-term investments, note their value on the bank reconciliation. The external auditor must be able to agree the bank reconciliation to Box 8 on the accounting statements **(Section 2, page 5)**. An explanation **must** be provided of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8. More help on bank reconciliation is available in the *Practitioners' Guide**.
- Explain fully significant variances in the accounting statements on **page 5**. Do not just send a copy of the detailed accounting records instead of this explanation. The external auditor wants to know that you understand the reasons for all variances. Include complete numerical and narrative analysis to support the full variance.
- If the bank reconciliation is incomplete or variances not **fully** explained then additional costs may be incurred.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and that the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2022) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2023).
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), on behalf of the authority, **must** set the commencement date for the exercise of public rights of 30 consecutive working days which **must** include the first ten working days of July.
- The authority **must** publish on the authority website/webpage the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, including the period for the exercise of public rights and the name and address of the external auditor **before 1 July 2023.**

Completion checklist – 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements		Yes	No
All sections	Have all highlighted boxes have been completed?		
	Has all additional information requested, including **the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights**, been provided for the external auditor?		
Internal Audit Report	Have all highlighted boxes been completed by the internal auditor and explanations provided?		
Section 1	For any statement to which the response is 'no', has an explanation been published?		
Section 2	Has the Responsible Financial Officer signed the accounting statements before presentation to the authority for approval?		
	Has the authority's approval of the accounting statements been confirmed by the signature of the Chairman of the approval meeting?		
	Has an explanation of significant variations been published where required?		
	Has the bank reconciliation as at **31 March 2023** been reconciled to Box 8?		
	Has an explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 been provided?		
Sections 1 and 2	Trust funds – have all disclosures been made if the authority as a body corporate is a sole managing trustee? **NB:** do not send trust accounting statements unless requested.		

****Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices***, can be downloaded from **www.nalc.gov.uk** or from **www.ada.org.uk**

Annual Internal Audit Report 2022/23

ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

ENTER PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

During the financial year ended 31 March 2023, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2022/23 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.			
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.			
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.			
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.			
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.			
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.			
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.			
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.			
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.			
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.			
K. **If** the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2021/22, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. *(If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2021/22 AGAR tick "not covered")*			
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.			
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations *(during the 2022-23 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2021-22 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).*			
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2021/22 AGAR *(see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).*			

	Yes	No	Not applicable
O. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.			

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

DD/MM/YYYY DD/MM/YYYY DD/MM/YYYY

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

ENTER NAME OF INTERNAL AUDITOR

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date DD/MM/YYYY

***If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).**

**Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

We acknowledge as the members of:

ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2023, that:

	Agreed Yes	No*		*'Yes' means that this authority:*
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.				*prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.*
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.				*made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.*
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.				*has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.*
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.				*during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.*
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.				*considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.*
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.				*arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.*
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.				*responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.*
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.				*disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.*
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A	*has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.*

***Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.**

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

DD/MM/YYYY

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by the Chairman and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chairman SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk SIGNATURE REQUIRED

ENTER PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2022/23 for

ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2022 £	31 March 2023 £	*Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records.*
1. Balances brought forward			*Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.*
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies			*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts			*Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.*
4. (-) Staff costs			*Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.*
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments			*Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).*
6. (-) All other payments			*Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cash-book less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).*
7. (=) Balances carried forward			*Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).*
8. Total value of cash and short term investments			*The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March –* ***To agree with bank reconciliation.***
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets			*The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.*
10. Total borrowings			*The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).*

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)				*The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.*
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)				*The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.*

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2023 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date DD/MM/YYYY

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

DD/MM/YYYY

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by Chairman of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

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

In respect of ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

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

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

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

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

2 External auditor's limited assurance opinion 2022/23

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

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

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

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

3 External auditor certificate 2022/23

We certify/do not certify* that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2023.

*We do not certify completion because:

External Auditor Name

ENTER NAME OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR

External Auditor Signature SIGNATURE REQUIRED Date DD/MM/YYYY

Annual Internal Audit Report 2022/23

BANBURY TOWN COUNCIL

WWW.BANBURY.GOV.UK

During the financial year ended 31 March 2023, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2022/23 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✔		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✔		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✔		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✔		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✔		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✔		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✔		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✔		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✔		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✔		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2021/22, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. *(If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2021/22 AGAR tick "not covered")*			✔
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.			✔
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations *(during the 2022-23 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2021-22 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).*	✔		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2021/22 AGAR *(see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).*	✔		

	Yes	No	Not applicable
O. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	✔		

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

05/10/2022 16/02/2023 26/04/2023

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

Adrian Shepherd-Roberts

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

Date 26/04/2023

***If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).**

**Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

Banbury Town Council

Statement of Accounts

(Not Subject to Audit)

31 March 2023

Banbury Town Council

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Page No(s).

Banbury Town Council

Council Information

Town Mayor

Cllr Jane Strangwood

Councillors
Cllr Fiaz Ahmed
Cllr George Ayers
Cllr Andrew Beere
Cllr Rebecca Biegel
Cllr Mike Bishop
Cllr Johnny Bunce
Cllr Mark Cherry
Cllr John Colegrave
Cllr Ben Dalton
Cllr John Donaldson
Cllr Simon Garrett
Cllr Matt Hodgson
Cllr Shaida Hussain
Cllr Tony Ilott
Cllr Steve Kilsby
Cllr Kieron Mallon
Cllr Helen Mears
Cllr Martin Phillips
Vacancy
Cllr Eddie Reeves
Cllr Barry Richards

Clerk to the Council and Responsible Financial Officer
Clerk to the Council & RFO - Mark Hassall ACMA CGMA

Auditors
Moore

Banbury Town Council

Introduction to Accounting Statements

For the Year Ended 31 March 2023

The Accounting and Audit Regulations governing the production of the Council's accounts were amended on 31 March 2012. Prior to this date the Council were obliged to prepare its accounts under the 2008 FRSSE and these accounts were subject to a full code audit.

The new regulations allow the Council to adopt the Limited Assurance Audit Regime, the principal advantage being a considerable saving in audit fees and a less arduous audit regime.

The Council's statutory accounts are now produced in the form of the Annual Return. The Statements of Accounts which are not subject to audit provides background workings and explanations of the figures declared in the Annual Return.

The following items are included:

The Statement of Accounting Policies

This statement details the legislation and the accounting principles on which the financial statements are prepared.

The Statement of Responsibilities

This statement identifies the Council's responsibilities and identifies the officer who is responsible for the Council's financial affairs.

The Income and Expenditure Account (Unaudited)

This document shows the income generated and the total expenditure on the services provided by the Council for the year. If required, this document includes capital expenditure and the capital element of loan repayments.

The Income and Expenditure Account Reconciliation (Unaudited)

This document reconciles the figures shown in the Income and Expenditure Account to the Annual Return.

The Balance Sheet (Unaudited)

This sets out the financial position of the Council on 31 March. It shows the value of its assets, the value of its cash and bank values, how much it is owed and how much it owes and the balance of reserves at its disposal.

Notes to the Accounts

These provide further information on the amounts included in the financial statements.

Budget Comparison for the year ended 31 March 2023

The Council's policy is to estimate the total expenditure for the year, which may contain capital expenditure not financed via the precept. Any such expenditure of this type is included within the actual revenue expenditure for the year.

The budget out-turn is summarised below :

	Net Expenditure	Net Budget	Variance
SERVICES TO THE PUBLIC			
Litter and Dog Bins	(144,942)	(154,876)	9,934
Cemeteries	(199,846)	(196,217)	(3,629)
Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation	(885,757)	(1,002,801)	117,044
Cultural and Heritage	(2,379)	(34,849)	32,470
Bus Shelters and Grit Bins	(15,053)	(18,840)	3,787
Capital Costs	(207,782)	(98,879)	(108,903)
	(1,455,759)	**(1,506,462)**	**50,703**
DEMOCRATIC, CIVIC AND CENTRAL COSTS			
Civic and Events	(185,937)	(203,782)	17,845
Service Support Costs	(271,006)	(289,168)	18,162
Town Hall	(71,265)	(66,307)	(4,958)
Swimming Pool and Other Grants	(89,030)	(88,377)	(653)
Capital Costs		-	-
Interest and Other Income	62,705	43,765	18,940
	(554,533)	**(603,869)**	**49,336**
Covid Recovery Grant		-	-
Developer Contribution under S106 agreements		104,464	-104,464
Precept	2,017,911	2,017,911	-
Net surplus/(deficit)	**7,619**	**12,044**	**(4,425)**

It is the Council's policy to provide full information about its affairs. Interested members of the public have a statutory right to inspect the accounts before the audit is completed. The availability of the accounts for inspection is advertised on the Council's notice boards and website.

Further information about the accounts is available from The Town Hall, Bridge Street, Banbury, OX16 5QB. This is part of the Council's policy of providing full information about its affairs.

Banbury Town Council

Statement of Accounting Policies

31 March 2023

Accounting Convention

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – A Practitioners Guide (England).

These accounts have been prepared having regard to the fundamental accounting concepts of: Going Concern, Prudence, Accruals, Relevance, Consistency, Reliability, Comparability, Understandability and Materiality.

The accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

Prior to 1 April 2012 the Council's accounts were prepared in line with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (FRSSE 2008). The change from the FRSSE has resulted in a review of accounting policies, with changes in respect of the treatment of Fixed Assets.

Fixed Assets

All expenditure on the acquisition, creation or enhancement of fixed assets above the Council de-minimus (currently £5,000) is written off to the Council's Income and Expenditure Account in the year of acquisition. Expenditure on fixed assets is then included in the Balance Sheet with a corresponding transaction shown in the Capital Financing Reserve to balance the transaction.

Fixed Assets are included in the balance sheet at carrying value current on 31 March 2009 together with subsequent acquisitions and enhancements at cost.

Depreciation Policy

All assets are held at cost on the balance sheet, in line with the accounting regulations.

Disposals

Where an asset is disposed of at a value above the de-minimus level (currently £10,000), the proceeds of the capital receipt within the meaning of the Local Authorities (Capital Financing and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2011, are included in the Income and Expenditure Account and carried to the Useable Capital Receipts Reserve.

Grants or Contributions from Government or Related Bodies

Capital Grants

Where a fixed asset has been acquired or improved with the financing either wholly or in part by a grant or contribution from government or a related body, e.g. Sports Council, the full amount of the grant has been included in the Income and Expenditure Account to off-set the cost of purchasing the relevant asset.

Revenue Grants

Whether paid on account by instalment or in arrears grants and third party contributions are recognised as income on the date the Council receives the payment. Revenue grants are matched in revenue accounts with the service expenditure to which they relate and are shown under a separate heading in the Statutory Income and Expenditure Account.

Capital Receipts

Capital receipts arising from the disposal of fixed assets are taken to the Capital Receipts Reserve until such time as they are used to finance new capital expenditure.

Investments

Investments over one year in length are not included in the balance sheet and realised gains or losses are taken into the Income and Expenditure account as realised.

Stocks and Work in Progress

Stocks where relevant are being constantly replaced and their value is not material to assessing the Council's state of affairs, as a result, stock is written off directly to revenue expenditure.

Debtors and Creditors

The revenue accounts of the Council are maintained on an accruals basis in accordance with the regulations. That is, sums due to or from the Council during the year are included whether or not the cash has actually been received or paid in the year. Exceptions to this are payment of regular quarterly and other accounts (e.g. telephones, electricity). This policy is applied consistently each year. Therefore, it will not have a material effect on the year’s accounts or on the Council’s annual budget.
The Council reviews the level of its commercial debtors on a regular basis and provisions are made, as required, where the likelihood of amounts proving ultimately collectable is in doubt.

Value Added Tax

Income and Expenditure excludes any amounts related to VAT, as all VAT suffered/collected is recoverable from or payable to HM Revenue and Customs. Any amounts not so recoverable are treated as a separate expense.

External Loan Repayments

When required, details of the Council’s external borrowings are shown in the notes.
The Council shows external borrowings in its Balance Sheet. However the capital element of loan repayments is included in the Income and Expenditure Account and transferred to the Balance Sheet via the Capital Financing Account.

Leases

The Council has no commitments under finance leases. Rentals payable under operating leases are charged to revenue on an accruals basis.

Reserves

The Council maintains certain reserves to meet general and specific future expenditure. The purpose of the Council’s reserves is explained in the notes.
The Capital Financing Reserve is maintained to manage the accounting processes for tangible fixed assets. It does not represent usable resources for the Council:
Capital receipts arising from the disposal of fixed assets are taken to the Useable Capital Receipts Reserve until such time as they are used to finance new capital expenditure.

Interest Income

All interest receipts are credited initially to general funds.

Interest is reallocated to certain reserves based on the level of their fund balance.

Cost of Support Services

The costs of management and administration have been apportioned to services on an appropriate and consistent basis.

Pensions

The pension costs that are charged against precept in the Council’s accounts, in respect of its employees, are equal to the contributions paid to the funded pension scheme for those employees.
These contributions are determined by the fund’s actuary on a triennial basis and are set to meet 100% of the liabilities of the pension fund, in accordance with relevant government regulations.
The Local Government scheme is accounted for as a defined benefit scheme.

Banbury Town Council

Statement of Responsibilities for the Accounts

31 March 2023

The Council's Responsibilities

The Council is required:

to make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs

to secure that one of its officers has the responsibility for the administration of those affairs. At this Council, that officer is the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO).

to manage its affairs to secure economic, efficient and effective use of resources and safeguard its assets

to approve the Annual Return

The Responsible Financial Officer's Responsibilities

The RFO is responsible for the preparation of the Council's statement of accounts as contained in *Governance and Accountability for Local Councils (Part 3) - A Practitioners Guide England "The Guide"*, to present a true and fair view of the financial position of the Council at 31 March 2023 and its income and expenditure for the year then ended.

In preparing the statements of accounts, the RFO has:

selected suitable accounting policies and then applied them consistently

made judgements and estimates that were reasonable and prudent, and complied with the guide.

The RFO has also:

kept proper accounting records which were up to date, and

taken reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Responsible Financial Officer's Certificate

I hereby certify that the statement of accounts presents a true and fair view of the position of Banbury Town Council at 31 March 2023, and its income and expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2023

Signed: ……………………………………………
Responsible Financial Officer - Mark Hassall

Date: ………………….

Banbury Town Council

Income and Expenditure Account

for the year ended 31 March 2023

Prior Year £ Net Expenditure		2023 £ Gross Expenditure	2023 £ Income	2023 £ Net Expenditure
	SERVICES TO THE PUBLIC			
(157,394)	Litter and Dog Bins	(144,942)		(144,942)
(113,190)	Cemeteries	(267,282)	67,436	(199,846)
(748,754)	Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation	(918,204)	32,447	(885,757)
(4,874)	Cultural and Heritage	(2,379)		(2,379)
(17,229)	Bus Shelters and Grit Bins	(15,053)		(15,053)
(186,282)	Capital Costs	(207,782)	-	(207,782)
-	Developer Contribution under S106 agreements		-	-
	DEMOCRATIC, CIVIC AND CENTRAL COSTS			
(184,321)	Civic and Events	(220,250)	34,313	(185,937)
(340,234)	Service Support Costs	(271,006)		(271,006)
(53,895)	Town Hall	(81,519)	10,254	(71,265)
(77,727)	Swimming Pool and Other Grants	(89,030)	-	(89,030)
-	Capital Costs		-	-
16,883	Interest and Other Income	-	62,705	62,705
(1,867,017)		(2,217,447)	207,155	(2,010,292)
1,934,869	Precept			2,017,911
	Council Tax Support Grant			
110,384	Covid Recovery Grant			
178,236	**Net Surplus/(Deficit)**			**7,619**

Balances at Prior Year	RESERVES	Balances at 31 March 2022	Movement in Year	Balances at 31 March 2023
1,367,762	General Fund	1,367,762	112,082	1,479,844
2,361,902	Earmarked Reserves	2,361,902	0	2,361,902
847,496	Land transfer maintenance	847,496	(104,464)	743,032
-	Capital Receipts Reserve	-	-	-
4,577,160	**Total**	**4,577,160**	**7,619**	**4,584,779**

Banbury Town Council

Income and Expenditure Account and Annual Return Reconciliation

for the year ended 31 March 2023

	Income			Expenditure			
	Box 2	Box 3		Box 4	Box 5	Box 6	
Annual Return Box Numbers	Precept	Other Income	Total	Staff Costs	Loans Repaid	Other Costs	Total
Sevices to the Public							
Litter and Dog Bins		-	-	-		(144,942)	(144,942)
Cemeteries		67,436	67,436	(155,881)		(111,401)	(267,282)
Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation		32,447	32,447	(304,900)		(613,304)	(918,204)
Cultural and Heritage		-	-	-		(2,379)	(2,379)
Bus Shelters and Grit Bins		-	-	-		(15,053)	(15,053)
Capital Costs		-	-	-		(207,782)	(207,782)
Democratic, Management and Civic							
Civic and Events		34,313	34,313	(82,434)		(137,816)	(220,250)
Service Support Costs		-	-	(193,105)		(77,901)	(271,006)
Town Hall		10,254	10,254	(20,445)		(61,074)	(81,519)
Swimming Pool and Other Grants		-	-	-		(89,030)	(89,030)
Capital Costs		-	-	-		-	-
Interest and Other Income		62,705	62,705	-		-	-
Precept	2,017,911	-	2,017,911	-		-	-
Council Tax Support Grant			-				
S106 Developer Contributions			-				
Totals Carried to Annual Return	2,017,911	207,155	2,225,066	(756,765)	-	(1,460,682)	(2,217,447)

Banbury Town Council

Balance Sheet

as at 31 March 2023

Previous Year £		Box	2023 £	2023 £
	Current Assets			
93,539	Debtors	8	126,281	
4,792,863	Cash at Bank and In-hand		4,752,595	
4,886,402			4,878,875	
	Current Liabilities			
(309,240)	Creditors and accrued expenses	9	(294,095)	
0	Commuted Sums received in advance	11	0	
			(294,095)	
4,577,162	**Net Current Assets**			4,584,780
	Financed by:			
	Reserves available to the Council			
1,367,762	General Reserve		1,479,844	
	Earmarked Reserve	14		
2,361,903	- Future Projects		2,361,904	
847,496	- Land transfer maintenance		743,032	
				4,584,780
	Reserves Not Available to Council: Represents the Council's Net Investment in Fixed Assets less Outstanding Loans			
4,577,162				4,584,780

These accounts have been approved by the Council.

Leader of the Council

Date: ………………………….

…………………………………

Responsible Financial Officer

Date: …………………………

1 **Interest and Investment Income**

	2023	2022
	£	£
Interest Income - General Funds	62,705	22,151
	62,705	22,151

2 **Audit Fees**

Fees payable covering the year 2022/2023 for the services carried out by the Council's auditors, Moore Stephens LLP in the year are £2,400 (2021/2022 £2,400).

3 **Employees**

The average weekly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2023 Number	2022 Number
Full-time	16	16
Part-time	9	9
	25	25

All staff are paid within nationally agreed pay scales

Number of employees whose remuneration excluding employers pension contributions was over £50,000 in bands of £10,000 was:

Band	Number of Employees 2022/2023	Number of Employees 2021/2022
£50,000 to £59,999	1	1
£60,000 to £69,999	1	1

4 **Participation in Pension Scheme**

As part of the terms and conditions of employment of its officers and other employees, the Council offers retirement benefits. Although these benefits will not actually be payable until employees retire, the Council has a commitment to make the payments that needs to be disclosed at the time that employees earn their future entitlement.

The Council participates in the Local Government Pension Scheme for civilian employees, administered locally by Oxfordshire County Council - this is a defined benefit final salary scheme, meaning that the Council and employees pay contributions into a fund, calculated at a level intended to balance the pensions liabilities with investment assets.

5 **Tangible Fixed Assets**

	Freehold Land and Buildings	Leasehold Buildings	Community Sites	Other Assets	Heritage Assets	Total
Cost	£	£				£
At 31 March 2022	2,413,275	145,000		3,110,989	801,654	6,470,919
Additions	207,782	-		-	-	207,782
Disposal	-	-	-	-	-	
Revaluations	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2,621,057	145,000		3,110,989	801,654	6,678,700

Although classified as capital expenditure, certain minor equipment purchases are not included above as they are not material in overall value (subject to a £5k de-minimus).

6 Financing of Capital Expenditure

	2023	2022
	£	£
The following capital expenditure during the year:		
Fixed Assets purchased	207,782	239,097
	207,782	239,097
was financed by:		
Useable Capital Grants	-	-
Earmarked Projects Reserve	270,782	-
Precept and Revenue Income	- 63,000	239,097
	207,782	239,097

7 Information on Assets Held

Fixed assets owned by the Council include the following:

Operational Land and Buildings

- Town Hall Buildings
- Cemetery Buildings
- Sports Grounds and Pavilions

Vehicles and Equipment

- Town Hall Furniture and Fittings
- Council Offices Furniture and Fittings
- Playground Equipment

Infrastructure Assets

- Bus Shelters
- Litter and Dog Litter Bins

Community Assets

- Allotment Sites
- Cemeteries
- Play Areas and Open Spaces
- Spiceball Country Park
- Recreation grounds
- Town Signs
- Civic Regalia
- Council Artifacts

8 Debtors & Accrued Income

	2023	2022
	£	£
Trade Debtors - amounts falling due under one year	49,023	15,307
Accrued Income	118	118
Prepayments	4,807	9,014
Land Deposit	-	-
Less: Provision for bad and doubtful debts	-	-
	53,948	24,439
HM Revenue & Customs (VAT recoverable)	72,334	69,101
	126,282	93,540

9 Creditors and Accrued Expenses

	2023	2022
	£	£
Trade Creditors	(93,486)	(136,657)
Superannuation Payable		
Payroll Taxes and Social Security		
Accruals	(168,362)	(164,020)
Income in Advance	(32,247)	(8,563)
	(294,095)	(309,240)

10 **Grants Received**

Capital Grants

	2023	2022
Capital Grants	-	-
	-	-

11 **Commuted Sums**

	2023 £	2022 £
Balance at 1 April	-	-
Sums received during the year	-	-
	-	-
	-	-

12 **Earmarked Reserves**

	Balances at 1 April 2022	Contribution to Reserves	Contibution from Reserves	Balances at 31 March 2023
Other Earmarked Reserves	3,209,399	270,782	375,246	3,104,936
	3,209,399	270,782	375,246	3,104,936

See Appendix A: for a full anaysis of earmarked reserves

Banbury Town Council

Notes to the Accounts

for the year ended 31 March 2023

Appendix A:

Schedule of Earmarked Reserves

	Corporate Objectives	Balances at 1 April 2022	Contribution to Reserve	Contribution from Reserve	Movement of reserve funds	Balances at 31 March 2023
Estate Wall Repairs & Ditch works	H1	77,000	9,240			86,240
Hardwick Hill Cemetery Extension	B1	503,098	60,372			563,470
Park Improvements	H1	645,156	77,419			722,575
Sports Capacity Investment	H1	293,000	35,160			328,160
Vehicle Replacement Fund (incl GM Plant)	H2	282,000	33,840			315,840
Allotment Site Improvement	A1	26,000	3,120			29,120
Town Centre Initiative	J1	131,000	15,720			146,720
Peoples Park Improvements	J2	370,649	31,832	270,782		131,699
Computer Software	D1	34,000	4,080			38,080
Section 106 Agreements	D1	847,496		104,464		743,032
		3,209,399	270,782	375,246	-	3,104,936

Banbury Town Council

Notes to the Accounts

for the year ended 31 March 2023

Appendix B:

Reserves Reconciliation to Cash at Bank

		Prior Year £	Prior Year £	2023 £	2023 £
Reserves	General	1,367,762		1,479,844	
	Earmarked	2,361,903		2,361,904	
	- Land transfer maintenan	847,496		743,032	
			4,577,162		4,584,780
Less Debtors		(93,539)		(126,281)	
Add Liabilities	Creditors and accrued expenses	309,240		294,095	
	Commuted Sums received in advance	0		0	
			215,701		167,814
Total			4,792,863		4,752,594
Cash at Bank			4,792,863		4,752,595
Difference			**0**		**-1**

		2023 £	2023 £
Bank Statement Balances			
	NAT WEST DISBURSEMENTS	508,951	
	NATWEST SALARIES	314,155	
	NATWEST SPECIAL INTEREST A/C	29,124	
	BARCLAYS	115	
	PETTY CASH	250	
	30 Day Notice	2,400,000	
	12 Month Bond	1,500,000	
			4,752,595
Unpresented Payments			0
Unbanked Receipts			0
Closing Balance			**4,752,595**

All Cash & Bank Accounts		
	NatWest Disbursements	508,951
	NatWest Salaries	314,155
	NatWest Special Int.	29,124
	Barclays	115
	Petty Cash	250
	Barclays	
	12 Month Bond	1,500,000
	30 Day Notice Acc Natwest	2,400,000
Total Bank & Cash Balances		**4,752,595**

Banbury Town Council

Notes to the Accounts

for the year ended 31 March 2023

Appendix C:

Annual Return Reconciliation

		2022 £	2023 £
1	Balances Brought Forward	4,398,926	4,577,162
2	Annual Precept	1,934,869	2,017,911
3	Total Other Receipts	257,921	207,155
4	Staff Costs	753,049	756,765
5	Loan Interest/Capital Repayments	-	-
6	Total Other Payments	1,261,505	1,460,682
7	Balances Forward	4,577,162	4,584,781
8	Total Cash and Investments	4,792,863	4,752,595
9	Total Fixed Assets	6,470,919	6,678,700
10	Total Borrowings	0	0

Appendix 4

Smaller authority name: ______**Banbury Town Council**_______

NOTICE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS AND PUBLICATION OF UNAUDITED ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 Sections 26 and 27
The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/234)

NOTICE

1. Date of announcement Wednesday 21st June 2023

2. Each year the smaller authority's Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) needs to be reviewed by an external auditor appointed by Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Ltd. The unaudited AGAR has been published with this notice. As it has yet to be reviewed by the appointed auditor, it is subject to change as a result of that review.
Any person interested has the right to inspect and make copies of the accounting records for the financial year to which the audit relates and all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers, receipts and other documents relating to those records must be made available for inspection by any person interested. For the year ended 31 March 2023, these documents will be available on reasonable notice by application to:

Mark Hassall
Town Clerk
01295 817313
Mark.hassall@banbury.gov.uk

commencing on Thursday 22nd June 2023

and ending on Wednesday 2nd August 2023

3. Local government electors and their representatives also have:

- The opportunity to question the appointed auditor about the accounting records; and
- The right to make an objection which concerns a matter in respect of which the appointed auditor could either make a public interest report or apply to the court for a declaration that an item of account is unlawful. Written notice of an objection must first be given to the auditor and a copy sent to the smaller authority.

The appointed auditor can be contacted at the address in paragraph 4 below for this purpose between the above dates only.

4. The smaller authority's AGAR is subject to review by the appointed auditor under the provisions of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and the NAO's Code of Audit Practice 2015. The appointed auditor is:

MOORE

Moore (Ref AP/HD)
Rutland House
Minerva Business Park
Lynch Wood
Peterborough
PE2 6PZ

5. This announcement is made by Mark Hassall – Town Clerk & RFO

LOCAL AUTHORITY ACCOUNTS: A SUMMARY OF YOUR RIGHTS

Please note that this summary applies to all relevant smaller authorities, including local councils, internal drainage boards and 'other' smaller authorities.

The basic position

By law, any interested person has the right to inspect the accounting records of smaller authorities. If you are a local government elector or registered to vote in the local councils' elections, then you are able to ask questions about the accounts and object to them.

The right to inspect the accounting records

When your council has finalised its accounts for the previous financial year, they must advertise that they are available for people to inspect. You must then provide the council with reasonable notice of your intentions. Following this, by arrangement you will then have 30 working days to inspect and make copies of the accounting records and supporting documents. You may be required to pay a copying charge.

The right to ask the auditor questions about the accounting records

If you have any questions regarding the accounting records, you should first ask your smaller authority. This must be done during the 30-day period for the exercise of public rights. You may also ask the appointed auditor questions about an item in the accounting records. However, the auditor can only answer 'what' questions, not 'why' questions so is limited with their response. To avoid any confusion, it is advised that you put your questions in writing.

The right to make objections

Should you view something as unlawful or believe there are matters of wider concern in the accounts, you may wish to object. If you are a local government elector, you have the right to ask the external auditor to apply to the courts for a declaration that an item is contrary to the law and should be reported as a matter of public interest. This must be done by telling the appointed auditor which specific item in the accounts you object to and why you believe it to be unlawful or think a public interest report should be made about it. You must provide clear evidence to support your objection, and this should be done in writing and the copied to the council.

You should not use the 'right to object' to make a personal complaint or claim against your smaller authority. Complaints of this nature should be taken to your local Citizens' Advice Bureau, local Law Centre or to your solicitor.

A final word

Smaller authorities, and so local taxpayers, meet the costs of dealing with questions and objections. In deciding whether to take your objection forward, the auditor must consider the cost that will be involved. They will only continue with the objection if it is in the public interest to do so. If you appeal to the courts against an auditor's decision, you may have to pay for the action yourself.

Appendix 5

Banbury Town Council

FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

INDEX to Financial Regulations

FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

1 GENERAL

1.1 These financial regulations shall govern the conduct of the financial transactions of the Council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the Council.

1.2 The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), under the policy direction of the Resources Committee, shall be responsible for the proper administration of the Council's affairs.

1.3 The RFO shall be responsible for the production of financial management information.

2. ANNUAL ESTIMATES

2.1 Each committee shall formulate and submit proposals to the Resources Committee in respect of revenue services and capital projects for inclusion in the rolling capital programme not later than the end of January each year.

2.2 Detailed estimates of income and expenditure on revenue services, and receipts and payments on capital account, shall be prepared each year by the RFO.

2.3 The Resources Committee shall review the estimates and submit them to the Council not later than the end of January in each year and shall recommend the Precept to be levied for the ensuing financial year. The RFO shall supply each member with a copy of the approved estimates.

2.4 The annual capital and revenue budgets shall form the basis of financial control for the ensuing year.

2.5 The Council shall prepare and have regard to a four year forecast of Revenue and Capital Receipts and Payments which shall be prepared at the same time as the annual Budget or Estimates.

3 BUDGETARY CONTROL

3.1 Expenditure on the revenue account may be incurred up to the amounts included in each approved committee budget.

3.2 No expenditure may be incurred which cannot be met from the amount provided in the appropriate committee revenue budget unless a virement has been approved by the Resources Committee or the Council.

3.3 Transfers within committee revenue budgets can be made provided that this does not distort Council policy. The Town Clerk and the RFO may authorize such transfers.

3.4 The RFO shall periodically provide the Resources Committee with a statement of income and expenditure to date under each head of the approved budgets, comparing actual expenditure to the appropriate date against that planned as shown in the budget.

3.5 The Town Clerk may incur expenditure on behalf of the council which is necessary to carry out any repair replacement or other work which is of such extreme urgency that it must be done at once, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £5,000 per annum. The Town Clerk shall report the action to the appropriate committee as soon as practicable thereafter.

3.6 Where expenditure is incurred in accordance with regulation 3.4 above and the sum required can not be met from savings made elsewhere within that committee's approved budget, it shall be subject to the provision of a supplementary estimate approved by the Resources Committee or the Council.

3.7 Unspent provisions in the revenue budget shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year unless placed in an Earmarked Reserve by resolution of the Resources Committee.

3.8 No expenditure shall be incurred in relation to any capital project and no contract entered into or tender accepted involving expenditure on capital account unless the committee concerned are satisfied that it is contained in the rolling capital programme and that the necessary capital funds are available, or the requisite borrowing approval has been obtained.

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

4 ACCOUNTING AND AUDIT

4.1 All accounting procedures and financial records of the Council shall be determined by the RFO as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (England) 2015.

4.2 The RFO shall be responsible for completing the annual financial statements of the Council as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and shall submit them and report thereon to the Resources Committee.

4.3 The RFO shall be responsible for completing the Accounts of the Council and for submitting the Accounts for approval and authorisation by the

Council within the timescales set by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (England) 2015,

4.4 The following principles shall be observed in connection with accounting duties.

a) The duty of providing information, calculating, checking and recording sums due to, or from, the council, should be separated as completely as possible from the duty of collecting or dispersing them.

b) Officers charged with the duty of examining and checking the accounts of cash transactions should not be engaged in any of those transactions.

4.5 The RFO shall be responsible for ensuring that there is adequate and effective system of internal audit of the Council's accounting, financial and other operations in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations (England) 2015. Any officer or member of the Council shall, if the RFO or Internal Auditor requires, make available such documents of the Council which appear to the RFO or Internal Auditor to be necessary for the purpose of the internal audit and shall supply the RFO or Internal Auditor with such information and explanation as the RFO or Internal Auditor considers necessary for that purpose.

4.6 The Internal Auditor shall carry out the work required by the RFO, or by the Council. The Internal Auditor, who shall be competent and independent of the operations of the Council, shall report to Council in writing on a regular basis with a minimum of one annual report in respect of each financial year.

4.7 The RFO shall make arrangements for the opportunity for inspection of the accounts, books, and vouchers required by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations (England) 2015

4.8 The RFO shall, as soon as practicable, bring to the attention of all councillors any correspondence or report from the Internal or External Auditor, unless the correspondence is of a purely administrative matter.

5 BANKING ARRANGEMENTS AND CHEQUES

5.1 The council's banking arrangements shall be made by the RFO and approved by the Resources Committee. They shall be regularly reviewed for efficiency.

5.2 A schedule of the payment of money shall be prepared by the RFO and together with the relevant invoices etc be presented to the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Resources Committee, the Town Mayor or Deputy Town Mayor. If the schedule is in order it shall be authorised by any two of the four signatories.

5.3 Cheques and autopay sheets drawn on the two bank accounts in accordance with the schedule referred to in the previous paragraph shall be signed by any two of the following:

Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Resources Committee, the Town Mayor or Deputy Town Mayor.

5.4 To indicate agreement of the detail shown on the cheque or order for payment with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall each also initial the cheque counterfoil.

6 PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

6.1 Apart from petty cash payments, all payment shall be effected by cheque or other order drawn on the Council's bankers.

6.2 Before certifying an account, the certifying officer shall be satisfied that:

(a) The goods to which the account relates have been received, examined and approved as to quality and quantity, or services rendered or work carried out satisfactorily.

(b) The prices, extensions, calculations, trade discounts, other allowances, credits and tax are correct.

(c) The relevant expenditure has been properly incurred, is within the relevant estimate provision, and the account has not been previously passed for payment.

(d) The expenditure has been correctly coded to the appropriate cost centre and appropriate entries made in inventories, store records or stock books, as required.

6.3 Duly certified invoices shall be passed to the Accountant who shall examine them in relation to arithmetical accuracy and authorisation. When the Accountant is satisfied that invoices are in order shall give them final certification in the box provided on the payment slip. When the invoice relates to an order raised by the Accountant he shall pass it to the Deputy Town Clerk for final certification.

6.4 The Accountant shall take all possible steps to settle all invoices submitted, and which are in order, within 30 days of their receipt.
If a payment is necessary to avoid a charge of interest under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998, where the Clerk and RFO certify that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, the RFO may take all steps necessary to settle such invoices provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the appropriate signatories at the next available opportunity.

6.5 All duly certified invoices will then be entered on the schedule referred to in 5.2 above.

6.6 The RFO may provide petty cash to officers for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses. Vouchers for payments made shall be forwarded to the RFO with a claim for reimbursement:

a) The RFO shall maintain a petty cash float to a limit of £250 for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses. Vouchers for payments made from petty cash shall be kept to substantiate the payment.

b) Income received must not be paid into the petty cash float but must be separately banked, as provided elsewhere in these regulations.

c) Payments to maintain the petty cash float shall be shown separately on the schedule of the payment of money presented to the Resources Committee Chairman or Vice-Chairman, the Town Mayor or Deputy Town Mayor (under 5.2 above).

6.7 If thought appropriate by the RFO, payment for utility supplies (energy, telephone and water) may be made by variable Direct Debit provided that the instructions are signed by the Resources Committee Chairman or Vice-Chairman, the Town Mayor or Deputy Town Mayor as made.

7 PAYMENT OF SALARIES

7.1 The payment of all salaries and wages shall be made by the RFO from the Salaries account in accordance with the payroll records and the rules of PAYE and National Insurance currently operating, and salaries shall be as agreed by the Resources Committee.

7.2 Payment of salaries and payment of deductions from salary such as may be made for tax, national insurance and pension contributions, may be made in accordance with the payroll records and on the appropriate dates.

7.3 All time sheets shall be certified as to accuracy by or on behalf of the Town Clerk.

7.4 The payroll account shall not be overdrawn at the bank. Transfers to fund it shall be made from the Council's general account and shall be shown separately on the schedule of the payment of money presented to the Resources Committee Chairman or Vice-Chairman, the Town Mayor or Deputy Town Mayor (under 5.2 above).

8 LOANS AND INVESTMENTS

8.1 All loans and investments shall be negotiated by the RFO in the name of the Council, and shall be for a set period of time in accordance with the Council's Treasury Management Policy, which shall be reviewed annually by the Resources Committee and recommended for approval by the Council.

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

8.3 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.

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

9 INCOME

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

9.2 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.

9.3 The Council will review all fees and charges annually, following a report of the Town Clerk.

9.4 Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts over £250 shall be reported to the Resources Committee and shall be written off in the year.

9.5 All sums received on behalf of the Council shall either be paid to the RFO for banking or be banked by the officer collecting the money as directed by the RFO. In all cases all receipts shall be deposited with the council's bankers with such frequency as the RFO considers necessary.

9.6 A reference to the related debt, or otherwise, indicating the origin of each cheque, shall be entered on the paying-in slip.

9.7 Every transfer of official money from one member of staff to another shall be signed for by the receiving officer.

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

9.9 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.

9.10 Where any significant sums of cash are regularly received by the Council, the RFO shall take such steps as are agreed by the Council to ensure that more than one person is present when the cash is counted in the first instance, that there is a reconciliation to some form of control such as ticket issues, and that appropriate care is taken in the security and safety of individuals banking such cash.

10 ORDERS FOR WORK, GOODS AND SERVICES

10.1 Official orders shall be in a form approved by the RFO and are to be signed only by officers authorised by the Town Clerk who shall be responsible for official orders issued. In all cases no orders will be authorised by the officer raising the order.

10.2 An official order or letter of intent shall be issued for all work, goods and services unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate e.g. petty cash purchases or for supplies of public utility services, periodical payments such as rent or rates or other such exceptions as the RFO may from time to time approve. Orders shall contain a quotation or estimate of costs and works to be undertaken. Copies of orders shall be maintained.

10.3 Order books shall be controlled by the RFO.

10.4 All Officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times. An officer issuing an official order is to ensure as far as reasonable and practicable that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction and are subjected to terms of the Council's financial regulations on Contracts at paragraph 11 of these regulations.

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

11 CONTRACTS

11.1 Procedures as to contracts are laid down as follows:

(a) Every contract whether made by the council or by a committee to which the power of making contracts has been delegated shall comply with these standing orders, and no exception from any of the following provisions of these standing orders shall be made otherwise than by direction of the council or in an emergency by such a committee as aforesaid provided that these standing orders shall not apply to contracts which relate to items (i) to (v) below:

(i) for the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telephone services;

(ii) for specialist services such as are provided by solicitors, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants;

(iii) for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which consist of repairs to or parts for existing machinery or equipment or plant;

(iv) for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the council;

(v) for additional audit work of the external Auditor up to an

estimated value of £500 (in excess of this sum the Clerk and RFO shall act following consultation with the Chairman of Resources Committee;

(vi) for goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and/ or which are sold only at a fixed price.

(b) Where it is intended to enter into a contract:

(i) for expenditure of £50,000 or less in value the Town Clerk or one of the duly authorised deputies (in the first instance the Deputy Town Clerk or Director of Environment) shall have executive power.

(ii) exceeding £3,000 but not exceeding £50,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works, quotations in writing from at least three firms shall be obtained by Officers under the direction of the Town Clerk, unless the service/goods is available from one specialist supplier only or for the reasons set out in paragraph (a) above. Such firms shall be selected in accordance with standing orders.

(iii) for expenditure exceeding £50,000, a minimum of three tenders shall be invited from the appropriate approved list of contractors, or upon the recommendation of any professional advisors engaged to assist the Council in undertaking the tender process, under the direction of the Town Clerk. If three offers are not received the Officers may repeat the request to other suitable approved firms.

(iv) a check is to be made whether the European Union Public Sector Procurement Rules apply and appropriate advice sought. Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed £138,893 (or other threshold specified by the Office of Government Commerce from time to time) the Council must consider whether the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (SI No.5, as amended) and the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016 (SI No. 6, as amended) apply to the contract and, if either of those Regulations apply, the Council must comply with EU procurement rules.

(c) When applications are made to waive financial regulations relating to contracts to enable a price to be negotiated without competition the reason shall be embodied in a recommendation to the Resources Committee.

(d) Every exception made by a committee to which the power of making contracts has been delegated shall be reported to the Resources Committee and the report shall specify the emergency by which the exception shall have been justified.

(e) Notice of a contract exceeding £50,000 shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the last date by which those tenders should reach the Town Clerk in the ordinary course of post. Tenders received after that date shall not be accepted or considered and the tender will be returned directly to the tenderer.

(f) Tenders shall only be accepted if returned in the Council's own stamped addressed envelope with no additional information added by the tenderer.

(g) Tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk in the presence of at least one Member of the Council and shall be reported to the appropriate Committee or Sub-Committee.

(h) All tenders received, including any returned, shall be recorded. A register of all contracts awarded shall be kept and maintained. This register shall be open to inspection by any member of the Council.

(i) Neither the Council nor any Committee, or Sub-Committee is bound to accept the lowest tender or any tender, quote or estimate; however satisfactory justification shall be required and recorded in the minutes.

(j) If no tenders are received or if all the tenders are identical the Council may make such arrangements for procuring the goods or materials or executing the works as it thinks fit.

(k) A notice issued under the regulations shall contain a statement of the effect of the following.

  (i) If a supplier/tenderer of any goods/services is to his/her knowledge related to any member of or the holder of any office under the Council, he/she and the person to whom he/she is related shall disclose the relationship in writing to the Town Clerk. A person who fails so to do shall be disqualified for such contract and, if engaged, the contract may be withdrawn without further notice. The Town Clerk shall report to the Council or to the appropriate Committee any such disclosure.
  (ii) Canvassing of members or of any Committee, directly or indirectly, for any work/service under the Council shall disqualify the supplier/tenderer. The Town Clerk shall make known the purport of this sub-paragraph to every supplier/tenderer.
  (iii) A member of the Council shall not solicit for any person any work under the Council or recommend any person for such work; but, nevertheless, a member may give a written testimonial of a supplier's ability, experience or character for submission to the Council.

(l) Tenders for the purchase of land, surplus equipment, etc., from the Council will be dealt with in accordance with the general interpretation of the regulations unless otherwise decided by the Council.

12 PAYMENTS UNDER CONTRACTS FOR BUILDING OR OTHER CONSTRUCTION WORKS

12.1 Payments on account of the contract sum shall be made within the time specified in the contract by the RFO upon authorised certificates of the architect or other consultants engaged to supervise the contract (subject to any percentage withholding as may be agreed in the particular contract).

12.2 Where contracts provide for payment by installments the RFO shall maintain a record of all such payments. In any case when it is estimated that the total cost of work carried out under a contract, excluding fluctuation clauses, will exceed the contract sum by 5% or more a report shall be submitted to the appropriate committee.

12.3 Any variation to a contract or addition to or omission from a contract must be approved by the Town Clerk in writing, the appropriate committee being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the financial provision.

13 STORES EQUIPMENT

13.1 The officer in charge of each section shall be responsible for the care and custody of stores and equipment in that section.

13.2 Delivery Notes must be obtained in respect of all goods received into store and goods must be checked as regard quality at the time delivery is made.

13.3 Stocks shall generally be maintained at the minimum levels consistent with operational requirements.

13.4 The RFO shall be responsible for an annual check of all stocks and stores.

14 PROPERTIES AND ESTATES

14.1 The Town Clerk shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds of properties owned by the Council. The RFO shall ensure a record is maintained of all properties owned by the Council, recording the location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held .

14.2 No property shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the council, save where the estimated market value of any one item does not exceed £1,000.

15 INSURANCE

15.1 Following an annual risk assessment, the RFO shall effect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the council's insurers in consultation with the Town Clerk.

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

15.3 The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the Council and the property and risks covered thereby and annually review it.

15.4 The RFO shall be notified of any loss liability or damage or of any event likely to lead to a claim.

15.5 All appropriate employees of the Council shall be included in a suitable fidelity guarantee insurance.

15.6 The RFO shall undertake an annual risk assessment.

16 CHARITIES

16.1 Where the Council is sole trustee of a Charitable body the Town Clerk and RFO shall ensure that separate accounts are kept of the funds held on charitable trusts and separate financial reports made in such form as shall be appropriate, in accordance with Charity Law and legislation, or as determined by the Charity Commission. The Town Clerk and RFO shall arrange for any Audit or Independent Examination as may be required by Charity Law or any Governing Document.

17 RISK MANAGEMENT

17.1 The Town Clerk with the RFO shall prepare and promote risk management policy statements in respect of all activities of the Council.

17.2 The Town Clerk and RFO shall ensure that all reports considered by the Council, Committees and Sub Committees address the legal and financial liabilities and Risk Management issues that arise from the proposed activity.

18 REVISION OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

18.1 It shall be the duty of the Resources Committee to review the financial regulations of the Council from time to time and to make such recommendations to the Council as the Committee considers are required.

Appendix 6

Banbury Town Council

STANDING ORDERS

Index of standing orders

1 Meetings

a) **Meetings shall not take place in premises, which at the time of the meeting, are used for the supply of alcohol unless no other premises are available free of charge or at a reasonable cost.**

b) **When calculating the 3 clear days for notice of a meeting to councillors and the public, the day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a day of the Christmas break, a day of the Easter break or of a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning shall not count.**

c) **Meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. The public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion.**

d) Subject to standing order 1(c) above, Banbury residents are permitted, at the discretion of the Town Mayor, to ask questions in respect of any item of business included in the agenda for the meeting of the full Council or which relate either to matters over which the Council has power or Its administrative area.

e) The period of time which is designated for public participation at meetings of the full Council in accordance with standing order 1(d) above shall not exceed (20) minutes. There shall be no public participation session at the Annual Council Meeting.

f) Subject to standing order 1(e) above, each member of the public is entitled to speak once only in respect of business itemised on the agenda for the full Council meeting and shall not speak for more than (5) minutes.

g) In accordance with standing order 1(d) above, a question asked by a member of the public during a public participation session at a meeting of the full Council shall not require a response or debate.

h) In accordance with standing order 1(g) above, the Town Mayor may direct that a response to a question posed by a member of the public be referred to a Councillor for an oral response or to an employee for a written or oral response.

i) A record of a public participation session at a meeting shall be included in the minutes of that meeting.

j) A person shall stand when requesting to speak and when speaking (except when a person has a disability or is likely to suffer discomfort)]. The Town Mayor may at any time permit an individual to be seated when speaking.

k) Any person speaking at a meeting shall address his comments to the Town Mayor.

l) Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wishes to speak, the Town Mayor shall direct the order of speaking. Where a number of people wish to make similar representations, they should be prepared to select one person from amongst their number to speak for them all. Where different people wish to speak on each side of a debate then each side must be willing to appoint one member to represent their views.

m) Audio and visual recordings of a meeting of the Council, Committees and other Council bodies by the general public, or the media, is permitted. It would be helpful if those wishing to record could contact the Council before the meeting so that we can ensure the necessary facilities are in place. The Town Mayor (or the Chairman of the meeting) will advise the public that the meeting is being recorded. A request to record a meeting shall only be refused if the Town Mayor believes recording would disrupt the meeting. The purpose of this standing order is to provide guidance for members of the press, or public, on the taking of photographs and/ or the audio / visual recording of any Council meeting which is held in public.

There are no restrictions on anyone at a Council meeting using Twitter, blogs, Facebook or similar social media provided that the Town Mayor does not consider their actions are disrupting the proceedings of the meeting.

n) In accordance with standing order 1(c) above, the press shall be provided reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present.

o) **Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Town Mayor (or Chairman of a Committee/Sub Committee) may in his absence be done by, to or before the Deputy Town Mayor (or Vice-Chairman).**

p) **The Town Mayor, if present, shall preside at a meeting of the Council. If the Town Mayor is absent from a meeting, the Deputy Town Mayor, if present, shall preside. If both are absent from a meeting, a Councillor as chosen by the Councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.**

q) **Subject to model standing order 1 (x) below, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the Councillors present and voting thereon.**

r) **The Town Mayor may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise his casting vote whether or not he gave an original vote.** (See also standing orders 2 (h) and (i) below.)

s) **Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on any question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of two Councillors, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave his vote for or against that question.** Such a request shall be made before the vote is taken.

t) **The minutes of a meeting shall record the names of councillors present** and absent**.**

u) **The code of conduct adopted by the Council shall apply to councillors and co-opted members in respect of the entire meeting.**

v) **An interest arising from the code of conduct adopted by the Council, the existence and nature of which is required to be disclosed by a Councillor at a meeting shall be recorded in the minutes.** (See also standing order 7 below.)

w) **No business may be transacted at a meeting unless at least one third of the whole number of members of the Council are present and in no case shall the quorum of a meeting be less than 3.**

x) **If a meeting is or becomes inquorate no business shall be transacted** and the meeting shall be adjourned. Any outstanding business of a meeting so adjourned shall be transacted at a following meeting.

2 Ordinary Council meetings

See also standing order 1 above

a **In an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the new councillors elected take office.**

b **In a year which is not an election year, the annual meeting of a Council shall be held on such day in May as the Council may direct.**

c **If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the Council shall take place at 6pm.**

d **In addition to the annual meeting of the Council, at least three other ordinary meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times as the Council directs.**

e **The election of the Town Mayor and** Deputy Town Mayor **shall be the first business completed at the annual meeting of the Council.**

f **The Town Mayor, unless he has resigned or becomes disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until his successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the Council.**

g **The Deputy Town Mayor, unless he resigns or becomes disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Town Mayor at the next annual meeting of the Council.**

h **In an election year, if the current Town Mayor has not been re-elected as a member of the Council, he shall preside at the meeting until a successor has been elected. The current Town Mayor shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Town Mayor but must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**

i **In an election year, if the current Town Mayor** has **been re-elected as a member of the Council, he shall preside at the meeting until a new Town Mayor has been elected. He may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Town Mayor and must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**

j Following the election of the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor at the annual meeting of the Council, the order of business shall be as follows.

i. In an election year, delivery by councillors of their declarations of acceptance of office.
ii. Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the Council and to receive and note minutes of and/or to determine recommendations made by committees.
iii. Receipt of nominations to existing committees.
iv. Appointment of any new committees, confirmation of the terms of reference, the number of members (including, if appropriate, substitute councillors) and receipt of nominations to them.
v. To appoint representatives to Outside Bodies
vi. In a year of elections, if a Council's period of eligibility to exercise the power of General Competence expired the day before the annual meeting, to review and make arrangements to reaffirm eligibility.

3 Proper Officer

a The Council's Proper Officer shall be the Town Clerk or such other employee appointed by the Council to undertake the role of the Proper Officer during the Proper Officer's absence. The Proper Officer and the employee appointed to act as such during the Proper Officer's absence shall fulfil the duties assigned to the Proper Officer in standing orders.

b The Council's Proper Officer shall do or make arrangements for the doing of the following.

i. **Sign and serve on councillors by delivery or post at their residences a summons confirming the time, date, venue and the agenda of a meeting of the Council and a meeting of a committee** and sub-committee **at least 3 clear days before the meeting.**

ii. **Give public notice of the time, date, venue and agenda at least 3 clear days before a meeting of the Council or a meeting of a committee** or a sub- committee **(provided that the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the Council convened by councillors is signed by them)**.
iii. Subject to standing orders 4(a)–(e) below, include in the agenda all motions in the order received unless a councillor has given written notice before the agenda for the meeting has been sent out confirming his withdrawal of it.
iv. **Convene a meeting of full Council for the election of a new Town Mayor, occasioned by a casual vacancy in his office, in accordance with standing order 3(b)i above**.
v. Make available for inspection the minutes of meetings.
vi. **Receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities.**
vii. **Receive and retain declarations of acceptance of office from councillors.**
viii. Retain a copy of every councillor's register of interests and any changes to it and keep copies of the same available for inspection.
ix. Keep proper records required before and after meetings;
x. Process all requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Data Protection Act 2022, in accordance with and subject to the Council's procedures relating to the same.
xi. Receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the Council except where there is a resolution to the contrary.
xii. Manage the organisation, storage of and access to information held by the Council in paper and electronic form.
xiii. Arrange for legal deeds to be sealed using the Council's common seal (*See also standing orders 14(a) and (b).*)
xiv. Arrange for the prompt authorisation, approval, and instruction regarding any payments to be made by the Council in accordance with the Council's financial regulations.
xv. Record every planning application notified to the Council and the Council's response to the local planning authority on the Council's Planning Database;;
xvi. Refer a planning application received by the Council to the Ward Councillors for comment
xvii. Retain custody of the seal of the Council which shall not be used without a resolution to that effect.
xviii. Action or undertake activity or responsibilities instructed by resolution or contained in standing orders.

4 Motions requiring written notice

a In accordance with standing order 3(b)(iii) above, no motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is included in the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Council's Proper Officer at least 7 clear days before the next meeting.

b The Proper Officer may, before including a motion in the agenda received in accordance with standing order 4(a) above, correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.

c If the wording or nature of a proposed motion is considered unlawful or improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the Town Mayor or, as the case may be, the Councillors who have convened the meeting, to consider whether the motion shall be included or rejected in the agenda. The proposer of the motion shall be advised accordingly.

d Having consulted the Town Mayor or councillors pursuant to standing order 4(c) above, the decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion in the agenda shall be final.

e Notice of every motion received in accordance with the Council's standing orders shall be numbered in the order received and shall be entered in a book, which shall be open to inspection by all councillors.

f Every motion rejected in accordance with the Council's standing orders shall be duly recorded with a note by the Proper Officer giving reasons for its rejection in a book for that purpose, which shall be open to inspection by all councillors.

g Every motion and resolution shall relate to the Council's statutory functions, powers and lawful obligations or shall relate to an issue which specifically affects the Council's area or its residents.

h If a motion falls within the terms of reference of a committee or sub-committee or within the delegated powers conferred on an employee, a referral of the same may be made to such committee or sub-committee or employee provided that the Town Mayor may direct for it to be dealt with at the present meeting for reasons of urgency or expedience.

5 Motions not requiring written notice

a Motions in respect of the following matters may be moved without written notice.

i. To appoint a person to preside at a meeting.
ii. To record the absences of councillors.
iii. To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the previous meeting.
iv. To correct an inaccuracy in the minutes of the previous meeting.
v. To dispose of business, if any, remaining from the last meeting.
vi. To alter the order of business on the agenda for reasons of urgency or expedience.
vii. To proceed to the next business on the agenda.
viii. To close or adjourn debate.
ix. To refer by formal delegation a matter to a committee or to a sub-committee or an employee.
x. To appoint a committee or sub-committee or any councillors (including substitutes) thereto.
xi. To receive nominations to a committee or sub-committee.
xii. To dissolve a committee or sub-committee.
xiii. To note the minutes of a meeting of a committee or sub-committee.
xiv. To consider a report and/or recommendations made by a committee or a sub- committee or an employee.
xv. To consider a report and/or recommendations made by an employee, professional advisor, expert or consultant.
xvi. To amend a motion relevant to the original or substantive motion under consideration which shall not have the effect of nullifying it.
xvii. To extend the time limit for speeches.
xviii. To exclude the press and public for all or part of a meeting.
xix. To silence or exclude from the meeting a Councillor or a member of the public for disorderly conduct.
xx. To give the consent of the Council if such consent is required by standing orders.
xxi. To suspend any standing order except those which are mandatory by law.
xxii. To adjourn the meeting.
xxiii. To appoint representatives to outside bodies and to make arrangements for those representatives to report back the activities of outside bodies.
xxiv. To answer questions from councillors.

6 Rules of debate

a Motions included in an agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear on the agenda unless the order is changed at the Town Mayor's direction for reasons of expedience.

b Subject to standing orders 4(a)–(e) above, a motion shall not be considered unless it has been proposed and seconded.

c Subject to standing order 3(b)(iii) above, a motion included in an agenda not moved by the councillor who tabled it, may be treated as withdrawn.

d A motion to amend an original or substantive motion shall not be considered unless proper notice has been given after the original or substantive motion has been seconded and notice of such amendment, shall, if required by the Town Mayor, be reduced to writing and handed to the Town Mayor who shall determine the order in which they are considered.

e A Councillor may move amendments to his own motion. If a motion has already been seconded, an amendment to it shall be with the consent of the seconder.

f Any amendment to a motion shall be either:

i. to leave out words;
ii. to add words;
iii. to leave out words and add other words.

g A proposed or carried amendment to a motion shall not have the effect of rescinding the original or substantive motion under consideration.

h Only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the Town Mayor. No further amendment to a motion shall be moved until the previous amendment has been disposed of.

i Subject to Standing Order 6(h) above, one or more amendments may be discussed together if the Town Mayor considers this expedient but shall be voted upon separately.

j Pursuant to standing order 6(h) above, the number of amendments to an original or substantive motion, which may be moved by a councillor, is limited to one.

k If an amendment is not carried, other amendments shall be moved in the order directed by the Town Mayor.

l If an amendment is carried, the original motion, as amended, shall take the place of the original motion and shall become the substantive motion upon which any further amendment may be moved.

m The mover of a motion or the mover of an amendment shall have a right of reply, not exceeding (5) minutes.

n Where a series of amendments to an original motion are carried, the mover of the original motion shall have a right of reply in respect of the substantive motion at the very end of debate and immediately before it is put to the vote.

o Subject to standing orders 6(m) and (n) above, a councillor may not speak further in respect of any one motion except to speak once on an amendment moved by another councillor or to make a point of order or to give a personal explanation.

p During the debate of a motion, a councillor may interrupt only on a point of order or a personal explanation and the councillor who was interrupted shall stop speaking. A Councillor raising a point of order shall identify the standing order which he considers has been breached or specify the irregularity in the meeting he is concerned by.

q A point of order shall be decided by the Town Mayor and his decision shall be final.

r With the consent of the seconder and/or of the meeting, a motion or amendment may be withdrawn by the proposer. A councillor shall not speak upon the said motion or amendment unless permission for the withdrawal of the motion or amendment has been refused.

s Subject to standing order 6(o) above, when a councillor's motion is under debate no other motion shall be moved except:

i. to amend the motion;
ii. to proceed to the next business;
iii. to adjourn the debate;
iv. to put the motion to a vote;
v. to ask a person to be silent or for him to leave the meeting;
vi. to refer a motion to a committee or sub-committee for consideration;
vii. to exclude the public and press;
viii. to adjourn the meeting;
ix. to suspend any standing order, except those which are mandatory.

t In respect of standing order 6(s)(iv) above, the Town Mayor shall first be satisfied that the motion has been sufficiently debated before it is put to the vote. The Town Mayor shall call upon the mover of the motion under debate to exercise or waive his right of reply and shall put the motion to the vote after that right has been exercised or waived. The adjournment of a debate or of the meeting shall not prejudice the mover's right of reply at the resumption.

7 Code of conduct (England)

See also model standing orders 1(d)–(i) above

a All councillors shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the Council.

b All councillors shall be encouraged to undertake training in the code of conduct within 6 months of the delivery of their declaration of acceptance of office.

c **Councillors with a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in relation to any item of business being transacted at a meeting shall as soon as practicable after the start of the meeting make a disclosure as to the nature as well as the existence of that interest; and thereafter, leave the room or chamber.**

8 Questions

(See also Standing Order 1(d) to 1(k))

a A councillor may seek an answer to a question concerning any business of the

Council provided notice of the question has been given to the person to whom it is addressed before the meeting begins.

b Questions not related to items of business on the agenda for a meeting shall only be asked during the part of the meeting set aside for such questions.

c Every question shall be put and answered without discussion.

d A person to whom a question has been put may decline to answer.

e At all meetings of the Council except at the Annual Council Meeting a period of up to 20 minutes in total shall be allocated in accordance with Standing Order 1(d) where the Town Mayor may at his/her discretion, allow any Banbury resident to address the meeting, subject to:

- no member of the public speaking for more than five minutes;
- where a number of people wish to make similar representations they are prepared to select one person from amongst their number to speak for them all; and
- where different people wish to speak on each side of a debate then each side being willing to appoint one member to represent their views.

f Such sessions form part of the Council meeting in law and shall be duly minuted.

9 Minutes

a If a copy of the minutes of a preceding meeting has been circulated to councillors no later than the day of service of the summons to attend the scheduled meeting they shall be taken as read.

b No discussion of the minutes of a preceding meeting shall take place except in relation to their accuracy. A motion to correct an inaccuracy in the minutes shall be raised in accordance with standing order 5(a)(iv) above.

c Minutes, including any amendment to correct their accuracy, shall be confirmed by resolution and shall be signed by the Town Mayor or Chairman of the meeting and stand as an accurate record of the meeting to which the minutes relate.

10 Disorderly conduct

a No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly.

b If, in the opinion of the Town Mayor or Chairman, there has been a breach of standing order 10(a) above, the Town Mayor or Chairman shall express that opinion and thereafter any councillor (including the Town Mayor or Chairman) may move that the person be silenced or excluded from the meeting, and the motion, if seconded, shall be put forthwith and without discussion.

c If a resolution made in accordance with standing order 10(b) above, is disobeyed, the Town Mayor or Chairman may take such further steps as may reasonably be necessary to enforce it and/or he may adjourn the meeting.

11 Rescission of previous resolutions

a A resolution (whether affirmative or negative) of the Council shall not be reversed within 6 months except either by a special motion, the written notice whereof bears the names of at least 6 councillors of the Council, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the report or recommendation of a committee.

b When a special motion or any other motion moved pursuant to standing order 11(a) above has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved within a further 6 months.

12 Voting on appointments

a Where more than 2 persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the Council and none of those persons has received an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. Any tie may be settled by the Town Mayor/Chairman’s casting vote.

13 Expenditure

a Any expenditure incurred by the Council shall be in accordance with the

Council's financial regulations.

b **The Council's financial regulations shall be reviewed once a year.**

c **The Council's financial regulations may make provision for the authorisation of the payment of money in exercise of any of the Council's functions to be delegated to a committee, sub-committee or to an employee.**

14 Execution and sealing of legal deeds /documents

a A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the Council unless the same has been authorised by a resolution.

b **In accordance with a resolution made under standing order 14(a) above, the Council's common seal shall alone be used for sealing a deed required by law. It shall be applied by the Town Clerk**

c A resolution of the Council or of a Committee (where that Committee has the power) or the exercise of any power under delegation arrangements authorising the acceptance of any tender or quotation, the purchase, sale, letting or taking of any property, the making of any payment, the issue of any stock, the transfer of shares and other investment transactions, the presentation of any petition, memorial or address, the making of any rate or contract or the doing of, or any other matter or thing, shall be sufficient authority for the sealing of any document necessary to give effect thereto.

d The Town Clerk may sign on behalf of the Council, any agreement or other document not requiring to be executed under seal and he or his authorised alternate, may sign on behalf of the Council any notice, order or other document not required to be executed under seal, the subject matter of which has been approved by or on behalf of the Council or any Committee or Sub-Committee thereof or Officer authorised so to act under delegation arrangements.

e An entry of the sealing of every deed and document to which the Common Seal shall have been affixed shall be made in a book to be provided for that purpose and shall be signed by the person present at the sealing.

f Where any document will be a necessary step in legal proceedings on behalf of the Council it shall, unless any enactment otherwise requires or authorises or the Council shall have given the necessary authority to some other person for the purpose of such proceedings, be signed by the Town Clerk, or other Officer authorised so to act under delegation arrangements.

15 Committees

See also standing order 1 above

a The Council may at its Annual Town Council Meeting appoint standing committees and may at any other time appoint such other committees as are necessary, but subject to any statutory provision in that behalf: -

- Shall not appoint any member of a Committee so as to hold office later than the next Annual Meeting.
- May appoint persons other than members of the Council, in a non-voting capacity, to any Committee.
- May subject to the provisions of Standing Order 11 above at any time dissolve or alter the membership of a committee.
- May at any time give instructions to or modify or revoke the powers or duties of any Committee.
- Shall, as far as is practicable appoint members to Standing Committees in proportion to the number of Councillors in each group to which they affiliate.

b Every committee shall at its first meeting before proceeding to any other business, elect a Chairman and may elect a Vice-chairman who shall hold office until the next Annual Meeting of the Council.

c The quorum of Committees and of Sub-Committees shall be one third of the whole number of members of the Committee or Sub-Committee but shall not be less than three members of a Committee or two members of a Sub-Committee.

16 Sub-committees

See also standing order 1 above

a Unless there is a Council resolution to the contrary, every committee may appoint a sub-committee whose terms of reference and members shall be determined by resolution of the committee.

17 Extraordinary meetings

See also standing order 1 above

a The Town Mayor may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council at any time.

b **If the Town Mayor does not or refuses to call an extraordinary meeting of the Council within 7 days of having been requested to do so by two councillors, those two councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council. The statutory public notice giving the time, venue and agenda for such a meeting must be signed by the two councillors.**

c The Chairman of a committee (or a sub-committee) may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee or sub-committee at any time.

d If the Chairman of a committee (or a sub-committee) does not or refuses to call an extraordinary meeting within seven days of having been requested to do so by two councillors, those two councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of a committee (or a sub-committee). The statutory public notice giving the time, venue and agenda for such a meeting must be signed by those two councillors.

18 Advisory committees

See also standing order 1 above

a The Council may appoint advisory committees comprised of a number of councillors and non-councillors.

b Advisory committees and any sub-committees may consist wholly of persons who are non-councillors.

19 Presence of Non-Members at Meetings

a A member who has proposed a resolution, which has been referred to any committee of which he is not a member, may explain his resolution to the committee but shall not vote.

b A Member of the Council may attend as an observer, without a right to speak or vote, a meeting of any Committee or Sub-Committee of which he is not a Member, even if members of the public have been excluded, except when a matter in respect of which he would be required to declare a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest is to be discussed.

c A Member of the Council may attend, without a right to vote, any meeting of a Committee or Sub-Committee of which they are not a Member, in order to make a statement on a particular item of business of which notice has been given in the formal agenda and which directly and specifically affects the Ward they represent. Such attendance shall not be allowed if the matter is one where the Member would be required to declare a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest.

d A Member attending a meeting as a Ward Member to make a statement shall notify the Town Clerk prior to the start of the meeting so as to enable a proper record to be made in the Minutes.

e Where alternate membership of a Committee or Sub-Committee is permitted, each Political Group may have an unlimited number of alternate members for that Committee or Sub-Committee provided that each alternate member has been duly appointed as such by the Council or by the parent Committee.

f If a Member of a Committee or Sub-Committee (with the exception of such bodies where the Council has decided alternate members shall not be appointed) is unable to attend a meeting thereof, a duly appointed named alternate member shall be entitled to attend, speak and vote at the meeting provided that:-

(i) no member shall be entitled to act as an alternate for more than one member at any one meeting;

(ii) the name of the alternate member is notified to the Town Clerk before the time appointed for the start of the meeting, and shall be reported formally by him to the meeting and the substitution recorded in the Minutes;

(iii) the attendance of the alternate member shall apply for the whole of the meetings in question;

g The provisions of paragraphs (e) and (f) above shall apply also to a vacant seat on a Committee or Sub-Committee created when a Member vacates his or her seat on the Council for whatever reason prior to the expiry of their elected term of office, until such time as the seat on the Committee or Sub-Committee has been filled.

h The Town Mayor shall be entitled to attend and speak, but may not vote at meetings of any Committee/Sub-Committee of which they are not appointed Members.

i A Member who is appointed as the Leader of a Political Group represented on the Council shall be entitled to attend and speak at all meetings of Committees and Sub-Committees of the Council. A Member who is attending a meeting as Leader of a Political Group shall advise the Town Clerk prior to the commencement of the meeting of that fact, and such attendance shall be recorded in the Minutes of the meeting.

20 Accounts and Financial Statement

a All payments by the Council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the Council's financial regulations, which shall be reviewed at least annually.

b The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to each councillor as soon as practicable after 31 March a Financial Statement prepared on the appropriate accounting basis for a year to 31 March. The Statement of Accounts of the Council (which is subject to external audit), including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to Council for formal approval before 30 June.

21 Estimates/precepts

a **The Council shall approve written estimates for the coming financial year** at its meeting before the end of January.

b Any committee desiring to incur expenditure shall give the Proper Officer a written estimate of the expenditure recommended for the coming year no later than December.

22 Canvassing of and recommendations by councillors

a Canvassing councillors or the members of a committee or sub-committee, directly or indirectly, for appointment to or by the Council shall disqualify the candidate from such an appointment. The Proper Officer shall disclose the requirements of this standing order to every candidate.

b A councillor or a member of a committee or sub-committee shall not solicit a person for appointment to or by the Council or recommend a person for such appointment or for promotion; but, nevertheless, any such person may give a written testimonial of a candidate's ability, experience or character for submission to the Council with an application for appointment.

c This standing order shall apply to tenders as if the person making the tender were a candidate for an appointment.

23 Inspection of document

a Subject to standing orders to the contrary or in respect of matters which are confidential, a councillor may, for the purpose of his official duties (but not otherwise), inspect any document in the possession of the Council or a committee or a sub-committee, and request a copy for the same purpose. The minutes of meetings of the Council, its committees or sub-committees shall be available for inspection by councillors.

24 Unauthorised activities

a Unless authorised by a resolution, no individual councillor shall in the name or on behalf of the Council, a committee or a sub-committee:

i. inspect any land and/or premises which the Council has a right or duty to inspect; or
ii. issue orders, instructions or directions.

25 Confidential business

a Councillors shall not disclose information given in confidence or which they believe, or ought to be aware is of a confidential nature.

b A councillor in breach of the provisions of standing order 25(a) above may be removed from a committee or a sub-committee by a resolution of the Council.

26 Power of General Competence

a Before exercising the power of general competence, a meeting of the full Council shall have passed a resolution to confirm it has satisfied the prescribed statutory criteria required to qualify as an eligible parish council.

b The Council's period of eligibility begins on the date that the resolution under standing order 26 (a) above was made and expires on the day before the annual meeting of the Council that takes place in a year of ordinary elections.

27 Matters affecting council employees

a If a meeting considers any matter personal to a Council employee, it shall not be considered at a meeting until the meeting has decided whether or not the press and public shall be excluded pursuant to standing order 1(c) above.

b Any persons responsible for all or part of the management of Council employees shall keep written records of all meetings relating to their performance, and capabilities, grievance and disciplinary matters.

c The Council shall keep written records relating to employees secure. All paper records shall be secured under lock and electronic records shall be password protected.

d Records documenting reasons for an employee's absence due to ill health or details of a medical condition shall be made available only to those persons with responsibility for the same.

e Only persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to employee records if so justified.

f Access and means of access by keys and/or computer passwords to records of employment shall be provided only to the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk.

28 Relations with the press/media

a All requests from the press or other media for an oral or written statement or comment from the Council shall be processed in accordance with the Council's policy in respect of dealing with the press and/or other media.

29 Liaison with District and County Councillors

a An invitation to attend a meeting of the Council shall be sent, together with the agenda, to the councillors of the District and County Councils representing Banbury electoral divisions/wards.

30 Financial matters

a The Council shall consider and approve financial regulations drawn up by the Responsible Financial Officer, which shall include detailed arrangements in respect of the following:

i. the accounting records and systems of internal control;
ii. the assessment and management of financial risks faced by the Council;
iii. the work of the Internal Auditor 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;
v. procurement policies (subject to standing order 30(b) below) including the setting of values for different procedures where the contract has an estimated value of less than £50,000.

b **Any proposed contract for the supply of goods, materials, services and**

the execution of works with an estimated value in excess of £25,000 shall comply with the relevant requirements of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (and as amended in 2022).

c Any formal tender process shall comprise the following steps:

i. a public notice of intention to place a contract to be placed in a local newspaper or in any other manner that is appropriate;
ii. a specification of the goods, materials, services and the execution of works shall be drawn up;
iii. tenders are to be sent, in a sealed marked envelope, to the Town Clerk by a stated date and time;
iv. tenders submitted are to be opened, after the stated closing date and time, by the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk and at least one member of the Council;
v. tenders are then to be assessed and reported to the appropriate meeting of Council or Committee.

d Neither the Council, nor any committee, is bound to accept the lowest tender, estimate or quote.

e **Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed the threshold specified by the Office of Government Commerce from time to time the Council must consider whether the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (and as amended in 2022) and the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016 apply to the contract and, if either of those Regulations apply, the Council must comply with EU procurement rules.**

31 Allegations of breaches of the code of conduct

a Any complaints regarding breaches of the Council's Code of Conduct shall be referred to the Monitoring Officer of Cherwell District Council.

32 Variation, revocation and suspension of standing orders

a Any or every part of the standing orders, except those which are mandatory by law and shown in bold type, may be suspended by resolution in relation to any specific item of business.

b A motion to permanently add to or to vary or to revoke one or more of the Council's standing orders not mandatory by law shall not be carried unless two-thirds of the councillors at a meeting of the Council vote in favour of the same.

33 Standing orders to be given to councillors

a The Town Clerk shall provide a copy of the Council's standing orders to a councillor upon delivery of his declaration of acceptance of office.

b The Town Mayor/Chairman's decision as to the application of standing orders at meetings shall be final.