



# St Ives Town Council

## Standing Orders

Based on NALC model Standing Orders November 2013

Adopted on 19 December 2013

Amended on 24 April 2017 (code of conduct)  
Amended after 22 February 2018 Council meeting

# Contents

## Contents

1. Rules of debate at meetings .....	3
2. Disorderly conduct at meetings .....	5
3. Meetings generally .....	5
4. Filming and Recording Meetings.....	8
5. Committees and sub-committees .....	8
6. Ordinary council meetings .....	9
7. Extraordinary meetings of the council and committees and sub-committees.....	11
8. Previous resolutions .....	11
9. Voting on appointments .....	12
10. Motions for a meeting that require written notice to be given to the Proper Officer .....	12
11. Motions at a meeting that do not require written notice .....	13
12. Handling confidential or sensitive information .....	13
13. Draft minutes .....	14
14. Code of conduct complaints.....	14
15. Code of conduct and dispensations .....	16
16. Proper Officer .....	16
17. Responsible Financial Officer.....	18
18. Accounts and accounting statements .....	18
19. Financial controls and procurement.....	18
20. Handling staff matters.....	20
21. Requests for information.....	20
22. Relations with the press/media .....	21
23. Execution and sealing of legal deeds .....	21
24. Communicating with Unitary Councillors.....	21
25. Restrictions on councillor activities.....	21
26. Standing orders generally .....	21

# Model standing orders

## 1. Rules of debate at meetings

- a Motions on the agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear unless the order is changed at the discretion of the chairman of the meeting.
- b A motion (including an amendment) shall not be progressed unless it has been moved and seconded.
- c A motion on the agenda that is not moved by its proposer may be treated by the chairman of the meeting as withdrawn.
- d If a motion (including an amendment) has been seconded, it may be withdrawn by the proposer only with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
- e An amendment is a proposal to remove or add words to a motion. It shall not negate the motion.
- f If an amendment to the original motion is carried, the original motion becomes the substantive motion upon which further amendment(s) may be moved.
- g An amendment shall not be considered unless early verbal notice of it is given at the meeting and, if requested by the chairman of the meeting, is expressed in writing to the chairman.
- 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 chairman.
- j Subject to standing order 1(k) below, only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the chairman of the meeting.
- k 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.
- l A councillor may not move more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion.
- m The mover of an amendment has no right of reply at the end of debate on it.
- n Where a series of amendments to an original motion are carried, the mover of the original

motion shall have a right of reply either at the end of debate of 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 chairman 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. in exercise of a right of reply.
  
- p 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 s/he considers has been breached or specify the other irregularity in the proceedings of the meeting s/he is concerned by.
  
- q A point of order shall be decided by the chairman of the meeting and his/her decision shall be final.
  
- r When a motion is under debate, no other motion shall be moved except:
  - i. to amend the motion;
  - ii. to proceed to the next business;
  - iii. to adjourn the debate;
  - iv. to put the motion to a vote;
  - v. to ask a person to be no longer heard or to leave the meeting;
  - vi. to refer a motion to a committee or sub-committee for consideration;
  - vii. to exclude the public and press;
  - viii. to adjourn the meeting; or
  - ix. to suspend particular standing order(s) excepting those which reflect mandatory statutory requirements.
  
- s 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/her right of reply.
  
- t Excluding motions moved under standing order 1(r) above, the contributions or speeches by a councillor shall relate only to the motion under discussion and shall not exceed 5 minutes without the consent of the chairman 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 chairman of the meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.
- b 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.
- c If a resolution made under standing order 2(b) above 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.

## 3. Meetings generally

- a Meetings of the council shall be held at the Council Chamber, St Ives Guildhall at 7.00 pm on the last Thursday of the month (except in August and the month in which the Annual Council meeting is held), unless otherwise decided by the Council.
- b The Mayor / Chairman of a committee shall be permitted to cancel a meeting due to lack of business, provided this decision does not contravene the requirement for four statutory meetings in each year
- c Council and Committee **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.**
- d For Council meetings, **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.**
- e For committee / sub-committee meetings, **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**
- f **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.**

- g 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. Where more than one person wishes to speak on an item, a spokesperson should be appointed to represent their views. (One person may speak in favour and one may speak against).
- h The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with standing order 3(g) above shall not exceed 15 minutes unless directed by the chairman of the meeting.
- i Subject to standing order 3(h) above, a member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes.
- j In accordance with standing order 3(g) above, 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.
- k A person shall raise his hand when requesting to speak and 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.
- l A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct their comments to the chairman of the meeting.
- m 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.
- n **The press shall be provided with reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present.**
- o For Council meetings, **subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Town Mayor may in his/her absence be done by, to or before the Deputy Town Mayor.**
- p For Council meetings, **the Mayor, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Mayor is absent from a meeting, the Deputy Mayor, if present, shall preside. If both the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor are absent from a meeting, a councillor as chosen by the councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.**
- q **Subject to a meeting being quorate, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the councillors or councillors with voting rights present and voting.**
- r Voting may be held by signed ballot, if at least two Members so request.

- s **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 their casting vote whether or not s/he gave an original vote.**

*See standing orders 5(i) and (j) below for the different rules that apply in the election of the Mayor at the annual meeting of the council.*

- t **Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on a question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave 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.

- u 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 absent;
- 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.

- v **A councillor or a non-councillor with voting rights who has a disclosable pecuniary interest or another interest as set out in the council's code of conduct in a matter being considered at a meeting is subject to statutory limitations or restrictions under the code on his right to participate and vote on that matter.**

- w For Council meetings, **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.**

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

- x **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.

- y A meeting shall not exceed a period of 3 hours, unless a resolution is passed to agree that the meeting continue for a specified period of time.

## 4. Filming and Recording Meetings

- a) Whilst a meeting of the Council, its committees or sub committees is open to the public, any person, if present, may :
  - i) film, photograph or make an audio recording of a meeting;
  - ii) use any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear proceedings at a meeting as it takes place or later;
  - iii) report or comment on the proceedings in writing during or after a meeting or orally report or comment after the meeting.
- b) Oral reporting, commentary or broadcasting is not permitted during any part of a meeting of the council, its committees and sub committees.
- c) An individual must be present and able to use their equipment in order to film, photograph or audio record a meeting. There will be no opportunity to report on any part of the meeting where the council has resolved to exclude the press and public.
- d) Disruptive behaviour
  - i) No filming, photographing or audio recording of a meeting should be carried out in such a way as to disrupt the proceedings of the meeting.
  - ii) If person(s) disregard the request of the chairman of the meeting to moderate or improve their behaviour, any councillor or the chairman of the meeting may move that the person be instructed to cease filming, photographing or audio recording. The motion, if seconded, shall be put to the vote without discussion.
  - iii) If a resolution under Standing Order 4 d ii) above 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.
- e) Members of the Council recording meetings are reminded of their obligations under the Council's Code of Conduct in respect of confidential matters.

## 5. Committees and sub-committees

- a **Unless the council determines otherwise, a committee may appoint a sub-committee whose terms of reference and members shall be determined by the committee.**
- b **The members of a committee may include non-councillors unless it is a committee which regulates and controls the finances of the council.**
- c **Unless the council determines otherwise, all the members of an advisory committee and a sub-committee of the advisory committee may be non-councillors.**
- d The council may appoint standing committees or other committees as may be necessary, and:
  - i. shall determine their terms of reference;
  - 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 full 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, subject to standing orders 4(b) and (c) above, appoint and determine the terms of office of members of such a committee;
  - v. may permit committees to appoint their own chairmen at the first meeting of the committee;
  - vi. 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;
  - vii. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a committee;
  - viii. 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;
  - ix. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a sub-committee that they are permitted to attend; and
  - x. may dissolve a committee.
- e. A Member who has proposed a motion, which has been referred to any committee of which s/he is not a member, may explain his/her motion to the committee but shall not vote.
- f. Any Member shall, unless the Council otherwise orders, be entitled to attend and debate at meetings of any committee, sub-committee, advisory committee, single issue panel or working group of which s/he is not a member (with the exception of committees considering staffing issues), but is not entitled to vote.

## 6. Ordinary council meetings

- a **In an election year, the annual meeting of the council shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the new councillors elected take office.**
- b **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.** The usual date for the annual meeting of the council for St Ives Town Council is the third Monday in May.
- c **If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the council shall take place at 6.00pm.** The usual time for the annual meeting of St Ives Town Council is 7.00pm.
- d **In addition to the annual meeting of the council, at least three other ordinary meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times as the council directs.**
- e **The first business conducted at the annual meeting of the council shall be the election of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of the Council,** and then to receive their Declarations of Acceptance of Office for these roles.

- f Ordinarily at the annual meeting of the council, and otherwise at a meeting of the town council, the Mayor may appoint Civic Deputies to assist in their civic role as Mayor.
- g **The Mayor, unless s/he has resigned or becomes disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until his/her successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the council.**
- h **The Deputy Mayor, unless s/he resigns or becomes disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Mayor at the next annual meeting of the council.**
- i **In an election year, if the current Mayor has not been re-elected as a member of the council, s/he shall preside at the meeting until a successor Mayor has been elected. The current Mayor shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Mayor but must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**
- j **In an election year, if the current Mayor has been re-elected as a member of the council, s/he shall preside at the meeting until a new Mayor has been elected. S/he may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Mayor and must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**
- k Following the election of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor at the annual meeting of the council, the business of the annual meeting shall include:
  - i. **In an election year, delivery by the Mayor 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 Mayor of his/her acceptance of office form unless the council resolves for this to be done at a later date;**
  - ii. Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the council;
  - iii. Receipt of the minutes of the last meeting of a committee;
  - iv. Consideration of the recommendations made by a committee;
  - v. Appointment of members to existing committees;
  - vi. Appointment of any new committees in accordance with standing order 4 above;
  - vii. 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;
  - viii. Confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insured risks; and
  - ix. Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the full council up to and including the next annual meeting of full council.
- l Matters to be programmed for annual review, although not necessarily at the annual council meeting shall include:
  - i. Review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, staff and other local authorities;
  - ii. Review of the terms of reference for committees;
  - iii. Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations
  - iv. 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;
- v. Review of representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back;
  - vi. Review of inventory of land and assets including buildings and office equipment;
  - vii. Review of the council's and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies;
  - viii. Review of the council's complaints procedure;
  - ix. Review of the council's procedures for handling requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Data Protection Act 1998;
  - x. Review of the council's policy for dealing with the press / media

## 7. Extraordinary meetings of the council and committees and sub-committees

- a **The Mayor may convene an extraordinary meeting of the council at any time.**
- b **If the Mayor 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.**
- c The chairman of a committee [or a sub-committee] may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee [or the sub-committee] at any time.
- d If the chairman of a committee [or a sub-committee] does not or refuses to call an extraordinary meeting within 7 days of having been requested by to do so by 2 members of the committee [or the sub-committee], any 2 members of the committee [and the sub-committee] may convene an extraordinary meeting of a committee [and a sub-committee].

## 8. Previous resolutions

- a A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least 9 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9 below, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the recommendation of a committee or a sub-committee.
- b When a motion moved pursuant to standing order 7(a) above has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved within a further six months.

## **9. Voting on appointments**

- a Where more than two persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the council and none of those persons has received an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. A tie in votes may be settled by the casting vote exercisable by the chairman of the meeting.

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

- a A motion shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting 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.
- 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 7 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) above, 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) above is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it in writing to the Proper Officer so that it can be understood at least 7 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 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.
- f Subject to standing order 9(e) above, the decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.

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

- a The following motions may be moved at a meeting without written notice to the Proper Officer;
  - i. to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes of a meeting;
  - ii. to move to a vote;
  - iii. to defer consideration of a motion;
  - iv. to refer a motion to a particular committee or sub-committee;
  - v. to appoint a person to preside at a meeting;
  - vi. to change the order of business on the agenda;
  - vii. to proceed to the next business on the agenda;
  - viii. to require a written report;
  - ix. to appoint a committee or sub-committee and their members;
  - x. to extend the time limits for speaking;
  - xi. to exclude the press and public from a meeting in respect of confidential or sensitive information which is prejudicial to the public interest;
  - xii. to not hear further from a councillor or a member of the public;
  - xiii. to silence or 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 requirements);
  - xvi. to alter the order of business on the agenda for reasons of urgency or expedience
  - xvii. to dissolve a committee or sub-committee
  - xviii. to amend a motion relevant to the original or substantive motion under consideration
  - xix. to appoint representatives to outside bodies
  - xx. to adjourn the meeting; or
  - xxi. to close a meeting.

## **12. Handling confidential or sensitive information**

- a The agenda, papers that support the agenda and the minutes of a meeting shall not disclose or otherwise undermine confidential or sensitive information which for special reasons would not be in the public interest.
- b Councillors and staff shall not disclose confidential or sensitive information which for special reasons would not be in the public interest.

## 13. Draft minutes

- a If the draft minutes of a preceding meeting have been served on councillors with the agenda to attend the meeting at which they are due to be approved for accuracy, they shall be taken as read.
- b There shall be no discussion about the draft minutes of a preceding meeting except in relation to their accuracy. A motion to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes shall be moved in accordance with standing order 10(a)(i) above.
- c 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.
- d If the chairman of the meeting does not consider the minutes to be an accurate record of the meeting to which they relate, s/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/her view was not upheld by the meeting and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.”
- e 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

*See also standing order 3(w) above.*

### England

- a The Council has adopted the Cornwall Code of Conduct for City, Community, Parish and Town Councils which will apply to all councillors and members of the public co-opted to serve on Committees and sub Committees of the Council in respect of the entire meeting.

All interests arising from the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council will be recorded in the minutes giving the existence and nature of the interest.

- b Members must have particular regard to their obligation to record and leave the room for certain matters in which they have an interest as defined by the Code of Conduct or by relevant legislation.
- c The Council shall maintain for public inspection, a Register of Members' interests that is compliant with the Code of Conduct and with relevant legislation.

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

- d All councillors and members of the public co-opted to serve on Council committees and sub committees shall observe the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council.
- e All councillors and members of the public co-opted to serve on Council committees and sub committees shall maintain a Register of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, and must update their register by notifying the Monitoring Officer and the Clerk of any changes within 28 days.
- f All councillors shall undertake training in the code of conduct within 6 months of the delivery of their declaration of acceptance of office.
- g Unless granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights who has registered a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in relation to any item of business being transacted at a meeting, shall leave the room whenever the item is being discussed, including any part of the meeting where the public are entitled to speak.
- h Unless granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights who has registered a non-registerable interest in relation to any item of business being transacted at a meeting, shall leave the room whenever the item is being discussed, including any part of the meeting where the public are entitled to speak.
- i Where a non-registerable interest arises from membership of an outside body as defined in 3.5a of the Council's code of conduct, a councillor remains in the room to address the meeting, provide a short statement and answer questions for no more than three (3) minutes before leaving the room at the request of the Chairman.
- j *Code of Conduct 2.6 – insert the clause in the Council's Code of Conduct relating to gifts and hospitality.*
- k A Member of the Council may, for the purposes of his duty as a member but not otherwise, inspect any document which has been considered by a Committee or by the Council. The Proper Officer or Solicitor to the Council may decline to allow inspection of any document which is protected by other legislation or in the event of legal proceedings would be protected by privilege arising from the relationship of solicitor and client. All Minutes kept for any Committee shall be open for the inspection of any member of the Council during office hours.

## **Allegations of breaches of the Code of Conduct**

- 1 Notification of any complaint shall remain confidential to the Proper Officer of the Council until such time as the matter has been concluded, when the outcome of the complaint shall be reported to a meeting of full council.

Where the notification relates to a complaint made by the Proper Officer, the Proper Officer shall notify the Chairman of that fact, who, upon receipt of such

- m notification, shall nominate a person to assume the duties of the Proper Officer set out in this standing order, who shall continue to act in respect of that matter as such until the complaint is resolved.
- n Where a notification relates to a complaint made by an employee (not being the Proper Officer) the Proper Officer shall ensure that the employee in question does not deal with any aspect of the complaint
- o The council may:
  - i. provide information or evidence where such disclosure is necessary to progress an investigation of the complaint or is required by law;
  - ii. seek information relevant to the complaint from the person or body with statutory responsibility for investigation of the matter;
- p References to a notification shall be taken to refer to a communication of any kind which relates to a breach or an alleged breach of the code of conduct by a councillor.
- q **Upon notification by the Monitoring Officer of the Unitary Council that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the council's code of conduct, the council shall consider any recommendations of the Monitoring Officer and what, if any, action to take against him in accordance with the recommendations. The Council has no ability to impose its own sanctions against a member found in breach of the Code of Conduct.**

**Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office but may include removal from one or more committees of the Council or restricted access to council premises except to attend meetings.**

## 15. Code of conduct dispensations

- a The Council has adopted a policy for the issuing of dispensations which is in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct. It is attached to these Standing Orders as an appendix.
- b This policy shall apply to all meetings of the Council, its committees and sub-committees.
- c No dispensation will be awarded for any meeting where there are no minutes of the proceedings.

## 16. Proper Officer

- a The Proper Officer shall be either (i) the clerk or (ii) other staff member(s) nominated by the



council to undertake the work of the Proper Officer when the Proper Officer is absent.

b The Proper Officer shall:

i. **at least three clear days before a meeting of the council, a committee and a sub-committee serve on councillors, by delivery or post at their residences, a signed summons confirming the time, place and the agenda.** By agreement with town councillors the Proper Officer may also 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.

*See standing order 3(d) above for the meaning of clear days for a meeting of a full council and standing order 3 (e) above for a meeting of a committee.*

ii. **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);**

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

iii. subject to standing order 9 above, 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 his withdrawal of it;

iv. **convene a meeting of full council for the election of a new Mayor, occasioned by a casual vacancy in his office;**

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

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

vii. retain acceptance of office forms from councillors;

viii. retain a copy of every councillor's register of interests;

ix. 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;

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

xi. manage the organisation, storage of, access to and destruction of information held by the council in paper and electronic form;

xii. arrange for legal deeds to be sealed using the Council's Common Seal;

*See also standing order 22 below.*

xiii. arrange or manage the prompt authorisation, approval, and instruction regarding any payments to be made by the council in accordance with the council's 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; and

xvi. retain custody of the seal of the council which shall not be used without a resolution to that effect.

*See also standing order 22 below.*

## 17. Responsible Financial Officer

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

## 18. Accounts and accounting statements

- a “Proper practices” in standing orders refer to the most recent version of Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioners’ Guide (England).
- b All payments by the council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the law, proper practices and the council’s financial regulations.
- c The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to each councillor as soon as practicable after 30 June, 30 September and 31 December in each year a statement to summarise:
  - i. the council’s receipts and payments 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

and which includes a comparison with the budget for the financial year and highlights any actual or potential overspends.

- d As soon as possible after the financial year end at 31 March, the Responsible Financial Officer shall provide:
  - i. each councillor with a statement summarising the council’s receipts and payments for the last quarter and the year to date for information; and
  - ii. to the full council the accounting statements for the year in the form of Section 1 of the annual return, as required by proper practices, for consideration and approval.
- e The year end accounting statements shall be prepared in accordance with proper practices and applying the form of accounts determined by the council (receipts and payments, or income and expenditure) for a year to 31 March. 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.

## 19. Financial controls and procurement

- a The council shall consider and approve financial regulations drawn up by the Responsible Financial Officer, which shall include detailed arrangements in respect of the following:
  - i. the keeping of accounting records and systems of internal controls;

- ii. the assessment and management of financial risks faced by the council;
  - iii. the work of the independent internal auditor in accordance with proper practices and the receipt of regular reports from the internal auditor, which shall be required at least annually;
  - iv. the inspection and copying by councillors and local electors of the council's accounts and/or orders of payments; and
  - v. procurement policies (subject to standing order 18(c) below) including the setting of values for different procedures where a contract has an estimated value of less than £2,500.
- b Financial regulations shall be reviewed regularly and at least annually for fitness of purpose.
- c **Financial regulations shall confirm that a proposed contract for the supply of goods, materials, services and the execution of works with an estimated value in excess of [£30,000], the Clerk shall endeavour to obtain tenders from at least three firms to be taken from the appropriate approved list.**
- d Subject to additional requirements in the financial regulations of the council, the tender process for contracts for the supply of goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall include, as a minimum, the following steps:
- i. a specification for the goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall be drawn up;
  - ii. an invitation to tender shall be drawn up to confirm (i) the council's specification (ii) the time, date and address for the submission of tenders (iii) the date of the council's written response to the tender and (iv) the prohibition on prospective contractors contacting councillors or staff to encourage or support their tender outside the prescribed process;
  - iii. the invitation to tender shall be advertised in a local newspaper and in any other manner that is appropriate;
  - iv. tenders are to be submitted in writing in a sealed marked envelope addressed to the Proper Officer;
  - v. tenders shall be opened by the Proper Officer in the presence of at least one councillor after the deadline for submission of tenders has passed;
  - vi. tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate meeting of the council or a committee or sub-committee with delegated responsibility.
- e Neither the council, nor a committee or a sub-committee with delegated responsibility for considering tenders, is bound to accept the lowest value tender.
- f **Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed £138,893 (or other threshold specified by the Office of Government Commerce from time to time) the council must consider whether the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 (SI No. 5, as amended) and the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2006 (SI No. 6, as amended) apply to the contract and, if either of those Regulations apply, the council must comply with EU procurement rules.**

## 20. Handling staff matters

- a A matter personal to a member of staff that is being considered by a meeting of council, the Staffing Committee, Resources Committee or a staffing panel, is subject to standing order 11 above (confidential / sensitive information).
- b Subject to the council's policy regarding absences from work, the council's most senior member of staff shall notify the Mayor or, if s/he is not available, the Deputy Mayor of absence occasioned by illness or other reason and that person shall report such absence to the Staffing Committee at its next meeting.
- c The Mayor and Chairman of Staffing Committee, or in their absence the vice-chairman shall upon a resolution conduct a review of the performance and annual appraisal of the work of the Town Clerk. The reviews and appraisal shall be reported in writing and is subject to approval by resolution by the Staffing Committee.
- d 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.
- e 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.
- f Only persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to staff records referred to in standing orders 19(f) and (g) above if so justified.
- g Access and means of access by keys and/or computer passwords to records of employment referred to in standing orders 19(f) and (g) above shall be provided only to the Town Clerk and the Chairman of the Staffing Committee.

## 21. Requests for information

- a 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.
- b Correspondence from, and notices served by, the Information Commissioner shall be referred by the Proper Officer to the chairman of the Resources 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

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

## 23. Execution and sealing of legal deeds

*See also standing orders 15(b)(xii) and (xvii) above.*

- a A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the council unless authorised by a resolution.
- b **[Subject to standing order 22(a) above, the council's common seal shall alone be used for sealing a deed required by law. It shall be applied by the Proper Officer in the presence of two councillors who shall sign the deed as witnesses.]**

## 24. Communicating with Unitary Councillors

- a An invitation to attend a meeting of the council shall be sent, together with the agenda, to the ward councillor(s) of the Unitary Council representing the area of the council.
- b Unless the council determines otherwise, a copy of each letter sent to Unitary Council shall be sent to the ward councillor(s) representing the area of the council.

## 25. Restrictions on councillor activities

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

## 26. Standing orders generally

- a 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.

- b A motion to add to or vary or revoke one or more of the council's standing orders, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory requirements, shall be proposed by a special motion, the written notice by at least 2 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9 above.
- c The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the council's standing orders to a councillor as soon as possible after s/he has delivered his/her acceptance of office form.
- d The decision of the chairman of a meeting as to the application of standing orders at the meeting shall be final.