1. # Standing Orders

RE-ADOPTED MAY 2026

(based on NALC Revised Model Standing Orders (England) 2018 (as amended 2025) and incorporating Forest Row Parish Council amendments adopted Nov. 2016 & May 2020)

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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 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.

1. RULES OF DEBATE AT MEETINGS

a The agenda shall specify the subject items to be discussed at the meeting and indicate the issues for decision by the meeting.
b. Subject items on the agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear unless the order is changed at the discretion of the Chair of the meeting.

c. No subject item shall be discussed at a meeting unless it appears on the agenda, subject to the provisions of Standing Order 3(x) below.
d. Any member of the meeting may make a proposal to resolve an issue for decision within a subject item, in the course of discussing that subject item.
e. The chair of the meeting may rule on whether the proposal is relevant to the issue for decision and the ruling of the chair shall be final.
f. Any other member of the meeting may then put forward a counter- proposal, whether by way of removing words from or adding words to a proposal, or as an alternative substantive resolution of the issue for decision.
g. The chair of the meeting may rule on whether a counter-proposal is relevant to the issue for decision and the ruling of the chair shall be final.
h. No proposal or counter-proposal shall be progressed unless it has been proposed and seconded.
i. If a proposal or counter-proposal has been seconded, it may be withdrawn by the proposer only with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.

j. A member of the meeting may put forward a counter-proposal to his own proposal if agreed by the meeting. If the proposal has already been seconded, the counter-proposal shall be with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.

k. If there is more than one counter-proposal to an original proposal the counter-proposals shall be dealt with in the order directed by the chair.

l. Subject to standing order 1(m) below, only one counter-proposal shall be put forward and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the chair of the meeting.

m. One or more counter-proposals may be discussed together if the chair of the meeting considers this expedient but each counter-proposal shall be voted upon separately.

n. A member of the meeting may not put forward more than one counter-proposal to an original or substantive proposal.

o. The member of the meeting putting forward a proposal or a counter-proposal shall have a right of reply not exceeding five minutes at the end of debate on it.

p. Where a series of counter-proposals to an original proposal are carried, the member of the meeting who put forward the original proposal shall have a right of reply either at the end of debate of the first counter-proposal or at the very end of debate on the final substantive proposal immediately before it is put to the vote.

q. All interventions shall be made through the chair, and members of the meeting shall not address each other directly in the course of the discussion of a subject item.

r. Unless permitted by the chair of the meeting, a member of the meeting may speak once in the debate on a proposal except:

i. to speak on a counter-proposal put forward by another member of the meeting;
ii. to speak on another counter-proposal if there has been a counter-proposal to the original proposal since he last spoke;

iii. to make a point of order;

iv. to give a personal explanation; or

v. in exercise of a right of reply.

s. During the debate of a proposal, a member of the meeting may interrupt only on a point of order or a personal explanation and the member who was interrupted shall stop speaking. A member of the meeting 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.

t. A point of order shall be decided by the chair of the meeting and his decision shall be final.

u. When a proposal is under debate, no other proposal shall be put forward except:
i. a counter-proposal to the proposal under debate;
ii. to proceed to the next business;
iii. to adjourn the debate;
iv. to put the proposal to a vote;
v. to ask a person to be no longer heard or to leave the meeting;
vi. to refer a proposal 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 requirements.

v. Before a proposal is put to the vote, the chair of the meeting shall be satisfied that the proposal has been sufficiently debated and that the member of the meeting putting forward the proposal under debate has exercised or waived their right of reply.

w Excluding proposals under standing order 1(u) above, the contributions or speeches by a member of the meeting shall relate only to the proposal under discussion and shall not exceed 2 minutes without the consent of the chair 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 chair of the meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.

b If person(s) disregard the request of the chair of the meeting to moderate or improve their conduct, any councillor or the chair 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 chair 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 for a meeting does not include the day on which the notice was issued or the day of the meeting unless the meeting is convened at shorter notice**

● 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.**

Such business may include (the list is not exhaustive):

i. Engagement, terms of service, conduct and dismissal of employees

ii. Terms of tenders, proposals and counter-proposals in negotiation for contracts

iii. Preparation for cases in legal proceedings

iv. Early stages of any dispute

e. Members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend, in the following two ways:

3e/i There shall be a period of 15 minutes at the beginning of a meeting, during which any member of the public may address the meeting on a subject item from the agenda of that meeting or any other Council business.

3e/ii A member of the public present at a meeting may by request to the Chair

of the meeting, and at the Chair of the meeting's sole discretion, make an intervention during the discussion of a subject item from the agenda, relevant to that subject item.

f. In every case, the person wishing to speak shall raise their hand to request the permission of the Chair of the meeting.

g. Their interventions shall be directed through the Chair of the meeting and only one person shall be permitted to speak at a time: if more than one person wishes to be heard, the Chair of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.

h No intervention shall last longer than two minutes, unless the Chair of the meeting directs otherwise.

i. When a person has addressed the meeting under 3e/i on a topic other than a subject item from the agenda of that meeting, their intervention shall not require a response at the meeting or start any debate on the topic raised. The Chair of the meeting may direct that a later oral or written response be provided.

j. The discretion of the Chair of the meeting shall be absolute in the above matters, and any person failing to comply with their instructions shall be warned as to disorderly conduct in the terms of Standing Order 2.

k For the avoidance of doubt, clauses 3e to 3k hereof shall be substituted for clauses 3e-3k of the 2022 version of Standing Orders of this Council, and the previous provisions shall be of no effect.

- **l. Subject to standing order 3(m), a person who attends a meeting is permitted to report on the meeting whilst the meeting is open to the public. To "report" means to film, photograph, make an audio recording of meeting proceedings, use any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear the meeting as it takes place or later or to report or to provide oral or written commentary about the meeting so that the report or commentary is available as the meeting takes place or later to persons not present.**

- **m. A person present at a meeting may not provide an oral report or oral commentary about a meeting as it takes place without permission.**

- **n. The press shall be provided with reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present.**

- **o. Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chair of the Council may in their absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chair of the Council (if there is one).**

- **p.The Chair of the Council, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chair is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chair of the Council (if there is one) if present, shall preside. If both the Chair and the Vice-Chair are absent from a meeting, a councillor as chosen by the councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.**

- **q. 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.**

- **r.The chair 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 Chair of the Council at the annual meeting of the Council.

- **s.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 on to the next item of business on the agenda.

  t.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.

- **u.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.**

- **v.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 three.**

- **w.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.

x.If a matter arises which cannot wait until a subsequent meeting, the Chair may put it to the councillors there present that it constitutes ‘urgent business’, and if they agree by a simple majority, the matter shall be considered by the councillors, and if appropriate, a decision authorised

y.A meeting shall not exceed a period of 2½ hours.

4. COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES, ADVISORY COMMITTEES/ WORKING GROUPS

a The Council may appoint standing committees or other committees as may be necessary, and:

a. shall determine their terms of reference;

b. 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. Meeting dates and times may be altered by the Chair, and in his/her absence by the Vice-Chair, of the relevant committee.

c. shall permit a committee, other than in respect of the ordinary meetings of a committee, to determine the number and time of its meetings;

d. shall, subject to standing orders 4(b) and (c), appoint and determine the terms of office of members of such a committee;

e. may, subject to standing orders 4(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 5 days before the meeting that they are unable to attend;

f. Except where ordered by the Council in the case of a committee, or by the Council or appropriate committee in the case of a sub-committee, shall be one third of its members, rounded up to the nearest whole number.

g. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council shall be members of every committee. They shall be entitled but not obliged to attend such meetings and to vote at any meeting which they attend.

h. For the avoidance of doubt, the Finance & Policy Committee shall, as from June 2023 and until further notice, be a free-standing Committee of eight members drawn from the Council membership (plus the Chair & Vice-Chair of Council in accordance with sub-para vii above).

i. Also for the avoidance of doubt, as from June 2023 and until further

notice, the Chairs & Vice-Chairs of each Committee shall be chosen by its own members at their first meeting and the provisions of sub-paras ix & x of the 2022 version of Standing Orders shall be deleted.

j. 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;

k. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a committee;

l. 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;

m. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a sub-committee that they are permitted to attend; and

n. may dissolve a committee or a sub-committee.

b **Unless the Council determines otherwise, a committee may appoint a sub-committee whose terms of reference and members shall be determined by the committee.**

c **The members of a committee may include non-councillors unless it is a committee which regulates and controls the finances of the Council.** Pursuant to the Local Government & Housing Act 1989, such non-councillor members shall not be entitled to vote save in matters of the management of land, the promotion of tourism or the management of a festival

d **Unless the Council determines otherwise, all the members of an advisory committee and a sub-committee of the advisory committee may be non-councillors.**

e Any member who has put forward a proposal which has been referred to any committee of which he is not a member, may explain his proposal to the committee but shall not vote. Any Council member shall, unless the Council otherwise orders, be entitled to be present as a spectator at the meetings of any committee or sub-committee of which he is not a member.

f. Working groups, whether long-term or 'task & finish', may be formed at any time by resolution of Full Council or Standing Committee, subject to the following conditions:

The resolution shall specify the general remit of the working group, but the group itself shall determine its processes and the activities appropriate to its remit.

The membership of every group shall always include at least one councillor and one staff member. The proposer and seconder of the proposal forming the working group will be appointed as members. The membership may be kept fluid by decision of the group, and may include non-councillors and professional advisers. The public may be invited to or excluded from its meetings.

A working group can make recommendations to Council or its Standing Committee for actions or projects, but cannot make substantive decisions outside its remit which commit Council or Standing Committees

Working groups shall have the autonomy to set their own schedule but are required to meet formally at least once every six months. Any working group which fails to meet this requirement will be automatically dissolved, with its cessation being confirmed at the next Full Council meeting.

5. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

a. The Planning Group shall, until further decision of Council, have the status of a working group, and may at the discretion of the group hold any or all of its meetings by remote electronic means (Zoom or similar), but its meetings shall be advertised as accessible to the public and and the agendas and recommendations shall be published in the same manner as those of a formal committee.

b. Meetings: A meeting of the Planning Group shall be convened every three weeks unless the Clerk, or in the absence of the Clerk, the Deputy Clerk, after consultation with the Chair of the Group, considers the nature of the business to be insufficient to convene a meeting.

c. Recommendations: The recommendations of the Planning Group shall be made direct to the District Council on behalf of the Council, and shall be included in the Planning Group's report to the Council.

d. Site Visits: Reasonable efforts to be made by the Clerk or Deputy Clerk to contact members of the Planning Group, not present at the meeting, to notify them of proposed site visits unless the visit is held immediately following the Planning Group meeting.

e. Simple Plans: Comments to the local Planning Authority on simple plans with no objections from neighbouring residents can be made by the Clerk, or in the Clerk's absence, the Deputy Clerk, under Delegated Powers without calling a Planning Group meeting. Such delegation to be exercised after consultation with the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Planning Group.

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 6pm.**

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 Chair and Vice-Chair (if there is one) of the Council.**

f **The Chair of the Council, unless they have resigned or becomes disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until their successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the Council.**

g **The Vice-Chair of the Council, if there is one, unless they resign or becomes disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chair of the Council at the next annual meeting of the Council.**

h **In an election year, if the current Chair of the Council has not been re-elected as a member of the Council, they shall preside at the annual meeting until a successor Chair of the Council has been elected. The current Chair of the Council shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chair 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 Chair of the Council has been re-elected as a member of the Council, they shall preside at the annual meeting until a new Chair of the Council has been elected. they may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chair of the Council and shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**

j Following the election of the Chair of the Council and Vice-Chair (if there is one) of the Council at the annual meeting, the business shall include:

i. **In an election year, delivery by the Chair 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 Chair of the Council of their acceptance of office form unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date;**

ii. Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the Council;

iii. Receipt of the minutes of the last meeting of a committee;

iv. Consideration of the recommendations made by a committee;

v. Review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, staff and other local authorities;

vi. Review of the terms of reference for committees;

vii. Appointment of members to existing committees;

viii. Appointment of any new committees in accordance with standing order 4;

ix. Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations;

x. Review of arrangements (including legal agreements) with other local authorities, not-for-profit bodies and businesses.

xi. Review of representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back;

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;

xiii. Review of inventory of land and other assets including buildings and office equipment;

xiv. Confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insurable risks;

xv. Review of the Council's and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies;

xvi. Review of the Council's complaints procedure;

xvii. Review of the Council's policies, procedures and practices in respect of its obligations under freedom of information and data protection legislation (*see also standing orders 11, 20 and 21*);

xviii. Review of the Council's policy for dealing with the press/media;

xix. Review of the Council's employment policies and procedures;

xx. Review of the Council's expenditure incurred under s.137 of the Local Government Act 1972 or the general power of competence.

xxi. 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 Chair of the Council may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council at any time** (subject to the statutory notice requirements).

b **If the Chair 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 chair of a committee [or a sub-committee] may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee [or the sub-committee] at any time.

d If the chair of a committee [or a sub-committee] does not call an extraordinary meeting within 7 days of having been requested to do so by 3 members of the committee [or the sub-committee], any 3 members of the committee [or the sub-committee] may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee [or a sub-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 4 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 10, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the recommendation of a committee or a sub-committee.

b When a motion moved pursuant to standing order 8(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 and none of those persons has received an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. A tie in votes may be settled by the casting vote exercisable by the chair of the meeting.

10. PRIOR NOTICE OF SUBJECT ITEMS OR ISSUES FOR DECISION

a. Pursuant to Standing Order 1(d) above, any member of a meeting may make a proposal to resolve an issue for decision within a subject item, in the course of discussing that subject item at the meeting.

b. Any councillor shall be entitled to propose a subject item to be discussed at a future meeting, and indicate the issue(s) which they consider are for decision by the meeting.

c. Any such proposal of a subject item to be discussed at a meeting, or indication of an issue for decision within a subject item shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting which it is tabled for 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.

e. No such proposal either of a subject item to be discussed at a meeting, or indication of an issue for decision within a subject item may be put forward unless the person putting it forward has given written notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least 7 working days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.

f. The Proper Officer may, before including a subject item to be discussed at a meeting, or indication of an issue for decision, correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the proposal.

g. If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a subject item to be discussed at a meeting, or indication of an issue for decision is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it in writing to the Proper Officer so that it can be understood at least 7 working days before the meeting.

h. If the wording or subject of a subject item to be discussed at a meeting, or indication of an issue for decision is considered unlawful or improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the chair 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.

I Subject to standing order 10(h) above, the decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include on the agenda any such subject item to be discussed at a meeting, or indication of an issue for decision shall be final.

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. to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes of a meeting;

ii. to move to a vote;

iii. to defer consideration of a motion;

iv. to refer a motion to a particular committee or sub-committee;

v. to appoint a person to preside at a meeting;

vi. to change the order of business on the agenda;

vii. to proceed to the next business on the agenda;

viii. to require a written report;

ix. to appoint a committee or sub-committee and their members;

x. to extend the time limits for speaking;

xi. to exclude the press and public from a meeting in respect of confidential or other information which is prejudicial to the public interest;

xii. to not hear further from a councillor or a member of the public;

xiii. to exclude a councillor or member of the public for disorderly conduct;

xiv. to temporarily suspend the meeting;

xv. to suspend a particular standing order (unless it reflects mandatory statutory or legal requirements);

xvi. to adjourn the meeting; or

xvii. to close the meeting.

12. MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION

See also standing order 21.

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 10(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 chair of the meeting and stand as an accurate record of the meeting to which the minutes relate.

d If the chair 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 chair 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 this 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 12(e) and standing order 20(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(u).

a All councillors and non-councillors with voting rights shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the Council.

b Unless they have been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest. They may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which they had the interest.

c Unless they have been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which they have another interest if so required by the Council's code of conduct. They may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which they had the interest.

d **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.

e A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by the Proper Officer and that decision is final.

f A dispensation request shall confirm:

i. the description and the nature of the disclosable pecuniary interest or other interest to which the request for the dispensation relates;

ii. whether the dispensation is required to participate at a meeting in a discussion only or a discussion and a vote;

iii. the date of the meeting or the period (not exceeding four years) for which the dispensation is sought; and

iv. an explanation as to why the dispensation is sought.

g Subject to standing orders 13(d) and (f), a dispensation request shall be considered by the Proper Officer before the meeting or, if this is not possible, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.

h A dispensation may be granted in accordance with standing order 13(e) if having regard to all relevant circumstances any of the following apply:

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;

ii granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the Council's area; or

iii it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.

15. CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS

a Upon notification by the District or Unitary Council that it is dealing with a complaint that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the Council's code of conduct, the Proper Officer shall, subject to standing order 11, report this to the Council.

b Where the notification in standing order 15(a) relates to a complaint made by the Proper Officer, the Proper Officer shall notify the Chair of Council of this fact, and the Chair shall nominate another staff member to assume the duties of the Proper Officer in relation to the complaint until it has been determined and the Council has agreed what action, if any, to take in accordance with standing order 15(d).

c The Council may:

i. provide information or evidence where such disclosure is necessary to investigate the complaint or is a legal requirement;

ii. seek information relevant to the complaint from the person or body with statutory responsibility for investigation of the matter;

d **Upon notification by the District or Unitary Council that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the Council's code of conduct, the Council shall consider what, if any, action to take against him. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office.**

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:

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;

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;

iii. **convene a meeting of the Council for the election of a new Chair of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in their office;**

iv. **facilitate inspection of the minute book by local government electors;**

v. **receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities;**

vi. hold acceptance of office forms from councillors;

vii. hold a copy of every councillor's register of interests;

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;

ix. liaise, as appropriate, with the Council's Data Protection Officer (if there is one);

x. receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the Council except where there is a resolution to the contrary;

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);

xii. arrange for legal deeds to be executed;
(*see also standing order 24);*

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;

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;

xv. refer a planning application received by the Council to the Chair or in their absence the Vice-Chair (if there is one) of the Planning Group 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 Group.

xvi. manage access to information about the Council via the publication scheme; and

xvii. retain custody of the seal of the Council (if there is one) which shall not be used without a resolution to that effect.
(s*ee also standing order 24.*

17. RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

a. The Parish Clerk shall be the Responsible Financial Officer to the Council and shall be responsible for the Parish Council's accounting procedures, in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations in force at any given time.

b. The Council shall appoint appropriate staff member(s) to undertake the work of the Responsible Financial Officer when the Responsible Financial Officer is absent. This shall normally be the Deputy Clerk.

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:

i. the Council's receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for each quarter;

ii. the Council's aggregate receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for the year to date;

iii. the balances held at the end of the quarter being reported and

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:

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

ii. to the Council the accounting statements for the year in the form of Section 2 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 £60,000 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. 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. tenders are to be submitted in writing in a sealed marked envelope addressed to the Proper Officer;

   iv. 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;

   v. tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate meeting of the Council or a committee or sub-committee with delegated responsibility.

d. Neither the Council, nor a committee or a sub-committee with delegated responsibility for considering tenders, is bound to accept the lowest value tender.

e. **Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed the threshold specified by the Government from time to time, the Council must consider whether the contract is subject to the requirements of the current procurement legislation and, if so, the Council must comply with procurement rules. NALC's procurement guidance contains further details.**

20. HANDLING STAFF MATTERS

a A matter personal to a member of staff that is being considered by a meeting of the Personnel & Grievance Committee is subject to standing order 12.

b Subject to the Council's policy regarding absences from work, the Council's most senior member of staff shall notify the Chair of the Finance & Policy Committee or, if he is not available, the Vice-Chair (if there is one) of the Finance & Policy Committee of significant absence occasioned by illness or other reason and that person shall report such absence to the Finance & Policty Committee at its next meeting.

c The Personnel & Grievance Committee shall conduct a review of the performance and annual appraisal of the work of the Clerk.

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 Personnel & Grievance Committee, in respect of an informal or formal grievance matter, and this matter shall be progressed by the Personnel & Grievance Committee.

e Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, if an informal or formal grievance matter raised by the Clerk relates to the chair of the Personnel & Grievance Committee, this shall be communicated to another member of the Committee, and shall be progressed by the Personnel & Grievance Committee, the member being complained of not beng involved.

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.

g The council shall keep all written records relating to employees secure. All paper records shall be secured and locked and electronic records shall be password protected and encrypted.

h In accordance with standing order 12(a), persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to staff records referred to in S/O 20(f).

i Access and means of access by keys and/or computer passwords to records of employment referred to in standing orders 20(f) and (g) above shall be provided only to the Clerk and Deputy Clerk.

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.**

The Council, shall publish information in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (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 may appoint a Data Protection Officer.

b **The Council shall have policies and procedures in place to respond to an individual exercising statutory rights concerning their 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 15(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 23(a), the Council's common seal shall alone be used for sealing a deed required by law. It shall be applied by the Proper Officer in the presence of two councillors who shall sign the deed as witnesses.**

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 each letter sent to the District and County Council OR Unitary Council shall be sent to the ward councillor(s) representing the area of the Council.

26. RESTRICTIONS ON COUNCILLOR ACTIVITIES

a. Canvassing councillors or the members of a committee or sub-committee, directly or indirectly, for appointment to or by the council shall disqualify the candidate from such an appointment. The Proper Officer shall disclose the requirement of this Standing Order to every candidate.

b. A councillor or a member of a committee or sub-committee shall not solicit a person for appointment to, or by the council, or recommend a person for such appointment or for promotion; but nevertheless any such person may give a written testimonial of a candidate's ability experience or character for submission

to the council with an application for appointment.

c. This Standing Order shall apply to tenders as if the person making the tender were a candidate for an appointment.

d. Unless authorised by a resolution, 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.

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 8.

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 chair of a meeting as to the application of standing orders at the meeting shall be final.