

Portishead Town Council



Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

Consulting: September 2019

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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- c A motion on the agenda that is not moved by its proposer may be treated by the chairman of the meeting as withdrawn.
- d If a motion (including an amendment) has been seconded, it may be withdrawn by the proposer only with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.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. In any dispute the Chairman's decision, taken with the advice of the Clerk, is final.
- 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 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 of the meeting.
- h Subject to standing order 1(i), only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the chairman of the meeting.
- i 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.
- j 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.
- k 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 considers has been breached or specify the other irregularity in the proceedings of the meeting he is concerned by.
- l A point of order shall be decided by the chairman of the meeting and his decision shall be final.
- m 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 working party 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 or legal requirements.
- n 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 right of reply.

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 be excluded from the meeting. The motion, if seconded, shall be put to the vote without discussion.
- c If a resolution made under standing order 2(b) is ignored, the 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

Full Council meetings ●
Committee meetings ●

- a **Meetings shall not take place in premises which at the time of the meeting are used for the supply of alcohol, unless no other premises are available free of charge or at a reasonable cost.**
- b **The minimum three clear days for notice of a meeting does not include the day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a**

- day of the Christmas break, a day of the Easter break or of a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning.
- c **The minimum three clear days' public notice for a meeting does not include the day on which the notice was issued or the day of the meeting unless the meeting is convened at shorter notice.**
 - d **Meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. 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 the business on the agenda.
 - f The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with standing order 3(e) shall not exceed 30 minutes unless directed by the chairman of the meeting.
 - g Subject to standing order 3(f), a member of the public shall not speak for more than 4 minutes **during public participation.**
 - h **The Chairman may invite additional comment from the public present at their discretion.**
 - i 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 chairman of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.
 - j A person shall sign the attendance sheet notifying their request to speak during public participation. Councillors wishing to address the council during public participation will be heard last.
 - k A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct his comments to the chairman of the meeting.
 - l 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.
 - m **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 is available as the meeting takes place or later to persons not present.**
 - n **A person present at a meeting may not provide an oral report or oral**

- commentary about a meeting as it takes place without permission.
- o 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.
- p Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chairman of the Council may in his absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chairman of the Council (if there is one).
- q The Chairman of the Council, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chairman is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chairman of the Council (if there is one) if present, shall preside. If both the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman are absent from a meeting, a councillor as chosen by the councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.
- r 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.
- 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 his casting vote whether or not he gave an original vote.

See standing orders 5(h) and (i) for the different rules that apply in the election of the Chairman of the Council 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 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.
- 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 **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 4e(viii) for the quorum of a committee or working party 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 Ordinarily a meeting shall not exceed a period of 2 hours and a review of the agenda should take place 2 hours after the start of the meeting.

4. COMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTIES

- a **Unless the Council determines otherwise, a committee may appoint a working party 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 working party of the advisory committee may be non-councillors.**
- d Other councillors may attend meetings of the committee, may participate in discussions and may vote unless otherwise specified.
- e The Council may appoint standing committees or other committees as may be necessary, and:
 - i. shall determine their terms of reference;
 - ii. shall determine the number and time of the ordinary meetings of a standing committee up until the date of the next annual meeting of the Council;

- iii. shall permit a committee, other than in respect of the ordinary meetings of a committee, to determine the number and time of its meetings;
- iv. shall, subject to standing orders 4(b) and (c), appoint and determine the terms of office of members of such a committee;
- v. shall, after it has appointed the members of a standing committee, appoint the chairman of the standing committee;
- vi. shall permit a committee other than a standing committee, to appoint its own chairman at the first meeting of the committee;
- vii. shall determine the place, notice requirements and quorum for a meeting of a committee and a working party which, in both cases, shall be no less than three;
- viii. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a committee;
- ix. shall determine if the public and press are permitted to attend the meetings of a working party and also the advance public notice requirements, if any, required for the meetings of a Working Party.
- x. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a working party that they are permitted to attend; and
- xi. may dissolve a committee or a working party.

STAFFING AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

- f The Staffing and Finance Committee will consist of 6 members: The Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council, and usually the Chairman of Recreation and Works, the Chairman of Planning Committee, and 2 other members. Other Councillors may attend meetings of the committee, may participate in discussions, but may not vote. The membership will be appointed at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council.

The quorum of this committee will be 3 members.

The Clerk of the Council / Responsible Financial Officer will attend meetings in an advisory and non-voting capacity.

- g The remit of the Staffing and Finance Committee shall be, via the Clerk of the Council as appropriate: –
 - i. To be responsible for all employment matters
 - ii. To oversee the job descriptions and terms and conditions of employment of all members of staff

- iii. To oversee the Policies which employers are required to have for their employees e.g. Health and Safety, Equal Opportunities, Bullying and Harassment, Grievance and Discipline, Complaints Procedure
 - iv. To hold delegated powers for the implementation of the Council's Grievance, Discipline and Complaints Procedures and to conduct formal hearings (not appeals) which arise under these policies
 - v. To conduct an annual review of staff salaries
 - vi. To oversee the appraisal process
 - vii. At least one member of the Committee, together with the Clerk of the Council, to conduct interviews of potential staff
 - viii. To receive Quarterly Financial Management Reports from the Clerk of the Council and make recommendations to Council
 - ix. To review the banking arrangements and make recommendations to Council
 - x. To be informed of any emergency spending by the Clerk of the Council as authorised by Financial Regulations
 - xi. To conduct an annual review of Standing Orders statutory Financial Regulations and the administration of VAT and PAYE regulations, and make recommendations as necessary
 - xii. To review the internal audit arrangements of the Council, consider the resultant internal and external audit reports, make recommendations to Council, and oversee any required action
 - xiii. To conduct an annual review of the asset register, and insurance schedule of the Council, having delegated powers to authorise synchronisation when necessary
 - xiv. To receive other ad hoc reports concerning financial matters from the Clerk of the Council, and report as necessary to Council.
 - xv. To consider any other matters that are not within the remit of the Recreation & Works Committee or the Planning & Regulatory Committee.
- h The Staffing and Finance Committee is given delegated authority:-
- i. To fulfil its role in implementing the Council's Grievance, Discipline and Complaints procedures.
 - ii. To approve financial investments of the Council.
 - iii. To authorise synchronisation of the Council's asset register and insurance schedule when necessary.
 - iv. To do anything to facilitate compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000. *See standing order 20.*

DRAFT

PLANNING AND REGULATORY COMMITTEE

- i The Committee will consist of 8 members: ~~Including~~ The Chairman, Vice Chairman, ~~and normally 2 councillors representing each of East and West Wards, and 1 councillor representing each of North and South Wards. It is permissible to depart from this pattern of representation only if all wards are represented on the committee.~~ The membership will be appointed at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council.

The quorum of this committee will be 3 councillors.

The Assistant Clerk/Deputy Clerk of the Council will attend meetings in an advisory and non-voting capacity.

- j The Planning & Regulatory Committee shall consider all planning applications received by the Council from the North Somerset Council for comment, and any other planning, regulatory or licensing related matters.
- k In relation to planning applications only, the Committee is given delegated authority to reach decisions on comments to be communicated to North Somerset Council.
- l At any point, the Chairman or any 2 members of the Council, may determine that a named planning application(s) is subject to 'recommendation only' by the committee and then go before the next ordinary meeting of the council for a decision on the comment to be made.

RECREATION AND WORKS COMMITTEE

- m The Committee will consist of 8 members: ~~Including~~ The Chairman, Vice Chairman, ~~and normally 2 councillors representing each of East and West Wards, and 1 councillor representing each of North and South Wards. It is permissible to depart from this pattern of representation only if all wards are represented on the committee.~~ The membership will be appointed at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council.

The quorum of this committee will be three 3 councillors.

The Clerk of the Council / Responsible Financial Officer / Assistant/Deputy Clerk will attend meetings in an advisory and non-voting capacity.

- n The remit of the Recreation and Works Committee will be to consider all matters relating to the maintenance of the Council's physical assets, and receive reports from the Clerk on expenditure delegated to him on those assets within the terms of Financial regulations 4.

- o **The committee shall have delegated financial authority to authorise spending within budgets to maximum of £2000 per item.**

5. 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 the months of September, December and March.**
- e **The first business conducted at the annual meeting of the Council shall be the election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council.**
- f **The Chairman of the Council, unless he has resigned or becomes disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until his successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the Council.**
- g **The Vice-Chairman of the Council, if there is one, unless he resigns or becomes disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chairman of the Council at the next annual meeting of the Council.**
- h **In an election year, if the current Chairman of the Council has not been re-elected as a member of the Council, he shall preside at the annual meeting until a successor Chairman of the Council has been elected. The current Chairman of the Council shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chairman 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 Chairman of the Council has been re-elected as a member of the Council, he shall preside at the annual meeting until a new Chairman of the Council has been elected. He may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chairman of the Council and shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**
- j **Following the election of the Chairman of the Council and Vice-Chairman of the Council at the annual meeting, the business shall include:**
 - i. **In an election year, delivery by the Chairman 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 Chairman of the Council of his acceptance of office form unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date;

- ii. Review of delegation arrangements to committees, working parties, staff and other local authorities;
- iii. Appointment of members to existing committees;
- iv. Appointment of any new committees in accordance with standing order 4;
- v. 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;
- vi. Review of the Council's and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies;
- vii. Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.

6. EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL AND COMMITTEES

- a **The Chairman of the Council may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council at any time.**
- b **If the Chairman of the Council does not call an extraordinary meeting of the Council within seven days of having been requested in writing to do so by two councillors, any two councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council. The public notice giving the time, place and agenda for such a meeting shall be signed by the two councillors.**
- c The chairman of a committee may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee at any time.
- d If the chairman of a committee or a working party does not call an extraordinary meeting within seven days of having been requested to do so by 2 members of the committee, any 2 members of the committee may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee.

7. PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS

- a A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least 6 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the recommendation of a 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 six months.

8. 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.

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

- a A motion shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting for which it is tabled and in any event shall relate to the performance of 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), correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.
- d If the Proper Officer **with the agreement of the Chair or Vice Chair** 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, **Chair and Vice Chair** at least 7 clear days before the meeting. (* this denotes the word received not being shown in the motion or a request for it to be deleted.)
- e **A motion shall only be considered improper if it contravenes any legal or regulatory obligations with regards to the council, councillors or staff.** 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 9e above, the decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.~~ Subject to standing order 9.e the proper officer has the right to veto the inclusion of any

motion that is defined as improper under the definition contained within section 9.e only. In all other circumstances the decision of the Chair or in their absence Vice Chair is 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.
- i All formal motions passed at a Portishead Residents Annual Meeting as defined within the regulations of Annual Parish Meetings shall be put on the agenda for debate at a full Town Council Meeting no later than 2 full council meetings after the Portishead Residents Annual Meeting has taken place. For any motion to be passed by full council the resident with assistance if required by either the Proper Officer or Chair must seek a Councillor prepared to propose the motion. If no Councillor is prepared to propose said motion the motion shall be debated but no resolution can be passed. All Portishead Residents Annual Meeting motions to be considered for discussion must be in compliance with the procedures as outlined within standing orders.

10. MOTIONS AT A MEETING THAT DO NOT REQUIRE WRITTEN NOTICE

- a The following motions may be moved at a meeting without written notice to the Proper Officer:
 - i. to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes of a meeting;
 - ii. to move to a vote;
 - iii. to defer consideration of a motion;
 - iv. to refer a motion to a particular committee or working party;
 - 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 working party and their members;
 - x. to extend the time limits for speaking;
 - xi. to exclude the press and public from a meeting in respect of confidential or other information which is prejudicial to the public interest;

- xii. to not hear further from a councillor or a member of the public;
- xiii. to exclude a councillor or member of the public for disorderly conduct;
- xiv. to temporarily suspend the meeting;
- xv. to suspend a particular standing order (unless it reflects mandatory statutory or legal requirements);
- xvi. to adjourn the meeting; or
- xvii. to close the meeting.

11. MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION

See also standing order 20.

- a **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.**

12. DRAFT MINUTES

Full Council meetings ●
 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. A motion to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes shall be moved in accordance with standing order 10(a)(i).

- c The accuracy of draft minutes, including any 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, 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 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.**
- f Subject to the publication of draft minutes in accordance with standing order 12(e) and standing order 20(a) and following a resolution which confirms the accuracy of the minutes of a meeting, the draft minutes of the meeting for which approved minutes exist shall be destroyed.

13. CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISPENSATIONS

See also standing order 3(u).

- a All councillors and non-councillors with voting rights shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the Council.
- b Unless he 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 has a disclosable pecuniary interest. He may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which he had the interest.
- c Unless he 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 has another interest if so required by the Council’s code of conduct. He may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which he 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 (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.**

14. CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS

- a Upon notification by the North Somerset 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 Chairman of Council of this fact, and the Chairman 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 North Somerset 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.**

15. PROPER OFFICER

- a The Proper Officer shall be either (i) the clerk or (ii) Deputy/Assistant Clerk 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 or a 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 time, place and the agenda (provided the councillor has consented to service by email), and**
 - **Provide, in a conspicuous place, public notice of the time, place and agenda (provided that the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the Council convened by councillors is signed by them).**
- See standing order 3(b) for the meaning of clear days for a meeting of a full council and standing order 3(c) for the meaning of clear days for a meeting of a committee;*
- ii. subject to standing order 9, include on the agenda all motions in the order received unless a councillor has given written notice at least 3 clear days before the meeting confirming his withdrawal of it;
- iii. **convene a meeting of the Council for the election of a new Chairman of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in his office;**
- iv. **facilitate inspection of the minute book by local government electors;**
- v. **receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities;**
- vi. hold acceptance of office forms from councillors;

- vii. hold a copy of every councillor's register of interests;
- viii. assist with responding to requests made under freedom of information legislation and rights exercisable under data protection legislation, in accordance with the Council's relevant policies and procedures;
- ix. liaise, as appropriate, with the Council's Data Protection Officer (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;
- xv. manage access to information about the Council via the publication scheme; and

16. 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.

17. ACCOUNTS AND ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

- a "Proper practices" in standing orders refer to the most recent version of "Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioners' Guide".
- b All payments by 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 (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 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 (or income and expenditure) for the last quarter and the year to date for information; and
 - ii. to the Council the accounting statements for the year in the form of Section 2 of the annual governance and accountability return, as required by proper practices, for consideration and approval.
- 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 annual governance and accountability return shall be presented to all councillors before the end of the following month of May. The annual governance and accountability return of the Council, which is subject to external audit, including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to the Council for consideration and formal approval before 30 June.

18. 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. 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 18(f) is subject to Regulations 109-114 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 which include a requirement on the Council to advertise the contract opportunity on the Contracts Finder website regardless of what other means it uses to advertise the opportunity 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 working party with delegated responsibility.
- e. Neither the Council, nor a committee or a working party with delegated responsibility for considering tenders, is bound to accept the lowest value tender.
- f. **A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 with an estimated value in excess of £181,302 for a public service or supply contract or in excess of £4,551,413 for a public works contract (or other thresholds determined by the European Commission every two years and published in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU)) shall comply with the relevant procurement procedures and other**

requirements in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 which include advertising the contract opportunity on the Contracts Finder website and in OJEU.

- g. A public contract in connection with the supply of gas, heat, electricity, drinking water, transport services, or postal services to the public; or the provision of a port or airport; or the exploration for or extraction of gas, oil or solid fuel with an estimated value in excess of £363,424 for a supply, services or design contract; or in excess of £4,551,413 for a works contract; or £820,370 for a social and other specific services contract (or other thresholds determined by the European Commission every two years and published in OJEU) shall comply with the relevant procurement procedures and other requirements in the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016.**
- h. The Council approves in principle, the payment of travelling expenses of councillors for duties approved by the Council when outside the boundaries of the town. Rates payable shall be in line with HMRC's mileage rates. Claims are to be submitted to the Clerk within thirty days of the expense being incurred. No subsistence, attendance or other allowance shall be paid for such duties.

19. HANDLING STAFF MATTERS

- a A matter personal to a member of staff that is being considered by a meeting of the Council or the Staffing and Finance Committee is subject to standing order 11.
- b In accordance with the Appraisal Policy the Chairman of the Staffing and Finance Committee and the Chairman shall conduct a review of performance and the annual appraisal of the work of the Clerk. The reviews and appraisal shall be reported in writing and is subject to approval by resolution by the Staffing and Finance Committee.
- c Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, the Council's most senior member of staff (or other members of staff) shall contact the chairman of the Staffing and Finance in respect of an informal or formal grievance matter, and this matter shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the Staffing and Finance Committee in line with the Council's Grievance Policy.
- d Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, if an informal or formal grievance matter raised by a member of staff relates to the chairman or vice chairman this shall be communicated to another member of the Council or to the Committee.
- 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 In accordance with standing order 11(a), persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to staff records referred to in standing order 19(e).

20. RESPONSIBILITIES TO PROVIDE INFORMATION

See also standing order 21.

- 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.

21. RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER DATA PROTECTION LEGISLATION

(Below is not an exclusive list).

See also standing order 11.

- 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 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.**

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 by the Clerk in collaboration with the Chairman.

23. EXECUTION AND SEALING OF LEGAL DEEDS

See also standing orders 15(b)(xii).

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

Subject to standing order 23(a), any two councillors may sign, on behalf of the Council, any deed required by law and the Proper Officer shall witness their signatures.

24. COMMUNICATING WITH NORTH SOMERSET 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 North Somerset Council representing the area of the Council.

25. RESTRICTIONS ON COUNCILLOR ACTIVITIES

- a. Unless duly authorised no councillor shall:
 - i. present him/herself as having an official right to carry out inspections of 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 or legal requirements, may be suspended by resolution in relation to the consideration of an item on the agenda for a meeting.
- b The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the Council's standing orders to a councillor as soon as possible.
- c The decision of the chairman of a meeting as to the application of standing orders at the meeting shall be final.