

## Policy & Resources Committee

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<b>Title:</b>	<b>Council Policies</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>20 April 2021</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Cassie Pinnells, Acting Town Clerk Karen Slater, Acting RFO / Office Administration Manager Andrea Oughton, Asset Manager</b>

### Purpose of Report

1. To provide the background to a review of Council Safety Policies.
2. The Committee is asked to make any further suggested changes for discussion and then formally agree the revised policies.

### Background

3. The following policies are usually reviewed every 4 years and are overdue / due for review:
  - Financial Management (adopted April 2016)
  - Fixed Asset Depreciation (adopted August 2017)
  - Land Acquisition & Disposal (last reviewed August 2016)
  - Partnership Working – A Code of Practice (last reviewed April 2016)
  - Social Media & Media Relations (last reviewed August 2017)
  - Sponsorship (last reviewed August 2017)
  - Promotional Signs (last reviewed August 2017)
  - Structures on the Highway (last reviewed August 2017)
  - Holding an Event on Town Council Land (last reviewed April 2021)
4. Officers have reviewed all policies in detail and made various mostly cosmetic amendments highlighted in red to reflect current practice. A summary of the changes can be found below.

### Policies

5. Listed below are the changes (where relevant) to each policy.

#### **Financial Management Procedure**

- Officers have reviewed and propose no amendments.

#### **Fixed Asset Depreciation**

- Officers have reviewed and propose one amendment – highlighted in red on the policy.

### **Land Acquisition & Disposal**

- Background:  
1.4 added advising policy should be read in conjunction with Financial Regulations
- Condition for Disposal:  
3.17 reference to advertising in local newspaper removed and publication on Noticeboard added.  
3.27 added To consider, on a case by case basis, to set aside funds raised from land disposal to contribute to biodiversity.

### **Partnership Working – A Code of Practice**

- Officers have reviewed and propose no amendments.

### **Social Media & Media Relations**

- Officers have reviewed with minor changes highlighted in red.

### **Sponsorship**

- Officers have reviewed and propose no amendments.

### **Promotional Signs**

- Officers have reviewed and propose no amendments.

### **Structures on the Highway**

- Officers have reviewed with a minor change highlighted in red. To reduce the minimum width from 1.5 metres to 1.2 metres required for public access on a footpath as outlined in the Oxfordshire Transport & Access Group.

### **Holding an Event on Town Council Land**

- As per the P&R resolution in April 2021, a meeting of the Open Spaces Working Group was held where it was agreed that commercial requests to use public open space would not be considered. A line to this effect has been included within the policy (in red).

### **Resource Appraisal**

6. All policies are currently adhered to under existing resource provision or have no resource implications attached apart from officer time in ensuring conformance with the policies and associated procedures.

### **Risk Assessment**

7. Financial Management Procedure – The document reflects what the Town Council does already and provides assurance to Members that risks are being addressed and controlled within the work of the Town Council.
8. Fixed Asset Depreciation Policy – There would be a risk of an incorrect balance sheet without a clear Fixed Asset Depreciation Policy in place.

9. Land Acquisition and Disposal Policy – to ensure the Town Council follows a consistent approach when acquiring and disposing of land to prevent accusations of unfairness and impropriety.
10. Partnership Working (A Code of Practice) Policy – none.
11. Social Media & Media Relations Policy – There would be a risk that the: - harm to the Council’s reputation, breaches of Officers/Members code of Conduct, data protection claims, criminal offences regarding obscene material and bringing the Council into disrepute without adopted guidelines.
12. Sponsorship Policy – There would be a risk that the Council’s reputation and financial opportunities for community benefit such as events and activities would be lost without clear sponsorship guidelines.
13. Promotional Signs Policy – There would be a risk of fly-posting proliferation without the policy.
14. Structures on the Highway Policy – There would be a risk of inappropriate highway obstructions without the policy.
15. Holding an Event on Town Council Land Policy – The business interruption, public space not available to residents due to commercial opportunity. Terms and conditions to be put in place to ensure legal requirements are held such as public liability insurance and appropriate licences to indemnify the Council.

### **Legal Powers:**

- Local Government Act 1972 s123-131
- Local Government Act 1972 s111
- Local Government Act 1972 sch 12a,
- Local Government Act 1986
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Defamation Act 2013
- Highway Act 1980 s132 / s143 / s149 / s152
- Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, s 19
- Local Government Act 1972, s144

### **Recommendation**

***It is recommended that:***

- i) ***The revised Financial Management Procedure, Fixed Asset Depreciation, Land Acquisition & Disposal, Partnership Working – A Code of Practice, Promotional Signs, Social Media & Media Relations, Sponsorship, Structures on the Highway, and Holding an Event on Town Council Land Policies be adopted.***