



Messing Cum Inworth Parish Council Standing Orders



	Page
1. Rules of debate at meetings.....	1
2. Disorderly conduct at meetings	2
3. Meetings generally	2
4. Committees and sub-committees	4
5. Ordinary council meetings	4
6. Extraordinary meetings of council, committees and sub-committees.....	6
7. Previous resolutions	6
8. Voting on appointments.....	6
9. Motions for a meeting that require written notice to be given to the proper officer	6
10. Motions at a meeting that do not require written notice	7
11. Management of information	7
12. Draft minutes	7
13. Code of conduct and dispensations	8
14. Code of conduct complaints.....	8
15. Proper officer	9
16. Responsible financial officer.....	10
17. Accounts and accounting statements	10
18. Financial controls and procurement	10
19. Handling staff matters.....	11
20. Responsibilities to provide information	11
21. Responsibilities under data protection legislation	12
22. Relations with the press and media	12
23. Execution and sealing of legal deeds.....	12
24. Communicating with city and county councillors	12
25. Restrictions on councillor activities.....	12
26. Standing orders generally.....	12

1. RULES OF DEBATE AT MEETINGS

- a Motions on the agenda shall be considered in the order they appear unless the order is changed at the discretion of the chair of the meeting.
- b A motion shall not be progressed unless it has been moved and seconded.
- c A motion on the agenda that is not moved by its proposer may be treated by the chair of the meeting as withdrawn.
- d If a motion, including an amendment, has been seconded, it may be withdrawn by the proposer only with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
- e An amendment is a proposal to remove or add words to a motion and shall not negate the motion.
- f If an amendment to the original motion is carried, the original motion, as amended, becomes the substantive motion upon which further amendments may be moved.
- g An amendment shall not be considered unless early verbal notice of it is given at the meeting and, if requested by the chair of the meeting, is expressed in writing to the chair.
- h A councillor may move an amendment to their own motion if agreed by the meeting. If a motion has already been seconded, the amendment shall be with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
- i If there is more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion, the amendments shall be moved in the order directed by the chair of the meeting.
- j Subject to standing order 1(k), only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the chair of the meeting.
- k One or more amendments may be discussed together if the chair of the meeting considers this expedient but each amendment shall be voted upon separately.
- l A councillor may not move more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion.

- m The mover of an amendment has no right of reply at the end of debate on it.
- n Where a series of amendments to an original motion are carried, the mover of the original motion shall have right of reply either at the end of debate on the first amendment or at the very end of debate on the final substantive motion immediately before it is put to the vote.
- o Unless permitted by the chair of the meeting, a councillor may speak once in the debate on a motion except:
- i. to speak on an amendment moved by another councillor;
 - ii. to move or speak on another amendment if the motion has been amended since they last spoke;
 - iii. to make a point of order;
 - iv. to give a personal explanation; or
 - v. to exercise a right of reply.
- p During debate on a motion, a councillor may interrupt only on a point of order or a personal explanation and the councillor who was interrupted shall stop speaking. A councillor raising a point of order shall identify the standing order which they consider has been breached or specify the other irregularity in the proceedings of the meeting.
- q A point of order shall be decided by the chair of the meeting whose decision shall be final.
- r When a motion is under debate, no other motion shall be moved except:
- i. to amend the motion;
 - ii. to proceed to the next business;
 - iii. to adjourn the debate;
 - iv. to put the motion to a vote;
 - v. to ask a person to be no longer heard or to leave the meeting;
 - vi. to refer a motion to a committee or sub-committee for consideration;
 - vii. to exclude the public and press;
 - viii. to adjourn the meeting; or
 - ix. to suspend particular standing orders excepting those which reflect mandatory statutory or legal requirements.
- s Before an original or substantive motion is put to the vote, the chair 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 their right of reply.
- t Excluding motions moved under standing order 1(r), the contributions or speeches by a councillor shall relate only to the motion under discussion and shall not exceed 3 minutes without the consent of the 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 persons to moderate or improve their conduct.
- b If persons 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. Public exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public exclusion.**
- e Members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda.
- f The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with standing order 3(e) shall not exceed 15 minutes unless directed by the chair of the meeting.
- g Subject to standing order 3(f), a member of public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes.
- h In accordance with standing order 3(e), a question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start debate on the question. The chair of the meeting may direct a written or oral response be given.
- i A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct comments to the chair of the meeting.
- j Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the chair of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.
- k **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 audio recordings 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 report or provide oral or written commentary about the meeting so the report or commentary is available as the meeting takes place or later to persons not present.**
- l **A person present at a meeting may not provide an oral report or oral commentary about a meeting as it takes place without permission.**
- m **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.**
- n **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.**
- o **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 present, shall preside. If both the Chair and Vice-Chair are absent from a meeting, a councillor as chosen by the councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.**
- p **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.**
- q **The chair of a meeting may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of equality of votes may exercise their casting vote whether or not they gave an original vote.**
- *See standing orders 5(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.*
- r **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 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.**
- s 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 councillors who are absent;

- iii. interests that are declared by councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
- iv. the grant of dispensations 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.

t A councillor or a non-councillor with voting rights who has a disclosable pecuniary interest or another interest as set out in the Council 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.

u No business may be transacted at a meeting unless at least one-third of the whole number of Council members are present and in no case shall the quorum of a meeting be less than three.

See standing order 4d(viii) for the quorum of a committee or sub-committee meeting.

v If a meeting is or becomes inquorate no business shall be transacted and the meeting shall be closed. Business on the agenda shall be adjourned to another meeting.

w A meeting shall not exceed a period of 2 hours.

4. COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES

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

b Members of a committee may include non-councillors unless it is a committee which regulates and controls the finances of the Council.

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

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

- i. shall determine their terms of reference;
- ii. shall determine the number and time of ordinary meetings of a standing committee up until the date of the next annual meeting of the Council;
- iii. shall permit a committee, other than in respect of ordinary meetings of a committee, to determine the number and time of its meetings;
- iv. shall, subject to standing orders 4(b) and (c), appoint and determine the terms of office of members of such a committee;
- v. may, subject to standing orders 4(b) and (c), appoint and determine terms of office of substitute members to a committee whose role is to replace ordinary members at a meeting of a committee if ordinary committee members confirm to the Proper Officer seven days before the meeting that they are unable to attend;
- vi. shall permit a committee to appoint its own chair at the first meeting of the committee;
- vii. shall determine the place, notice requirements, and quorum for a meeting of a committee or sub-committee which shall be no less than three;
- viii. shall determine if the public and press are permitted to attend meetings of a committee or sub-committee; and
- ix. may dissolve a committee or sub-committee.

5. ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETINGS

a In an election year, the annual meeting of Council shall be held on or within fourteen days following the day on which elected councillors 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 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 Council, at least three other ordinary meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times as Council decides.**
- e **The first business conducted at the annual meeting of 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 resign or become 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 become 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 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 Council, they shall preside at the annual meeting until a new Chair of the Council has been elected, and 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 election of the Chair, 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 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 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 any committees;
 - iv. Consideration of the recommendations made by any committees;
 - 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 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 Council and staff subscriptions to other bodies;
 - xvi. Review of the Council complaints procedure;
 - xvii. Review of policies, procedures and practices in respect of Council obligations under freedom of information and data protection legislation (*see also standing orders 11, 20 and 21*);
 - xviii. Review of Council policy for dealing with the press and media;
 - xix. Review of Council employment policies and procedures;
 - xx. Review of Council 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.

6. EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS OF COUNCIL, COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES

- a **The Chair of the Council may convene an extraordinary Council meeting at any time.**
- b **If the Chair of the Council does not call an extraordinary meeting of Council within 7 days of having been requested in writing to do so by 2 councillors, any 2 councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of 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 may convene an extraordinary committee meeting at any time.
- d If a committee chair does not call an extraordinary meeting within 7 days of having been requested to do so by 2 members of the committee, any 2 committee members may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee.

7. 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 2 councillors given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9, or by a motion moved in pursuance of a committee recommendation.
- b When a motion moved pursuant to standing order 7(a) has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved for a further six months.

8. VOTING ON APPOINTMENTS

- a Where more than two persons are nominated for a position to be filled by 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.

9. MOTIONS FOR A MEETING THAT REQUIRE WRITTEN NOTICE TO BE GIVEN TO THE PROPER OFFICER

- a A motion shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting for which it is tabled and in any event shall relate to the performance of Council statutory functions, powers and obligations or an issue which specifically affects the Council area or its residents.
- b No motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is on the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least ten clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.
- c The Proper Officer may, before including a motion on the agenda received in accordance with standing order 9(b), correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.
- d If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with standing order 9(b) is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it, so that it can be understood, in writing, to the Proper Officer at least seven clear days before the meeting.
- e If the wording or subject of a proposed motion is considered improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the chair of the forthcoming meeting or, as the case may be, councillors who have convened the meeting, to consider whether the motion shall be included in the agenda or rejected.
- f The decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.
- g Motions received shall be recorded and numbered in the order that they are received.
- h Motions rejected shall be recorded with an explanation by the Proper Officer of the reason for rejection.

10. 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.

11. MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION

See also standing order 20

- a **Council shall have in place and keep under review, technical and organisational measures to keep secure information, including personal data, held in paper and electronic form. Such arrangements shall include deciding who has access to personal data and encryption of personal data.**
- b **Council shall have in place, and keep under review, policies for the retention and safe destruction of all information, including personal data, held in paper and electronic form. The Council 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, Council contractors and agents shall not disclose confidential information or personal data without legal justification.**

12. DRAFT MINUTES

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

- a If 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 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 amendments 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 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 their view was not upheld by the meeting and the minutes

are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.”

- e **If Council gross annual income or expenditure (whichever is higher) does not exceed £25,000, draft minutes shall be published 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.
- g Draft minutes will be issued within 7 working days of a meeting. The only exception will be in the instance of sickness or pre-approved holiday.

13. 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 Council.
- b Unless dispensation is granted, 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 dispensation is granted, 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 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** 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 whose 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 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 period (not exceeding four years) for which dispensation is sought; and
 - iv. an explanation as to why 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 **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 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 dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the Council area; or**
 - iii. **it is otherwise appropriate to grant dispensation.**

14. CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS

- a Upon notification by City Council dealing with a complaint that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the Council code of conduct, the Proper Officer shall, subject to standing order 11, report this to Council.
- b Where the notification in standing order 14(a) relates to a complaint made by the Proper Officer, the

Proper Officer shall notify the Chair of the Council of this fact, and the Chair shall nominate another staff member to assume duties of the Proper Officer in relation to the complaint until it has been determined and Council has agreed what action, if any, to take in accordance with standing order 14(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 City Council that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the Council code of conduct, Council shall consider what, if any, action to take. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office.**

15. PROPER OFFICER

- a The Proper Officer shall be either (i) the clerk or (ii) another staff member nominated by 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 or a committee,**
 - **serve councillors at their residence by delivery, post or email (with consent) authenticated in such manner as the Proper Officer thinks fit, a signed summons confirming the time, place and agenda; and**
 - **provide, in a conspicuous place, public notice of the time, place and agenda (provided that public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of 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 9, 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 withdrawal of it;
- iii. **convene a meeting of 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 councillors' 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 relevant Council policies and procedures;
- ix. liaise, as appropriate, with the Council Data Protection Officer (if there is one);
- x. receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of Council except where there is a resolution to the contrary;
- xi. assist in the organisation, storage, access to, security and destruction of information held by Council in paper and electronic form subject to data protection requirements, freedom of information legislation and other legitimate requirements (e.g. Limitation Act 1980);
- xii. arrange for legal deeds to be executed; (*see also standing order 23*);
- xiii. arrange or manage prompt authorisation, approval, and instruction regarding any payments to be made by Council in accordance with its financial regulations;
- xiv. record every planning application notified to Council and Council response to the local planning authority in a book for such purpose;
- xv. refer a planning application received by Council to the Chair, or Vice-Chair in their absence, of Council within two working days of receipt to facilitate an additional meeting if the nature of a

planning application requires consideration before the next ordinary Council meeting;

- xvi. manage access to information about 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. (*see also standing order 23*).

16. RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

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

17. 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 Council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the law, proper practices and Council financial regulations.
- c The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to each councillor as soon as is practicable after 30 June, 30 September and 31 December in each year a statement to summarise:
 - i. Council receipts and payments for each quarter;
 - ii. Council aggregate receipts and payments for the year to date;
 - iii. balances held at the end of the quarter being reported; andwhich includes comparison with the budget for the financial year and highlights any actual or potential overspend.
- d As soon as is possible after the financial year end at 31 March, the Responsible Financial Officer shall provide:
 - i. each councillor with a statement summarising Council receipts and payments for the last quarter and the year to date for information; and
 - ii. Council 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 Year-end accounting statements shall be prepared in accordance with proper practices and apply the form of accounts determined by Council for the financial 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 Council approval. Council annual governance and accountability return, subject to external audit, including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to Council for consideration and formal approval before 30 June.

18. FINANCIAL CONTROLS AND PROCUREMENT

- a. 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. keeping of accounting records and systems of internal controls;
 - ii. assessment and management of financial risks faced by Council;
 - iii. work of the independent internal auditor in accordance with proper practices and receipt of regular reports from the internal auditor, required at least annually;
 - iv. inspection and copying by councillors and local electors of Council accounts and orders of payments; and
 - v. whether contracts with estimated value below £60,000 including VAT due to special circumstances are exempt from a tendering process.
- b. Financial regulations shall be reviewed regularly and at least annually for fitness of purpose.
- c. Subject to additional requirements in Council financial regulations, the tender process for contracts for the supply of goods, materials, services or execution of works shall include, as a minimum, the following steps:
 - i. a specification for goods, materials, services or execution of works shall be drawn up;

- ii. an invitation to tender shall be drawn up to confirm (i) Council specification (ii) time, date and address for submission of tenders (iii) the date of Council written response to the tender and (iv) prohibition on prospective contractors contacting councillors or staff to encourage or support a tender outside the prescribed process;
 - iii. invitation to tender shall be advertised on the Council website, Parish notice boards, local media and any other manner that is appropriate;
 - iv. tenders are to be submitted in writing in a sealed marked envelope addressed to the Proper Officer;
 - v. tenders shall be opened by the Proper Officer in the presence of at least one councillor after the deadline for submission of tenders has passed;
 - vi. tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate Council meeting or committee with delegated responsibility.
- d. Neither Council, nor a 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 Office of Government Commerce threshold, Council must consider whether Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016 apply and must comply with procurement rules. NALC's procurement guidance contains further details.**

19. HANDLING STAFF MATTERS

- a. A matter personal to a staff member considered by a meeting of Council or the personnel committee is subject to standing order 11.
- b. Subject to Council policy regarding absence from work, Council's most senior member of staff shall notify the chair of the personnel committee of absence occasioned by illness or other reason and that person shall report such absence to the personnel committee at its next meeting.
- c. The personnel committee will appoint a panel of 2 members to conduct a review of the performance and annual appraisal of the work of the most senior member of staff. This shall be reported in writing and subject to approval by resolution of the personnel committee.
- d. Subject to Council policy regarding handling of grievance matters, Council's most senior member of staff shall contact the chair of the personnel committee, or in their absence the vice-chair, in respect of an informal or formal grievance matter, and this matter shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the personnel committee.
- e. Subject to Council policy regarding handling of grievance matters, if an informal or formal grievance matter raised by a member of staff relates to the chair or vice-chair of the personnel committee, this shall be communicated to another member of the committee, which shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the personnel committee.
- 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. In accordance with standing order 11(a), persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to staff records referred to in standing order 19(f).

20. RESPONSIBILITIES TO PROVIDE INFORMATION

See also standing order 21

- a. **In accordance with freedom of information legislation, Council shall publish information in accordance with its publication scheme and respond to requests for information held by Council.**
- b. **If gross annual income or expenditure (whichever is higher) does not exceed £25,000, Council shall publish information in accordance with the requirements of the Smaller Authorities (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015.**

21. RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER DATA PROTECTION LEGISLATION

See also standing order 11

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

22. RELATIONS WITH THE PRESS AND MEDIA

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

23. 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 Council unless authorised by a resolution.
- b **Subject to standing order 23(a), any 2 councillors may sign, on behalf of Council, any deed required by law and the Proper Officer shall witness their signatures.**

24. COMMUNICATING WITH CITY AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS

- a An invitation to attend a meeting of Council shall be sent, together with the agenda, to the ward councillors of the City and County Council representing the area of the Council.
- b Unless Council determines otherwise, a copy of each letter sent to the City and County Council shall be sent to the ward councillors representing the area of the Council.

25. RESTRICTIONS ON COUNCILLOR ACTIVITIES

- a. Unless authorised by a resolution, no councillor shall:
 - i. inspect any land or premises which the Council has a right or duty to inspect; or
 - ii. issue orders, instructions or directions.

26. 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, vary or revoke Council standing orders, except that which incorporates mandatory statutory or legal requirements, shall be proposed by special motion and written notice by at least 2 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9.
- c The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of Council 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.

Review May 2026
V3 - remove 3i
Adopted May 2026
Review May 2027