



To: Full Town Council Members

Meeting Date: Tuesday 28th April 2026

Agenda Item 12a: Locum Responsible Financial Officer Report

Report Author: Safia Kauser – Locum Clerk/RFO

Purpose of the Report:

To provide members with an update on Financial Matters since the last meeting and matters for decision.

1) FSCS Protection Scheme

The protection offered by the FSCS increased to £120,000 from December 2025. Not all councils are covered by the scheme, only “a small local authority with an annual budget of up to EUR 500,000” (about £430,589, using the required 3 July 2025 exchange rate).

Confirmation has been received from the Co-op bank that the FSCS protection scheme applies to the councils bank accounts, covered up to £120,000.

The council may need to review the level of money held with Nationwide and consider investing this money with CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund once a new RFO is in place. Further information on CCLA is available on the website link: <https://www.ccla.co.uk/investments/investor/local-authorities>

2) Insurance Renewal with Zurich

The council is in a long-term agreement with Zurich that expires on 01st April 2027. The insurance cover was reviewed by the Locum Clerk/RFO prior to renewal. The premium covering the period from 01st April 2026 to 31st March 2027 was £5,972.93. The asset register, once updated, will be provided to the insurance company to ensure all assets are insured. A procurement exercise will need to be carried out this year for further quotes and long-term agreements prior to the expiry of the insurance.

Insurance cover is in place for the following categories:

- Assets
- Business Interruption
- Loss of money
- Public Liability (£15m)
- Hirers Liability (£2m)
- Employers Liability (£10m)
- Libel & Slander (£250k)
- Motor Vehicles (K64 NNM, MK71 FUU, MK71 FVC, SC19 TYF)
- Motor Legal Expenses & uninsured loss recovery
- Fidelity Guarantee (£1m)
- Personnel Accident (Officers & Members) & Key Personnel
- Legal Expenses (£200k)

3) Bank Signatories Update

The form to add the Locum Clerk/RFO as a signatory to the Co-op bank accounts was submitted last week and is being processed by the bank.

4) Invoice authorisation stamp

An accounts invoice authorisation stamp has been ordered and will be used for all purchase invoices from the 01st April and scanned into Scribe. This will assist in improving the audit trail for the purchase and approval of payments.

Cert for Payment RFO:	
Auth Ref & PO No:	
Payment Auth Ref:	
Budget / CC Code:	
Payment Type / Date:	
Signatory 1:	
Signatory 2:	

5) Business Rates Invoice for 2026/2027

The rates invoices for Parkers Farm has been received from Warrington Borough Council. Due to the building being subject to the Small Business Rate Relief, no payment is due.

6) Petty Cash Reconciliation Balance at 31st March 2026

The petty cash was reconciled by the Locum Clerk and Deputy Clerk. All receipts reconciled with the physical cash of £93.25 held at 31st March 2026. All expenditure has been entered into Scribe accounting software.

7) Year-End Accounts Preparation & Internal Audit

All payments for the March period have been entered, and preparation of the year-end accounts is underway.

The internal auditor was contacted last week to arrange the audit once the year-end documentation had been completed. The auditor has requested that a questionnaire be completed and supporting documents uploaded to enable the audit to be conducted remotely. Subject to these actions being completed by the Locum RFO, the year-end accounts will be presented at the May Council meeting, or at the latest, the June meeting. This will ensure that the accounts are submitted to the external auditor by the submission date of 30th June.

8) Renewal of Energy Contracts

An energy broker has been in touch with the office and requested to assist in renewing the energy contracts prior to their expiry date, advising that, given the current climate, it is recommended to lock the contracts in early.

Current Contracts:

- British Gas Lite – Electricity Contract (fixed price plan + end date 30th September 2027)
- British Gas Lite – Gas Contract (fixed price plan + end date 01st October 2027)

Any contract changes or quotations will be presented at a council meeting for renewal.