



# **MODEL STANDING ORDERS 2018 (ENGLAND)**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

These model standing orders update the National Association of Local Council (NALC) model standing orders contained in “Local Councils Explained” by Meera Tharmarajah (© 2013 NALC). This publication contains new model standing orders which reference new legislation introduced after 2013 when the last model standing orders were published.

## **HOW TO USE MODEL STANDING ORDERS**

Standing orders are the written rules of a local council. Standing orders are essential to regulate the proceedings of a meeting. A council may also use standing orders to confirm or refer to various internal organisational and administrative arrangements. The standing orders of a council are not the same as the policies of a council but standing orders may refer to them.

Local councils operate within a wide statutory framework. NALC model standing orders incorporate and reference many statutory requirements to which councils are subject. It is not possible for the model standing orders to contain or reference all the statutory or legal requirements which apply to local councils. For example, it is not practical for model standing orders to document all obligations under data protection legislation. The statutory requirements to which a council is subject apply whether or not they are incorporated in a council’s standing orders.

The model standing orders do not include model financial regulations. Financial regulations are standing orders to regulate and control the financial affairs and accounting procedures of a local council. The financial regulations, as opposed to the standing orders of a council, include most of the requirements relevant to the council’s Responsible Financial Officer. Model financial regulations are available to councils in membership of NALC.

## **DRAFTING NOTES**

Model standing orders that are in bold type contain legal and statutory requirements. It is recommended that councils adopt them without changing them or their meaning. Model standing orders not in bold are designed to help councils operate effectively but they do not contain statutory requirements so they may be adopted as drafted or amended to suit a council’s needs. It is NALC’s view that all model standing orders will generally be suitable for councils.

For convenience, the word “councillor” is used in model standing orders and, unless the context suggests otherwise, includes a non-councillor with or without voting rights.

A model standing order that includes brackets like this ‘( )’ requires information to be inserted by a council. A model standing order that includes brackets like this ‘[ ]’ and the term ‘OR’ provides alternative options for a council to choose from when determining standing orders.

# **1** RULES OF DEBATE AT MEETINGS

- a Motions on the agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear unless the order is changed at the discretion of the Chairperson of the meeting.
- b A motion (including an amendment) shall not be progressed unless it has been moved and seconded.
- c A motion on the agenda that is not moved by its proposer may be treated by the Chairperson of the meeting as withdrawn.
- d If a motion (including an amendment) has been seconded, it may be withdrawn by the proposer only with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
- e An amendment is a proposal to remove or add words to a motion. It shall not negate the motion.
- f If an amendment to the original motion is carried, the original motion (as amended) becomes the substantive motion upon which further amendment(s) may be moved.
- g An amendment shall not be considered unless early verbal notice of it is given at the meeting and, if requested by the Chairperson of the meeting, is expressed in writing to the Chairperson.
- h A Councillor may move an amendment to their own motion if agreed by the meeting. If a motion has already been seconded, the amendment shall be with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
- i If there is more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion, the amendments shall be moved in the order directed by the Chairperson of the meeting.
- j Subject to standing order 1(k), only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the Chairperson of the meeting.
- k One or more amendments may be discussed together if the Chairperson of the meeting considers this expedient, but each amendment shall be voted upon separately.
- l A Councillor may not move more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion.
- m The mover of an amendment has no right of reply at the end of debate on it.
- n Where a series of amendments to an original motion are carried, the mover of the original motion shall have a right of reply either at the end of debate on the first amendment or at the very end of debate on the final substantive motion immediately before it is put to the vote.

- o Unless permitted by the Chairperson of the meeting, a Councillor may speak once in the debate on a motion except:
  - i to speak on an amendment moved by another Councillor;
  - ii to move or speak on another amendment if the motion has been amended since they last spoke;
  - iii to make a point of order;
  - iv to give a personal explanation; or
  - v to exercise a right of reply.
- p During the debate on a motion, a Councillor may interrupt only on a point of order or a personal explanation and the Councillor who was interrupted shall stop speaking. A Councillor raising a point of order shall identify the standing order which they consider has been breached or specify the other irregularity in the proceedings of the meeting they are concerned by.
- q A point of order shall be decided by the Chairperson of the meeting and their decision shall be final.
- r When a motion is under debate, no other motion shall be moved except:
  - i to amend the motion;
  - ii to proceed to the next business;
  - iii to adjourn the debate;
  - iv to put the motion to a vote;
  - v to ask a person to be no longer heard or to leave the meeting;
  - vi to refer a motion to a committee or sub-committee for consideration;
  - vii to exclude the public and press;
  - viii to adjourn the meeting; or
  - ix to suspend particular standing order(s) excepting those which reflect mandatory statutory or legal requirements.
- s Before an original or substantive motion is put to the vote, the Chairperson of meeting shall be satisfied that the motion has been sufficiently debated and that the mover of the motion under debate has exercised or waived their right of reply.
- t Excluding motions moved under standing order 1(r), the contributions or speeches by a Councillor shall relate only to the motion under discussion and shall not exceed 3 minutes without the consent of the Chairperson of the meeting.

## 2 DISORDERLY CONDUCT AT MEETINGS

- a No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly. If this standing order is ignored, the Chairperson of the meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.
- b If person(s) disregards the request of the Chairperson of the meeting to moderate or improve their conduct, any Councillor or the Chairperson of the meeting may move that the person be no longer heard or be excluded from the meeting. The motion, if seconded, shall be put to the vote without discussion.
- c If a resolution made under standing order 2(b) is ignored, the Chairperson of the meeting may take further reasonable steps to restore order or to progress the meeting. This may include temporarily suspending or closing the meeting.

## 3 MEETINGS GENERALLY

Full Council meetings	●
Committee meetings	●
Sub-committee meetings	●

- a Meetings shall not take place in premises which at the time of the meeting are used for the supply of alcohol unless no other premises are available free of charge or at a reasonable cost.
- b The minimum three clear days for notice of a meeting does not include the day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a day of the Christmas break, a day of the Easter break or of a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning.
- c The minimum three clear days' public notice of a meeting does not include the day on which the notice was issued or the day of the meeting.
- d Meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. The public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion.
- e Members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda.
- f The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with standing order 3(e) shall not exceed 10 minutes unless directed by the Chairperson of the meeting. At the Chairperson's discretion and the agreement of the Council, a member of the public may be invited to answer questions on matters of fact relating to the item under consideration

by the Council at that point on the agenda where the matter is being discussed.

- g Subject to standing order 3(f), a member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes.
- h In accordance with standing order 3(e), a question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The Chairperson of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.
- i A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct their comments to the Chairperson of the meeting.
- j Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the Chairperson of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.
- k Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chairperson of the Council may in their absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chairperson of the Council.
- l The Chairperson of the Council, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chairperson is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chairperson of the Council if present, shall preside. If both the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson, are absent from a meeting, a Councillor as chosen by the Councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.
- m Subject to a meeting being quorate, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the Councillors and Non-Councillors with voting rights present and voting.
- n The Chairperson of a meeting may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise their casting vote whether or not they gave an original vote.

*See standing orders 6(h) and (i) for the different rules that apply in the election of the Chairperson of the Council at the annual meeting of the Council.*

- o Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on a question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a Councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each Councillor present and voting gave their vote for or against that question. Such a request shall be made before moving to the vote and will be taken in alphabetical order of those present at the meeting and eligible to vote.
- p The minutes of a meeting shall include an accurate record of the following:
  - i the time and place of the meeting;
  - ii the names of Councillors who are present and the names of Councillors



- who are absent;
  - iii interests that have been declared by Councillors and Non-Councillors with voting rights;
  - iv the grant of dispensations (if any) to Councillors and Non-Councillors with voting rights;
  - v whether a Councillor or Non-Councillor with voting rights left the meeting when matters that they held interests in were being considered;
  - vi if there was a public participation session; and
  - vii the resolutions made.
- q A Councillor or a Non-Councillor with voting rights who has a disclosable pecuniary interest or another interest as set out in the Council's Code of Conduct in a matter being considered at a meeting, is subject to statutory limitations or restrictions under the Code on their right to participate and vote on that matter.
  - r No business may be transacted at a meeting unless at least one-third of the whole number of members of the Council are present and in no case shall the quorum of a meeting be less than four.
- See standing order 5d(viii) for the quorum of a committee or sub-committee meeting.*
- s If a meeting is or becomes inquorate no business shall be transacted and the meeting shall be closed. The business on the agenda for the meeting shall be adjourned to another meeting.
  - t A meeting shall not exceed a period of 2 hours.

## **4 FILMING AND RECORDING MEETINGS**

- a) Whilst a meeting of the Council, its committees or sub committees, is open to the public, any person, if present, may:
  - i) film, photograph or make audio recording of a meeting;
  - ii) use any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear proceedings at a meeting as it takes place or later;
  - iii) report or comment on the proceedings in writing during or after a meeting or orally report or comment after the meeting.
- b) Oral reporting, commentary or broadcasting is not permitted during any part of a meeting of the Council, its committees and sub committees.
- c) An individual must be present and able to use their equipment in order to film, photograph or audio record a meeting. There will be no opportunity to report on any part of the meeting where the Council has resolved to exclude the press and public.

- d) Disruptive behaviour
  - i No filming, photographing or audio recording of a meeting should be carried out in such a way as to disrupt the proceedings of the meeting.
  - ii If person(s) disregards the request of the Chairperson of the meeting to moderate or improve their behaviour, any Councillor or the Chairperson of the meeting may move that the person be instructed to cease filming, photographing or audio recording. The motion, if seconded, shall be put to the vote without discussion.
  - iii If a resolution under the standing order 4 d above is ignored, the Chairperson of the meeting may take further reasonable steps to restore order or to progress the meeting. This may include temporarily suspending or closing the meeting.
- e) Members of the Council recording meetings are reminded of their obligations under the Council's Code of Conduct in respect of confidential matters.

## **5 COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES**

- a Unless the Council determines otherwise, a Committee may appoint a sub-committee whose terms of reference and members shall be determined by the committee.
- b The members of a committee may include Non-Councillors unless it is a committee which regulates and controls the finances of the Council.
- c Unless the Council determines otherwise, all the members of an advisory committee and a sub-committee of the advisory committee may be Non-Councillors.
- d The Council may appoint standing Committees or other committees as may be necessary, and:
  - i shall determine their terms of reference including the scheme of delegation and the role of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson as ex office members with or without voting rights;
  - ii shall determine the number and time of the ordinary meetings of a standing committee up until the date of the next annual meeting of the Council;
    - shall permit a committee, other than in respect of the ordinary meetings of a committee, to determine the number and time of its meetings;
  - iii shall, subject to Standing Orders 5(b) and (c), appoint and determine the terms of office of members of such a committee;
  - iv may, subject to Standing Orders 5(b) and (c), appoint and determine the terms of office of the substitute members to a committee whose role is to replace the ordinary members at a meeting of a committee, if the ordinary members of the committee confirm to the Proper Officer 3 days before

- the meeting that they are unable to attend;
- v shall, after it has appointed the members of a standing committee, appoint the Chairperson of the standing committee;
- vi shall permit a Committee other than a standing committee, to appoint its own Chairperson at the first meeting of the committee;
- vii shall determine the place, notice requirements and quorum for a meeting of a committee and a sub-committee which, in both cases, shall be no less than three;
- viii shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a committee;
- ix shall determine if the public and press are permitted to attend the meetings of a sub-committee and also the advance public notice requirements, if any, required for the meetings of a sub-committee;
- x shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a sub-committee that they are permitted to attend; and
- xi may dissolve a committee or a sub-committee.

## **6 ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETINGS**

- a In an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the Councillors elected take office.
- b In a year which is not an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on such day in May as the Council decides.
- c If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the Council shall take place at 7pm.
- d In addition to the annual meeting of the Council, at least three other ordinary meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times as the Council decides.
- e The first business conducted at the annual meeting of the Council shall be the election of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Council.
- f The Chairperson of the Council, unless they have resigned or becomes disqualified, shall continue in office, and preside at the annual meeting until his successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the Council.
- g The Vice-Chairperson of the Council, unless they have resigned or becomes disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chairperson of the Council at the next annual meeting of the Council.
- h In an election year, if the current Chairperson of the Council has not been re-elected as a member of the Council, they shall preside at the Annual Meeting

until a successor Chairperson of the Council has been elected. The current Chairperson of the Council shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chairperson of the Council but shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.

- i In an election year, if the current Chairperson of the Council has been re-elected as a member of the Council, they shall preside at the annual meeting until a new Chairperson of the Council has been elected. They may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chairperson of the Council and shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.
- j Following the election of the Chairperson of the Council and Vice-Chairperson of the Council at the annual meeting, the business shall include:
  - a.i In an election year, delivery by the Chairperson of the Council and councillors of their acceptance of office forms unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date. In a year which is not an election year, delivery by the Chairperson of Council of their acceptance of office form, unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date;
  - a.ii Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the Council;
  - a.iii Receipt of the minutes of the last meeting of a committee;
  - a.iv Consideration of the recommendations made by a committee;
  - a.v Review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, staff and other local authorities
  - a.vi Review of the terms of reference for committees;
  - a.vii Appointment of members to existing committees;
  - a.viii Appointment of any new committees in accordance with standing order 4;
  - a.ix Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations;
  - a.x Review of arrangements (including legal agreements) with other local authorities, not-for-profit bodies and businesses.
  - a.xi Review of representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back;
  - a.xii In an election year, to make arrangements with a view to the Council becoming eligible to exercise the general power of competence in the future;
  - a.xiii Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.

## **7**

### **EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL, COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES**

- a The Chairperson of the Council may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council at any time.
- b If the Chairperson of the Council does not call an extraordinary meeting of the Council within seven days of having been requested in writing to do so by two Councillors, any two Councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council. The public notice giving the time, place and agenda for such a meeting shall be signed by the two Councillors.
- c The Chairperson of a committee may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee at any time.
- d If the Chairperson of a committee does not call an extraordinary meeting within 7 days of having been requested to do so by 4 members of the committee, any 4 members of the committee may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee.

## **8**

### **PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS**

- a A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except, either by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least 6 Councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 10.
- b When a motion moved pursuant to standing order 7(a) has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved for a further six months.

## **9**

### **VOTING ON APPOINTMENTS**

- a Where more than two persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the Council, the vote will be taken by a written ballot of those members present and eligible to vote. The outcome of the vote will be reported by the Clerk. A tie in votes may be settled by the casting vote exercisable by the Chairperson of the meeting.

## **10**

### **MOTIONS FOR A MEETING THAT REQUIRE WRITTEN NOTICE TO BE GIVEN TO THE PROPER OFFICER**

- a A motion shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting for which it is tabled and, in any event, shall relate to the performance of the Council's statutory functions, powers and obligations or an issue which specifically affects the Council's area or its residents.

- b No motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is on the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least 10 clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.
- c The Proper Officer may, before including a motion on the agenda received in accordance with standing order 10(b), correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.
- d If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with standing order 10(b) is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it, so that it can be understood, in writing, to the Proper Officer at least 10 clear days before the meeting.
- e If the wording or subject of a proposed motion is considered improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the Chairperson of the forthcoming meeting or, as the case may be, the Councillors who have convened the meeting, to consider whether the motion shall be included in the agenda or rejected.
- f The decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.
- g Motions received shall be recorded and numbered in the order that they are received.
- h Motions rejected shall be recorded with an explanation by the Proper Officer of the reason for rejection.
- i A written notice of motion shall not relate to any matter which may be considered under the Council's Code of Conduct, Complaints Procedure or employment policies.

## **11** MOTIONS AT A MEETING THAT DO NOT REQUIRE WRITTEN NOTICE

- a The following motions may be moved at a meeting without written notice to the Proper Officer:
  - i.i to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes of a meeting;
  - i.ii to move to a vote;
  - i.iii to defer consideration of a motion;
  - i.iv to refer a motion to a particular committee or sub-committee;
  - i.v to appoint a person to preside at a meeting;
  - i.vi to change the order of business on the agenda;
  - i.vii to proceed to the next business on the agenda;

- i.viii to require a written report;
- i.ix to appoint a committee or sub-committee and their members;
- i.x to extend the time limits for speaking;
- i.xi to exclude the press and public from a meeting in respect of confidential or other information which is prejudicial to the public interest;
- i.xii to not hear further from a Councillor or a member of the public;
- i.xiii to exclude a Councillor or member of the public for disorderly conduct;
- i.xiv to temporarily suspend the meeting;
- i.xv to suspend a particular standing order (unless it reflects mandatory statutory or legal requirements);
- i.xvi to adjourn the meeting; or
- i.xvii to close the meeting.

## **12** MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION

*See also standing order 22.*

- a The Council shall have in place and keep under review, technical and organisational measures to keep secure information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. Such arrangements shall include deciding who has access to personal data and encryption of personal data.
- b The Council shall have in place, and keep under review, policies for the retention and safe destruction of all information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. The Council's retention policy shall confirm the period for which information (including personal data) shall be retained or if this is not possible the criteria used to determine that period (e.g. the Limitation Act 1980).
- c The agenda, papers that support the agenda and the minutes of a meeting shall not disclose or otherwise undermine confidential information or personal data without legal justification.
- d Councillors, staff, the Council's contractors and agents shall not disclose confidential information or personal data without legal justification.

## **13** DRAFT MINUTES

- Full Council meetings ●
- Committee meetings ●
- Sub-committee meetings ●

- a If the draft minutes of a preceding meeting have been served on Councillors with the agenda to attend the meeting at which they are due to be approved for accuracy, they shall be taken as read.
- b There shall be no discussion about the draft minutes of a preceding meeting except in relation to their accuracy. A motion to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes shall be moved in accordance with standing order 11(a)(i).
- c The accuracy of draft minutes, including any amendment(s) made to them, shall be confirmed by resolution and shall be signed by the Chairperson of the meeting and stand as an accurate record of the meeting to which the minutes relate.
- d If the Chairperson of the meeting does not consider the minutes to be an accurate record of the meeting to which they relate, they shall sign the minutes and include a paragraph in the following terms or to the same effect:
 

“The Chairperson of this meeting does not believe that the minutes of the meeting of the ( ) held on [date] in respect of ( ) were a correct record but his view was not upheld by the meeting and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.”
- e If the Council’s gross annual income or expenditure (whichever is higher) does not exceed £25,000, it shall publish draft minutes on a website which is publicly accessible and free of charge not later than one month after the meeting has taken place.
- f Subject to the publication of draft minutes in accordance with standing order 13(e) and standing order 21(a) and following a resolution which confirms the accuracy of the minutes of a meeting, the draft minutes or recordings of the meeting for which approved minutes exist shall be destroyed.

## **14** CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISPENSATIONS

*See also standing order 3(q).*

- a The Council has adopted the Cornwall Code of Conduct for, City Community, Parish and Town Councils which will apply to all Councillors and members of the public co-opted to serve on Committees and sub committees of the Council in respect of the whole meeting. All interests arising from the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council will be recorded in the minutes giving the existence and nature of the interest.
- b Members must have particular regard to their obligation and leave the room for matters in which they have an interest as defined by the Code of Conduct or by relevant legislation.
- c The Council shall maintain for public inspection, a Register of Members interests that is compliant with the Code of Conduct and with relevant legislation.



## **Members and the Code of Conduct**

- d All Councillors and members of the public co-opted to serve on the Council committees and sub committees shall maintain a Register of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, and must update their register by notifying the Monitoring Officer and the clerk of any changes within 28 days.
- e All Councillors shall undertake training in the Code of Conduct within 6 months of the delivery of the declaration of acceptance of office.
- f Unless granted a dispensation, a Councillor or Non-Councillor with voting rights who has registered a disclosable pecuniary interest in relation to any item of business being transacted at a meeting, shall leave the room whenever the item is being discussed, including any part of the meeting where public are entitled to speak.
- g Unless granted a dispensation, a Councillor or Non-Councillor with voting rights who has registered a non-registerable interest in relation to any item of business being transacted at a meeting, shall leave the room whenever the item is being discussed, including any part of the meeting where the public are entitled to speak.
- h Where a non-registerable interest arises from membership of an outside body as defined in 3.6 of the Council's Code of Conduct, a Councillor may remain in the room to address the meeting, provide a short statement and answer questions for no more than 3 minutes before leaving the room at the request of the Chairperson.
- i A member must within 28 days of receiving any gift, or hospitality over the value of £25, provide written notification to Cornwall Council's Monitoring Officer for the existence and nature of that gift, or hospitality.
- j A member of the Council may, for the purposes of their duty as a member but not otherwise, inspect any document which has been considered by a committee, or by the Council. The Proper Officer, or Solicitor to the Council, may decline to allow inspection of any document that is protected by other legislation, or in the event of legal proceedings, would be protected by privilege arising from the relationship of solicitor and client. All minutes kept for any committee shall be open for inspection of any member of the Council during office hours.

## **Dispensations**

- k Dispensation requests shall be in writing and submitted to the Proper Officer as soon as possible before the meeting, or failing that, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.
- l A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by a meeting of the Council, or committee or sub-committee for which the dispensation is required and that decision is final.
- m A dispensation request shall confirm:

- i.i the description and the nature of the disclosable pecuniary interest or other interest to which the request for the dispensation relates;
- i.ii whether the dispensation is required to participate at a meeting in a discussion only or a discussion and a vote;
- i.iii the date of the meeting or the period (not exceeding four years) for which the dispensation is sought; and
- i.iv an explanation as to why the dispensation is sought.
- n This policy shall apply to all meetings of the Council, its committees and sub-committees.
- o No dispensations shall be awarded for any meeting where there are no minutes of the proceedings.
- p A dispensation may be granted in accordance with standing order 14 above if having regard to all relevant circumstances any of the following applies:
  - a.i without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from participating in the particular business would be so great a proportion of the meeting transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business;
  - a.ii granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the Council's area; or
  - a.iii it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.

## **15 CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS**

- a Notification of any complaint shall remain confidential to the Proper Officer of the Council until such time as the matter has been concluded, when the outcome of the complaint shall be reported to a meeting of full Council.
- b Where the notification relates to a complaint made by the Proper Officer, the Proper Officer shall notify the Chairperson or Vice Chairperson of that fact, who, upon receipt of such notification, shall nominate a person to assume the duties of the Proper Officer set out in this standing order, and who shall continue to act in the respect of that matter until the complaint is resolved.
- c Where a notification is made by an employee (not being the Proper Officer) the Proper Officer shall ensure that the employee in question does not deal with any aspect of the complaint.
- d The Council may:
  - a.i provide information or evidence where such disclosure is necessary to investigate the complaint or is a legal requirement;
  - a.ii seek information relevant to the complaint from the person or body with

statutory responsibility for investigation of the matter;

- e References to a notification shall be taken to refer to a communication of any kind which relates to a breach or an alleged breach of the code of conduct by a Councillor.
- f Upon notification by Cornwall Council that a Councillor or Non-Councillor with voting rights has breached the Council's Code of Conduct, the Council shall consider any recommendations and what, if any, action to take against them. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office and shall be limited to those sanctions recommended by the Monitoring Officer as part of the Decision Notice.

## **16**      **PROPER OFFICER**

- a The Proper Officer shall be either (i) the Clerk or (ii) other staff member(s) nominated by the Council to undertake the work of the Proper Officer when the Proper Officer is absent.
- b The Proper Officer shall:
  - b.i at least three clear days before a meeting of the Council, a committee or a sub-committee,
    - serve on Councillors by delivery or post at their residences, or by email authenticated in such manner as the Proper Officer thinks fit, a signed summons confirming the time, place and the agenda (provided the Councillor has consented to service by email), and
    - Provide, in a conspicuous place, public notice of the time, place and agenda (provided that the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the Council convened by Councillors is signed by them).

*See standing order 3(b) for the meaning of clear days for a meeting of a full council and standing order 3(c) for the meaning of clear days for a meeting of a committee;*

- b.ii subject to standing order 10, include on the agenda, all motions in the order received, unless a Councillor has given written notice at least 7 days before the meeting confirming their withdrawal of it;
- b.iii convene a meeting of the Council for the election of a new Chairperson of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in their office;
- b.iv facilitate inspection of the minute book by local government electors;
- b.v receive and retain copies of bye-laws made by other local authorities;
- b.vi hold acceptance of office forms from Councillors;

- b.vii hold a copy of every Councillor's register of interests;
- b.viii assist with responding to requests made under freedom of information legislation and rights exercisable under data protection legislation, in accordance with the Council's relevant policies and procedures;
- b.ix liaise, as appropriate, with the Council's Data Protection Officer;
- b.x receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the Council, except where there is a resolution to the contrary;
- b.xi assist in the organisation of, storage of, access to, security of and destruction of information held by the Council in paper and electronic form, subject to the requirements of data protection and freedom of information legislation and other legitimate requirements (e.g. the Limitation Act 1980);
- b.xii arrange for legal deeds to be executed;  
(see also *standing order 24*);
- b.xiii arrange or manage the prompt authorisation, approval, and instruction regarding any payments to be made by the Council in accordance with its financial regulations;
- b.xiv record every planning application notified to the Council and the Council's response to the local planning authority in a book for such purpose;
- b.xv refer a planning application received by the Council to the or in their absence the Vice-Chairperson of the Planning Committee within two working days of receipt to facilitate an extraordinary meeting, if the nature of a planning application requires consideration before the next ordinary meeting of the planning committee;
- b.xvi manage access to information about the Council via the publication scheme; and
- b.xvii retain custody of the seal of the Council (if there is one) which shall not be used without a resolution to that effect.  
(see also *standing order 24*).

# 17

## RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

- a The Council shall appoint appropriate staff member(s) to undertake the work of the Responsible Financial Officer when the Responsible Financial Officer is absent.

# 18

## ACCOUNTS AND ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

- a “Proper practices” in standing orders refer to the most recent version of “Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioners’ Guide”.
- b All payments by the Council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the law, proper practices and the Council’s financial regulations.
- c The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to each Councillor as soon as practicable after 30 June, 30 September and 31 December in each year a statement to summarise:
  - xvii.i the Council’s receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for each quarter;
  - xvii.ii the Council’s aggregate receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for the year to date;
  - xvii.iii the balances held at the end of the quarter being reported and
  - xvii.iv which includes a comparison with the budget for the financial year and highlights any actual or potential overspends.
- d As soon as possible after the financial year end at 31 March, the Responsible Financial Officer shall provide:
  - b.i each Councillor with a statement summarising the Council’s receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for the last quarter and the year to date for information; and
  - b.ii to the Council the accounting statements for the year in the form of Section 1 of the annual governance and accountability return, as required by proper practices, for consideration and approval.
- e The year-end accounting statements shall be prepared in accordance with proper practices and apply the form of accounts determined by the Council (receipts and payments, or income and expenditure) for the year to 31 March. A completed draft annual governance and accountability return shall be presented to all Councillors at least 14 days prior to anticipated approval by the Council. The annual governance and accountability return of the Council, which is subject to external audit, including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to the Council for consideration and formal approval before 30 June.

# 19

## FINANCIAL CONTROLS AND PROCUREMENT

- a The Council shall consider and approve financial regulations drawn up by the Responsible Financial Officer, which shall include detailed arrangements in respect of the following:

- i the keeping of accounting records and systems of internal controls;
  - ii the assessment and management of financial risks faced by the Council;
  - iii the work of the independent internal auditor in accordance with proper practices and the receipt of regular reports from the internal auditor, which shall be required at least annually;
  - iv the inspection and copying by Councillors and local electors of the Council's accounts and/or orders of payments; and
  - v whether contracts with an estimated value below **£30,000** due to special circumstances are exempt from a tendering process, or procurement exercise.
- b Financial regulations shall be reviewed regularly and, at least annually, for fitness of purpose.
- c A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 with an estimated value in excess of £30,000, but less than the relevant thresholds referred to in standing order 19(f), is subject to the "light touch" arrangements under Regulations 109-114 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, unless it proposes to use an existing list of approved suppliers (framework agreement).
- d Subject to additional requirements in the financial regulations of the Council, the tender process for contracts for the supply of goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall include, as a minimum, the following steps:
- i a specification for the goods, materials, services, or the execution of works, shall be drawn up;
  - ii an invitation to tender shall be drawn up to confirm (i) the Council's specification (ii) the time, date and address for the submission of tenders (iii) the date of the Council's written response to the tender and (iv) the prohibition on prospective contractors contacting Councillors, or staff, to encourage or support their tender outside the prescribed process;
  - iii the invitation to tender shall be advertised in a local newspaper and in any other manner that is appropriate;
  - iv tenders are to be submitted in writing in a sealed marked envelope addressed to the Proper Officer;
  - v tenders shall be opened by the Proper Officer in the presence of at least one Councillor after the deadline for submission of tenders has passed;
  - vi tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate meeting of the Council or a committee or sub-committee with delegated responsibility.
- e Neither the Council, nor a committee or a sub-committee with delegated responsibility for considering tenders, is bound to accept the lowest value

tender.

- f Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed the threshold specified by the Office of Government Commerce from time to time, the Council must consider whether the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016 apply to the contract and, if either of those Regulations apply, the Council must comply with procurement rules. NALC's procurement guidance contains further details.
  - a All payments by the council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the law, proper practices and the Council's Financial Regulations.
  - b The Council's proper practices will be in accordance with the most recent JPAG guidance.

## **20** HANDLING STAFF MATTERS

- a A matter personal to a member of staff that is being considered by a meeting of the GDPR & Staffing Committee is subject to standing order 12.
- b Subject to the Council's policies regarding the handling of performance, capability and disciplinary matters, the Council's most senior staff member shall contact the Chairperson of the GDPR & Staffing Committee or in their absence the Vice Chairperson of the GDPR & Staffing Committee, in respect of an informal or formal matter and this shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the GDPR & Staffing Committee in accordance with its terms of reference.
- c The Chairperson of the GDPR & Staffing Committee or in their absence, the Vice-Chairperson, shall, upon a resolution, conduct a review of the performance and annual appraisal of the work of the member of staff's job specification. The reviews and appraisal shall be reported in writing and are subject to approval by resolution by the GDPR & Staffing Committee.
- d Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, the Council's most senior member of staff or other members of staff shall contact the Chairperson of the GDPR & Staffing Committee or in their absence, the Vice-Chairperson of the GDPR & Staffing Committee, in respect of an informal, or formal, grievance matter, and this matter shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the GDPR & Staffing Committee.
- e Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, if an informal or formal grievance matter raised by an employee relates to the Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson of Full Council, or any sub-committee, this shall be communicated to another member of the GDPR & Staffing Committee, which shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the Councils Grievance and Disciplinary Policy and Procedures.
- f Any persons responsible for all or part of the management of staff, shall treat

as confidential, the written records of all meetings relating to their performance, capabilities, grievance or disciplinary matters. In accordance with standing order 12(a), persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to staff records referred to in standing order 20(g).

- g In accordance with standing order 12(a) the Council will identify two persons with line management responsibilities who may have access to staff records referred to in standing order 20(f) This will be the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson to the Council

## **21 RESPONSIBILITIES TO PROVIDE INFORMATION**

*See also standing order 22.*

- a In accordance with freedom of information legislation, the Council shall publish information in accordance with its publication scheme and respond to requests for information held by the Council.
- iv.b The Council shall publish information in accordance with the requirements of the Smaller Authorities (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015.

## **22 RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER DATA PROTECTION LEGISLATION**

(Below is not an exclusive list).

*See also standing order 12.*

- a The Council shall appoint a Data Protection Officer.
- b The Council shall have policies and procedures in place to respond to an individual exercising statutory rights concerning his personal data.
- c The Council shall have a written policy in place for responding to and managing a personal data breach.
- d The Council shall keep a record of all personal data breaches comprising the facts relating to the personal data breach, its effects and the remedial action taken.
- e The Council shall ensure that information communicated in its privacy notice(s) is in an easily accessible and available form and kept up to date.
- f The Council shall maintain a written record of its processing activities.

## **23 RELATIONS WITH THE PRESS/MEDIA**

- a Requests from the press or other media for an oral or written comment or statement from the Council, its Councillors, or staff, shall be handled in accordance with the Council's policy in respect of dealing with the press and/or



other media.

## **24 EXECUTION AND SEALING OF LEGAL DEEDS**

*See also standing orders 16(b)(xii) and (xvii).*

- a A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the Council unless authorised by a resolution.
- b [Subject to standing order 24(a), any two Councillors may sign, on behalf of the Council, any deed required by law and the Proper Officer shall witness their signatures.]

## **25 COMMUNICATING WITH DISTRICT AND COUNTY OR UNITARY COUNCILLORS**

- a An invitation to attend a meeting of the Council shall be sent, together with the agenda, to the Ward Councillor(s) of the District and County Council OR Unitary Council representing the area of the Council.
- b Unless the Council determines otherwise a copy of relevant correspondence sent to the Unitary Authority shall be sent to the Divisional Councillor representing the area of the Council.
- c At the Chairperson's discretion and with the approval of the Council, a divisional member may be invited to speak during any item on the agenda to make a short statement and answer any questions.

## **26 RESTRICTIONS ON COUNCILLOR ACTIVITIES**

- a.a Unless duly authorised no Councillor shall:
  - i inspect any land and/or premises which the Council has a right or duty to inspect; or
  - ii issue orders, instructions or directions.
  - iii Incur any expenditure on behalf of the Council, or issue an instruction to incur expenditure

## **27 STANDING ORDERS GENERALLY**

- a All or part of a standing order, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory or legal requirements, may be suspended by resolution in relation to the consideration of an item on the agenda for a meeting.
- b A motion to add to, or vary, or revoke one or more of the Council's standing

orders, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory or legal requirements, shall be proposed by a special motion. The written notice by at least 4 Councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 10.

- c The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the Council's standing orders to a Councillor as soon as possible.
- d The decision of the Chairperson of a meeting as to the application of standing orders at the meeting shall be final.

Adopted by St Dennis Parish Council 7<sup>th</sup> May 2019

Minute Ref: 42/19

Reviewed by St Dennis Parish Council 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2022

Min Ref: 97/21

Reviewed by St Dennis Parish Council 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2023

Min Ref: 33/23