



Stanway

Parish Council

STANDING ORDERS

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1. How to use standing orders

The following paragraphs 0 to 0 in this section 1 (How to use standing orders) are drafting instructions directed to the Council by the National Association of Local Councils and are not Standing Orders.

Standing Orders are the written rules of a local Council. They are used to confirm a Council's internal organization, administrative and procurement procedures and procedural matters for meetings. They are not the same as the policies of a Council but they may refer to them. A local Council must have standing orders for the procurement of contracts.

Meetings of full Council, Councillors, the Responsible Financial Officer and the Proper Officer are subject to many statutory requirements. A Council should have Standing Orders to confirm those statutory requirements. A Council should have Standing Orders to control the number, place, quorum, notices and other procedures for Committee and Sub-Committee meetings because these are subject to fewer statutory requirements. If it does not, Committees and Sub-Committees may adopt their own Standing Orders.

Standing Orders that are in bold type contain statutory requirements. It is recommended that Councils adopt them without changing them. Other model Standing Orders not in bold are designed to help Councils operate effectively but do not contain statutory requirements so they may be adopted as drafted or amended to suit a Council's needs. For convenience, the word "Councillor" is used in Standing Orders and includes a non-Councillor with or without voting rights unless otherwise stated.

2. Rules of debate at meetings

Motions on the agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear unless the order is changed at the discretion of the Chairman of the meeting.

A motion (including an amendment) shall not be progressed unless it has been moved and seconded.

A motion on the agenda that is not moved by its proposer may be treated by the Chairman of the meeting as withdrawn.

If a motion (including an amendment) has been seconded, it may be withdrawn by the proposer only with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.

An amendment is a proposal to remove or add words to a motion. It shall not negate the motion.

If an amendment to the original motion is carried, the original motion becomes the substantive motion upon which further amendment(s) may be moved.

An amendment shall not be considered unless early verbal notice of it is given at the meeting and, if requested by the Chairman of the meeting, is expressed in writing to the Chairman.

A Councillor may move an amendment to his 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.

If there is more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion, the amendments shall be moved in the order directed by the Chairman.

Subject to standing order 2.11., only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the Chairman of the meeting.

One or more amendments may be discussed together if the Chairman of the meeting considers this expedient but each amendment shall be voted upon separately.

A Councillor may not move more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion.

The mover of an amendment has no right of reply at the end of debate on it.

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 of the first amendment or at the very end of debate on the final substantive motion immediately before it is put to the vote.

Unless permitted by the Chairman of the meeting, a Councillor may speak once in the debate on a motion except:

- a) to speak on an amendment moved by another Councillor;
- b) to move or speak on another amendment if the motion has been amended since he last spoke;
- c) to give a personal explanation; or

- d) in exercise of a right of reply.

During the debate of 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 he considers has been breached or specify the other irregularity in the proceedings of the meeting he is concerned by.

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

When a motion is under debate, no other motion shall be moved except:

- e) to amend the motion;
- f) to proceed to the next business;
- g) to adjourn the debate;
- h) to put the motion to a vote;
- i) to ask a person to be no longer heard or to leave the meeting;
- j) to refer a motion to a Committee or Sub-Committee for consideration;
- k) to exclude the public and press;
- l) to adjourn the meeting; or
- m) to suspend particular standing order(s) excepting those which reflect mandatory statutory requirements.

Before an original or substantive motion is put to the vote, the Chairman of the meeting shall be satisfied that the motion has been sufficiently debated and that the mover of the motion under debate has exercised or waived his right of reply.

Excluding motions moved under standing order 2.18, the contributions or speeches by a Councillor shall relate only to the motion under discussion and shall not exceed three minutes without the consent of the Chairman of the meeting.

3. Disorderly conduct at meetings

No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly. If this standing order is ignored, the Chairman of the meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.

If person(s) disregard the request of the Chairman of the meeting to moderate or improve their conduct, any Councillor or the Chairman of the meeting may move that the person be no longer heard or excluded from the meeting. The motion, if seconded, shall be put to the vote without discussion.

If a resolution made under standing order 0 is ignored, the Chairman 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.

4. Meetings generally

The following applies to Full Council 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) Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chairman may in his absence be done by, to or before the Deputy Chairman.
- d) The Chairman, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chairman is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chairman, if present, shall preside. If both the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman are absent from a meeting, a Councillor as chosen by the Councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.

- e) 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.

The following applies to Committee meetings.

- f) 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.

The following applies to Full Council meetings and Committee meetings.

- g) 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.
- h) During the time set aside for public forum, members of the public may ask the Council a question on any matter relating to the Parish of Stanway.
- i) The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with standing order 4.3.b) shall not exceed 15 minutes unless directed by the Chairman of the meeting.
- j) Subject to standing order 4.3.c), a member of the public shall not speak for more than five minutes. Members of the public may ask one question, and not ask another until all others wishing to ask a question have been permitted to do so.
- k) In accordance with standing order 4.3.b), a question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The Chairman of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.
- l) A person shall raise his hand when requesting to speak and, at meetings of the Full Council, stand when speaking (except when a person has a disability or is likely to suffer discomfort). The Chairman of the meeting may at any time permit a person to be seated when speaking.
- m) A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct his comments to the Chairman of the meeting.
- n) Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the Chairman of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.
- o) Members of the public are permitted to film or record Council meetings, to which they are permitted access, in a non-disruptive manner and in accordance with the Council's agreed Protocol. The Chairman of the meeting has the authority to stop a meeting and take appropriate action if any recording is deemed to be disruptive.
- p) 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.

The following applies to Full Council meetings and Committee meetings and Sub-Committee meetings.

- q) Subject to a meeting being quorate, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the Councillors with voting rights present and voting.
- r) The Chairman 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 his casting vote whether or not he gave an original vote.
- 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 to show whether each Councillor present and voting gave his 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 present and apologies for absence;
 - iii) interests that have been declared by Councillors and non-Councillors with voting rights;
 - iv) whether a Councillor or non-Councillor with voting rights left the meeting when matters that they held interests in were being considered;
 - v) if there was a public participation session; and
 - vi) the resolutions made.

- u) 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.
- v) A meeting shall not exceed a period of two-and-a-half hours unless the Council, or Committee agree to extend the meeting time.

5. Committees and Sub-Committees

Unless the Council determines otherwise, a Committee may appoint a Sub-Committee whose terms of reference and Members shall be determined by the Committee.

The Members of a Committee may include appointed substitute members (with full voting rights but only when formally appointed to a specific meeting) and also non-Councillors, unless it is a Committee which regulates and controls the finances of the Council.

Unless the Council determines otherwise, all the Members of an advisory Committee and a Sub-Committee of the advisory Committee may be non-Councillors.

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 full Council;
- 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 5.4.b) and 5.4.c), appoint and determine the terms of office of Members of such a Committee;
- e) shall, after it has appointed the Members of a standing Committee, defer the appointment of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman to the standing Committee;
- f) shall permit a standing Committee, to appoint its own Chairman at the first meeting of the Committee;
- g) shall determine the place, notice requirements and quorum for a meeting of a Committee and a Sub-Committee which shall be no less than three;
- h) shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a Committee;
- i) 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;
- j) shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a Sub-Committee that they are permitted to attend; and
- k) may dissolve a Committee.

6. Ordinary Council meetings

In an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the new Councillors elected take office.

In a year which is not an election year, the annual meeting of a Council shall be held on such day in May as the Council may direct.

If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the Council shall take place at 6pm.

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 directs.

The first business conducted at the annual meeting of the Council shall be the election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council.

The Chairman, unless he has 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.

The Vice-Chairman unless he resigns or becomes disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chairman at the next annual meeting of the Council.

In an election year, if the current Chairman has not been re-elected as a member of the Council, he shall preside at the meeting until a successor Chairman has been elected. The current Chairman shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chairman but must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.

In an election year, if the current Chairman has been re-elected as a member of the Council, he shall preside at the meeting until a new Chairman has been elected. He may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chairman and must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.

Following the election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council at the annual meeting of the Council, the business of the annual meeting shall, unless deferred (by formal vote or by custom) to a meeting later in the civic year to allow more detailed evaluation, include:

- a) in an election year, delivery by the Chairman 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 Chairman of his acceptance of office form unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date;
- b) confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the Council;
- c) receipt of the minutes of the last meeting of a Committee including Chairman's explanation and pertinent questions to the Chairman;
- d) consideration of the recommendations made by a Committee;
- e) review of delegation arrangements to Committees, Sub-Committees, staff and other local authorities;
- f) review of the terms of reference for Committees;
- g) appointment of Members to existing Committees;
- h) appointment of any new Committees in accordance with standing order 4 above;
- i) review and adoption of appropriate standing orders;
- j) review of arrangements, including any charters and agency agreements, with other local authorities and review of contributions made to expenditure incurred by other local authorities;
- k) review of representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back;
- l) 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;
- m) review of inventory of land and assets including buildings and office equipment;
- n) confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insured risks;
- o) review of the Council's and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies;
- p) review of the Council's complaints procedure;
- q) review of the Council's procedures for handling requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998;
- r) review of the Council's policy for dealing with the press/media; and
- s) determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the full Council up to and including the next annual meeting of full Council.

7. Extraordinary meetings of the Council and Committees and Sub-Committees

The Chairman may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council at any time.

If the Chairman does not or refuses to 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 must be signed by the two Councillors.

The Chairman of a Committee or a Sub-Committee may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Committee or the Sub-Committee at any time.

If the Chairman of a Committee or a Sub-Committee does not or refuses to call an extraordinary meeting within seven days of having been requested by to do so by two thirds of the Members of the Committee or the Sub-Committee, any three Members of the Committee and the Sub-Committee may convene an extraordinary meeting of a Committee and a Sub-Committee.

8. Previous resolutions

A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least nine 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. In the event the original motion cannot be enacted because of some lawful impediment, then the matter shall be reported to Council for the resolution to be reversed without requiring a minimum number of signatories.

When a motion moved pursuant to standing order 8.1 has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved within a further six months.

9. Voting on appointments

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 Chairman of the meeting.

10. Motions for a meeting that require written notice to be given to the Proper Officer

A motion 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.

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 seven clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.

The Proper Officer may, before including a motion on the agenda received in accordance with standing order 10.2., correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.

If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with standing order 10.2 is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it in writing to the Proper Officer at least seven clear days before the meeting so that it can be understood.

If the wording or subject of a proposed motion is considered improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the Chairman 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.

Subject to standing order 10.5., the decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.

Motions received shall be recorded in a book for that purpose and numbered in the order that they are received.

Motions rejected shall be recorded in a book for that purpose with an explanation by the Proper Officer for their rejection.

11. Motions at a meeting that do not require written notice

The following motions may be moved at a meeting without written notice to the Proper Officer:

- a) to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes of a meeting;
- b) to move to a vote;
- c) to defer consideration of a motion;
- d) to refer a motion to a particular Committee or Sub-Committee;
- e) to appoint a person to preside at a meeting;
- f) to change the order of business on the agenda;

- g) to proceed to the next business on the agenda;
- h) to require a written report;
- i) to appoint a Committee or Sub-Committee and their Members;
- j) to extend the time limits for speaking;
- k) to exclude the press and public from a meeting in respect of confidential or sensitive information which is prejudicial to the public interest;
- l) to not hear further from a Councillor or a member of the public;
- m) to exclude a Councillor or member of the public for disorderly conduct;
- n) to temporarily suspend the meeting;
- o) to suspend a particular standing order (unless it reflects mandatory statutory requirements);
- p) to adjourn the meeting; or
- q) to close a meeting.

12. Handling & protecting confidential or sensitive information

12.1 A Councillor , Officer or employee:

- a) may use a personal computer for the Council's financial business, provided it is protected by up-to-date anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall software; and
- b) will not disclose any PIN or password relevant to the working of the Council or its bank accounts, to any person.

12.2.1 Accounting records will include salaries, other emoluments, employers' pension contributions and employers' National Insurance Contributions such information will not be open to inspection or review (under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or otherwise) other than:

- c) by a Councillor who can demonstrate a need to know;

And, also with permission of the employee

- d) by the internal auditor;
- e) by the external auditor; or
- f) by any person authorised under the Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation.

13. Draft minutes

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.

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 11.1.(a).

The accuracy of draft minutes, including any amendment(s) made to them, shall be confirmed by resolution and shall be signed by the Chairman of the meeting and stand as an accurate record of the meeting to which the minutes relate.

If the Chairman of the meeting does not consider the minutes to be an accurate record of the meeting to which they relate, he shall sign the minutes and include a paragraph in the following terms or to the same effect: "The Chairman 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."

Upon 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

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

Unless he has 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 he has a disclosable pecuniary interest. He may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which he had the interest.

Unless he has 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 he has another interest if so required by the Council's code of conduct. He may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which he had the interest.

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.

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

A dispensation request shall confirm:

- a) the description and the nature of the disclosable pecuniary interest or other interest to which the request for the dispensation relates;
- b) whether the dispensation is required to participate at a meeting in a discussion only or a discussion and a vote;
- c) the date of the meeting or the period (not exceeding four years) for which the dispensation is sought; and
- d) an explanation as to why the dispensation is sought.

Subject to standing orders 14.4. and 14.6, dispensations requests 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.

A dispensation may be granted in accordance with standing order 14.4. if having regard to all relevant circumstances the following applies:

- e) 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; or
- f) granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the Council's area; or
- g) it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.

15. Code of conduct complaints

Upon notification by the District 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 12, report this to the Council.

Where the notification in standing order 15.1. relates to a complaint made by the Proper Officer, the Proper Officer shall notify the Chairman of this fact, and the Chairman 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 15.4.

The Council may:

- a) provide information or evidence where such disclosure is necessary to progress an investigation of the complaint or is required by law; and
- b) seek information relevant to the complaint from the person or body with statutory responsibility for investigation of the matter.
- c) Upon notification by the District 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

The Proper Officer shall be either (a) the clerk or (b) other staff member(s) nominated by the Council to undertake the work of the Proper Officer when the Proper Officer is absent.

The Proper Officer shall:

- a) at least three clear days before a meeting of the Council, a Committee and a Sub- Committee serve on Councillors a summons, by email, confirming the time, place and the agenda provided any such email contains the electronic signature and title of the Proper Officer; or, for individual Councillors who, at any time in writing to the Proper Officer, withdraw consent to receiving a summons by email, to serve on Councillors, by delivery or post at their residences, a signed summons confirming the time, place and the agenda.
- b) give public notice of the time, place and agenda at least three clear days before a meeting of the Council or a meeting of a Committee or a Sub- Committee (provided that the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the Council convened by Councillors is signed by them);
- c) subject to standing order 10 above, include on the agenda all motions in the order received unless a Councillor has given written notice at least seven days before the meeting confirming his withdrawal of it;
- d) convene a meeting of full Council for the election of a new Chairman occasioned by a casual vacancy in his office;
- e) facilitate inspection of the minute book by local government electors;
- f) receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities;
- g) retain acceptance of office forms from Councillors;
- h) retain a copy of every Councillor's register of interests;
- i) assist with responding to requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Data Protection Act 1998, in accordance with and subject to the Council's policies and procedures relating to the same;
- j) receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the Council except where there is a resolution to the contrary;
- k) manage the organisation, storage of, access to and destruction of information held by the Council in paper and electronic form;
- l) arrange for legal deeds to be executed;
- m) record every planning application notified to the Council and the Council's response to the local planning authority;
- n) refer a planning application received by the Council to the Chairman or in his absence Vice-Chairman of the Planning & Environment 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 & Environment Committee;
- o) manage access to information about the Council via the publication scheme; and
- p) retain custody of the seal of the Council which shall not be used without a resolution to that effect.

17. Responsible Financial Officer

The Council shall appoint appropriate staff member(s) to undertake the work of the Responsible Financial Officer when the Responsible Financial Officer is absent, but such appointment shall not confer on such member(s) of staff the statutory duties or statutory authority of the 'Responsible Financial Officer'.

18. Accounting statements and audit

"Proper practices" in standing orders refer to the most recent version of Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioners' Guide (England).

The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to each Councillor as soon as reasonably practicable after 30 June, 30 September and 31 December in each year interim management accounts summarising:

- a) the Council's income and expenditure during the preceding quarter;
 - b) the Council's aggregate of income and expenditure for the year to date;
 - c) the balances held at the preceding quarter ; and
- a comparison with the budget for the financial year highlighting any overspend.

As soon as reasonably practicable after the financial year end each year, the Responsible Financial Officer shall provide:

- d) to each Councillor a statement summarising the Council's income and expenditure for the last quarter of the financial year ; and
- e) to the full Council the accounting statements for the year in the form stipulated in legislation for approval.

The accounting statements for each financial year shall be prepared in accordance with legislation. A completed draft annual return shall be presented to each Councillor before the end of the following month of May. The annual return of the Council, which is subject to external audit, including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to Council for consideration and formal approval before 30 June.

Each Member will review the effectiveness of the Council's system of internal control and will agree with or deny each of the statements contained in the Annual Governance Statement. The Clerk and the Chair of the meeting at which the Annual Governance Statement was approved will countersign the Annual Governance Statement.

The Council will:

- f) ensure there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and of its system of internal control; and
- g) appoint an internal auditor,
in accordance with Proper Practices.

The internal auditor will:

- h) be competent and independent of the financial operations of the Council;
- i) demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence;
- j) be free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships;
- k) not be involved in financial decision making, management or control of the Council;
- l) report to Council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one annual written report during each financial year;
- m) complete and sign the Annual Internal Audit Report forming part of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return; and
- n) not under any circumstances:
 - i) perform any operational duties for the Council;
 - ii) initiate or approve accounting transactions; or
 - iii) direct the activities of any staff member, except to the extent that such staff member of staff has been properly assigned to assist the internal auditor.

For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to the internal auditor, the terms 'independent' and 'independence' have the same meaning as is described in Proper Practices.

Any Councillor or staff member will make available such documents and records as to the Council considers necessary for such purpose and shall, as directed by the Council, supply the internal auditor with such information and records.

The Clerk and/or the RFO will, without undue delay, bring to the attention of Members any correspondence or report from the internal auditor or the external auditor.

At least annually the Council will review the effectiveness of its internal audit process.

19. Procurement

Save for the goods and services listed below, every agreement for the supply of goods or services to the Council will comply with this standing order 19:

- a) supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage, telephone and broadband services;
- b) legal advice;
- c) repairs to or parts for machinery or equipment or plant owned by the Council;
- d) additional audit work of the external auditor up to a value of £500 (in excess of this sum the Clerk and the RFO may act after consultation with the Chair of the Council); and
- e) proprietary goods that are sold only at a fixed price.

All goods and services will be necessary to the Council's operations and will represent value for money.

The basic procedure for the selection of a supplier for goods or services, will be as given in the following table depending on the value of the supply.

Value of supply	Procedure
£25,000 or more	The Council will observe the relevant competitive tendering and award procedures set out in The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended).
£2,500 to £24,999	The Clerk will secure priced proposals from at least three suppliers.
£500 to £2,499	The Clerk will obtain priced proposals from three suppliers, but if this is impracticable or three suppliers decline to submit priced proposals, the best available terms will be secured.
Up to £499	The staff member will secure the best available terms from a supplier.

All invitations to tender and requests for proposals issued by the Council will:

- f) state the specification for the goods or services;
- g) will refer expressly to the Bribery Act 2010;
- h) require tenders or priced proposals to be submitted before a prescribed date;
- i) remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening bids;
- j) will be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the Clerk in the presence of at least one Councillor.

The Council is not obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, priced proposal, quotation or estimate.

The decision as to the selection of the supplier will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting of the Council or Committee at which the decision was made.

Should:

- k) the Council, or a Committee, decide not to accept any tender or priced proposal; and
 - l) the Council requires further pricing, and
 - m) the specification does not change,
- any person who was present when the original decision was made will not be permitted to submit another tender or priced proposal.

The Council may resolve to waive standing order (but not the statutory obligations pursuant to the Public Contracts Regulations 2015) so that a price can be negotiated without competition. The reason for such waiver will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting at which such decision was made.

In accordance with the Local Government Transparency Code, each quarter the Council will publish details of every invitation to supply goods and/or services with a value of more than £5,000.

All supplies will be subject to a written agreement between the Council and the supplier which sets out, as a minimum:

- n) the goods or services to be supplied;
- o) the value of the goods or services; and
- p) the payment terms.

The type of written agreement and the level of detail will be appropriate for the value of the goods or services. At a simplest it may be an exchange of correspondence whereas a lengthier agreement may be necessary for higher value goods or services or more complex supplies.

The Council, Committee, or staff member who authorised the expenditure:

- q) is responsible for compliance with this standing order 19;
- r) will ensure delivery of the goods or services; and
- s) is responsible for all matters concerning ongoing supplier performance.

The Council may agree a variation to an agreement with a supplier before the expiry of the agreement, provided such variation does not lead to an increase in the value of goods or services. Where a variation leads to an increase in the value of goods or services, the procurement process restarts.

The Council will reject all goods or services supplied in the absence of a purchase order or a written agreement.

In accordance with the Local Government Transparency Code, each quarter the Council will publish details of any contract, commissioned activity, purchase order, framework agreement and any other legally enforceable supply agreement with a value of more than £5,000.

20. Handling staff matters

A matter personal to a member of staff that is being considered by a meeting of Council OR the Staffing Sub-Committee is subject to standing order 12 above.

All staff shall be provided with an annual appraisal.

Any grievances by staff shall be considered in accord with the Council's adopted Grievance Procedure.

Any persons responsible for all or part of the management of staff shall treat the written records of all meetings relating to their performance, capabilities, grievance or disciplinary matters as confidential and secure.

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.

Only persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to staff records referred to in standing orders 0 and 0 if so justified.

Access and means of access by keys and/or computer passwords to records of employment referred to in standing orders 20.4. and 20.5. shall be provided only to the Clerk and the Chairman of the Staffing Committee.

21. Requests for information

Requests for information held by the Council shall be handled in accordance with the Council's policy in respect of handling requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

Correspondence from, and notices served by, the Information Commissioner shall be referred by the Proper Officer to the Chairman of the Policy and Finance Committee. The said Committee shall have the power to do anything to facilitate compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

22. Relations with the press/media

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.

23. Execution and sealing of legal deeds

A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the Council unless authorised by a resolution.

Subject to standing order 23.1. above, any two Councillors may sign, on behalf of the Council, any deed required by law and the Proper Officer shall witness their signatures.

24. Communicating with District and County Councillors

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 representing the area of the Council.

25. Restrictions on Councillor activities

Unless authorised by a resolution, no Councillor shall:

- a) inspect any land and/or premises which the Council has a right or duty to inspect; or
- b) issue orders, instructions or directions.

26. Questions to the Chairman

At a meeting of Full Council, questions may be put by Councillors to the Chairman provided that seven days' notice has been given of the question. The Chairman may give an oral or written response at the meeting; any such written response to form part of the minutes of the meeting.

27. Presentations to Council

External organisations will be permitted, if invited, to make presentations to a meeting of the Council or a Committee.

The Clerk, in conjunction with the Chairman or Chairman of the relevant Committee, will determine whether an organisation may make a presentation.

Both Councillors and the public may be invited to question the presenter, subject to the existing rules on public participation.

28. Standing orders generally

All or part of a standing order, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory requirements, may be suspended by resolution in relation to the consideration of an item on the agenda for a meeting.

A motion to add to or vary or revoke one or more of the Council's standing orders, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory requirements, shall be proposed by a special motion, the written notice by at least three Councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 10.

The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the Council's standing orders to a Councillor as soon as possible after he has delivered his acceptance of office form.

The decision of the Chairman of a meeting as to the application of standing orders at the meeting shall be final.

29. Risk management

The Council will put in place arrangements for managing risks.

The Clerk will prepare, for approval by the Council, risk management policy statements in respect of the Council's activities.

The Council will review its risk policy statements and associated risk management framework at least annually.

When considering any new activity, the Clerk will prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration and adoption by the Council.

30. Insurance

Following the annual risk review (per section 29 of these Standing Orders), and as directed by the Corporate Governance Committee, the Clerk will be responsible for effecting insurance for .

- a) all existing and new risks, financial interests, assets and liabilities in respect of which insurance is required; and
- b) Public liability and Employers Liability @ £10,000,000 or as required by law; and
- c) Fidelity guarantee insurance which will cover the maximum risk exposure as determined annually by the Council, or a duly delegated Committee

The Clerk will retain a record of all contracts of insurance effected by the Council and review it annually.