Scarning Parish Council

Standing Orders

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1. Meetings

a. Meetings shall take place at Scarning Village Hall, Dereham Road, Scarning at 7pm unless the Council otherwise decides at a previous meeting, or unless circumstances decree. 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. A minimum of three clear days notice of a meeting must be given to councillors and the public. The minimum three clear days for notice of a meeting does not include the day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a day of the Christmas break, a day of the Easter break or of a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning.

c. The minimum three clear days public notice for a meeting does not include the day on which the notice was issued or the day of the meeting unless the meeting is convened at shorter notice.

d. Meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. 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, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of any item of business on the agenda.

f. The period of time designated for Public Participation at a meeting in accordance with Standing Order 1 (e) shall not exceed 15 minutes unless directed by the Chair of the meeting to the contrary.

g. Subject to Standing Order 1 (f) each member of the public is entitled to speak in respect of business itemised on the agenda and shall not speak for more than 3 minutes unless directed by the Chair of the meeting to the contrary.

h. A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct his comments to the Chair of the meeting.

i. 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.

j. In accordance with Standing Order 1 (e) a question asked by a member of the public during Public Participation shall not require a response at the meeting or a debate. The Chair may direct that a written or oral response be given.

k. 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.

l. Photographing, recording, broadcasting or transmitting the proceedings of a meeting by any means is permitted provided the person does not orally report or comment about a meeting as it takes place if he is present at the meeting of the Council or committee, but otherwise may film, photograph or make an audio recording of a meeting and use any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear proceedings at a meeting.

m. Subject to Standing Orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chair of the Council may in their absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chair of the Council.

n. The Chair, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chair is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chair, 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.

o. 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.

p. 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 their casting vote whether or not they gave an original vote.

See Standing Orders 2 (i) and (j) for the different rules that apply in the election of the Chair of the Council at the Annual Meeting of the Council.

q. Unless the Council's Standing Orders provide otherwise, voting on a question shall be by a show of hands, or by pressing a button to record their vote. 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.

r. The minutes of a meeting shall include an accurate record of the following:

i. the time and media used to conduct 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.

s. 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 their right to participate and vote on that matter.

t. Three members or one third of the total membership, whichever is the greater, shall constitute a quorum. 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 15 (d viii) for the quorum of a committee or sub-committee meeting.

u. If a quorum is not present or if during a meeting the number of councillors present (not counting those debarred by reason of a declared prejudicial interest) falls below the required quorum, the meeting shall be adjourned and business on the agenda for the meeting that has not been transacted shall be transacted at the next meeting or on such other day as the Chair may fix.

v. A meeting shall not exceed a period of two hours unless by a resolution of the Council this Standing Order is suspended. Any matters not considered shall be adjourned to the next Council meeting.

2. 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 the Council shall be held on such day in May as the Council may direct.

c. If no other time is fixed, the Annual Meeting of the Council shall take place at 7.30pm.

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 Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council.

f. The Chair of the Council, unless they have resigned or becomes disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the Annual Meeting until their successor is elected at the next Annual Meeting of the Council.

g. The Vice-Chair of the Council, unless they resign or become disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chair of the Council at the next Annual Meeting of the Council.

h. In an election year, if the current Chair of the Council has not been re-elected as a member of the Council, they shall preside at the 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 must 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, they shall preside at the meeting until a new Chair of the Council has been elected. They may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chair of the Council and must 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 of the Council at the Annual Meeting of the Council, the business of the Annual Meeting shall include:

i. In an election year, delivery by the Chair of the Council and councillors of their Acceptance of Office forms unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date. In a year which is not an election year, delivery by the Chair of the Council of their 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. Appointment of members to committees;

iv. Appointment of two representatives to Scarning Playing Field Committee;

v. Appointment of one representative to Scarning Fuel Allotment Charity;

vi. Appointment of one representative to the William Seckar Trust;

vii. Receipt of the minutes of the last meeting of a committee;

viii. Appointment of any new committees in accordance with Standing Order 15;

ix. Review and adoption of appropriate Standing Orders and Financial Regulations;

x. 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;

xi. Review of representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back;

xii. In an election year, to make arrangements with a view to the Council becoming eligible to exercise the general power of competence in the future;

xiii. Review of inventory of land and assets including buildings and office equipment;

xiv. Confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insured risks;

xv. Review of the Council's and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies;

xvi. Review of the Council's Complaints Procedure;

xvii. Review of the Council's procedures for handling requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998;

xviii. Review of the Council's policy for dealing with the Press/media; and

xix. Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the full Council up to and including the next Annual Meeting of full Council.

3. Proper Officer

a. The Council's 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 during the Proper Officer's absence.

b. The Proper Officer shall;

i. Sign and serve on councillors by delivery, electronically or post at their residences a summons confirming the time, date, venue and the agenda of a meeting of the Council and a meeting of a committee at least 3 clear days before the meeting.

ii. Give public notice of the time, date, venue and agenda at least three clear days before a meeting of the Council or a meeting of a committee provided that the public notice with agenda of an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council convened by councillors is signed by them;

iii. Subject to Standing Order 4 (a-e), include on the agenda all motions in the order received unless a councillor has given written notice at least three days before the meeting confirming his withdrawal of it;

iv. Convene a meeting of full Council for the election of a new Chair of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in their office;

v. Make available for inspection the minutes of meetings;

vi. Receive and retain copies of bye-laws made by other local authorities;

vii. Receive and 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 information held by the Council in paper and electronic form;

xii. Arrange for legal deeds to be executed;

See also Standing Order 26

xiii. Arrange for 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. Refer a planning application received by the Council to the Chair or in their absence the Vice-Chair of the Council within two working days of receipt to facilitate an extraordinary meeting if the nature of a planning application requires consideration before the next ordinary meeting of the Council;

xvi. Manage access to information about the Council via the Publication Scheme

4. Motions Requiring Written Notice

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 5 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 4 (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 4 b) 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 3 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. Having consulted the Chair or councillors pursuant to Standing Order 4 (e), the decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.

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

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

5. Motions Not Requiring Written Notice

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

i. To appoint a person to preside at a meeting.
ii. To approve the absence of councillors.
iii. To approve the accuracy of the draft minutes of the previous meeting.
iv. To correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes of the previous meeting.
v. To dispose of business, if any, remaining from the previous meeting.
vi. To alter the order of business on the agenda because of urgency or expediency.
vii. To proceed to the next business on the agenda.
viii. To close or adjourn the meeting.
ix. To temporarily suspend the meeting.
x. To exclude the press and public from a meeting in respect of confidential or sensitive information which is prejudicial to the public interest.
xi. To extend the time limits for speaking.
xii. To exclude a councillor or member of the public for disorderly conduct.
xiii. To appoint a committee or sub committee and their members.
xiv. To refer a motion to a committee or sub-committee.
xv. To note the minutes of a committee or sub committee.
xvi To dissolve a committee or sub committee.
xvii. To require a written report.
xviii. To move to a vote.
xix. To defer consideration of a motion.
xx. To suspend any Standing Order except those which are mandatory by law.

6. 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 Chair of the meeting.

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

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

d. Subject to Standing Order 6(e), only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the Chair of the meeting.

e. 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.

f. A point of order shall be decided by the Chair of the meeting and their decision shall be final.

g. 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;
ii. 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.

h. Before a motion is put to the vote, the Chair of the meeting shall be satisfied that the motion has been sufficiently debated.

7. Code of Conduct and Dispensations

See also Standing Order 1 (s).

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

b. Unless 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 they have a disclosable pecuniary interest. The councillor or non councillor may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which they had the interest. The councillor or non councillor shall not vote on any matter for which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest unless they have been granted a dispensation.

c. **Dispensation requests shall be made 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.

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

e. 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.

f. Subject to Standing Orders 7 (d) and (f), dispensation requests shall be considered by the Proper Officer before the meeting or, if this is not possible, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.

g. A dispensation may be granted in accordance with Standing Order 7 (e) if, having regard to all relevant circumstances, the following applies:

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 transition of the business or

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.

8. Code of Conduct Complaints

a. Upon notification by Breckland 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 22, report this to the Council.

b. Where the notification in Standing Order 8 (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 8 (d).

c. 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;

iii. seek information relevant to the complaint from the person or body with statutory
iv. responsibility for investigation of the matter;

d Upon notification by Breckland 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.

9. Disorderly Conduct at Meetings

a. No person shall obstruct the transition of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly. If this Standing Order is ignored, the Chair of the meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.

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

c. If a resolution made under Standing Order 9 (b) is ignored, the Chair of the meeting may take further reasonable steps to restore order or to progress the meeting. This may include temporarily suspending or closing the meeting.

10. 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 5 (iv).

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 Council at the next available meeting of the Council in person 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 shall sign the minutes and include a paragraph in the following terms or to the same effect at the next available meeting of the Council in person :

“The Chair of this meeting does not believe that the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on [date] in respect of ……. were a correct record but their view was not upheld by the meeting and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.”

e. 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.

11. Previous Resolutions

a. A resolution (whether or affirmative or negative) shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least three councillors to be given to the Proper Officer, 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 11 (a) has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved within a further six months.

12. Voting on Appointments

Where more than two persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the Council and none of those persons has received an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall

continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. A tie in votes may be settled by the casting vote exercisable by the Chair of the meeting.

13. Expenditure

a. Any expenditure incurred by the Council shall be in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations.

b. The Council's Financial Regulations shall be reviewed once a year.

14. Urgent Business

The Clerk is afforded delegated powers in consultation with the Chair to take action on items of an urgent nature without recourse to a full meeting of the Council. If in the course of using the delegated powers an expenditure is required, this expenditure must not exceed £500. Full details of any action taken will be reported to the next meeting of the Council.

15. 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 15 (b) and (c), appoint and determine the terms of office of members of such a committee;
v. may, subject to Standing Orders 15 (b) and (c) 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 seven days before the meeting that they are unable to attend;
vi. shall, after it has appointed the members of a standing committee, appoint the Chair of the standing committee;
vii. shall permit a committee other than a standing committee, to appoint its own Chair at the first meeting of the committee;
viii. 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;
ix. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a committee;
x. 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;

xi shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a sub-committee that they are permitted to attend; and
xii may dissolve a committee

16. Extraordinary Meetings

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 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 electronically 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 or refuses to call an Extraordinary Meeting within seven days of having been requested by to do so by two members of the committee or the sub-committee, any two members of the committee and the sub-committee may convene an Extraordinary Meeting of a committee and a sub-committee.

17. Responsible Financial Officer

The Council has appointed the clerk to undertake the work of Responsible Financial Officer.

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.

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 at regular intervals a statement to summarise:

i. the Council's receipts and payments for each month;

ii. the Council's aggregate receipts and payments for the year to date;

iii. the balances held at the end of the month 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 the 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 Officer, which shall include detailed arrangements in respect of the following:

i. the keeping of accounting records and systems of internal controls;

ii. the assessment and management of financial risks faced by the Council;

iii. the work of the independent internal auditor in accordance with proper practices and the receipt of regular reports from the internal auditor, which shall be required at least annually;

iv. the inspection and copying by councillors and local electors of the Council's accounts and/or orders of payments; and

v. whether contracts with an estimated value below £25,000 due to special circumstances are exempt from a tendering process or procurement exercise

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 referred to in Standing Order 19(f) is subject to the 'light touch' arrangements under Regulations 109-114 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 unless it proposes to use an existing list of approved suppliers (framework agreement).

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, but is responsible for obtaining best value at all times.

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.

20. Handling Staff Matters

a. A matter personal to a member of staff that is being considered by a meeting of Council is subject to Standing Order 22.

b. The Chair and one councillor shall upon a resolution conduct an annual appraisal and review of the work and performance of the clerk/RFO. The review and appraisal shall be reported in writing and is subject to approval by resolution by the Council.

c. 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.

d. The Council shall keep all written records relating to employees secure. All paper records shall be secured and locked and electronic records shall be password protected and encrypted.

e. All serious staffing matters shall be considered in accordance with the Council's Disciplinary and Grievance policy.

21. Requests for Information

a. All 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 Chair of the Council. The Chair (or in their absence the Vice Chair) shall have the power to do anything necessary to facilitate compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 including exercising the powers of the Proper Officer in respect of Freedom of Information requests set out in Standing Order 3 (b ix).

22. Management of Information

See also Standing 23.

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 (eg 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.

e. The Council has the following means of dealing with confidential matters:-

Confidential Matters

Under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, Council meetings must be open to the public (which includes the press) except when any confidential matter is to be discussed in which their presence is considered to be prejudicial to the public interest, for example a contractual matter or a legal case. However the Council has a power to resolve to exclude the press and public for the whole or part of the meeting on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest, either because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for some other stated reason. Such a resolution does not have to be included in the agenda, but it is good practice to include it.

The attached agenda and minutes do not include a confidential matter, but in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders when faced with a confidential matter, the Chair would close the meeting and ask members of the public. The public's exclusion from part or all of the meeting is by a resolution setting out the reasons the public has been excluded.

The Clerk would note the following in the minutes. Pursuant to s 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, it is resolved that, because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and the press leave the meeting during consideration of the matter discussed. This would be followed by the reasons.

The minutes of such items are part of the main body of the minutes and the minute should be kept to a minimum i.e. simply recording a decision rather than the background.

It is not lawful to exclude some of the public or the press. The exclusion must apply uniformly. However, the Council may invite individuals to speak at a meeting (e.g. the Council's solicitor, or other professional adviser or particular staff member) when it is in private session.

23. Responsibilities to Provide Information

See also Standing Order 24.

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.

b. The Council shall publish information in accordance with the requirements of the Smaller Authorities (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015.

24. Responsibilities under Data Protection Legislation

See also Standing Order 22.

a. The Council shall appoint a Data Protection Officer.

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

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 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.

25. Relations with the Press/Media

Requests from the Press or other media for an oral or written comment or statement from the Council, its councillors or staff shall be handled in accordance with the Council's Press and Media policy.

26. Execution and Sealing of Legal Deeds

See also Standing Order 3 (b)(xii).

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

b. **Subject to Standing Order 26 (a), any two councillors may sign, on behalf of the Council, any deed required by law and the Proper Officer shall witness their signatures.**

27. Communicating with District and County Councillors

An invitation to attend a meeting of the Council shall be sent, together with the agenda and a copy of the previous minutes, to the ward councillor(s) of the District and County Council.

28. Restrictions on Councillor Activities

a. Unless duly authorised no councillor shall:-

- Inspect any land and/or premises which the Council has a right or duty to inspect, or
- Issue orders, instructions or directions

29 Inspection of Documents

Subject to Standing Orders to the contrary or in respect of matters which are confidential, a councillor may, for the purpose of his official duties (but not otherwise) inspect any document in the possession of the Council or a committee or sub committee, and request a copy for the same purpose.

30. 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 two councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with Standing Order 4.

c. The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the Council's Standing Orders to a councillor as soon as possible after he has delivered his acceptance of office form.

d. The decision of the Chair of a meeting as to the application of Standing Orders at the meeting shall be final.

Approved (without amendment): February 2026
Next review: January 2028, unless the law requires sooner.