

Safeguarding public money

A framework to safeguard public money for local councils in England – SLCC guidance

The whole document may be viewed in the Member's Area of the pc website. The following points are directly relevant to councillors.

5. 'Money' includes cash and anything easily converted into cash. For example, a non-exhaustive list of money includes:

- physical cash and notes, petty cash and unclaimed receipts, imprest accounts, cash in transit;
- unpaid income held by debtors;
- signed and unsigned cheques, drafts and other orders for payment;
- current, deposit and investment accounts at banks and financial institutions and access to undrawn borrowing facilities;
- credit cards (where held – see below), debit cards, store cards, fuel cards;
- access to balances by telephone or electronic transfer; and
- the ability to buy goods or services on credit.

6. Where doubt exists over what constitutes money, councils must presume that it falls within the scope of this guidance.

31. Councils should set out clearly in writing the responsibilities of those handling money. Where officers are to receive delegated responsibility for collecting money or making payments, their terms and conditions of employment should refer to the relevant council Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and internal controls.

34. Those with direct responsibility for money must undertake appropriate training from time to time. Members should keep themselves informed about known risks and threats to money. Councils may engage with police and local anti-fraud and corruption networks to keep up to date with risks and security threats.

36. Councils should expect to see bank reconciliation at every ordinary council meeting. In the event of bank reconciliation discrepancy, explanations should be checked and verified. The clerk should explain any failure to produce bank reconciliation.

Financial Regulations related to Councillor' responsibilities with respect to internet banking

6.12. No employee or councillor shall disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the working of the council or its bank accounts, to any person not authorised in writing by the council or a duly delegated committee.

6.14. The council, and any members using computers for the council's financial business, shall ensure that anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall, software with automatic updates, together with a high level of security, is used.

6.16. Access to any internet banking accounts will be directly to the access page (which may be saved under "favourites"), and not through a search engine or e-mail link. Remembered or saved passwords facilities must not be used on any computer used for council banking work. Breach of this Regulation will be treated as a very serious matter under these regulations.