REGULATION 14: OTHER COUNCIL ASSETS (CURRENT)

Quick Link

This regulation covers all Council assets such as employees, data and information which would not be classified as assets on a balance sheet.
Physical assets such as land, property and equipment are covered in Regulation 13 – Fixed Assets.

14.1 EMPLOYEES

The following rules only cover the financial and security issues associated with employees. Further information on the management of employees (e.g. absence management) is contained in a number of corporate policies which are available from Personnel Services.

14.1.1 **Budget Setting:** Managers should ensure that staffing budgets set represent an accurate forecast of staffing requirements, within any strategy restraints set by the Council.

14.1.2 **Employee Budgetary Control:** Managers shall exercise control over their staffing establishment within the approved staffing budgets.

14.1.3 **Recruitment Process:** The recruitment of employees will be made in accordance with the Council's Recruitment and Selection Guidelines and procedures. This will include ensuring that adequate checks are undertaken to ensure that new employees are appropriately qualified, experienced, and trustworthy and have a legal permit to work.

14.1.4 **Contracts and Remuneration:** The appointment of employees will be made in accordance with statutory requirements and the Council's approved establishment, grades and rates of pay.

14.1.5 **Use of Temping Agencies:** Recruitment of temporary staff should only be made from reputable agencies where it can be established that employment legislation such as social inclusion and the minimum wage, is being adhered to.

14.1.6 **Time Sheets:** Adequate controls should be in place to ensure that employee time is used effectively and to the benefit of the authority. This should include the timely completion of timesheets for employees and agency staff, wherever appropriate.

14.2 ICT SYSTEMS

The following rules only cover the key financial and irregularity risks associated with Information and Communication Technology (ICT) systems. Detailed regulations on the use and maintenance of ICT systems are contained in the ICT handbooks.

14.2.1 **System Design:** Consideration should be given to the appropriateness of controls to be built into systems to achieve an acceptable level of security and ensure, wherever possible, that transactions can be traced to the person originating them.

14.2.2 **Access Security:** Directors and Chief Officers shall be responsible for ensuring that the surety systems which prevent access to financial and personal data held by a computer or by any other method of storage are maintained.

14.2.3 **Standards on Use of Systems:** The use of ICT systems and equipment shall comply with:

a) the Data Protection Act (security and collection of personal data)

b) UK Copyright, Designs and Patents law (software licensing)

c) Computer Misuse Act (illegality of unauthorised use and access)

d) Human Rights Directive and RIPA (rights to privacy)

e) Telecommunications Directive (rights not to receive unwanted e-communications)

and any FBC information and record keeping policies and standards laid down to ensure security and privacy.

14.2.4 **ICT Disaster Recovery Plan:** The "Nominated Chief Officer with responsibility for Information and Communication Management" is responsible for ensuring that adequate arrangements exist to protect the Council's interests in the event of a computer disaster.

14.3 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

The following rules apply to the maintenance of information and data which are key to the provision of services.

14.3.1 **Ownership:** Information, data and methodologies created using Council resources remains the property of the Council, unless agreed otherwise by the appropriate Director and Chief Officer.

14.3.2 **Responsibility for Information Security:** Directors and Chief Officers are responsible for maintaining appropriate security and privacy of all information under their control in accordance with the Information Security Policy.

14.3.3 **Information Storage and Management:** All employees must be mindful of the Councils information and record keeping policies, and the requirements of the Data Protection Act, when collating, storing and distributing information and must follow any instructions issued by the Council's Information Officer.

14.3.4 **Information Disposal:** All employees must be mindful of the Council's guidance on "Disposing of Confidential Information" when dealing with the disposal of any documents or disks that may contain confidential or sensitive information.

14.3.5 **Contingency Plans:** Directors and Chief Officers should ensure that adequate contingency plans exist for the security of assets and continuity of service in the event of disaster or system failure.

14.4 DOCUMENT RETENTION

Records can now exist in a variety of forms: e.g. computer database, microfiche, CD ROM, Document Imaging (DIPS) systems and hard copy. All these forms need to be managed to ensure that legislative, corporate and service needs are met, whilst resources are not unnecessarily tied up with the storage and maintenance of records. Corporate policy is that all documents should be held in electronic format wherever possible.

14.4.1 **Document Retention Schedule**: All managers should maintain appropriate procedures to ensure compliance with the Council's Information Disposal Schedule, and any other corporate guidance issued.

14.4.2 **Financial Documents:** The periods for retaining documents of a financial nature shall be agreed with the Statutory Chief Finance Officer. Documents which record or support financial transactions must be retained for minimum periods for accounting and taxation purposes.

14.4.3 **Statutory Service Documents:** Directors and Chief Officers are responsible for ensuring that any service specific statutory document formats and retention periods are adhered to.

14.5 CONTROLLED ITEMS

14.5.1 **Controlled Stationery Stocks:** The "Nominated Chief Officer with responsibility for Exchequer functions" is responsible for ordering and safeguarding stocks of documents used to originate financial transactions. Examples include orders for goods and services, debtor accounts, receipt books and paying in books.

14.5.2 **Use of Controlled Stationery:** The issue and use of controlled stationery must be by authorised staff only and all blank and part used stocks must be kept securely.

14.5.3 **Contracts:** Contract documents (excluding copy official orders) must be recorded and kept safe within Legal Services.

14.5.4 **Contract Seal:** The instrument for affixing the common seal of the Council shall be held in the custody of an officer nominated by the Monitoring Officer.

Other Points of Reference (underline denotes a hyperlink is available)

Financial Regulation 8: Revenue Budgets

Financial Regulation 13: Fixed Assets

Financial Regulation 15: Procurement and Contracts

Financial Regulation 19: Income and Banking

Information and Record Keeping Policies and Guides including:

a) Information Security Policy
b) Council Information Disposal Schedule
c) Guidance on Disposing of Confidential Information

Recruitment and Selection Guidelines and procedures