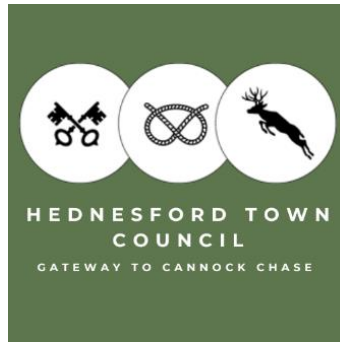


HEDNESFORD TOWN
COUNCIL
GATEWAY TO CANNOCK CHASE

STANDING ORDERS

May 2024





Updated April 2024

Lindsey Smith – Chief Officer in conjunction with Chair of Hednesford Town Council – Cllr Alan Pearson

NALC Model Standing Orders 2018 (England) version 2, updated May 2022 with regards to Model Standing Order 18

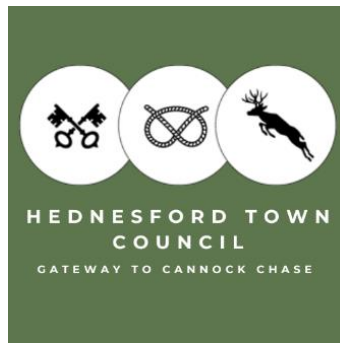
To be reviewed April 2025

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1. Introduction

Standing orders are the written rules of a local council. Standing orders are essential to regulate the proceedings of a meeting. A council may also use standing orders to confirm or refer to various internal organisational and administrative arrangements. The standing orders of a council are not the same as the policies of a council but standing orders may refer to them.

Local councils operate within a wide statutory framework. NALC model standing orders incorporate and reference many statutory requirements to which councils are subject. It is not possible for the model standing orders to contain or reference all the statutory or legal requirements which apply to local councils. For example, it is not practical for model standing orders to document all obligations under data protection legislation. The statutory requirements to which a council is subject apply whether or not they are incorporated in a council's standing orders.

The standing orders do not include model financial regulations. Financial regulations are standing orders to regulate and control the financial affairs and accounting procedures of a local council. The financial regulations, as opposed to the standing orders of a council, include most of the requirements relevant to the council's Responsible Financial Officer.

Standing orders that are in bold type contain legal and statutory requirements.

It is recommended that councils adopt them without changing them or their meaning.

Standing orders not in bold are designed to help councils operate effectively but they do not contain statutory requirements so they may be adopted as drafted or amended to suit a council's needs.

For convenience, the word "councillor" is used in model standing orders and, unless the context suggests otherwise, includes a non-councillor with or without voting rights.

2. Rules of Debate for Council 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 chair 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 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. It 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 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 chair of the meeting, is expressed in writing to the chair.
- h A councillor may move an amendment to his/her/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 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 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.
- 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 he/she/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 the 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 he/she/they considers has been breached or specify the other irregularity in the proceedings of the meeting he/she/they is concerned by.
- q A point of order shall be decided by the chair of the meeting and his/her/their 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 standing order(s) 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 his/her/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 2 minutes without the consent of the chair of the meeting.

3. Disorderly Conduct at Meetings

- a All Members are required to always adhere to the Members Code of Conduct when representing the town council and avoid bringing the town council into disrepute.
- b No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively, defensively, or improperly and shall refrain from any threatening, abusive, physical language or behaviour. If this standing order is ignored, the chair of the meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.
- c If person(s) disregards the request of the chair of the meeting to moderate or improve their conduct and behaviour, 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. The result of the vote being final.
- d 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 suspending or closing the meeting.
- e Should a member breach the request to refrain from obstructing business at a meeting, disregard the request by the chair to moderate or improve their conduct and behaviour on 2 or more separate occasions within a 12-month period they will be subject to the town council's disciplinary procedure.

4. 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 full council 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 committee meeting does not include the day on which the notice was issued or the day of the meeting unless the meeting is convened at shorter notice.**
- d **Meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. The public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion.**
- e Members of the public may make representations, ask, and 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(d) shall not exceed 20 minutes unless directed by the chair of the meeting.
- g Subject to standing order 3(e), a member of the public shall not speak for more than 5 minutes.
- h In accordance with standing order 3(e) a question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The chair of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.
- i A person shall raise his/her/their hand when requesting to speak and stand when speaking (except when a person has a disability or is likely to suffer discomfort). The chair of the meeting may at any time permit a person to be seated when speaking.
- j A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct his/her/their comments to the chair of the meeting.
- k 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.

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

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

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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.

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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/their absence be done by, to or before the vice-chair of the council (if there is one).

- p

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

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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.

- ●
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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 his/her/their casting vote whether or not he/she/they gave an original vote.

- s

Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on a question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave his/her/their vote for or **against that question. Such a request shall be made before voting on the agenda item takes place.**

- t

The minutes of a full council meeting shall include an accurate record of the following:

- i. the date, time, and place of the meeting;
- ii. the names of councillors who are present and the names of councillors who are absent;
- iii. interests that have been declared by councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
- iv. the grant of dispensations (if any) to councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
- v. whether a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights left the meeting when matters that they held interests in were being considered;
- vi. if there was a public participation session; and
- vii. the resolutions made.

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

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

W **If a meeting is or becomes inquorate no business shall be transacted** and the meeting shall be closed. The business on the agenda for the meeting shall be adjourned to another meeting.

X A full council meeting shall not exceed a period of 2 hours unless in exceptional circumstances. A comfort break of no more than 5 minutes can be made as and when directed by the chair.

Y The minutes of a subcommittee meeting or working group will include bullet point summary of the following:

- I. the date, time, and place of the meeting;
- II. the names of councillors who are present and the names of councillors who are absent;
- III. interests that have been declared by councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
- IV. the grant of dispensations (if any) to councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;

- V. whether a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights left the meeting when matters that they held interests in were being considered;
 - VI. if there was a public participation session; and
 - VII. a summary of resolutions made.
- z A subcommittee or working group meeting shall not exceed a period of 1 hour, unless in exceptional circumstances

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 at the first meeting in May:
 - i. shall determine/update the number and time of the ordinary meetings of a standing committee up until the date of the next annual meeting of the Council;
 - ii. shall permit a committee, other than in respect of the ordinary meetings of a committee, to determine the number and time of its meetings;
 - iii. shall appoint and determine the terms of office of members of such a committee;
 - iv. 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 5_working days before the meeting that they are unable to attend;
 - v. shall permit the committee to determine/update their terms of reference in accordance with the committee delegations

- vi. 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;
- 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 or a sub-committee

6. Ordinary Council Meetings

- a **In an election year, the annual meeting of the council shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the councillors elected take office.**
- b **In a year which is not an election year, the annual meeting of the council shall be held on such day in May as the council decides.**
- c **If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the council shall take place at 6pm.**
- d **In addition to the annual meeting of the council, at least three other ordinary meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times as the council decides.**
- e **The first business conducted at the annual meeting of the council shall be the election of the chair and the appointment of vice-chair (if there is one) of the council.**
- f **The Chair of the Council, unless he/she/they has resigned or becomes disqualified, shall continue in office, and preside at the annual meeting until the successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the council.**
- g **The vice-chair of the council, if there is one, unless he/she/they 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.**
- h **In an election year, if the current chair of the council has not been re-elected as a member of the council, he/she/they shall preside at the annual meeting until a successor chair of the council has been elected.**

The current chair of the council shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new chair of the council but shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.

i **In an election year, if the current chair of the council has been re-elected as a member of the council, he/she/they shall preside at the annual meeting until a new chair of the council has been elected. He/she/they may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new chair of the council and shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**

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

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/her/their acceptance of office form unless the council resolves for this to be done at a later date;

- i. Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the council;
- ii. Receipt of the minutes of the last meeting of a committee;
- iii. Consideration of the recommendations made by a committee;
- iv. Review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, staff and other local authorities;
- v. Review of the terms of reference for committees;
- vi. Appointment of members to existing committees including the election of the chair and vice chair of each committee
- vii. Appointment of any new committees
- viii. Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations;
- ix. Review of arrangements (including legal agreements) with other local authorities, not for profit bodies and businesses;
- x. Review of representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back;
- xi. 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

- xii. Review of inventory of land and other assets including building and office equipment
- xiii. Confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insurable risks:
- xiv. Review of the council's and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies;
- xv. Review of the council's complaints procedure;
- xvi. Review of the council's policies, procedures, and practices in respect of its obligations under freedom of information and data protection legislation (*see also standing orders 11, 20 and 21*)
- xvii. Review the council's policy for dealing with the press/media;
- xviii. Review of the council's employment policies and procedures;
- xix. Review of the council's expenditure incurred under s.137 of the Local Government Act 1972 or the general power of competence;
- xx. Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the council up to and including the next annual meeting of the council.

7. Extraordinary Meetings of the Council, Committees and Sub-Committees

- a **The Chair of the Council may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council at any time.**
- b **If the Chair of the Council does not call an extraordinary meeting of the council within seven days of having been requested in writing to do so by two councillors, any two councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of the council. The public notice giving the date, time, place and agenda for such a meeting shall be signed by the two councillors.**
- c The chair of a committee [or a sub-committee] may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee [or the sub-committee] at any time.
- d If the chair of a committee [or a sub-committee] does not call an extraordinary meeting within seven days of having been requested to do so by two members of the committee [or the sub-committee], any two members of the committee [or the sub-committee] may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee [or a sub-committee].

8. Previous Resolutions

- a A resolution shall not be reversed within the full terms of the administration except either by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least three councillors to be given to the proper officer , 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) has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved for a further twelve months.

9. Elections and Co-option

- a **Where there is insufficiency of candidates at an ordinary election to fill the vacancies on the council, those that have been validly nominated are automatically elected as councillors. Provided that those elected constitutes at least a quorum of six the council may co-opt any person or persons to fill the vacancies. The power of co-option must be exercised within 35 working days (excluding Saturday, Sunday, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Good Friday, a Bank Holiday, and a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning) of the election having taken place.**
- b Public notice will be given no less than 14 days before the end of the 35 working day deadline for co-option candidates to submit their interest in the council vacancy. If the vacancy falls within the six months before the date when the councillor would have regularly retired a causal vacancy may be advertised in lieu of public notice of co-option.
- c Co-option candidates are required to declare or certify in writing to the proper officer that they meet the criteria for eligibility set out in section 79 of the 1973 Act and are not disqualified under the 1972 Act.
- d In cases where there are more candidates than vacancies candidates will be invited to attend the next full council meeting or an extraordinary meeting (public) may be called, to present their pitch to council. Council may take into consideration such skills and expertise required according to council's particular needs.
- e **Where the number of candidates is less than or equal to the number of vacancies, the candidates shall be automatically appointed to the council if they meet the section 79 eligibility criteria, and they are not disqualified.**

10. Voting

- a. Where more than two persons have been nominated for an appointment or 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.
- b. Each member will receive one vote per motion/decision to be made and will be made by a show of hands. A tie in votes may be settled by the casting vote exercisable by the chair of the meeting.

11. 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 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 five 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 five 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, the 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 in conjunction with the Chair of Council or chair of committee 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.

12. 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.

13. Management of Information

- a **The council shall have in place and keep under review, technical and organisational measures to keep secure information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. Such arrangements shall include deciding who has access to personal data and encryption of personal data.**
- b **The council shall have in place, and keep under review, policies for the retention and safe destruction of all information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. The council's retention policy shall confirm the period for which information (including personal data) shall be retained or if this is not possible the criteria used to determine that period (e.g., the Limitation Act 1980).**
- c **The agenda, papers that support the agenda and the minutes of a meeting shall not disclose or otherwise undermine confidential information or personal data without legal justification.**
- d **Councillors, staff, the council's contractors, and agents shall not disclose confidential information or personal data without legal justification**

14. Draft Minutes

Full Council Meetings ●
Committee Meetings ●
Sub-Committee Meetings ●

- a If the draft minutes of a preceding meeting have been served on councillors with the agenda to attend the meeting at which they are due to be approved for accuracy, they shall be taken as read.
- b There shall be no discussion about the draft minutes of a preceding meeting except in relation to their accuracy.
- c The accuracy of draft minutes, including any amendment(s) made to them, shall be confirmed by resolution, and shall be signed by the chair of the meeting and stand as an accurate record of the meeting to which the minutes relate.
- d If the chair of the meeting does not consider the minutes to be an

accurate record of the meeting to which they relate, he/she/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 his/her/their view was not upheld by the meeting and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings."

- **e** **If the council's gross annual income or expenditure (whichever is higher) does not exceed £25,000, it shall publish draft minutes on a website which is publicly accessible and free of charge not later than one month after the meeting has taken place.**
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- f Subject to the publication of draft minutes, the draft minutes, or recordings of the meeting for which approved minutes exist shall be signed and stored as a true and accurate record

15. Code of Conduct and Dispensations

- a All councillors and non-councillors with voting rights shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the council.
- b Unless he/she/they has been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which he/she/they has a disclosable pecuniary interest. He/she/they may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which he/she/they had the interest.
- c Unless he/she/they have been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which he/she/they has another interest if so, required by the council's code of conduct. He/she/they may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which he/she/they had the interest.
- d **Dispensation requests shall be in writing and submitted to the Proper Officer** as soon as possible before the meeting, or failing that, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.
- e A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by the Proper Officer and that decision is final.
- f A dispensation request shall confirm:
 - i. the description and the nature of the disclosable pecuniary interest

- or other interest to which the request for the dispensation relates;
 - ii. whether the dispensation is required to participate at a meeting in a discussion only or a discussion and a vote;
 - iii. the date of the meeting or the period (not exceeding four years) for which the dispensation is sought; and
 - iv. an explanation as to why the dispensation is sought.
- g Subject to standing orders 13(d) and 13(f), a dispensation request shall be considered by the proper officer before the meeting or, if this is not possible, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.
- h A dispensation may be granted in accordance with standing order 13(e) if having regard to all relevant circumstances any of the following apply:**
- i. without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from participating in the particular business would be so great a proportion of the meeting transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business;**
 - ii. granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the council's area; or**
 - iii. it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.**

16. Code of Conduct Complaints

- a Upon notification by the District or Unitary Council that it is dealing with a complaint that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the council's code of conduct, the Proper Officer shall, subject to standing order 11, report this to the council.
- b Where the notification in standing order 14(a) relates to a complaint made by the proper officer, the proper officer shall notify the Chair of Council of this fact, and the chair shall nominate another staff member to assume the duties of the Proper Officer in relation to the complaint until it has been determined and the council has agreed what action, if any, to take in accordance with standing order 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 the district council that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the council's code of conduct, the council shall consider what, if any, action to take against him. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office.**

17. Proper Officer

- a The Proper Officer shall be either the chief officer/clerk or other staff member(s) nominated by the council to undertake the work of the proper officer when the Proper Officer is absent.
- b The Proper Officer shall:
- i. **at least three clear days before a meeting of the council, a committee or a sub-committee,**
 - **serve on councillors by delivery or post at their residences or by email authenticated in such manner as the proper officer thinks fit, a signed summons confirming the date, time, place and the agenda (provided the councillor has consented to service by email), and**
 - **Provide, in a conspicuous place, public notice of the date, time, place and agenda (provided that the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the council convened by councillors is signed by them).**

See standing order 3(b) for the meaning of clear days for a meeting of full council and standing order 3(c) for meaning of clear days for a meeting of a committee;
 - ii. 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/her/their withdrawal of it;
 - iii. **convene a meeting of the council for the election of a new Chair of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in his/her/their office;**
 - iv. **facilitate inspection of the minute book by local government electors;**
 - v. **receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities;**

- vi. hold acceptance of office forms from councillors;
- vii. hold a copy of every councillor's register of interests;
- viii. assist with responding to requests made under freedom of information legislation and rights exercisable under data protection legislation, in accordance with the council's relevant policies and procedures;
- ix. liaise, as appropriate, with the council's data protection officer (if there is one);
- x. receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the Council except where there is a resolution to the contrary;
- xi. assist in the organisation of, storage of, access to, security of and destruction of information held by the council in paper and electronic form subject to the requirements of data protection and freedom of information legislation and other legitimate requirements (e.g., the Limitation Act 1980);
- xii. arrange for legal deeds to be executed;
(see also standing order 23);
- 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 and report outcomes to full council at each ordinary meeting of the council
- xv. manage access to information about the council via the publication scheme; and
- xvi. 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)

18. Responsible Finance 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.

19. Accounts and Accounting Statements

- a “Proper practices” in standing orders refer to the most recent version of “Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioners’ Guide”.
- b All payments by the council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the law, proper practices and the council’s financial regulations.
- c The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to each councillor as soon as practicable after 30 June, 30 September, and 31 December in each year a statement to summarise:
 - i. the council’s latest receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for each quarter;
 - ii. the council’s aggregate receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for the year to date;
 - iii. the latest 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 on 31 March, the Responsible Financial Officer shall provide:
 - i. each councillor with a statement summarising the council’s receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for the last quarter and year to date for information; and
 - ii. to the council the accounting statements for the year in the form of Section 2 of the annual governance and accountability return, as required by proper practices, for consideration and approval.
- e The year-end accounting statements shall be prepared in accordance with proper practices and apply the form of accounts determined by the council (receipts and payments, or income and expenditure) for the year to 31 March. A completed draft of the annual governance and accountability return shall be presented to all councillors at least 14 days prior to anticipated approval by the council. The annual governance and accountability return for 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.

20. 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 as agreed by Proper Officer and for which charges apply
 - v. whether contracts with an estimated value below £25,000 due to special circumstances are exempt from a tendering process or procurement exercise.
- b. Financial regulations shall be reviewed regularly and at least annually for fitness of purpose.
- c. **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 in standing order 20(f) is subject to the “light touch” under Regulations 109-114 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 unless it proposes to use an existing list of approved suppliers (framework agreement).**
- 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 The Chair of Council after the deadline for submission of tenders has passed;
 - vi. tenders are to be reported to and considered by a full meeting of the Council
- 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 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.**

21. Handling Staff Matters

- a A matter personal to a member of staff that is being considered by a meeting of council, committee or sub-committee is to fall under private and confidential business
- b Staff sickness absence, annual leave, performance appraisals and grievance matters shall be dealt with in accordance with town council policies and procedures and where appropriate/necessary, will be reported back to the relevant committee or sub-committee. All matters relating to the management of staff are covered by relevant policies; these policies are reviewed on a regular basis.
- c The Proper Officer is responsible for the recruitment and management of staff and will liaise, as necessary with the Chair of the Council and Chair of Finance, Operations and Personnel committee regarding these matters as and when appropriate and required.
- d The Chair of Council and Chair of Finance, Operations and Personnel Committee shall be appointed to undertake the annual appraisal of the Proper Officer, in accordance with the councils adopted appraisal

procedure.

- e 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.
- f The Proper Officer and Responsible Finance Officer (in acting capacity on behalf of the Proper Officer) shall have access to staff records

22. Responsibilities to Provide Information

- a **In accordance with freedom of information legislation, the council shall publish information in accordance with its publication scheme and respond to requests for information held by the council.**

The council shall publish information in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015.

23. Responsibilities under Data Protection Legislation

Below is not an exclusive list

- a The council may appoint a data protection officer
- b **The council shall have policies and procedures in place to respond to an individual exercising statutory rights concerning his/her/their personal data.**
- c **The council shall have a written policy in place for responding to and managing a personal data breach.**
- d **The council shall keep a record of all personal data breaches comprising the facts relating to the personal data breach, its effects and the remedial action taken.**
- e **The council shall ensure that information communicated in its privacy notice(s) is in an easily accessible and available form and kept up to date.**
- f **The council shall maintain a written record of its processing activities.**

24. 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 actioned only by the Chair of the Council and the Proper Officer in accordance with the council's policy in respect of dealing with the press and/or other media.

25. Execution and Sealing of Legal Deeds

- a A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the council unless agreed by a resolution of full council and signed by The Chair of Council and Chair of Finance, Operations and Personnel Committee

any two councillors may sign on behalf of the council, any deed required by law and the proper officer shall witness their signatures.

26. Restrictions on Councillor Activities

- a. Unless duly authorised no councillor shall:
 - i. issue orders, instructions, or directions but has the right to make a request through the Proper Officer
 - ii. The Chair of Council and Chair of Finance, Operations and Personnel Committee, in the case of an emergency, may spend up to £5,000 in the case of an emergency with the approval of The Proper Officer

27. Standing Orders Generally

- a All or part of a standing order, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory or legal requirements, may be suspended by resolution in relation to the consideration of an item on the agenda for a meeting.
- b A motion to add to or vary or revoke one or more of the council's standing orders, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory or legal requirements, shall be proposed by a special motion, the written notice by at least three councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9.

- c The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the council's standing orders to a councillor as soon as possible.
- d The decision of the chair of a meeting as to the application of standing orders at the meeting shall be final.