



**Town Clerk (CEO)**  
Mrs S. Villafuerte-Richards (CiLCA)

**Our Ref:** EX 15.01.25  
**Date:** 09/01/2025

**Committee Membership:**

S. Browne, D. Craggs (Vice-Chair), K. Murphy (Ex-Officio), S. Olander (Ex-Officio), R. Peaty (Chair), J. Robertson, E. Taylor.

**For Information:**

D. Collins, A. Goulder, S. Kiddie, A. Kitchen, L. Sinfield, J. Welch.  
Town Clerk

Diss Express

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## Notice Of Meeting

Dear Members of the Public and Press,

You are cordially invited to attend a meeting of **Executive Committee** to be held in the **Council Chamber** at **Diss Corn Hall** on **Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025** at **7.15pm** to consider the business detailed below.

Town Clerk / Chief Executive Officer

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## Agenda

- 1. Apologies**  
To receive and consider apologies for absence.
- 2. Nomination of Substitute Representatives**  
To note nominated substitute representatives attending in place of those who have sent their apologies.
- 3. Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations<sup>1</sup>**  
To note any declarations of member's pecuniary and/or non-pecuniary/other interests pertaining to items on the following agenda, to note any dispensations granted in respect of business to be discussed and to consider any requests for dispensations.
- 4. Minutes**  
To confirm as a true record, the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2024 (copy herewith).
- 5. Public Participation**  
To consider a resolution under Standing Orders 3d to 3h to suspend the meeting to hear comments from members of the public on items to be discussed on the agenda (*the period of designated time for public participation is 20 minutes, unless directed by the Chair of the meeting, and individual members of the public are entitled to speak for a maximum of five minutes each*).
- 6. Items of Urgent Business**  
To discuss any item(s) of business which the Chair or Town Clerk has previously been informed at least 24 hours before the meeting and decides should be considered as a matter of urgency (*Councillors are reminded that no resolutions can be made under this agenda item*).
- 7. Financial Regulations**  
To review new Financial Regulations based on the NALC Model for recommendation to Full Council (copy details to follow).
- 8. Banking Review**  
To consider proposals (report reference 46/2425 herewith) regarding banking changes for presentation to the February meeting of Full Council.

**9. TOIL Policy**

To review a proposed amendment to the TOIL policy (copy details herewith).

**10. Member Allowances Policy**

To consider removing member allowances (report reference 47/2425 herewith).

**11. Staff Performance Management Review**

To consider a new staff performance management procedure (report reference 48/2425 herewith).

**12. Progress Report**

To note progress on decisions made at the last meeting of this committee (copy herewith).

**13. Date of Next Meeting**

To note that the next meeting of the Executive Committee is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at 7.15pm.

**14. Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings)**

To consider a resolution under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 and Standing Orders 3d to exclude members of the public and press in order to discuss the following item which is properly considered to be of a confidential nature.

**15. Staffing Review**

To consider an update regarding the staffing review (report reference 49/2425 herewith).

**Notes**

1 - Council has a statutory legal duty under the Localism Act 2011 s2 and has adopted a code dealing with the conduct that is expected of members in order to promote high standards of conduct as required by the Act. Members' disclosable pecuniary interests are kept on a register available to view on the Council's website. Allegations about the conduct of a councillor may be made to the district council's monitoring officer. Diss Town Council has also adopted a dispensation policy.

The reports and enclosures referred to in this agenda are available (unless marked confidential) for public inspection at the Council Offices during normal opening hours or on our website at <https://www.diss.gov.uk/executive>.

# DISS TOWN COUNCIL

## MINUTES

### DRAFT

Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held in the Council Chamber at Diss Corn Hall on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2024 at 7.15pm.

Present: Councillors: D. Craggs  
K. Murphy (ex-officio)  
S. Olander (ex-officio)  
R. Peaty  
J. Robertson  
E. Taylor

In attendance: S. Villafuerte-Richards (Town Clerk/Chief Executive Officer)

*Cllr Taylor chaired the first item in the absence of the Vice-Chair.*

#### **EX1024/01 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Members considered the election of a new Chairman of the Executive Committee. It was

**RESOLVED:** to elect councillor Peaty as Chairman of the Executive Committee until the end of the Municipal Year 2024/25.

*Cllr Peaty took the chair.*

#### **EX1024/02 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received and accepted from councillor Browne.

#### **EX1024/03 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Members considered the election of a new Chairman of the Executive Committee. It was

**RESOLVED:** to elect councillor Craggs as Vice-Chairman of the Executive Committee until the end of the Municipal Year 2024/25.

#### **EX1024/04 NOMINATION OF SUBSTITUTE REPRESENTATIVES**

There were none.

#### **EX1024/05 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

#### **EX1024/06 MINUTES**

Members received the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2024. It was

**RESOLVED:** To approve the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2024 as a true record and were signed by the Chair.

#### **EX1024/07 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no members of the public in attendance.

#### **EX1024/08 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business raised.

#### **EX1024/09 FINANCE**

Members noted that the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarterly financial report will be presented to the October Full Council meeting.

#### **EX1024/10 BUDGET**

Members noted that the locum RFO will be reviewing the council's bank accounts and a report with recommendations to transfer funds into higher interest accounts will be presented to the next full council meeting.

**EX1024/12**      **INTERNAL CONTROL COUNCILLOR**

Members considered the appointment of an additional internal control councillor. It was

RESOLVED:    to appoint councillor Craggs as an additional internal control councillor.

**EX1024/13**      **PROGRESS REPORT**

Members noted progress on decisions made at the last meeting of this committee. It was agreed to push back the revisions to the staffing handbook and review to June 2025. Cllr Taylor offered his time to help with policy reviews.

**(Action: Clerk / ET; by June 2025)**

**EX1024/14**      **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Members noted that the next meeting of the Executive Committee is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025 at 7.15pm.

**EX1024/15**      **PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSIONS TO MEETINGS)**

Members considered a resolution under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 and Standing Orders 3d to exclude members of the public and the press to discuss the following items which are carefully considered to be of a confidential nature.

**EX1024/16**      **STAFFING**

a) Members considered recommendations (confidential report reference 30/2425) for staff salary increases. Councillor Taylor summarised his views on the staff performance management reviews. He feels the process should be reviewed. It was agreed that the Town Clerk would share the completed performance management reviews with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Executive committee. It was

RESOLVED:

1. That one salary scale increment is awarded to 10 of the 11 members of staff in the October / November salary payment back paid to April 2024 with a total value of £8,399.

2. That the Chair, Vice-Chair & cllr Taylor of the Executive Committee work with the Clerk to review the performance management policy and recommendations for future consideration by the Executive Committee.

b) Members received a confidential update (report reference 31/2425) regarding staffing. It was agreed that a quotation for the staffing review detailing outcomes would be requested from the Locum RFO.

**(Action: Clerk / KK; by 15.01.25)**

It was

RESOLVED:            To approve the payment of the Clerk's 3.5 days of TOIL accrual from August – September due to the staffing shortfall.

**(Action: Finance Officer / RP; by 25.10.24)**

Meeting Closed: 20:15.

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Councillor Peaty  
CHAIR OF EXECUTIVE

## MODEL FINANCIAL REGULATIONS FOR LOCAL COUNCILS

This Model Financial Regulations template was produced by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) in April 2024 for the purpose of its member councils and county associations. Every effort has been made to ensure that the contents of this document are correct at time of publication. NALC cannot accept responsibility for errors, omissions and changes to information subsequent to publication.

Notes to assist in the use of this template:

- 1) This document is a model for councils of all sizes to use to develop their own financial regulations, suitable for the size of the council and the activities it undertakes.
- 2) Bold text indicates legal requirements, which a council cannot change or suspend.
- 3) For the rest, each council needs to adapt the model to suit its size and structure. For example, some councils have both a clerk and RFO, possibly with several more staff, while others have a single employee as clerk/RFO. Some councils have committees, some have a high level of delegation and some make all decisions at full council meetings. Many now use online payment methods, but others still rely on cheques.
- 4) Curly brackets indicate words, sentences or sections that can be removed if not applicable, or amended to fit the council's circumstances. An example of this is the phrase {or duly delegated committee}, which can be deleted if there are no committees.
- 5) Specific areas that may need adapting:
  - a) In 1.5 – is the Clerk the RFO?
  - b) In 3.3 and 3.4, the words “Governance and Accountability” do not apply in Wales
  - c) In section 4, does the council have committees and how many years are forecast?
  - d) In 5.6, does the council issue an open invitation to tender, or invite specific firms?
  - e) In 5.9, are online prices acceptable evidence?
  - f) In 5.13, 5.15 and 5.17, does the council have committees?
  - g) In 5.16, will a councillor ever be instructed to place an order?
  - h) In 5.20, is there a minimum level for official orders?
  - i) Section 6 includes several alternatives to cover delegation to committees or to officers, approval of invoices individually or in batches, or for approval of regular contractual payments at the beginning of the year.
  - j) Sections 7, 8 and 9 also includes several alternatives, including wording for where the clerk is a signatory. These are intended to allow a council's financial regulations to fit what they actually do, not to force any council to change what they do.
  - k) Section 10 gives two alternatives, with or without petty cash.
  - l) 13.6 has alternatives for VAT-registered and unregistered councils – only use one.
  - m) 13.7 and 13.8 are removable if they don't apply to the council.

- n) Much of Section 16 can be deleted if not applicable.
  - o) 17.3, is the Clerk the RFO or will the RFO consult the Clerk?
- 6) Square brackets indicate where the council needs to specify who, or how much, or what the timescale is. For example [£500] might need to be £100, or [October] might need to be November, or [the council] might need to say the Policy and Resources Committee.
- a) In 4.1 and 4.7, select the wording for England or Wales, based on your location.
  - b) In Section 4, the council needs to determine the timescale for its budget setting.
- 7) It is challenging to try to offer guidance on setting financial limits. A council spending £1,000 a year is unlikely to delegate authority to spend £500 to its proper officer, but one spending £5 million a year might regard £5,000 as a reasonable limit. Each council needs to determine its own limits, that help, rather than hinder, its operations.
- 8) Key limits to set:
- a) In 5.6, at what limit will the council require a formal tender process to ensure fair competition, rather than just asking for quotes? If this is set too low, it may discourage suppliers. Many small councils might only use formal tenders once every few years.
  - b) In 5.8, at what limit will the council require fixed-price quotes rather than estimates?
  - c) In 5.9, at what level can smaller purchases be made without competition?
  - d) In 5.15, at what level can purchases be made under delegated authority (having complied with the rules about obtaining prices)?
  - e) In 5.18, how much can the clerk commit to spending in an emergency?
  - f) In 6.9, can payment of invoices (for purchases that have already been authorised) be authorised by an officer under delegated authority as a general principle, or only to avoid problems?
  - g) In Section 9, what are the limits for card payments?
  - h) In 16.5, what value of assets can be bought or disposed of, without seeking council approval?
- 9) The contents list is a table that extracts section headings from the document. It can be updated by clicking on the contents list, whereupon a tab saying “update table” appears at the top of the list.
- 10) Once this model has been tailored to fit the council’s needs, the resulting Financial Regulations (with the insertion of the council’s name at the top) should be adopted at a meeting of the full council. The date of adoption should be inserted below the Contents. Any subsequent proposal for amendment should also be made to the full council.
- 11) The council should keep abreast of developments in legislation that affect the local council sector and should review and update its Financial Regulations annually.
- 12) Please ensure that the latest approved version is published on the council’s website.

[ENTER COUNCIL NAME] FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

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These Financial Regulations were adopted by the council at its meeting held on [enter date].

## 1. General

- 1.1. These Financial Regulations govern the financial management of the council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the council. They are one of the council's governing documents and shall be observed in conjunction with the council's Standing Orders.
- 1.2. Councillors are expected to follow these regulations and not to entice employees to breach them. Failure to follow these regulations brings the office of councillor into disrepute.
- 1.3. Wilful breach of these regulations by an employee may result in disciplinary proceedings.
- 1.4. In these Financial Regulations:
  - 'Accounts and Audit Regulations' means the regulations issued under Sections 32, 43(2) and 46 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, or any superseding legislation, and then in force, unless otherwise specified.
  - "Approve" refers to an online action, allowing an electronic transaction to take place.
  - "Authorise" refers to a decision by the council, or a committee or an officer, to allow something to happen.
  - 'Proper practices' means those set out in *The Practitioners' Guide*
  - *Practitioners' Guide* refers to the guide issued by the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) and published by NALC in England or Governance and Accountability for Local Councils in Wales – A Practitioners Guide jointly published by One Voice Wales and the Society of Local Council Clerks in Wales.
  - 'Must' and **bold text** refer to a statutory obligation the council cannot change.
  - 'Shall' refers to a non-statutory instruction by the council to its members and staff.
- 1.5. The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) holds a statutory office, appointed by the council. [The Clerk has been appointed as RFO and these regulations apply accordingly.] The RFO;
  - acts under the policy direction of the council;
  - administers the council's financial affairs in accordance with all Acts, Regulations and proper practices;
  - determines on behalf of the council its accounting records and control systems;
  - ensures the accounting control systems are observed;
  - ensures the accounting records are kept up to date;
  - seeks economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of council resources; and
  - produces financial management information as required by the council.
- 1.6. **The council must not delegate any decision regarding:**



- **setting the final budget or the precept (council tax requirement);**
  - **the outcome of a review of the effectiveness of its internal controls**
  - **approving accounting statements;**
  - **approving an annual governance statement;**
  - **borrowing;**
  - **declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence; and**
  - **addressing recommendations from the internal or external auditors**
- 1.7. In addition, the council shall:
- determine and regularly review the bank mandate for all council bank accounts;
  - authorise any grant or single commitment in excess of [£5,000]; and

## **2. Risk management and internal control**

- 2.1. **The council must ensure that it has a sound system of internal control, which delivers effective financial, operational and risk management.**
- 2.2. The Clerk [with the RFO] shall prepare, for approval by [the council], a risk management policy covering all activities of the council. This policy and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.
- 2.3. When considering any new activity, the Clerk [with the RFO] shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration by the council.
- 2.4. **At least once a year, the council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control, before approving the Annual Governance Statement.**
- 2.5. **The accounting control systems determined by the RFO must include measures to:**
- **ensure that risk is appropriately managed;**
  - **ensure the prompt, accurate recording of financial transactions;**
  - **prevent and detect inaccuracy or fraud; and**
  - **allow the reconstitution of any lost records;**
  - **identify the duties of officers dealing with transactions and**
  - **ensure division of responsibilities.**
- 2.6. At least [once in each quarter], and at each financial year end, a member other than the Chair {or a cheque signatory} shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the RFO. The member shall sign and date the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of this. This activity, including any exceptions, shall be reported to and noted by the council {Finance Committee}.

- 2.7. Regular back-up copies shall be made of the records on any council computer and stored either online or in a separate location from the computer. The council shall put measures in place to ensure that the ability to access any council computer is not lost if an employee leaves or is incapacitated for any reason.

### 3. Accounts and audit

- 3.1. All accounting procedures and financial records of the council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 3.2. **The accounting records determined by the RFO must be sufficient to explain the council's transactions and to disclose its financial position with reasonable accuracy at any time. In particular, they must contain:**
- **day-to-day entries of all sums of money received and expended by the council and the matters to which they relate;**
  - **a record of the assets and liabilities of the council;**
- 3.3. The accounting records shall be designed to facilitate the efficient preparation of the accounting statements in the Annual {Governance and Accountability} Return.
- 3.4. The RFO shall complete and certify the annual Accounting Statements of the council contained in the Annual {Governance and Accountability} Return in accordance with proper practices, as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year. Having certified the Accounting Statements, the RFO shall submit them (with any related documents) to the council, within the timescales required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 3.5. **The council must ensure that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and internal control system in accordance with proper practices.**
- 3.6. **Any officer or member of the council must make available such documents and records as the internal or external auditor consider necessary for the purpose of the audit** and shall, as directed by the council, supply the RFO, internal auditor, or external auditor with such information and explanation as the council considers necessary.
- 3.7. The internal auditor shall be appointed by [the council] and shall carry out their work to evaluate the effectiveness of the council's risk management, control and governance processes in accordance with proper practices specified in the Practitioners' Guide.
- 3.8. The council shall ensure that the internal auditor:
- is competent and independent of the financial operations of the council;
  - reports to council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one written report during each financial year;
  - can demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships; and

- has no involvement in the management or control of the council

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

- perform any operational duties for the council;
- initiate or approve accounting transactions;
- provide financial, legal or other advice including in relation to any future transactions; or
- direct the activities of any council employee, except to the extent that such employees have been appropriately assigned to assist the internal auditor.

3.10. For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to internal audit the terms 'independent' and 'independence' shall have the same meaning as described in The Practitioners Guide.

3.11. The RFO shall make arrangements for the exercise of electors' rights in relation to the accounts, including the opportunity to inspect the accounts, books, and vouchers and display or publish any notices and documents required by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, or any superseding legislation, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

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

#### 4. Budget and precept

4.1. **Before setting a precept, the council must calculate its [council tax (England)/budget (Wales)] requirement for each financial year by preparing and approving a budget, in accordance with The Local Government Finance Act 1992 or succeeding legislation.**

4.2. Budgets for salaries and wages, including employer contributions shall be reviewed by [the council] at least annually in [October] for the following financial year and the final version shall be evidenced by a hard copy schedule signed by the Clerk and the [Chair of the Council or relevant committee]. {The RFO will inform committees of any salary implications before they consider their draft their budgets.}

4.3. No later than [month] each year, the RFO shall prepare a draft budget with detailed estimates of all [receipts and payments/income and expenditure] for the following financial year {along with a forecast for the following [three financial years]}, taking account of the lifespan of assets and cost implications of repair or replacement.

4.4. Unspent budgets for completed projects shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year. {Unspent funds for partially completed projects may only be carried forward (by placing them in an earmarked reserve) with the formal approval of the full council.}

4.5. Each committee (if any) shall review its draft budget and submit any proposed amendments to the council {finance committee} not later than the end of [November] each year.

- 4.6. The draft budget {with any committee proposals and [three-year]} forecast, including any recommendations for the use or accumulation of reserves, shall be considered by the {finance committee and a recommendation made to the} council.
- 4.7. Having considered the proposed budget and [three-year] forecast, the council shall determine its [council tax (England)/budget (Wales)] requirement by setting a budget. The council shall set a precept for this amount no later than [the end of January] for the ensuing financial year.
- 4.8. **Any member with council tax unpaid for more than two months is prohibited from voting on the budget or precept by Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and must and must disclose at the start of the meeting that Section 106 applies to them.**
- 4.9. The RFO shall **issue the precept to the billing authority no later than the end of February** and supply each member with a copy of the agreed annual budget.
- 4.10. The agreed budget provides a basis for monitoring progress during the year by comparing actual spending and income against what was planned.
- 4.11. Any addition to, or withdrawal from, any earmarked reserve shall be agreed by the council {or relevant committee}.

## 5. Procurement

- 5.1. **Members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times.** Any officer procuring goods, services or works should ensure, as far as practicable, that the best available terms are obtained, usually by obtaining prices from several suppliers.
- 5.2. The RFO should verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before it is made and in the case of new or infrequent purchases, should ensure that the legal power being used is reported to the meeting at which the order is authorised and also recorded in the minutes.
- 5.3. Every contract shall comply with these the council's Standing Orders and these Financial Regulations and no exceptions shall be made, except in an emergency.
- 5.4. **For a contract for the supply of goods, services or works where the estimated value will exceed the thresholds set by Parliament, the full requirements of The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or any superseding legislation ("the Legislation"), must be followed in respect of the tendering, award and notification of that contract.**
- 5.5. Where the estimated value is below the Government threshold, the council shall (with the exception of items listed in paragraph 6.12) obtain prices as follows:
- 5.6. For contracts estimated to exceed [£60,000] including VAT, the Clerk shall {seek formal tenders from at least [three] suppliers agreed by [the council]} OR {advertise an open invitation for tenders in compliance with any relevant provisions of the Legislation}. Tenders shall be invited in accordance with Appendix 1.

- 5.7. **For contracts estimated to be over £30,000 including VAT, the council must comply with any requirements of the Legislation<sup>1</sup> regarding the advertising of contract opportunities and the publication of notices about the award of contracts.**
- 5.8. For contracts greater than [£3,000] excluding VAT the Clerk [or RFO] shall seek at least [3] fixed-price quotes;
- 5.9. where the value is between [£500] and [£3,000] excluding VAT, the Clerk [or RFO] shall try to obtain 3 estimates {which might include evidence of online prices, or recent prices from regular suppliers.}
- 5.10. For smaller purchases, [the clerk] shall seek to achieve value for money.
- 5.11. **Contracts must not be split into smaller lots to avoid compliance with these rules.**
- 5.12. The requirement to obtain competitive prices in these regulations need not apply to contracts that relate to items (i) to (iv) below:
- i. specialist services, such as legal professionals acting in disputes;
  - ii. repairs to, or parts for, existing machinery or equipment;
  - iii. works, goods or services that constitute an extension of an existing contract;
  - iv. goods or services that are only available from one supplier or are sold at a fixed price.
- 5.13. When applications are made to waive this financial regulation to enable a price to be negotiated without competition, the reason should be set out in a recommendation to the council {or relevant committee}. Avoidance of competition is not a valid reason.
- 5.14. The council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.
- 5.15. Individual purchases within an agreed budget for that type of expenditure may be authorised by:
- [the Clerk], under delegated authority, for any items below [£500] excluding VAT.
  - the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of the Council {or Chair of the appropriate committee}, for any items below [£2,000] excluding VAT.
  - {a duly delegated committee of the council for all items of expenditure within their delegated budgets for items under [£5,000] excluding VAT}
  - {in respect of grants, a duly authorised committee within any limits set by council and in accordance with any policy statement agreed by the council.}
  - the council for all items over [£5,000];

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<sup>1</sup> The Regulations require councils to use the Contracts Finder website if they advertise contract opportunities and also to publicise the award of contracts over £30,000 including VAT, regardless of whether they were advertised.

Such authorisation must be supported by a minute (in the case of council or committee decisions) or other auditable evidence trail.

- 5.16. No individual member, or informal group of members may issue an official order {unless instructed to do so in advance by a resolution of the council} or make any contract on behalf of the council.
- 5.17. No expenditure may be authorised that will exceed the budget for that type of expenditure other than by resolution of the council {or a duly delegated committee acting within its Terms of Reference} except in an emergency.
- 5.18. In cases of serious risk to the delivery of council services or to public safety on council premises, the clerk may authorise expenditure of up to [£2,000] excluding VAT on repair, replacement or other work that in their judgement is necessary, whether or not there is any budget for such expenditure. The Clerk shall report such action to the Chair as soon as possible and to [the council] as soon as practicable thereafter.
- 5.19. No expenditure shall be authorised, no contract entered into or tender accepted in relation to any major project, unless [the council] is satisfied that the necessary funds are available and that where a loan is required, Government borrowing approval has been obtained first.
- 5.20. An official order or letter shall be issued for all work, goods and services {above [£250] excluding VAT} unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate. Copies of orders shall be retained, along with evidence of receipt of goods.
- 5.21. Any ordering system can be misused and access to them shall be controlled by [the RFO].

## **6. Banking and payments**

- 6.1. The council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the RFO and authorised by the council; banking arrangements shall not be delegated to a committee. The council has resolved to bank with [name bank]. The arrangements shall be reviewed [annually] for security and efficiency.
- 6.2. The council must have safe and efficient arrangements for making payments, to safeguard against the possibility of fraud or error. Wherever possible, more than one person should be involved in any payment, for example by dual online authorisation or dual cheque signing. Even where a purchase has been authorised, the payment must also be authorised and only authorised payments shall be approved or signed to allow the funds to leave the council's bank.
- 6.3. All invoices for payment should be examined for arithmetical accuracy, analysed to the appropriate expenditure heading and verified to confirm that the work, goods or services were received, checked and represent expenditure previously authorised by the council before being certified by [the RFO]. {Where the certification of invoices is done as a batch, this shall include a statement by the RFO that all invoices listed have been 'examined, verified and certified' by the RFO}.

- 6.4. Personal payments (including salaries, wages, expenses and any payment made in relation to the termination of employment) may be summarised to avoid disclosing any personal information.
- 6.5. All payments shall be made by [online banking/cheque], in accordance with a resolution of the council {or duly delegated committee}{or a delegated decision by an officer}, unless [the council] resolves to use a different payment method.
- 6.6. {For each financial year [the RFO] may draw up a schedule of regular payments due in relation to a continuing contract or obligation (such as Salaries, PAYE, National Insurance, pension contributions, rent, rates, regular maintenance contracts and similar items), which the council {or a duly delegated committee} may authorise in advance for the year}.
- 6.7. {A copy of this schedule of regular payments shall be signed by [two members] on each and every occasion when payment is made - to reduce the risk of duplicate payments.}
- 6.8. {A list of such payments shall be reported to the next appropriate meeting of the council or Finance Committee} for information only.
- 6.9. The Clerk and RFO shall have delegated authority to authorise payments {only} in the following circumstances:
  - i. {any payments of up to [£500] excluding VAT, within an agreed budget}.
  - ii. payments of up to [£2,000] excluding VAT in cases of serious risk to the delivery of council services or to public safety on council premises.
  - iii. any payment necessary to avoid a charge under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998 {or to comply with contractual terms}, where the due date for payment is before the next scheduled meeting of [the council], where the [Clerk and RFO] certify that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council {or finance committee}.
  - iv. Fund transfers within the councils banking arrangements up to the sum of [£10,000], provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council [or finance committee].
- 6.10. The RFO shall present a schedule of payments requiring authorisation, forming part of the agenda for the meeting, together with the relevant invoices, to the council {or finance committee}. The council {or committee} shall review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied itself, shall authorise payment by resolution. The authorised schedule shall be initialled immediately below the last item by the person chairing the meeting. A detailed list of all payments shall be disclosed within or as an attachment to the minutes of that meeting.

## **7. Electronic payments**

- 7.1. Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, [the RFO] shall be appointed as the Service Administrator. The bank mandate agreed by the council shall identify [a number of] councillors who will be authorised to approve

transactions on those accounts and a minimum of two people will be involved in any online approval process. {The Clerk may be an authorised signatory, but no signatory should be involved in approving any payment to themselves.}

- 7.2. All authorised signatories shall have access to view the council's bank accounts online.
- 7.3. No employee or councillor shall disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the council or its banking, to anyone not authorised in writing by the council or a duly delegated committee.
- 7.4. The Service Administrator shall set up all items due for payment online. A list of payments for approval, together with copies of the relevant invoices, shall be sent [by email] to [two] authorised signatories.
- 7.5. In the prolonged absence of the Service Administrator [an authorised signatory] shall set up any payments due before the return of the Service Administrator.
- 7.6. Two [councillors who are] authorised signatories shall check the payment details against the invoices before approving each payment using the online banking system.
- 7.7. Evidence shall be retained showing which members approved the payment online {and a printout of the transaction confirming that the payment has been made shall be appended to the invoice for audit purposes}.
- 7.8. A full list of all payments made in a month shall be provided to the next [council] meeting {and appended to the minutes}.
- 7.9. With the approval of [the council] in each case, regular payments (such as gas, electricity, telephone, broadband, water, National Non-Domestic Rates, refuse collection, pension contributions and HMRC payments) may be made by variable direct debit, provided that the instructions are [signed/approved online] by [two authorised members]. The approval of the use of each variable direct debit shall be reviewed by [the council] at least every two years.
- 7.10. Payment may be made by BACS or CHAPS by resolution of [the council] provided that each payment is approved online by [two authorised bank signatories], evidence is retained and any payments are reported to [the council] at the next meeting. The approval of the use of BACS or CHAPS shall be renewed by resolution of the council at least every two years.
- 7.11. If thought appropriate by the council, regular payments of fixed sums may be made by banker's standing order, provided that the instructions are signed {or approved online} by [two members], evidence of this is retained and any payments are reported to council when made. The approval of the use of a banker's standing order shall be reviewed by [the council] at least every two years.
- 7.12. Account details for suppliers may only be changed upon written notification by the supplier verified by [two of] the Clerk and [the RFO] [a member]. This is a potential area for fraud and the individuals involved should ensure that any change is genuine. Data held should be checked with suppliers every [two years].



7.13. Members and officers shall ensure that any computer used for the council's financial business has adequate security, with anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall software installed and regularly updated.

7.14. Remembered password facilities {other than secure password stores requiring separate identity verification} should not be used on any computer used for council banking.

## **8. Cheque payments**

8.1. Cheques or orders for payment in accordance in accordance with a resolution or delegated decision shall be signed by [two members]{and countersigned by the Clerk}.

8.2. A signatory having a family or business relationship with the beneficiary of a payment shall not, under normal circumstances, be a signatory to that payment.

8.3. To indicate agreement of the details on the cheque with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall also initial the cheque counterfoil and invoice.

8.4. {Cheques or orders for payment shall not normally be presented for signature other than at, or immediately before or after a council {or committee} meeting}. Any signatures obtained away from council meetings shall be reported to the council {or Finance Committee} at the next convenient meeting.

## **9. Payment cards**

9.1. Any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to [the Clerk and the RFO] and will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of [£500] unless authorised by council or finance committee in writing before any order is placed.

9.2. A pre-paid debit card may be issued to employees with varying limits. These limits will be set by [the council]. Transactions and purchases made will be reported to [the council] and authority for topping-up shall be at the discretion of [the council].

9.3. Any corporate credit card or trade card account opened by the council will be specifically restricted to use by the Clerk {and RFO} {specify other officers} and any balance shall be paid in full each month.

9.4. Personal credit or debit cards of members or staff shall not be used {under any circumstances.} OR {except for expenses of up to [£250] including VAT, incurred in accordance with council policy.}

## **10. Petty Cash**

10.1. {The council will not maintain any form of cash float. All cash received must be banked intact. Any payments made in cash by the Clerk [or RFO] (for example for postage or minor stationery items) shall be refunded on a regular basis, at least quarterly.} **OR** {The RFO shall maintain a petty cash [float/imprest account] of [£250] and may provide petty cash to officers for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses.

- a) Vouchers for payments made from petty cash shall be kept, along with receipts to substantiate every payment.
- b) Cash 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 any schedule of payments presented for approval.}

## **11. Payment of salaries and allowances**

- 11.1. **As an employer, the council must make arrangements to comply with the statutory requirements of PAYE legislation.**
- 11.2. **Councillors allowances (where paid) are also liable to deduction of tax under PAYE rules and must be taxed correctly before payment.**
- 11.3. Salary rates shall be agreed by the council, or a duly delegated committee. No changes shall be made to any employee's gross pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the council {or relevant committee}.
- 11.4. Payment of salaries shall be made, after deduction of tax, national insurance, pension contributions and any similar statutory or discretionary deductions, on the dates stipulated in employment contracts.
- 11.5. Deductions from salary shall be paid to the relevant bodies within the required timescales, provided that each payment is reported, as set out in these regulations above.
- 11.6. Each payment to employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall be recorded in a payroll control account or other separate confidential record, with the total of such payments each calendar month reported in the cashbook. Payroll reports will be reviewed by [the finance committee] to ensure that the correct payments have been made.
- 11.7. Any termination payments shall be supported by a report to the council, setting out a clear business case. Termination payments shall only be authorised by the full council.
- 11.8. Before employing interim staff, the council must consider a full business case.

## **12. Loans and investments**

- 12.1. Any application for Government approval to borrow money and subsequent arrangements for a loan must be authorised by the full council and recorded in the minutes. All borrowing shall be in the name of the council, after obtaining any necessary approval.
- 12.2. Any financial arrangement which does not require formal borrowing approval from the [Secretary of State/Welsh Assembly Government] (such as Hire Purchase, Leasing of tangible assets or loans to be repaid within the financial year) must be authorised by the full council, following a written report on the value for money of the proposed transaction.
- 12.3. The council shall consider the requirement for an Investment Strategy and Policy in accordance with Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments, which must

written be in accordance with relevant regulations, proper practices and guidance. Any Strategy and Policy shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.

12.4. All investment of money under the control of the council shall be in the name of the council.

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

12.6. Payments in respect of short term or long-term investments, including transfers between bank accounts held in the same bank, shall be made in accordance with these regulations.

### **13. Income**

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

13.2. The council will review all fees and charges for work done, services provided, or goods sold at least annually as part of the budget-setting process, following a report of the Clerk. [The RFO] shall be responsible for the collection of all amounts due to the council.

13.3. Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts shall be reported to the council by [the RFO] and shall be written off in the year. The council's approval shall be shown in the accounting records.

13.4. All sums received on behalf of the council shall be deposited intact with the council's bankers, with such frequency as the RFO considers necessary. The origin of each receipt shall clearly be recorded on the paying-in slip or other record.

13.5. Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the council.

13.6. {The RFO shall ensure that VAT is correctly recorded in the council's accounting software software and that any VAT Return required is submitted from the software by the due date}. OR {Any repayment claim under section 33 of the VAT Act 1994 shall be made {quarterly where the claim exceeds [£100] and} at least annually at the end of the financial year.}

13.7. {Where significant sums of cash are regularly received by the council, the RFO shall 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 record such as ticket issues, and that appropriate care is taken for the security and safety of individuals banking such cash.}

13.8. {Any income that is the property of a charitable trust shall be paid into a charitable bank account. Instructions for the payment of funds due from the charitable trust to the council (to meet expenditure already incurred by the authority) will be given by the Managing Trustees of the charity meeting separately from any council meeting.}

### **14. Payments under contracts for building or other construction works**

14.1. Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the RFO shall maintain a record of all such payments, which shall be made within the time specified in the

contract based on signed certificates from the architect or other consultant engaged to supervise the works.

- 14.2. Any variation of, addition to or omission from a contract must be authorised by [the Clerk] to the contractor in writing, with the council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the contract sum by 5% or more, or likely to exceed the budget available.

## **15. Stores and equipment**

- 15.1. {[The officer in charge of each section] shall be responsible for the care and custody of stores and equipment [in that section].}
- 15.2. Delivery notes shall be obtained in respect of all goods received into store or otherwise delivered and goods must be checked as to order and quality at the time delivery is made.
- 15.3. {Stocks shall be kept at the minimum levels consistent with operational requirements.}
- 15.4. {The RFO shall be responsible for periodic checks of stocks and stores, at least annually.}

## **16. Assets, properties and estates**

- 16.1. The Clerk shall make arrangements for the safe custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the council.
- 16.2. The RFO shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date, with a record of all properties held by the council, their location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held, in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 16.3. The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the Register shall be verified at least annually, possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.
- 16.4. No interest in land shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law. In each case a written report shall be provided to council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate where required by law).

No tangible moveable property shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law, except where the estimated value of any one item does not exceed [£500]. In each case a written report shall be provided to council with a full business case.

## **17. Insurance**

- 17.1. The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the council and the property and risks covered, reviewing these annually before the renewal date in conjunction with the council's review of risk management.
- 17.2. The 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.
- 17.3. The RFO shall be notified of any loss, liability, damage or event likely to lead to a claim, and shall report these to [the council] at the next available meeting. The RFO shall negotiate all claims on the council's insurers {in consultation with the Clerk}.
- 17.4. All appropriate members and employees of the council shall be included in a suitable form of security or fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined [annually] by the council, or duly delegated committee.

## **18. [Charities]**

- 18.1. Where the council is sole managing trustee of a charitable body the 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 Clerk and RFO shall arrange for any audit or independent examination as may be required by Charity Law or any Governing Document.]

## **19. Suspension and revision of Financial Regulations**

- 19.1. The council shall review these Financial Regulations [annually] and following any change of clerk or RFO. The Clerk shall monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and advise the council of any need to amend these Financial Regulations.
- 19.2. The council may, by resolution duly notified prior to the relevant meeting of council, suspend any part of these Financial Regulations, provided that reasons for the suspension are recorded and that an assessment of the risks arising has been presented to all members. Suspension does not disapply any legislation or permit the council to act unlawfully.
- 19.3. The council may temporarily amend these Financial Regulations by a duly notified resolution, to cope with periods of absence, local government reorganisation, national restrictions or other exceptional circumstances.

## **Appendix 1 - Tender process**

- 1) Any invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases.
- 2) The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the Clerk in the ordinary course of post, unless an electronic tendering process has been agreed by the council.
- 3) Where a postal process is used, each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specifically marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract. All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the Clerk in the presence of at least one member of council.
- 4) Where an electronic tendering process is used, the council shall use a specific email address that will be monitored to ensure that nobody accesses any tender before the expiry of the deadline for submission.
- 5) Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to Standing Order [insert reference of the council's relevant standing order] and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.
- 6) Where the council, or duly delegated committee, does not accept any tender, quote or estimate, the work is not allocated and the council requires further pricing, no person shall be permitted to submit a later tender, estimate or quote who was present when the original decision-making process was being undertaken.



## DISS TOWN COUNCIL

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Report Number:  
**46 / 2425**

Report to:	Executive Committee
Date of Meeting:	Wednesday 15 <sup>th</sup> January 2025
Authorship:	Finance Officer
Subject:	Banking Review

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Diss Town Council currently has 5 bank accounts with Barclays Bank Plc, a Barclaycard, a Nationwide savings account and 3 accounts with Lloyds Bank Plc.
- 1.2 With all these bank accounts, we must run 10 cashbooks within the Rialtas system, which can be time consuming and is not cost effective.
- 1.3 It was agreed to review these, along with additional options, to identify a more streamlined and user-friendly bank.

### 2. Barclays Bank Plc

- 2.1 We currently have 5 accounts with Barclays, which include the current account, Wages account, Active Saver, Rate Reward and Town Mayor's Charities account. We do not need to have these 5 accounts.
- 2.2 The Rate Reward account receives an interest rate of 1.41% payable quarterly, and we are only allowed to have 4 drawdowns each year to be able to get the interest paid. This is why we also have the active saver account, to withdraw larger amounts from the Rate Reward, and then transfer monies as and when required to the Wages and current accounts. There is currently £690,819 in this account.
- 2.3 The current account is not user friendly. It costs us £20 monthly for the Barclays.net system to be able to make bacs payments, and we are no longer able to make payments into this account, as we need a personal debit card to pay in at the post office now the branch has closed.
- 2.4 We have a separate wages account for no other reason than this being an internal signatory only account, therefore we wouldn't have to get councillors in to sign the wages as well as payment runs, but with electronic banking this is not such a time consuming issue.
- 2.5 The Town Mayor's Charities has its own bank account, but this is not required, as the balance of this is kept separate from council funds within the Rialtas accounting software, so would be just as easy to come out of a singular account.
- 2.6 Dealing with Barclays on a day-to-day basis has always been challenging, especially adding and removing signatories.

### **3. Lloyds Bank Plc**

- 3.1 We have a current account, which costs £8.50 per month, required for the two longer-term investments, which have £100,000 in each. One will expire in January 2025, and the other will expire in June 2025.
- 3.2 This current account is the only place that we can still deposit any cheques or cash, as we can pay in using the deposit book and envelopes. We are charged extra to bank cash and cheques, and we would incur increased charges to make bacs payments.
- 3.3 These accounts were opened 2 years ago so funds could be diversified. Their current interest rates are 1% for instant access, 2.3% for a 32 day access a 3.46% interest for a 95-day access account.

### **3. Nationwide Building Society**

- 3.1 We have one account with Nationwide with £192,191, which has an interest rate of 3.05%.
- 3.2 This account needs to have 35 days' notice to be able to make withdrawals, and can be difficult to pay funds into, but we will be speaking to them regarding this, as it pays on average £500 per month interest with very little management.

### **4. Unity Trust Bank**

- 4.1 Cash can be deposited at the post office, and cheques can be deposited via freepost, and their account would cost £6 per month plus 15p per transaction.
- 4.2 Their interest rates at 2.52% for an instant access account, going up to 4.25% for savings in a 12-month fixed term account are extremely competitive.
- 4.3 Unity Trust appears to be a widely favoured bank among Councils. It was considered during the last banking review six years ago but ultimately not chosen, as the former Responsible Finance Officer advised against it, preferring to work with a Barclays business account manager conveniently located in the neighbouring branch. This is no longer applicable.

### **5. Banking Summary / Recommendations**

- 5.1 Keep the Nationwide savings account as it is, as it attracts favourable interest for minimal work.
- 5.2 Keep the Lloyds account, so we can continue to utilise their longer-term savings for Earmarked Reserves funds.
- 5.2 Open a Unity Trust account, with a current and savings account, with councillors Craggs, Peaty, Robertson & Taylor as signatories, along with another 1 or 2 willing and available members.
- 5.3 Close the Barclays accounts.
- 5.4 These recommendations with any comments from Executive members will be presented to the February Full Council meeting for consideration.



Last Reviewed: Jun 2023  
 Review Date: Jan 2025  
 Next Review Date: Jun 2027

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### Staff TOIL Policy

Time off in Lieu (TOIL) is time off which staff may take for hours worked beyond the normal working day.

1. TOIL should only be accrued in exceptional circumstances only; these exceptional circumstances include finishing important maintenance teamwork. Where possible every effort should be made to avoid TOIL being accrued. Working additional hours is voluntary.
2. All TOIL must be authorised by the individual's Line Manager and recorded on the employee's time sheet.
3. TOIL cannot be accrued for lunch periods. If you work more than six consecutive hours daily, you are entitled to a 20 minute lunch break, this lunch break must be taken and recorded on all staff time sheets.
4. The additional hours needed should be sporadic or required for a limited period of time only – if it is for a period longer than a month then the Clerk should review the overall staffing needs for the team to ensure working practices are effective.
5. The rate at which TOIL can be accrued is on a like for like basis, with the exception of the Carnival event support whereby TOIL will be accrued at the rate of time and a half. (This exception is required to incentivise maximum operational engagement).
6. All TOIL accrued in one calendar month must be used up within six weeks of accrual.
7. Only TOIL accrued in March be carried over from one tax year into the next and must be utilised in April.
8. Employees who choose to work outside their normal working hours through personal choice cannot claim TOIL for those hours unless authorised through their Line Manager.
9. TOIL not taken within the six weeks of accrual will be lost. If there is no allowance for toil to be taken in this time due to staff shortages the Town Clerk can authorise an extension to this time limit.
10. There will be no financial compensation for any TOIL that is lost.
11. Managers should ensure that employees are given reasonable opportunities to take any accrued TOIL within the approved period.
12. The operation of TOIL depends on mutual trust. Any suspected abuse of TOIL will be treated as a disciplinary matter.



## DISS TOWN COUNCIL

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Report Number:  
**47 / 2425**

Report to:	Executive Committee
Date of Meeting:	15 <sup>th</sup> January 2025
Authorship:	Town Clerk
Subject:	Member allowances

### Introduction

1. For some years now some elected members have claimed taxable member allowances. Only elected members are eligible to claim, not co-opted members.
2. In England, the law (specifically the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003) says a town or parish council may pay an annual allowance (the 'parish basic allowance') to its chair only or to all its members.
3. The payment structure for the current financial year is shown as follows and was implemented to acknowledge the extra workload for councillors with additional responsibilities. Only one allowance can be paid per councillor.
 

£318 to Mayor and Council Leader each  
£190 to Committee Chairs (3)  
£110 to all other councillors (6)
4. If everyone was to claim, this could end up costing the taxpayer £1,866 plus £105 for the cost of NALC processing as additional salaries with HMRC.
5. This report asks the question, should the Council continue to offer councillor allowances.

### Rationale

6. Last year 9 from 14 members claimed a total of £1,486. Some stated that they took the role as a voluntary role and feel that they should not be taking monies from the general public for doing this.
7. There are many councillors who are going over and above, who can justifiably claim the allowance but choose not to in some cases. We also have councillors who are co-opted and work harder for the council than some members elect, and they are not entitled to claim.
8. There are others who are regularly absent from meetings, contribute very little if at all in other ways to support the council but claim the allowance.
9. Should members consider continuing with the allowance there should be stricter rules on meeting attendance and the councillors who are claiming should only be those who are playing a more active role in council work.

10. District and County councillors are awarded allowances.

### Advice

11. Advice has been sought from Norfolk Parish Training & Support.

12. They advise that, "There is no obligation to pay councillor allowances, whether to do so or not is a decision for the council. There are not many councils that do and it tends to be the larger ones. If you wanted to get an idea of which councils do pay it, it would be a good question to post on one of the clerk Facebook groups, there's a Norfolk one – 'Norfolk Parish Clerks' and a national one 'Community Clerks' Network'.

### Research

13. The following poll was posted on the Community Clerks' Network.

05:59 Posts

**Community Clerks' Network**  
Sarah Villafuerte Richards · 5 d · 🗨️

To those Councils of a similar size or larger than Diss Town Council (precept - £668k / councillors - 14 / staff - 12 / electorate - 6526 / population 10,714), do you pay elected councillor allowances?

Added by you  
**Yes**

Added by you  
**No**

Added by you  
**If yes, how much per year?**

+ Add poll option...

Like Comment Send

All comments ▾

**Adam Keppel-Green**  
Group expert Top contributor

No, but I think we should. I just don't think the councillors would vote to give themselves allowances due to the likely public backlash.

5 d Like Reply 1 👍

Comment as Sarah Villafuerte Richards

14. 69% of voters (total of 26) stated that they didn't operate a councillor allowance scheme.

15. There is an interesting article in the Clerk magazine regarding why our sector can't afford not to pay the parish basic allowance (see Appendix A).

16. To quote from the article, “Given that this legitimate and lawful expenditure may help your council to address equality and diversity issues, improve behaviour, engagement and participation in the democratic process, whilst helping to improve the perception of your councillors as empowered and accountable public office holders”, I think this provides for an interesting debate.
17. Of course, the current payments to DTC councillors are considerably less than those examples provided of much larger precepting Councils and probably wouldn't go very far, if at all, in addressing the issues raised or incentivising would-be councillors (who wouldn't be able to claim until they were elected anyway).

#### Councillor expenses

18. All of this should be borne in mind alongside the fact that councillors can claim travel and subsistence costs for approved duties (see Appendix B) under a separate power covered in section 26 of the regulations.

#### Summary

19. There is sound & lawful justification for continuing to pay councillor allowances in addition to expenses, but there is also a morale and ethical debate against continuing with this.
20. Justifying the allowance based on individual councillor contributions to Council work is part of the discussion alongside the obvious benefits that could be brought about by doing so as referred to in the article albeit the amounts currently being offered may not go very far in addressing the issues or incentivising would-be councillors.

#### **Recommendation**

To determine whether to continue offering councillor allowances to elected members.



# BACK-TO-BASICS: WHY OUR SECTOR REALLY CAN'T AFFORD NOT TO PAY THE PARISH BASIC ALLOWANCE



Ian Morris MA FSLCC, Chief Officer and Town Clerk to Peterlee Town Council in County Durham, and Mark Smith MBA LLB (Hons) CMgr FCIM FSLCC, Chief Executive at Chippenham Town Council in Wiltshire, challenge some of the mythology regarding the payment

of members' allowances in England. They also propose five key problems that might arise as a result from not paying allowances – along with several 'calls to action' for clerk colleagues and SLCC/National Association of Local Councils (NALC) as the bodies representing our sector.

## What are councillor allowances?

The payment of councillor allowances is prevalent across the local government sector, with principal councils paying basic allowances from £5,000 for a small district council – to over £20,000 for large unitary councils. It also includes additional allowance payments for several roles, such as cabinet member, committee chair, leader etc.

It seems to be much less prevalent in the parish tier though and we are not aware of any published data on the prevalence or value of allowances paid by local councils. This seems to us to be a major knowledge gap, and our first call to action is for SLCC and NALC to ensure future sector surveys include questions about this very important issue.

In England, the law (specifically the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003) says a town or parish council may pay an annual allowance (the 'parish basic allowance') to its chair only or to all its members.

If it pays an annual allowance to all members, then the amount paid to the chair can be different to the others. And if there is a parish remuneration panel for the area and it has made recommendations as to levels of allowances for parish and town councils, then a town or parish council must have regard to those recommendations in setting its own level of annual parish basic allowance. This is all covered in s25 of the regulations.

Separate to the annual parish basic allowance, there is also a power to pay a 'parish travelling and subsistence allowance'. This is covered in s26 of the regulations. These allowances can be paid for travel (motorised or not) for meetings, and duties

	Chippenham Town Council	Peterlee Town Council
<b>Quick facts</b>		
No. of councillors	24	22
No. of council seats contested at last full election	21	22
No. of co-opted councillors	0	1
Gross expenditure 2022/2023	£4.6m	£2.2m
Precept 2022/2023	£3.9m	£1.6m
Band D precept equivalent	£298.64	£336.82
Town councillor basic allowance	£1,342.00	£1,206.84
Additional mayoral allowance	£4,415.62	£500
Principal council ward member basic allowance	£15,004.08	£13,300

related to the council's business.

There is a common misconception that if a principal authority doesn't have a parish remuneration panel, then the local councils in the area can't pay an allowance. This is a dubious interpretation, and any clerks reading this who were under that impression should seek legal advice (or speak to the current authors!) to get the record set straight.

## Why should we be paying the parish basic allowance?

We're not going to beat around the bush here. The issue of parish basic allowances is directly linked to the problematic 'Vicar of Dibley' – 'councillors are volunteers' image of the local council sector. Here's just a few manifestations of the problems that arise as a result:

CONTINUED ON PAGE 17 >



# CONTINUED > BACK-TO-BASICS: WHY OUR SECTOR REALLY CAN'T AFFORD NOT TO PAY THE PARISH BASIC ALLOWANCE

## 1. Lack of diversity

As highlighted in SLCC's Future of Local Councils report (2023), our sector lacks diversity. Around three quarters of local councils have more men than women as councillors, and only circa 12% of councils consist of more women than men – despite the fact there are slightly more women than men in the general population.

In 2018, less than 15% of local councillors were aged 18-44 – despite around 45% of the population being in this age bracket, and 91% of councillors identified as White British compared to 81% in the wider population.

As public authorities, we have a statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering good relations in our local communities. We would argue councils that currently choose not to pay a parish basic allowance to their members should complete an equality impact assessment to specifically consider the extent to which their current membership reflects the wider population of their area and whether the choice to not pay a basic allowance may directly or indirectly affect some parts of their communities more than others.

## 2. Lack of equality

More than half of local councils have 'double-hatted' councillors, and approximately 15% have councillors who are 'triple-hatters'! It seems perverse that as a sector we are comfortable with councillors who are members of district/county/unitary councils receiving allowances in those roles but not in their local council role. Anecdotally, we're both aware of twin-hatted councillors who would confirm they do at least as much – and in some cases more – constituency work relating to local council activity. Why should the twin and triple hatters receive a (sometimes substantial) allowance for part of their civic role while single hatters receive nothing?

## 3. Lack of engagement and involvement

It's an embarrassment to the sector that in the 2022 local council elections only around 10% of council seats were filled by contested elections, leaving around 90% uncontested or unfilled. In 2021 approximately three-quarters of local councils had co-opted members. On average, a quarter of local council seats are filled by co-option. Almost one in four councils have more co-opted members than elected members and the size of the council has little or no impact on the extent of co-option.

We argue every council that has a history of uncontested seats at elections and chooses not to pay a parish basic allowance should be actively consulting residents about whether a change in local policy would be likely to improve candidate recruitment in the future.

## 4. Lack of respect and civility

We're all aware of the issue of civility and respect in our sector and we won't rehearse them again here. We do however argue that clinging on to the 'Vicar of Dibley' – 'councillors are volunteers' culture while also lobbying for mandatory training, increased accountability and tougher sanctions seems both contradictory and counterintuitive.

Councillors are categorically not 'just volunteers'. They are important and influential holders of formal public office and if we want them to behave professionally, then surely, we should also be leading the way and remunerating them with a modest allowance in parity with other local government tiers?

## 5. An expenses scandal waiting to happen?

Allowances paid to elected members are a form of taxable personal income subject to PAYE. During the research for this article, it is apparent some local councils may be publicly declaring they do not pay members allowances, but are instead paying what they claim to be (non-taxable) expenses in the form of a substantial rolled-up advance payment that is not subject to PAYE – and for which actual expenditure incurred is not accounted.

This feels disturbingly like the old 'boot money' scam used by turn of the 20th Century 'amateur' football teams to get around the prohibition on professionalism! Although we are by no means tax experts, we feel that this practice is unethical and potentially unlawful tax avoidance.

In conclusion, we've heard some colleagues say that their councils 'can't afford' to pay a parish basic allowance to their members. For our two councils, the average allowance paid is around £1,250 a year per member. Given that this legitimate and lawful expenditure may help your council to address equality and diversity issues, improve behaviour, engagement and participation in the democratic process, whilst helping to improve the perception of your councillors as empowered and accountable public office holders, we'd respectfully offer a challenge: how can you possibly afford not to?!



## **EXPENSES POLICY**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. The Council will reimburse Council members and staff travel and subsistence costs for approved duties as defined below where an individual has been appointed by the Council to attend in a representative role on behalf of the Council or is attending an approved training course.
- 1.2. The value of expenses claimed must have been incurred for the purpose stated in the claim.
- 1.3. A receipt for all expenses incurred must be provided. Lack of a receipt will be grounds for the expense not being reimbursed unless exceptional approval is given by the Council. In such a case, a brief written explanation of why a receipt was not obtained should be submitted to the Town Clerk.
- 1.4. There will be occasions when Council members are required to meet small incidental expenses whose eligibility for reimbursement is not covered by this document. Each person shall exercise common sense when in this position. If there is any doubt whatsoever about the eligibility of the individual item of expenditure for reimbursement, individuals should check with the Town Clerk before incurring and claiming reimbursement for the expense.
- 1.5. Current expense reimbursement rates and forms for completion are attached to this policy.
- 1.6. Individuals should keep full records of expenses claimed and the reasons for the expenses so that they can provide appropriate evidence, if requested, to HMRC or the auditor.
- 1.7. Consideration should be given to the appropriateness of the mode of transport given the journey duration, number of people travelling, distance and cost.

### **2. Approved Duties**

- 2.1. Attendance at meetings with other authorities or with other bodies where the member has been appointed by the Council. The Town Clerk or other members of staff should not normally require prior approval of the Council, so long as the attendance is justified.
- 2.2. Attendance at receptions, visits, conferences, seminars or other functions where the member has been appointed by the Council to attend in a representative role on behalf of the Council. The Town Clerk or other members of staff should not normally require prior approval of the Council, so long as the attendance is justified.
- 2.3. Attendance as the Council's appointed representative on any public body, charity, voluntary body or other organisation formed for a public purpose.

- 2.4. Attendance at a training course approved either by Council, the Town Clerk or Line Manager.
- 2.5. Non-approved duties under this policy are any duties not previously authorised by the Town Council, one of its committees or working groups or the Town Clerk.

### **3. Travel**

- 3.1 All rail travel shall be by the cheapest standard class available. [In this regard individuals are required to book rail fares in advance whenever possible; to make full use of rail "offers" cheap day returns, supersavers; apex fares and rail cards].
- 3.2 It should always be borne in mind that not all tickets cost the same for the same class of service to a given destination. Therefore, the lowest cost solution must always be identified and chosen by the individual responsible for booking travel arrangements.
- 3.3 The only exceptions to this are:
  - a) When travelling long distance by sleeper train
  - b) When the cost of travel at a higher rate is being reimbursed by another party (claim is to be annotated accordingly)
  - c) When given specific authority to travel in a higher class by the Town Clerk or the Council, for some rare or exceptional circumstance.
- 3.4 Taxis shall only be used when essential [e.g., urgency, awkward hours, transport of baggage too dangerous to use public transport etc.,]
- 3.5 All air travel is to be by economy class unless authorised by the Council. Advantage should be taken of charter and other off-peak airfares whenever possible.
- 3.6 Travel by car – subject to clause 3.7 below, a mileage allowance may be claimed for travel by car on Council business as per rates and form attached.
- 3.7 The maximum sum payable for any given journey shall not exceed the full standard class rail fare for the distance plus the cost of travel to and from the railway station by public transport [NB the rail journey will be deemed to have commenced from the nearest train station to the point of commencement of the journey]. Travel by car, other than for incidental trips to the station etc, must be approved by the Town Clerk.

### **4. Hotels**

- 4.1 Hotel accommodation is expensive and therefore individuals should only seek to stay overnight when it can be clearly demonstrated that the stay will:
  - a) Save the Council costs overall [e.g., the combined cost of a later but cheaper train [fare] and hotel accommodation is equivalent to or less than a more expensive but earlier train [fare].
  - b) It is impossible or impracticable to attend the approved duty without staying overnight. [It will be considered "impossible" or "impracticable" in



circumstances where a member's journey would by necessity have to start from home before 6am in order to reach the approved meeting/duty on time or where productivity would be lost due to tiredness].

- 4.2 Whenever it is necessary for Council members or staff to be away overnight on Council business, individuals may claim reimbursement for reasonable hotel accommodation, breakfast and a table d'hôte dinner [including tea, coffee or soft drinks, but excluding wine or any other alcoholic drinks].
- 4.3 Claims will not normally be acceptable for expenditure on laundry or dry cleaning. Such costs may only be charged if the individual is away from home for more than 3 consecutive days or the individual is required to stay away from home for longer than originally expected. Exceptions to this policy may be made in an emergency such as loss of luggage.
- 4.4 Hotel telephones should not be used.
- 4.5 Room service is an allowable expense but for breakfast and dinner only. Use of mini bars is always at the individuals own expense.

## **5. Meals**

- 5.1 The cost of breakfast away from home may be claimed. This may be as part of a hotel bill or it may also be claimed if an unusually early start has to be made to reach a destination in time.
- 5.2 The cost of lunch will not be reimbursed when the individual is attending a meeting/conference where the provider supplies lunch. If individuals wish to make their own provision for lunch it shall be at the individuals own expense.
- 5.3 The cost of an evening meal [including tea, coffee and soft drinks but excluding wine or any other alcoholic drinks] may be claimed by individuals working after 7pm on Council business (but excluding attendance at meetings of the Council, its committees or working parties) either at base or away.
- 5.4 The Council applies a maximum limit to the acceptable rate per person per meal as attached.

## **6. Postage and Telephone**

- 6.1 The cost of postage and telephone calls [including mobile telephones] necessarily incurred for business reasons may be claimed. In most of the UK, itemised statements are available from most providers. Unless the individual lives in an area where this service is unavailable, detailed monthly statements of reimbursement claims for telephone calls made and costs incurred are required [i.e., claims for a percentage of the quarterly telephone bill are not acceptable].
- 6.2 Individuals making long distance telephone calls must exercise all reasonable economy. Receipts are normally required when claiming for payment of telephone calls in excess of £2.

## **7. Carer's Allowance**

- 7.1 A carer's allowance of up to £12 per hour, i.e., actual expenditure incurred up to a maximum of £12 per hour will be paid for care of dependants whether children, elderly people or people with disabilities, while a staff member or Councillor is undertaking Council approved duties outside of normal working hours. The carer or child minder would be required to be a registered child minder or carer to claim the allowance. The allowance will not be payable to a member of the claimant's own family or household. A staff member will be eligible to seek a carer's allowance where their attendance outside of normal working hours requires them to employ a carer or child minder to cover their attendance (e.g., evening meetings). This is a taxable allowance & councillors would be required to take responsibility for declaring any expenses paid on their annual tax returns.

## **8. Persons with Disabilities**

- 8.1 The Council appreciates that an individual with a disability may not be able to comply with all of the requirements of this policy, and to insist upon compliance would be unfair and unreasonable. Any application for a dispensation from this policy for reasons of disability [e.g., an individual who is unable to use public transport due to disability] should be made to the Town Clerk who will decide based on the circumstances of the member concerned. In exceptional circumstances or in matters of dispute the Town Clerk will refer the request for a dispensation to the Council for a decision.

## **9. Miscellaneous**

- 9.1 There may well be other incidental expenses incurred by individuals that are not covered by these rules. The principle to be applied in considering such items is clear: if the expenditure was wholly, exclusively, necessarily and reasonably incurred for business reasons, then it will normally be reimbursed.
- 9.2 All cases of doubt should be referred promptly to the Town Clerk, *prior* to incurring the expense.

## **10. Non-Reimbursable Expenses**

- 10.1 The following categories of expense will not be reimbursed:
- a) Those claims not supported by fully documented receipts [NB credit card slips do not count as documented receipts], unless exceptional approval has been given by the Town Clerk or the Council.
  - b) Personal entertainment of any sort.
  - c) Car wash/car valeting [except when the vehicle is hired specifically for Council business and requires cleaning before return to the hire garage].
  - d) Mini bar/bar bills other than bottled water in areas and countries where tap water is not potable.
  - e) Habitual claims for unidentified small items of expenditure.

- f) Any claims in excess of the maximum limits set for mileage, subsistence etc., set out in the attached.
- g) Travel to and from a member of staff's usual place of work.

### 11. Submission and Payment of Expense Claims

- 11.1 All claims must reach the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) seven days prior to the payment run being processed which will be on the 18<sup>th</sup> of every month. This payment will be made by BACS through your nominated bank account.
- 11.2 If an individual fails to submit a claim for an item within two months of the purchase, the Council may at the discretion of the Town Clerk refuse reimbursement.
- 11.3 The RFO will scrutinise all claims submitted, and these will be agreed with the Town Clerk. If satisfied that the claims are allowable, the RFO will prepare them for payment in the same manner as for all sundry creditor's payments which have to be approved by Council. Any claims not approved by the RFO or the Town Clerk will be notified to the individual concerned.

### 12. Claim Forms

All claims must be submitted on the standard Council claim form attached at Annex

### MOTOR MILEAGE RATES

VEHICLE	RATE PER MILE
Car	45 pence
Passenger	5 pence
Motorcycle	24 pence
Bicycle	20 pence

### SUBSISTENCE

The maximum subsistence expenses that will be reimbursed are the lower of actual cost of the following:

**Breakfast allowance** [more than 4 hours away from normal place of residence when the journey commences before 7.30am].

**£6.88**

**Lunch allowance** [more than 4 hours away from normal place of residence including lunchtime between 12 & 2pm].

**£9.50**

**Evening meal allowance** [more than 4 hours away from normal place of residence ending after 7pm].

**£11.77**



## DISS TOWN COUNCIL

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Report Number:  
**48 / 2425**

Report to:	Executive Committee
Date of Meeting:	15 <sup>th</sup> January 2025
Authorship:	Town Clerk
Subject:	Staff Performance Management

### Introduction

1. At the last Executive meeting, it was resolved that:

#### **EX1024/16    STAFFING**

2. That the Chair, Vice-Chair & cllr Taylor of the Executive Committee work with the Clerk to review the performance management policy and recommendations for future consideration by the Executive Committee.
2. Cllrs Craggs, Peaty and Taylor met with the Clerk early January to review a draft appraisal form based on ACAS' template which cllr Taylor had prepared.
3. The feedback was very positive with the proposed document being much easier to understand and an opportunity for both the employee and line manager to be more objective with multiple-choice answers to questions regarding competencies.
4. At the end of the document is a revised policy clearly setting out the objective of the appraisal review for both the employee and Diss Town Council.
5. It was also suggested that the reviews should be carried out in August/September each year to allow the Council to budget for wage increments and training more accurately and at a slightly less busy time of year.

### Staff feedback

6. The working party felt it was essential to acquire staff feedback on the new scheme prior to implementation to improve engagement with the process given this has been an issue in the past particularly amongst the outdoor team.
7. One member of the admin team was asked to provide feedback along with a member of the Facilities & Buildings Team.
8. The form and policy has been updated to reflect this feedback which is summarised as follows:
  - a) Improve the wording of the performance assessment table to make it as positive an experience as possible whilst allowing shortcomings to be identified, discussed and addressed.
  - b) Re-format the policy to highlight key points and make it easier to understand.

- c) Provide a condensed version of the form for employees to allow for more staff feedback.
- d) Any boxes checked in Column D in the assessment table would warrant disciplinary procedures with any performance issues being identified and addressed immediately and not at an annual review meeting.

#### Proposed staff appraisal forms

- 9. The new staff appraisal forms are attached at Appendices A & B.
- 10. Appendix A is a self-appraisal form for use by the employee. As well as the self-assessment of the employee's performance, there's a section to review his / her job description to ensure it reflects their current role accurately and prompts in the free field section to aid completion. It is expected that all sections of this form are completed by the employee ahead of the appraisal meeting.
- 11. Appendix B is the form for use by the Line Manager. Sections 1-3 should be completed in advance of the meeting so that the employee and manager performance assessments can be compared during the meeting with opportunities for both the manager and employee to comment on the respective assessments. The final section sets out the action plan to support the employee's development and / or enhance job performance with an example of a SMART objective.
- 12. The forms have also been updated to include additional performance criteria detailed in an appraisal template provided by Worknest, the Council's HR support provider.

#### Next Steps

- 13. Given there have been a number of changes made to the forms since the initial feedback requested from staff representatives, I'd like to share the proposed appraisal forms with all staff at our team meeting next week for final comments.
- 14. It is proposed that the Clerk carries out all staff appraisals (alongside the Facilities & Buildings Manager for his team) to ensure consistency of reviews.
- 15. This feedback alongside any from Executive members will be considered with a recommendation to adopt the new staff appraisal scheme at the February meeting of Full Council.

#### **Recommendation**

To recommend to Full Council the adoption of the new staff appraisal scheme with associated forms, policy and subject to final comments from members and staff.



## Self-Appraisal Scheme for Council Employees

The purpose of this appraisal scheme is to provide an opportunity for staff to reflect on their accomplishments, identify areas for growth, and align their development with the Council's values and objectives.

Please complete sections 1-3 below and bring the form with you to the meeting.

Employee Name	
Job Title	
Length of time in post	
Team (admin or outdoor)	
Line Manager	
Date of appraisal	

1. Job description (reviewed each year - please add in the box any amendments required – tasks no longer undertaken, new responsibilities, changed tasks)

--

2. Self-assessment of performance (tick as appropriate)

Criteria	A Well ahead of standard	B More than satisfactory – slightly above job requirements	C Less than satisfactory – needs slight improvement	D Unsatisfactory – below the standard reasonably expected
<b>1. Volume of work</b> How does the amount of work done compare with the job requirements?	<input type="checkbox"/> Exceptionally high output, exceeding expectations	<input type="checkbox"/> Output is usually above average	<input type="checkbox"/> Output is occasionally below expectations	<input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient – improvement needed

Criteria	A Well ahead of standard	B More than satisfactory – slightly above job requirements	C Less than satisfactory – needs slight improvement	D Unsatisfactory – below the standard reasonably expected
<b>2. Job knowledge</b> Does the employee have the knowledge to do the job effectively?	<input type="checkbox"/> Exceptionally thorough knowledge of role and related responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/> Good knowledge of role and related responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/> Gaps in job knowledge sometimes hinder performance	<input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient knowledge of role, significantly impacting performance
<b>3. Quality of work</b> How high are the employees standard of work?	<input type="checkbox"/> Consistently high-quality standards, nearly always accurate	<input type="checkbox"/> Good quality of work, usually accurate	<input type="checkbox"/> Quality sometimes falls below standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Pays little attention to details, checks regularly required
<b>4. Safety awareness</b> Does the employee adhere to safe working practices?	<input type="checkbox"/> Consistently prioritises safety & sets a positive example to others	<input type="checkbox"/> A good attitude to safety and encourages safe practices amongst others	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes requires reminders to follow safety procedures	<input type="checkbox"/> Regularly disregards safety protocols posing a potential risk
<b>5. Problem solving</b> How much initiative do employees demonstrate to solve problems?	<input type="checkbox"/> Shows much flair and initiative. Solves problems.	<input type="checkbox"/> Good problem solver, seldom needs help	<input type="checkbox"/> Able to solve minor problems but often needs advice	<input type="checkbox"/> Shows little initiative and is easily put off
<b>6. Dependability</b> How reliable is the employee in following procedures?	<input type="checkbox"/> Consistently dependable requiring minimal supervision	<input type="checkbox"/> Reliably follows procedures with occasional supervision only	<input type="checkbox"/> Requires more frequent oversight to ensure tasks are completed correctly	<input type="checkbox"/> Relies heavily on constant supervision to fulfil responsibilities
<b>7. Teamwork</b> How well does the employee collaborate with others to achieve group goals?	<input type="checkbox"/> Works extremely well with others fostering a collaborative & enthusiastically environment	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates strong cooperation & flexibility, contributing positively to the team	<input type="checkbox"/> Usually performs adequately but may occasionally struggle with collaboration or adaptability	<input type="checkbox"/> Often resistant to teamwork displaying uncooperative behaviour or reluctance to adapt

Criteria	A Well ahead of standard	B More than satisfactory – slightly above job requirements	C Less than satisfactory – needs slight improvement	D Unsatisfactory – below the standard reasonably expected
<b>8. Attendance &amp; punctuality</b> What is the employee's pattern of absence and punctuality?	<input type="checkbox"/> Maintains exemplary attendance & punctuality, rarely absent or late	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates acceptable attendance & punctuality with occasional absences	<input type="checkbox"/> Attendance or punctuality levels are slightly below expectations & need improvement	<input type="checkbox"/> Frequently late or absent, significantly impacting reliability
<b>9. Work planning</b> How effectively does the employee plan and organise their work?	<input type="checkbox"/> Consistently demonstrates exceptional planning & organisational skills	<input type="checkbox"/> Effectively organises work & meets deadlines with minimal issues	<input type="checkbox"/> Requires development in planning and prioritisation to improve efficiency	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks effective planning which often results in missed deadlines or incomplete tasks.
<b>10. Flexibility</b> How willing is the employee to accept change?	<input type="checkbox"/> Contributes to change through continuous improvement process	<input type="checkbox"/> Readily accepts change	<input type="checkbox"/> Not keen to accept change	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not accept changes in working practices or procedures
<b>11. Communication</b> How effective is the employee at verbal and written communication?	<input type="checkbox"/> Excels in all forms of communication, consistently clear, concise & professional	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates strong communication skills, effectively conveying ideas & information	<input type="checkbox"/> Experiences occasional challenges with communication that require improvement	<input type="checkbox"/> Struggles with communication, leading to misunderstandings or lack of clarity
<b>12. Housekeeping</b> How well does the employee ensure a clean & orderly personal & general working environment?	<input type="checkbox"/> Carries out all tasks in orderly manner. Takes the lead with others to ensure clean and orderly personal & general working environment	<input type="checkbox"/> Carries out all tasks in orderly manner. Cooperates with others to ensure clean and orderly personal & general working environment	<input type="checkbox"/> Carries out own work tasks in orderly manner. Only concerned with general working environment	<input type="checkbox"/> Works in disorganised manner. Not co-operative in maintaining a clean & orderly working environment



Criteria	A Well ahead of standard	B More than satisfactory – slightly above job requirements	C Less than satisfactory – needs slight improvement	D Unsatisfactory – below the standard reasonably expected
<b>Overall performance</b> How does the employee's overall performance compare with the expected standard?	<input type="checkbox"/> Consistently performs at a level well above the expected standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Regularly meets or slightly exceeds expectations in most areas	<input type="checkbox"/> Falls below expected performance in several areas, requiring targeted improvement	<input type="checkbox"/> Consistently underperforms, requiring immediate intervention & development

### 3. Employee Comments on his / her Self-Assessment

The following questions are prompts to help you complete this section.

*What achievements are you most proud of since your last performance review?*

*Do you have any evidence to demonstrate progression on the objectives raised at the last performance review?*

*Is there anything the Council could do differently to enable you to do your duties more efficiently?*

*What can the Council do to help you improve your range of skills?*

*Do you have any problems with your fellow workers or management you would like the council to look into?*

*What training have you completed since the last review and what has been the outcome to you, your team and DTC?*

*Bearing in mind the Council's Vision 'To make Diss a successful, vibrant, attractive town, where people want to live, work and visit' and your role within the team, is there scope for you to develop and how?*

*What are your medium- and long-term career goals?*

*Is there any specific training we should consider to help your career development?*

*Is there anything else you would like to discuss with us concerning your job or working relationships?*

If there is insufficient space in the above columns, please continue your comments on a separate page. Remember we also encourage regular 1-2-1's with your line manager at any time throughout the year if you feel it would be useful.



## PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL POLICY

1. At Diss Town Council, we are committed to fostering a fair and supportive workplace for all employees. This policy aims to ensure consistency in staff evaluations and provide a structured framework for assessing performance, supporting professional growth, and achieving organisational goals.
2. Performance appraisals provide an opportunity for staff to reflect on their accomplishments, identify areas for growth, and align their development with the Council's values and objectives. For those eligible for pay progression, appraisals also inform recommendations based on performance throughout the review cycle.
3. Through this process, we aim to:
  - a) Maintain clear communication of expectations.
  - b) Recognise and celebrate staff contributions.
  - c) Support skill enhancement and career progression.
  - d) Reinforce the Council's commitment to equality and inclusivity.
4. Line managers play a critical role in facilitating open communication and regular one-to-one engagements to complement the annual appraisal process. While appraisals focus on development and performance enhancement, they are separate from the Council's formal capability, disciplinary, and grievance procedures.

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### What Is a Performance Appraisal?

5. A performance appraisal is periodic evaluation (at least annual) of an employee's contributions, measured against defined competencies and objectives. This structured process allows staff and their line managers to discuss achievements, set goals, and identify professional development opportunities.
6. Key features include:
  - a) **Annual Cycle:** Appraisals will be conducted in August and September to inform the training plan and budget for the following financial year.
  - b) **Core Competencies:** Discussions focus on Council-wide expectations and role-specific skills (including review of job description)
  - c) **Constructive Feedback:** Line managers or the Town Clerk provide actionable insights to guide improvement and celebrate successes.
  - d) **Recognition of Potential:** Appraisals highlight achievements and explore future growth opportunities.

## Benefits of the Appraisal Process

### For Diss Town Council

7. Performance appraisals enhance organisational effectiveness by:
  - a) Recognising and utilising employees' unique talents and skills.
  - b) Identifying ways to improve working conditions, productivity, and quality of work.
  - c) Supporting skill and career development initiatives.
  - d) Facilitating strategic decision-making, including succession planning and internal promotions.
  - e) Addressing behavioural issues proactively.

### For Employees

8. Appraisals provide a positive platform for employees to:
  - a) Receive recognition for their achievements and contributions.
  - b) Gain clarity on areas for improvement and set actionable goals.
  - c) Identify training needs to support career development.
  - d) Discuss long-term career aspirations and feel invested in their professional journey.
  - e) Explore opportunities for promotion or pay progression.

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## Appraisal Meetings

9. Performance appraisals are designed to encourage constructive, two-way communication. These meetings offer a dedicated opportunity to review past performance, set future goals, and discuss development opportunities in a supportive environment.
10. Preparation by both employee and line manager is key to a meaningful dialogue about performance, challenges and aspirations.
  - a) **Line Managers:** Ensure access to job descriptions, previous objectives, records of training, and a completed draft appraisal form.
  - b) **Employees:** Review past objectives, gather evidence of progress, and complete a self-appraisal form to bring to the meeting.
11. Meetings should be conducted as follows:
  - a) Scheduled with at least five working days' notice.
  - b) Discussions will take place in a confidential and distraction-free setting.
  - c) Feedback will focus on constructive guidance, aligning expectations, and actionable outcomes.
12. The Executive Committee supports the Town Clerk and line managers by providing training on conducting appraisals effectively.
13. The Town Clerk will be present at all staff appraisal meetings to ensure consistency.
14. Final appraisal assessments are reviewed by a panel comprising the Town Clerk, Executive Chair, and another Executive Member before being presented to Full Council.



## Appraisal Scheme for Council Employees (for use by line managers)

The purpose of this appraisal scheme is to provide an opportunity for staff to reflect on their accomplishments, identify areas for growth, and align their development with the Council's values and objectives.

Please complete the boxes below including an assessment of the employee's performance in advance of the meeting.

Employee Name	
Job Title	
Length of time in post	
Team (admin or outdoor)	
Line Manager	
Date of appraisal	

1. Job description (reviewed each year - please add in the box any amendments required – tasks no longer undertaken, new responsibilities, changed tasks)

--

2. Assessment of performance (tick as appropriate)

Criteria	A Well ahead of standard	B More than satisfactory – slightly above job requirements	C Less than satisfactory – needs slight improvement	D Unsatisfactory – below the standard reasonably expected
<b>1. Volume of work</b> How does the amount of work done compare with the job requirements?	<input type="checkbox"/> Exceptionally high output, exceeding expectations	<input type="checkbox"/> Output is usually above average	<input type="checkbox"/> Output is occasionally below expectations	<input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient – improvement needed

Criteria	A Well ahead of standard	B More than satisfactory – slightly above job requirements	C Less than satisfactory – needs slight improvement	D Unsatisfactory – below the standard reasonably expected
<b>2. Job knowledge</b> Does the employee have the knowledge to do the job effectively?	<input type="checkbox"/> Exceptionally thorough knowledge of role and related responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/> Good knowledge of role and related responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/> Gaps in job knowledge sometimes hinder performance	<input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient knowledge of role, significantly impacting performance
<b>3. Quality of work</b> How high are the employees standard of work?	<input type="checkbox"/> Consistently high-quality standards, nearly always accurate	<input type="checkbox"/> Good quality of work, usually accurate	<input type="checkbox"/> Quality sometimes falls below standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Pays little attention to details, checks regularly required
<b>4. Safety awareness</b> Does the employee adhere to safe working practices?	<input type="checkbox"/> Consistently prioritises safety & sets a positive example to others	<input type="checkbox"/> A good attitude to safety and encourages safe practices amongst others	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes requires reminders to follow safety procedures	<input type="checkbox"/> Regularly disregards safety protocols posing a potential risk
<b>5. Problem solving</b> How much initiative do employees demonstrate to solve problems?	<input type="checkbox"/> Shows much flair and initiative. Solves problems.	<input type="checkbox"/> Good problem solver, seldom needs help	<input type="checkbox"/> Able to solve minor problems but often needs advice	<input type="checkbox"/> Shows little initiative and is easily put off
<b>6. Dependability</b> How reliable is the employee in following procedures?	<input type="checkbox"/> Consistently dependable requiring minimal supervision	<input type="checkbox"/> Reliably follows procedures with occasional supervision only	<input type="checkbox"/> Requires more frequent oversight to ensure tasks are completed correctly	<input type="checkbox"/> Relies heavily on constant supervision to fulfil responsibilities
<b>7. Teamwork</b> How well does the employee collaborate with others to achieve group goals?	<input type="checkbox"/> Works extremely well with others fostering a collaborative & enthusiastically environment	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates strong cooperation & flexibility, contributing positively to the team	<input type="checkbox"/> Usually performs adequately but may occasionally struggle with collaboration or adaptability	<input type="checkbox"/> Often resistant to teamwork displaying uncooperative behaviour or reluctance to adapt

Criteria	A Well ahead of standard	B More than satisfactory – slightly above job requirements	C Less than satisfactory – needs slight improvement	D Unsatisfactory – below the standard reasonably expected
<b>8. Attendance &amp; punctuality</b> What is the employee's pattern of absence and punctuality?	<input type="checkbox"/> Maintains exemplary attendance & punctuality, rarely absent or late	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates acceptable attendance & punctuality with occasional absences	<input type="checkbox"/> Attendance or punctuality levels are slightly below expectations & need improvement	<input type="checkbox"/> Frequently late or absent, significantly impacting reliability
<b>9. Work planning</b> How effectively does the employee plan and organise their work?	<input type="checkbox"/> Consistently demonstrates exceptional planning & organisational skills	<input type="checkbox"/> Effectively organises work & meets deadlines with minimal issues	<input type="checkbox"/> Requires development in planning and prioritisation to improve efficiency	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks effective planning which often results in missed deadlines or incomplete tasks.
<b>10. Flexibility</b> How willing is the employee to accept change?	<input type="checkbox"/> Contributes to change through continuous improvement process	<input type="checkbox"/> Readily accepts change	<input type="checkbox"/> Not keen to accept change	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not accept changes in working practices or procedures
<b>11. Communication</b> How effective is the employee at verbal and written communication?	<input type="checkbox"/> Excels in all forms of communication, consistently clear, concise & professional	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates strong communication skills, effectively conveying ideas & information	<input type="checkbox"/> Experiences occasional challenges with communication that require improvement	<input type="checkbox"/> Struggles with communication, leading to misunderstandings or lack of clarity
<b>12. Housekeeping</b> How well does the employee ensure a clean & orderly personal & general working environment?	<input type="checkbox"/> Carries out all tasks in orderly manner. Takes the lead with others to ensure clean and orderly personal & general working environment	<input type="checkbox"/> Carries out all tasks in orderly manner. Cooperates with others to ensure clean and orderly personal & general working environment	<input type="checkbox"/> Carries out own work tasks in orderly manner. Only concerned with general working environment	<input type="checkbox"/> Works in disorganised manner. Not co-operative in maintaining a clean & orderly working environment

Criteria	A Well ahead of standard	B More than satisfactory – slightly above job requirements	C Less than satisfactory – needs slight improvement	D Unsatisfactory – below the standard reasonably expected
<b>Overall performance</b> How does the employee's overall performance compare with the expected standard?	<input type="checkbox"/> Consistently performs at a level well above the expected standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Regularly meets or slightly exceeds expectations in most areas	<input type="checkbox"/> Falls below expected performance in several areas, requiring targeted improvement	<input type="checkbox"/> Consistently underperforms, requiring immediate intervention & development

### 3. Line Manager's Comments

Remember we also encourage regular 1-2-1's with your line manager at any time throughout the year if you feel it would be useful.

### 4. Comments of Line Manager on the Employee's Self-Assessment

### 5. Comments of Employee on Line Manager's Assessment

**6. Action Plan for Development**

Outline agreed steps to support the employee’s development and / or enhance job performance.

**1. Training or Counselling Requirements**

Details any specific training, workshops or counselling sessions needed to support development. This may be used for the Council training plan and for budgeting purposes.

**2. Career Development Opportunities**

Identify potential career progression steps and opportunities for growth.

**3. Agreed Objectives & Timeframe**

Specify clear job and development objectives along with deadlines for achieving them. Ensure the objective are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timebound)

A good example of a SMART objective for the outdoor team is:  
 ‘To reduce the time spent cutting the verges at Council sites by 20% next season without adversely impacting on its appearance.’ Rather than ‘improve verge cutting’.

*Please include a minimum of 3 objectives and no more than 6.*

No.	Objective	Timeframe	Measures of success / performance criteria / evidence
1.			
2.			
3.			

Signed Line Manager .....

Date .....

Signed Employee .....

Date .....





## PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL POLICY

1. At Diss Town Council, we are committed to fostering a fair and supportive workplace for all employees. This policy aims to ensure consistency in staff evaluations and provide a structured framework for assessing performance, supporting professional growth, and achieving organisational goals.
  2. Performance appraisals provide an opportunity for staff to reflect on their accomplishments, identify areas for growth, and align their development with the Council's values and objectives. For those eligible for pay progression, appraisals also inform recommendations based on performance throughout the review cycle.
  3. Through this process, we aim to:
    - a) Maintain clear communication of expectations.
    - b) Recognise and celebrate staff contributions.
    - c) Support skill enhancement and career progression.
    - d) Reinforce the Council's commitment to equality and inclusivity.
  4. Line managers play a critical role in facilitating open communication and regular one-to-one engagements to complement the annual appraisal process. While appraisals focus on development and performance enhancement, they are separate from the Council's formal capability, disciplinary, and grievance procedures.
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### What Is a Performance Appraisal?

5. A performance appraisal is periodic evaluation (at least annual) of an employee's contributions, measured against defined competencies and objectives. This structured process allows staff and their line managers to discuss achievements, set goals, and identify professional development opportunities.
  6. Key features include:
    - a) **Annual Cycle:** Appraisals will be conducted in August and September to inform the training plan and budget for the following financial year.
    - b) **Core Competencies:** Discussions focus on Council-wide expectations and role-specific skills (including review of job description)
    - c) **Constructive Feedback:** Line managers or the Town Clerk provide actionable insights to guide improvement and celebrate successes.
    - d) **Recognition of Potential:** Appraisals highlight achievements and explore future growth opportunities.
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## Benefits of the Appraisal Process

### For Diss Town Council

7. Performance appraisals enhance organisational effectiveness by:
  - a) Recognising and utilising employees' unique talents and skills.
  - b) Identifying ways to improve working conditions, productivity, and quality of work.
  - c) Supporting skill and career development initiatives.
  - d) Facilitating strategic decision-making, including succession planning and internal promotions.
  - e) Addressing behavioural issues proactively.

### For Employees

8. Appraisals provide a positive platform for employees to:
  - a) Receive recognition for their achievements and contributions.
  - b) Gain clarity on areas for improvement and set actionable goals.
  - c) Identify training needs to support career development.
  - d) Discuss long-term career aspirations and feel invested in their professional journey.
  - e) Explore opportunities for promotion or pay progression.

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## Appraisal Meetings

9. Performance appraisals are designed to encourage constructive, two-way communication. These meetings offer a dedicated opportunity to review past performance, set future goals, and discuss development opportunities in a supportive environment.
10. Preparation by both employee and line manager is key to a meaningful dialogue about performance, challenges and aspirations.
  - a) **Line Managers:** Ensure access to job descriptions, previous objectives, records of training, and a completed draft appraisal form.
  - b) **Employees:** Review past objectives, gather evidence of progress, and complete a self-appraisal form to bring to the meeting.
11. Meetings should be conducted as follows:
  - a) Scheduled with at least five working days' notice.
  - b) Discussions will take place in a confidential and distraction-free setting.
  - c) Feedback will focus on constructive guidance, aligning expectations, and actionable outcomes.
12. The Executive Committee supports the Town Clerk and line managers by providing training on conducting appraisals effectively.
13. The Town Clerk will be present at all staff appraisal meetings to ensure consistency.
14. Final appraisal assessments are reviewed by a panel comprising the Town Clerk, Executive Chair, and another Executive Member before being presented to Full Council.

## Progress Report

Item 12

Committee	Minute Ref	Subject	Action	Assigned to	Timescale	Comments or further action
Executive	EX1024/13	PROGRESS REPORT	It was agreed to push back the revisions to the staffing handbook and review to June 2025. Cllr Taylor offered his time to help with policy reviews.	Clerk / ET	Jun-25	
Executive	EX1024/16	STAFFING	It was agreed that a quotation for the staffing review detailing outcomes would be requested from the Locum RFO.	Clerk / KK	15.01.25	Update on agenda