Tanworth in Arden Parish Council

STANDING ORDERS

Revised May 2024

This document defines Tanworth in Arden Parish Council's Standing Orders. Standing Orders are the written rules of the council and are essential to regulate the proceedings of meetings. The council 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 do refer to them.

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NOTES:

Except in financial matters the Proper Officer will be taken to mean the Clerk or Deputy Clerk

The term "Councillor" refers to a Member of Tanworth in Arden Parish Council and to non-councillors with voting rights where appropriate.

Written notice can mean communication by electronic means unless stated to the contrary.

Standing orders that are in highlighted in Blue contain legal and statutory requirements.

STANDING ORDERS

1. During a meeting 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.

2. 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 normally be proposed by a special motion, the written notice by at least two councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing orders regarding notice of Motions. .

3. The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the Council's current standing orders on to each councillor on Acceptance of office, at each annual meeting, or when requested.

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

MEETINGS

5. The Council shall meet a minimum of four times per year.

6. 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.

7. A minimum of three clear days must be given for public notice of a meeting, this 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

8. The Chair of the Council, if present, shall normally 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 the Vice-Chair are absent from a meeting, a councillor as chosen by the councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.

9. 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 his/her absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chair of the Council.

10. 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.

11. 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 the next meeting.

12. Subject to a meeting being quorate, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the councillors present by vote. Councillors may abstain from voting and are not recorded as a vote.

13. A councillor 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 his right to participate and vote on that matter.

14. 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 her/his casting vote whether or not she/he gave an original vote and regardless of how she/he voted initially.

15. Voting on a question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of any councillor before a vote is taken, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave his vote for or against that question.

16. A meeting shall not normally exceed a period of two and a half hours.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

17. Meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is deemed prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or other special reasons. The public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give the reasons for the public's exclusion.

18. 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. The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting shall normally not exceed 30 minutes unless agreed by the Chair of the meeting.

19. Subject to standing order 18 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. A member of the public shall not normally speak for more than 3 minutes.

20. District and County Councillors will be allowed six minutes each during the public session. Their contributions may be deferred by the Chair to a point later in the meeting if necessary

21. In accordance with standing order 18, a question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question at that time.. The Chair of the meeting may direct that the matter is dealt with later in the meeting or that a written or oral response will be given subsequently. The Chair may also seek clarification from members of the public when the item is discussed later in the meeting.

22. 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.

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

24. 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 subject to standing order 21.

MOTIONS

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

26. No motion may be moved at a meeting unless the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least eight clear days before the meeting or it concerns an item already on the agenda. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.

27. The Proper Officer may, before including a motion on the agenda correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.

28. If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received is not clear in meaning the mover of the motion will be asked to reword it and resubmit it in writing at least eight clear days before the meeting.

29. 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, the councillors who have convened the meeting, to consider whether the motion shall be included in the agenda or rejected.

30. In consultation with the Chair, the decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.

31. Motions received shall be recorded and numbered in the order that they are received unless the Chair decides otherwise.

32. Motions rejected shall be recorded with an explanation by the Proper Officer of the reason for rejection.
    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;
xvii. to close the meeting

RULES OF DEBATE

33. Motions 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.

34. A councillor may normally speak once in the debate on a motion, where permitted by the chair of the meeting they may request to speak again in the exception of:
    xviii. to speak on an amendment moved by another councillor;
    xix. to move or speak on another amendment if the motion has been amended since he last spoke;
    xx. to make a point of order;
    xxi. to give a personal explanation; or
    xxii. to exercise a right of reply.

35. 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 Chair of the meeting. The Chair has absolute discretion to decide if comments are relevant to the subject under debate.

36. During the debate on a motion, a councillor may interrupt only on a point of order 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.

37. A point of order shall be decided by the Chair of the meeting and her/his decision shall be final.
    i. When a motion is under debate, no other motion shall be moved except:
    ii. to amend the motion;
    iii. to proceed to the next business;
    iv. to adjourn the debate;
    v. to put the motion to a vote;
    vi. to ask a person to be no longer heard or to leave the meeting;
    vii. to refer a motion to a committee or sub-committee for consideration;
    viii. to exclude the public and press;
    ix. to adjourn the meeting; or
    x. to suspend particular standing order(s) excepting those which reflect mandatory statutory or legal requirements.

38. 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 his right of reply. Voting will take place on amendments first and then on the substantive motion as amended or otherwise.

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

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

41. 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.

AMENDMENTS

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

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

44. An amendment shall normally 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.

45. A councillor may move an amendment to her/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.

46. 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.

47. Only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the Chair of the meeting.

48. 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.

49. A councillor may normally not move more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion.

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

51. Where a series of amendments to an original motion are carried, the mover of the original motion shall have a right of reply either at the end of debate on the first amendment or at the very end of debate on the final substantive motion immediately before it is put to the vote.

DISORDERLY CONDUCT AT MEETINGS

52. 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.

53. If the 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 rest of that meeting. The motion, if seconded, shall be put to the vote without discussion.

54. If a resolution made under standing order 52 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 or excluding the individual councillor from future meetings until she/he is prepared to give assurances about future behaviour.

PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS

55. A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least three councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9.

56. When a motion moved pursuant to the above standing order has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved for a further six months.

VOTING ON APPOINTMENTS

57. 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.

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

58. 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.

59. 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.

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

61. 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.

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

63. The Chair of the Council, unless she/he has resigned or becomes disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until her/his successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the Council.

64. The Vice-Chair of the Council unless he resigns 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.

65. In an election year, if the current Chair of the Council has not been re-elected as a member of the Council, she/he may preside at the annual meeting until a successor Chair of the Council has been elected. The outgoing 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. If the outgoing Chair is not present the current Vice Chair may preside. Failing that, the Proper Officer will preside until a new Chair is decided.

66. In an election year, if the current Chair of the Council has been re-elected as a member of the Council, she/he shall preside at the annual meeting until a new Chair of the Council has been elected. She/He 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.

67. Following the election of the Chair of the Council and Vice-Chair 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 his acceptance of office form unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date;
    ii. Review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, staff and other local authorities;
    iii. Review of the terms of reference for committees;
    iv. Appointment of members to existing committees;
    v. Appointment of any new committees
    vi. Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations;
    vii. Review of arrangements (including legal agreements) with other local authorities, not-for-profit bodies and businesses.
    viii. 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;
    ix. Review of inventory of land and other assets including buildings and office equipment;
    x. Confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insurable risks;

xi. Review of the Council's and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies;
xii. Review of the Council's expenditure incurred under s.137 of the Local Government Act 1972 or the general power of competence.
xiii. Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.

MINUTES

68. 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 left the meeting when matters that they held interests in were being considered;
    vi. if there was a public participation session;
    vii. at the discretion of the Chair, where a matter of controversy is involved in order that succeeding meetings may understand the complexity of an issue discussed.
    viii. the resolutions made.

69. 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.

70. 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 31.

71. 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.

72. Where 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 [council/committee] held on [date] in respect of [inaccuracy] were a correct record but her/his view was not upheld by the meeting and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings."*

73. 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.

74. Subject to the publication of draft minutes 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.

COMMITTEES

75. The members of a committee may include non-councillors unless it is a committee which regulates and controls the finances of the Council.

76. The Council will appoint permanent members of each committee at the annual meeting and only members appointed to each committee may vote at meetings of the Committee. The council may resolve in advance to permit non-councillors to vote.

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

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

79. The 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 the 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 the ordinary meetings of a committee, to determine the number and time of its meetings;
iv. shall appoint and determine the terms of office of members of such a committee;
v. may 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 two days before the meeting that they are unable to attend;
vi. shall, after it has appointed the members of a standing committee, appoint the chair of the committee;
vii. shall determine the place, notice requirements and quorum for a meeting of a committee and a sub-committee which, in both cases, shall be no less than three;
viii. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a committee;
ix. shall determine if the public and press are permitted to attend the meetings of a sub-committee and also the advance public notice requirements, if any, required for the meetings of a sub-committee;
x. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a sub-committee that they are permitted to attend; and
xi. shall determine if a committee requires delegated authority. Without, resolved delegate authoriy, committees and sub committees cannot make decisions and must recommend action to full Council.

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

80. The Council may appoint working parties as may be necessary.Working parties are advisory groups only.

81. Normally, the Clerk of Deputy Clerk will take minutes of Committee meetings. Working parties and subcommittees may rely on individual members to keep a record of deliberations

EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS

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

83. 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.

84. The Chair of a committee may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee at any time.

85. If the Chair of a committee does not call an extraordinary meeting within seven days of having been requested to do so by two members of the committee, any two members of the committee may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee.

RESTRICTIONS ON COUNCILLOR ACTIVITIES

82. Unless duly authorised by full Council no individual 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 on behalf of the Council or
    iii. represent her/himself as acting on behalf of the Council

MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION AND DATA PROTECTION RESPONSIBILITIES

83. 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.

84. Councillors, staff, the Council's contractors and agents shall not disclose confidential information or personal data without legal justification.

85. 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.

86. 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).

87. 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.

88. The Council may appoint a Data Protection Officer.

89. The Council shall have policies and procedures in place to respond to an individual exercising statutory rights concerning her/his personal data.

90. The Council shall have a written policy in place for responding to and managing a personal data breach.

91. 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.

92. 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.

93. The Council shall maintain a written record of its processing activities.

CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISPENSATIONS

94. All councillors shall observe the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council.

95. Unless they have been granted a dispensation, a councillor shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which she/he has a disclosable pecuniary interest. She/He may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which the interest was declared.

96. Unless granted a dispensation, a councillor 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. She/He may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which ~~he had~~ the interest was declared..

97. 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.

98. 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.

99. A dispensation request shall be considered at the beginning of the meeting of the Council, or committee or sub-committee for which the dispensation is required. A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made and that decision is final.

100. A dispensation may be granted 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.

CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS

101. Upon notification by the District Council Monitoring Officer that she/he is dealing with a complaint that a councillor has breached the Council's code of conduct, the Proper Officer shall, subject to correct management of information, report this to the Council.

102. Where the notification 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 or a councillor 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.

103. 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;

104. 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.

104. The Proper Officer shall be either the Clerk or Deputy Clerk, nominated by the Council to undertake the work of the Proper Officer when the Proper Officer is absent.

PROPER OFFICER

105. The Proper Officer shall:
    i at least three clear days before the meeting of the council or a committee
        i. 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
        ii. 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).
    ii include on the agenda all motions in the order received unless a councillor has given written notice at least eight days before the meeting confirming his 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 his 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
    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;
    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 manage access to information about the Council via the publication scheme

RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

106. The Council shall appoint appropriate a staff member to undertake the work of the Responsible Financial Officer when the Responsible Financial Officer is absent. The post of Respoonsible Financial Officer may be combined with that of the Clerk if appropriate,

ACCOUNTS AND ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

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

108. All payments by the Council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the law, proper practices and the Council's financial regulations.

109. 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 for each quarter;
    ii the Council's aggregate receipts and payments for the year to date;
    iii the balances held at the end of the quarter being reported which includes a comparison with the budget for the financial year and highlights any actual or potential overspends.

110. 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 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.

111. 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) for the year to 31 March. A completed draft annual governance and accountability return shall be presented to all councillors at least 7 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.

FINANCIAL CONTROLS AND PROCUREMENT

112. 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 **£25,000** due to special circumstances are exempt from a tendering process or procurement exercise.

113. Financial regulations shall be reviewed regularly and at least annually for fitness of purpose.

114. A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 with an estimated value in excess of £25,000 but less than the relevant thresholds referred to in standing order 18(f) is subject to the "light touch" arrangements under Regulations 109-114 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 unless it proposes to use an existing list of approved suppliers (framework agreement).

115. Subject to additional requirements in the financial regulations of the Council, the tender process for contracts for the supply of goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall include, as a minimum, the following steps:
    i. a specification for the goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall be drawn up;

ii. an invitation to tender shall be drawn up to confirm (i) the Council's specification (ii) the time, date and address for the submission of tenders (iii) the date of the Council's written response to the tender and (iv) the prohibition on prospective contractors contacting councillors or staff to encourage or support their tender outside the prescribed process;
iii. the invitation to tender shall be advertised in a local newspaper and in any other manner that is appropriate;
iv. tenders are to be submitted in writing in a sealed marked envelope addressed to the Proper Officer;
v. tenders shall be opened by the Proper Officer in the presence of at least one councillor after the deadline for submission of tenders has passed;
vi. tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate meeting of the Council or a committee or sub-committee with delegated responsibility.

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

115. Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed the threshold specified by the Office of Government Commerce from time to time, the Council must consider whether the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016 apply to the contract and, if either of those Regulations apply, the Council must comply with procurement rules. NALC's procurement guidance contains further details.

HANDLING STAFF MATTERS

116. A matter personal to a member of staff that is being considered by a meeting of Council or the Staffing Committee is subject to Management of Information standing orders.

117. Subject to the Council's policy regarding absences from work, the Clerk shall notify the Chair of Staffing Committee of absence occasioned by illness or other reason and that person shall report such absence to the Council at its next meeting.

118. The Chair of Staffing Committee shall, upon a resolution, conduct a review of the performance and annual appraisal of the work of the member of staff. The reviews and appraisal shall be reported in writing and are subject to approval by resolution by full Council.

119. Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, the Clerk or other members of staff shall contact the Chair of Staffing Committee in respect of an informal or formal grievance matter, and this matter shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of full Council.

120. Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, if an informal or formal grievance matter raised by a member of staff relates to the Chair of Staffing Committee this shall be communicated to another member of Staffing Committee, which shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of full Council.

121. 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.

RELATIONS WITH THE PRESS/MEDIA

122. 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. The Council is committed to openness and transparency.

EXECUTION AND SEALING OF LEGAL DEEDS

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

124. Any two councillors may sign, on behalf of the Council, any deed required by law and the Proper Officer shall witness their signatures. *This is applicable to a Council without a common seal.*

COMMUNICATING WITH DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS

125. An invitation to attend each meeting of the Council shall be sent, together with the agenda, to the District and County Councilors representing the area of the Council.

126. Unless the Council determines otherwise, each letter sent to the District and County Council shall be copied to the District and County Councilors representing the area of the Council.