**CREDIT CARD POLICY**

**Scope**

The policy is to ensure effective controls, policies and procedures are in place with respect to the use of Corporate Credit Cards.

**Principles**

Ensure transparency in Council’s operations concerning the use of Corporate Credit Cards Ensure Council’s resources are managed with integrity and diligence.

**Objectives**

Fulfil all statutory requirements under section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 with respect to the use of corporate credit cards, as applied by the council’s Financial Regulations.

To adopt best practice on the use of corporate credit cards.

Corporate credit cards have been implemented to allow the Council to transact its business in a more efficient manner and at the same time provide Council officers with a more convenient method to meet costs they incur on Council’s behalf.

Corporate credit cards should be recognised as a valuable tool for the efficient and effective operation of Council’s daily business and not as a benefit assigned to specific individuals. The use of corporate credit cards will create savings in staff administration time. It will also reduce the high number of creditor creations that are required for one-off purchases.

It is intended to save time and paperwork in making purchases while still maintaining control of purchases through the monthly reconciliation process. It is unlawful for staff to use their private credit card to conduct Council business.

Corporate Credit Cards should not be used when there is an alternative form of payment which aligns with the normal purchasing process.

Monthly limit and authorisations: each corporate credit card will have a limit on expenditure and the expenditure is to be authorised.

**Restrictions**

Corporate credit cards are for official Council business and are not to be used for personal expenses under any circumstances.

Use of the corporate credit cards for purchases over the internet should be restricted to trusted secure sites.

The cardholder will be personally liable for expenditure that cannot be shown to be related to the business of ODA Parish Council or if an invoice is not provided

**How To Use It**

Corporate credit cards are to be used as a normal credit card, with the valid signature required to make any purchase.

No cash advances are available from cash machines or over the counter facilities.

The card is not to be linked to any form of award points and any personal award card or membership should not be used in conjunction with the use of the corporate credit card.

An invoice must be obtained for every purchase you make. This is required in reconciliations at the end of each month. The purpose of the purchase should be recorded on the invoice.

If a transaction is made by telephone or by mail order, the cardholder will need to ensure that an appropriate invoice is obtained from the supplier and included with the monthly reconciliation.

Invoices must contain the components in order to comply with VAT and allow Council to reclaim input VAT. Care should be taken to ensure that VAT numbers are properly UK VAT numbers.

All details of the purchase, including VAT invoices are required to be obtained and retained to support the appropriate allocation of purchases at the end of each month.

Use of a corporate credit card will require the user to abide by Council’s Financial Regulations.

The credit limit of the individual cards is not to be exceeded.

Payment of Monthly Account The outstanding balance of each corporate credit card will be automatically debited to Council’s bank account at the end of the month.

**Reconciling Monthly Statements**

1. It is the responsibility of the cardholder to match their supporting documentation to the monthly statement.

2. When the monthly statement is received, a check is required to ensure that all purchases are supported by invoices retained.

3. Record next to each transaction; if not recorded on the Invoice: - The reason for the purchase and the budget heading (Code and Cost Centre) the purchase is to be charged against.

**PLEASE NOTE:** VAT invoices are necessary to enable Council to claim back the VAT each month.

4. Sign and date the corporate credit card statement at completion of the reconciliation.

5. The monthly corporate credit card statement, with all invoices, should then be approved at the next full council meeting.

6. After processing, all corporate credit card statements, and supporting documentation, will be kept by the RFO.

7. The Internal Auditor will include as part of the annual work plan, a periodical review of the supporting documentation in respect of the monthly corporate credit card statement.

**Disputed Purchases**

Council is responsible for paying all accounts on the monthly corporate credit card statements and the bank will debit this amount to the Council’s bank account at the end of the month.

The RFO will notify the council of all disputed transactions.

When a dispute occurs, the cardholder/RFO will attempt to resolve the matter and may have to contact the bank for assistance.

The bank can assist with resolving some disputes with suppliers, particularly those involving duplicated charges, non-receipt of goods ordered, or credits not processed.

**Terminating or Ceasing Employment**

The card should be returned as soon as they are no longer required and, upon leaving the Council’s employment, no later than the last day of employment.

**Reporting Lost or Stolen Cards**

If a card is lost or stolen it is the cardholder’s responsibility to immediately telephone Council’s credit card bank (Barclay Card) to report the loss.

Barclay Card can be contacted 7 days a week.

A replacement card will be arranged and issued upon receipt from the bank.

**Replacement Cards**

The card is valid for the period shown on the face of the card and the bank will automatically reissue replacement cards to the RFO prior to the expiry date.

**Implementation**

The RFO is responsible for the implementation of this policy.

**Evaluation and Review**

The policy will be evaluated and reviewed by ODA Finance Committee.