



# Barrowby Parish Council

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## Standing Orders

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### Introduction

Standing Orders are the written rules used by Barrowby Parish Council to regulate the conduct of Council, committee and sub-committee meetings, and to support clear, lawful and consistent decision-making.

They set out how meetings are called and conducted, how motions are considered, how decisions are made, and how responsibilities are carried out by councillors, committees and officers. They should be read alongside the Council's Financial Regulations, Scheme of Delegation, Code of Conduct, policies and any relevant legislation.

Some Standing Orders reflect legal requirements and cannot be suspended. Others are local procedural rules adopted by the Council to support effective governance. Where there is any conflict between these Standing Orders and legislation, legislation will take precedence.

These Standing Orders are based on the National Association of Local Councils Model Standing Orders 2018 for England, as updated in 2025, and have been adapted for use by Barrowby Parish Council.

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## **1. Rules of debate at meetings**

- 1.1** Motions on the agenda shall be considered in the order in which they appear unless the order is changed at the discretion of the Chair of the meeting.
- 1.2** A motion, including an amendment, shall not be progressed unless it has been moved and seconded.
- 1.3** A motion on the agenda that is not moved by its proposer may be treated by the Chair of the meeting as withdrawn.
- 1.4** If a motion, including an amendment, has been seconded, it may be withdrawn by the proposer only with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
- 1.5** An amendment is a proposal to remove or add words to a motion. It shall not negate the motion.
- 1.6** If an amendment to the original motion is carried, the original motion as amended becomes the substantive motion on which further amendments may be moved.
- 1.7** 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, it is expressed in writing.
- 1.8** A councillor may move an amendment to their own motion if agreed by the meeting. If the motion has already been seconded, the amendment requires the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
- 1.9** 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.
- 1.10** Only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time unless the Chair considers that discussing one or more amendments together would assist the efficient conduct of business. Each amendment shall be voted on separately.
- 1.11** A councillor may not move more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion.
- 1.12** The mover of an amendment has no right of reply at the end of debate on that amendment.
- 1.13** Where a series of amendments to an original motion is 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 end of debate on the final substantive motion, immediately before it is put to the vote.
- 1.14** Unless permitted by the Chair of the meeting, a councillor may speak once in the debate on a motion, except to speak on an amendment moved by another councillor, to move or speak on another amendment if the motion has been amended since they last spoke, to make a point of order, to give a personal explanation, or to exercise a right of reply.
- 1.15** During debate on a motion, a councillor may interrupt only on a point of order or a personal explanation. The councillor who was interrupted shall stop speaking. A councillor raising a point of order shall identify the standing order or other irregularity they consider has been breached.
- 1.16** A point of order shall be decided by the Chair of the meeting and the Chair's decision shall be final.
- 1.17** When a motion is under debate, no other motion shall be moved except: to amend the motion; to proceed to the next business; to adjourn the debate; to put the motion to a vote; to ask a person to be no longer heard or to leave the meeting; to refer the motion to a committee or sub-committee; to exclude the public and press; to adjourn the meeting; or to suspend a standing order that does not reflect a mandatory statutory or legal requirement.
- 1.18** Before an original or substantive motion is put to the vote, the Chair shall be satisfied that the motion has been sufficiently debated and that the mover has exercised or waived their right of reply.
- 1.19** Contributions or speeches shall relate only to the motion under discussion and shall not exceed 5 minutes without the consent of the Chair of the meeting.

## **2. Disorderly conduct at meetings**

- 2.1** No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively, improperly, disrespectfully or in a way that prevents the meeting from conducting its business. If this standing order is ignored, the Chair shall request the person to moderate or improve their conduct.
- 2.2** If a person disregards the Chair's request to moderate or improve their conduct, any councillor or the Chair may move that the person be no longer heard or be excluded from the meeting. If seconded, the motion shall be put to the vote without discussion.
- 2.3** If a resolution made under standing order 2.2 is ignored, the Chair may take reasonable steps to restore order or progress the meeting. This may include temporarily suspending or closing the meeting.
- 2.4** Where there is a general disturbance involving any person present, making orderly conduct impracticable, the Chair may adjourn the meeting for as long as they consider necessary.

## **3. Meetings generally**

- 3.1 Meetings of the Council and its committees 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 resolution and the reason shall be stated in the resolution and recorded in the minutes.**
- 3.2 Meetings shall not take place in premises which, at the time of the meeting, are used for the supply of alcohol unless no other suitable premises are available free of charge or at a reasonable cost.**
- 3.3 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 or Easter break, a bank holiday, or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning.**
- 3.4 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.**
- 3.5** Formal meetings of the Council, committees and sub-committees shall be held in person. A councillor attending by remote means shall not be counted as present for quorum, voting, attendance or decision-making purposes unless legislation in force at the time expressly permits remote attendance to count for those purposes.
- 3.6** The Council may provide remote access, live-streaming or other facilities to assist public observation or engagement, but such facilities do not alter the legal requirement for a properly convened in-person meeting unless legislation provides otherwise. Any livestreaming, recording or remote-access facility is provided to support accessibility and engagement only. Technical failure of such facilities shall not invalidate an otherwise lawfully convened in-person meeting.
- 3.7** Members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend, but only in respect of business on the agenda and only during the public participation session or when invited by the Chair.
- 3.8** The period designated for public participation at a meeting shall not exceed 15 minutes unless directed by the Chair of the meeting.
- 3.9** Subject to standing order 3.8, a member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes unless the Chair permits otherwise.

- 3.10** A question from a member of the public shall not require a response at the meeting and shall not start a debate. The Chair may provide a brief response, invite the Clerk or another councillor to respond, or indicate that a written response will be provided.
- 3.11** The public participation session is not part of the formal decision-making business of the Council. No decision shall be made on a matter raised by the public unless the matter appears as a specific item on the agenda.
- 3.12** A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct their comments to the Chair. Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wishes to speak, the Chair shall direct the order of speaking.
- 3.13** A person who attends a meeting is permitted to report on the meeting while it is open to the public, including filming, photographing, audio recording, broadcasting or providing written or oral commentary, subject to the law and to reasonable rules to avoid disruption.
- 3.14** A person present at a meeting may not provide an oral report or oral commentary about a meeting as it takes place without permission.
- 3.15** The press shall be provided with reasonable facilities for taking their report of all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present.
- 3.16** 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 the Chair's absence, be done by, to or before the Vice-Chair of the Council.
- 3.17** The Chair of the Council, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chair is absent, the Vice-Chair, if present, shall preside. If both are absent, a councillor chosen by the councillors present shall preside.
- 3.18** Subject to a meeting being quorate, all questions shall be decided by a majority of councillors and non-councillors with voting rights present and voting.
- 3.19** 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 a casting vote whether or not they gave an original vote.
- 3.20** Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting shall be by show of hands or, if a majority of councillors present so resolves, by paper ballot for appointments such as co-option. At the request of a councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present at the vote voted for or against the question or abstained. Such a request shall be made before moving to the next item of business.
- 3.21** No business may be transacted at a meeting of the Council unless at least one-third of the whole number of members of the Council is present, and in no case shall the quorum be less than three.
- 3.22** If a meeting is or becomes inquorate, no business shall be transacted and the meeting shall be closed. The remaining business shall be adjourned to another meeting.
- 3.23** A meeting shall not normally exceed 3 hours. Any unfinished business shall be adjourned to another meeting unless the Council resolves to extend the meeting for a specified period.
- 3.24** The minutes of a meeting shall include an accurate record of:
- the time and place of the meeting;
  - the names of councillors present and absent;
  - apologies received and whether they were accepted;
  - interests declared, and whether dispensations were granted;
  - whether any councillor left the meeting when an item in which they had an interest was considered;
  - whether there was a public participation session;

- the resolutions made; and
- any recorded vote requested in accordance with standing order 3.20.

## **4. Committees and sub-committees**

- 4.1 The Council may appoint standing committees, other committees, sub-committees and working groups as necessary. The Council shall determine their terms of reference, membership, reporting arrangements and review date. Any delegated decision-making authority shall be expressly stated and may only be given to a committee, sub-committee or officer where lawful.**
- 4.2** The Council's standing committees may include, but are not limited to, Finance, Staffing, Burial Ground, Buildings and Assets, and Allotments. The Council may amend its committee structure by resolution.
- 4.3** A committee may appoint a sub-committee unless the Council determines otherwise. The committee shall determine the terms of reference and membership of the sub-committee, subject to any limits set by Council.
- 4.4 The members of a committee may include non-councillors unless it is a committee which regulates and controls the finances of the Council. Non-councillors may only have voting rights where legislation permits and where the Council has expressly granted those rights.**
- 4.5 Advisory committees, advisory sub-committees and working groups may include non-councillors. Working groups are informal advisory bodies only. They may gather information, carry out tasks authorised by the Council, and make recommendations, but they may not make decisions on behalf of the Council, commit expenditure, instruct contractors or represent Council policy unless specifically authorised by Council resolution or delegated authority.**
- 4.6** The Council shall appoint the Chair of each standing committee after appointing the members of that committee, unless it resolves that the committee may appoint its own Chair.
- 4.7** A committee may appoint its own Vice-Chair if the Council has not done so.
- 4.8** The quorum of a committee or sub-committee shall be no less than three and shall be stated in its terms of reference.
- 4.9** The public may attend committee meetings unless excluded by resolution for legally permitted reasons. Public participation at committee meetings shall be governed by these Standing Orders and by the committee's terms of reference.
- 4.10** Any councillor who is not a member of a committee may attend a committee meeting. Unless invited by the Chair, their right to speak is the same as that of a member of the public and they may not vote.
- 4.11** A committee or sub-committee shall report its decisions and recommendations to Full Council in accordance with its terms of reference.
- 4.12** The Council may dissolve a committee or sub-committee by resolution.

## **5. Ordinary council meetings**

- 5.1 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.**
- 5.2 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.**
- 5.3 If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the Council shall take place at 6pm.**

- 5.4 In addition to the annual meeting of the Council, at least three other ordinary meetings shall be held each year on such dates and times as the Council decides.**
- 5.5 The first business conducted at the annual meeting shall be the election of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council.**
- 5.6 The Chair of the Council, unless they have resigned or become disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until their successor is elected.**
- 5.7 The Vice-Chair of the Council, unless they resign or become disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chair at the next annual meeting.**
- 5.8 In an election year, if the outgoing Chair has not been re-elected as a member of the Council, they shall preside until a successor has been elected. They shall not have an original vote in the election of the new Chair but shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**
- 5.9 In an election year, if the outgoing Chair has been re-elected as a member of the Council, they shall preside until a new Chair has been elected. They may exercise an original vote in the election of the Chair and shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**
- 5.10** Following the election of the Chair and Vice-Chair at the annual meeting, the business shall include, where applicable:
- **delivery of acceptance of office forms by the Chair and councillors unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date;**
  - confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the Council;
  - receipt of committee minutes and consideration of committee recommendations;
  - review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, officers and other local authorities;
  - review of committee terms of reference and appointment of members to committees;
  - appointment of any new committees;
  - review and adoption of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations;
  - review of arrangements with other local authorities, not-for-profit bodies, community groups and businesses;
  - review of representation on external bodies and arrangements for reporting back;
  - in an election year, consideration of whether the Council meets the eligibility criteria for the General Power of Competence;
  - review of the Council's inventory of land, buildings, assets and equipment;
  - confirmation of insurance arrangements for all insurable risks;
  - review of Council and staff subscriptions to other bodies;
  - review of the Council's complaints procedure;
  - review of policies, procedures and practices relating to freedom of information, publication, data protection and records management;
  - review of the Council's policy for dealing with the press/media and communications;
  - review of employment policies and procedures;
  - review of expenditure incurred under section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 and, where applicable, any expenditure incurred under the General Power of Competence; and
  - determination of the time and place of ordinary Council meetings up to and including the next annual meeting.

## **6. Extraordinary meetings of the Council, committees and sub-committees**

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

**6.2** If the Chair does not call an extraordinary meeting within seven days of having been requested in writing to do so by two councillors, any two councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting. The public notice giving the time, place and agenda for such a meeting shall be signed by those two councillors.

**6.3** The Chair of a committee may convene an extraordinary meeting of that committee at any time.

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

## **7. Previous resolutions**

**7.1** A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except by a special motion requiring written notice by at least two councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9, or by a motion moved in pursuance of a recommendation of a committee or sub-committee.

**7.2** When a motion moved under standing order 7.1 has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved for a further six months.

## **8. Voting on appointments**

**8.1** Where more than two persons have been nominated for a position and none has received an absolute majority of votes, the name of the person with 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 may be settled by the Chair's casting vote.

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

**9.1** 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 to an issue which specifically affects the Council's area or its residents.

**9.2** 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.

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

**9.4** If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion unclear, the motion shall be rejected until the mover resubmits it in a form that can be understood and in time for lawful inclusion on the agenda.

**9.5** If the wording or subject of a proposed motion is considered improper, unlawful, outside the Council's powers, defamatory, vexatious or otherwise irregular, the Proper Officer shall consult the Chair of the forthcoming meeting, or the councillors who have convened the meeting, before deciding whether to include or reject it.

**9.6** The Proper Officer's decision on whether to include a motion on the agenda shall be final.

**9.7** Motions received shall be recorded and numbered in the order received. Motions rejected shall be recorded with an explanation of the reason for rejection.

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

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

- to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes;
- to move to a vote;
- to defer consideration of a motion;
- to refer a motion to a committee or sub-committee;
- to appoint a person to preside at a meeting;
- to change the order of business on the agenda;
- to proceed to the next business;
- to require a written report;
- to appoint a committee or sub-committee and its members;
- to extend time limits for speaking;
- to exclude the press and public from a meeting in respect of confidential or exempt business or for another legally permitted reason;
- to not hear further from a councillor or member of the public;
- to exclude a councillor or member of the public for disorderly conduct;
- to temporarily suspend the meeting;
- to suspend a particular standing order unless it reflects a mandatory statutory or legal requirement;
- to adjourn the meeting; or
- to close the meeting.

## **11. Management of information**

**11.1** 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, where appropriate, encryption of personal data.

**11.2** The Council shall have in place and keep under review policies for the retention and safe destruction of information, including personal data. The retention policy shall confirm the period for which information is retained or, if this is not possible, the criteria used to determine that period.

**11.3** The agenda, supporting papers and minutes of a meeting shall not disclose or otherwise undermine confidential information or personal data without legal justification.

**11.4** Councillors, staff, contractors and agents shall not disclose confidential information or personal data without legal justification.

**11.5** Confidential papers shall be clearly marked and handled in accordance with the Council's data protection, retention and publication policies.

## 12. Draft minutes

- 12.1** If the draft minutes of a preceding meeting have been served on councillors with the agenda for the meeting at which they are due to be approved, they shall be taken as read.
- 12.2** There shall be no discussion about the draft minutes except in relation to their accuracy.
- 12.3** The accuracy of draft minutes, including any amendment made to them, shall be confirmed by resolution and they shall be signed by the Chair of the meeting as an accurate record.
- 12.4** If the Chair of the meeting does not consider the minutes to be an accurate record but the meeting resolves that they are accurate, the Chair shall sign the minutes and include a note to that effect.
- 12.5** **Where the Council's gross annual income or expenditure, whichever is higher, does not exceed £25,000, it shall publish draft minutes on a publicly accessible website not later than one month after the meeting has taken place.**
- 12.6** Subject to publication requirements and the Council's retention policy, draft minutes or recordings of a meeting may be destroyed after the approved minutes exist.

## 13. Code of Conduct and dispensations

- 13.1** All councillors and non-councillors with voting rights shall observe the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council.
- 13.2** Unless 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. They may return after the matter has been considered.
- 13.3** Unless 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 another interest if the Council's Code of Conduct requires them to do so. They may return after the matter has been considered.
- 13.4** **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.
- 13.5** A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by the meeting of the Council, committee or sub-committee for which the dispensation is required, unless the Council has lawfully delegated the power to the Proper Officer. That decision is final.
- 13.6** A dispensation request shall confirm the nature of the interest, whether dispensation is sought for discussion only or for discussion and voting, the meeting date or period for which dispensation is sought, and why the dispensation is requested.
- 13.7** **A dispensation may be granted if, having regard to all relevant circumstances, the number of persons prohibited from participating would be so great as to impede the transaction of the business; granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the Council's area; or it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.**

## 14. Code of Conduct complaints

- 14.1** **Upon notification by the principal authority 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. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office. The Council shall not investigate Code of Conduct complaints itself unless requested or permitted to do so under the principal authority's standards arrangements.**

**14.2** Any Code of Conduct complaint or related information shall be handled in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, the principal authority's standards arrangements and the Council's obligations relating to confidentiality, data protection and access to information.

## **15. Proper Officer**

**15.1** The Proper Officer shall be either:

- i. the Clerk; or
- ii. in the temporary absence, incapacity or unavailability of the Clerk, the Assistant Clerk, or another officer duly appointed by resolution of the Council.

In the temporary absence, incapacity or unavailability of the Clerk, the Assistant Clerk may act as Proper Officer and undertake such duties of the Clerk as are necessary for the proper administration of the Council, to the extent authorised by their appointment and Council resolutions, and subject to the Council's Scheme of Delegation, Financial Regulations, Standing Orders, approved budgets and any specific limitations agreed by the Council.

**15.2** The Proper Officer shall, at least three clear days before a meeting of the Council, committee or sub-committee, serve on councillors by delivery, post or email, where email consent has been given, a signed summons confirming the time, place and agenda, and provide public notice of the time, place and agenda in a conspicuous place and on the Council website where practicable.

**15.3** The Proper Officer shall include on the agenda all valid motions in the order received unless a councillor has given written notice at least 4 days before the meeting confirming withdrawal of the motion.

**15.4** The Proper Officer shall convene a meeting of the Council for the election of a new Chair occasioned by a casual vacancy in that office.

**15.5** The Proper Officer shall facilitate inspection of the minute book by local government electors.

**15.6** The Proper Officer shall receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities, acceptance of office forms from councillors and copies of councillors' registers of interests.

**15.7** The Proper Officer shall assist with responding to requests made under freedom of information legislation and rights exercisable under data protection legislation, in accordance with the Council's policies and procedures.

**15.8** The Proper Officer shall liaise with the Council's Data Protection Officer, if one is appointed.

**15.9** The Proper Officer shall receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the Council except where there is a resolution to the contrary.

**15.10** Formal Council correspondence shall normally be sent by the Clerk or other authorised officer. Councillors may undertake routine information-gathering or fact-finding in accordance with the Council's Communications Policy, but personal views must be clearly identified as personal and not as Council policy.

**15.11** The Proper Officer shall assist in the organisation, storage, access, security and destruction of information held by the Council in paper and electronic form, subject to data protection, freedom of information, retention and other legitimate requirements.

**15.12** The Proper Officer shall arrange for legal deeds to be executed in accordance with standing order 23.

**15.13** The Proper Officer shall arrange or manage the prompt authorisation, approval and instruction of payments in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations and any division of responsibilities between the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer.

- 15.14** The Proper Officer shall record planning applications notified to the Council and the Council's responses to the local planning authority.
- 15.15** The Proper Officer shall refer planning applications received by the Council to the Chair or Vice-Chair of the relevant committee, or to the Chair/Vice-Chair of the Council where no committee applies, within two working days where practicable, to facilitate consideration or an extraordinary meeting where required before the next ordinary meeting.
- 15.16** Planning comments submitted by the Council shall be sent by the Proper Officer or other authorised officer in accordance with Council resolutions, delegated authority and agreed committee arrangements.
- 15.17** The Proper Officer shall manage access to information about the Council via the publication scheme and the Council website.
- 15.18** The Proper Officer may exercise urgent delegated authority only in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation and Financial Regulations. Any significant urgent decision shall be recorded and reported to the next appropriate meeting.

## **16. Responsible Financial Officer**

- 16.1** The Council shall appoint a Responsible Financial Officer to administer the Council's financial affairs in accordance with proper practices, Financial Regulations and Council resolutions.
- 16.2** The Council shall appoint appropriate staff member(s) or make suitable arrangements to undertake the work of the Responsible Financial Officer when the Responsible Financial Officer is absent.
- 16.3** Where the offices of Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer are held by separate people, their respective responsibilities shall be reflected in contracts, job descriptions, Financial Regulations and delegated authority arrangements.

## **17. Accounts and accounting statements**

- 17.1** "Proper practices" in these Standing Orders means the most recent version of Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England: A Practitioners' Guide.
- 17.2** All payments by the Council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the law, proper practices and the Council's Financial Regulations.
- 17.3** The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to each councillor, as soon as practicable after 30 June, 30 September and 31 December each year, a statement summarising receipts and payments or income and expenditure for the quarter, year to date, balances held, budget comparison and any actual or potential overspends.
- 17.4** As soon as possible after the financial year end at 31 March, the Responsible Financial Officer shall provide each councillor with a statement summarising the last quarter and year to date for information, and shall provide the accounting statements for the year for consideration and approval by the Council.
- 17.5** The year-end accounting statements shall be prepared in accordance with proper practices and the form of accounts determined by the Council. A completed draft Annual Governance and Accountability Return shall be presented with the meeting papers at least three clear days before anticipated approval. The AGAR, including the Annual Governance Statement, shall be presented to the Council for consideration and formal approval before 30 June.

## **18. Financial controls and procurement**

- 18.1** The Council shall consider and approve Financial Regulations drawn up by the Responsible Financial Officer. The Financial Regulations shall include detailed arrangements for accounting records and internal controls; assessment and management of financial risks; internal audit; inspection and copying of accounts and orders of payment; and whether contracts with an estimated value below the Council's tender threshold, due to special circumstances, are exempt from a tendering process or procurement exercise.
- 18.2** Financial Regulations shall be reviewed regularly and at least annually for fitness of purpose.
- 18.3** Subject to additional requirements in the Financial Regulations, the tender process for contracts for the supply of goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall include, as a minimum: a specification; an invitation to tender confirming the specification, submission requirements and timetable; a prohibition on prospective contractors contacting councillors or staff to encourage or support their tender outside the prescribed process; written submissions; secure opening after the deadline; and reporting to the Council, committee or sub-committee with delegated responsibility.
- 18.4** Neither the Council nor a committee or sub-committee with delegated responsibility for considering tenders is bound to accept the lowest value tender.
- 18.5** **Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed the relevant threshold specified by Government from time to time, the Council must consider whether the Procurement Act 2023, the Procurement Regulations 2024, or any successor legislation applies to the contract and, where applicable, must comply with all relevant procurement, transparency, notice and publication requirements.**
- 18.6** The Council shall not artificially subdivide contracts, purchases or works in order to avoid thresholds in its Financial Regulations or procurement legislation.
- 18.7** The Council shall maintain appropriate records of procurement decisions, quotations, tenders, exemptions, conflicts of interest and contract awards in accordance with Financial Regulations and retention requirements.

## **19. Handling staff matters**

- 19.1** A matter personal to a member of staff that is being considered by a meeting of the Council or Staffing Committee is subject to standing order 11 and may require exclusion of the public and press.
- 19.2** Subject to the Council's policy on absence from work, the Council's most senior member of staff shall notify the Chair of the Staffing Committee, or if unavailable the Vice-Chair, of absence occasioned by illness or other reason. Such absence shall be reported to the Staffing Committee at its next meeting where appropriate.
- 19.3** The Chair of the Staffing Committee, or in their absence the Vice-Chair, shall, upon a resolution, conduct or arrange the performance review and annual appraisal of the Proper Officer and/or Responsible Financial Officer in accordance with Council policy. The review and appraisal shall be reported in writing and are subject to approval by resolution of the Staffing Committee or Council, according to delegated authority.
- 19.4** Grievance, disciplinary, capability and performance matters shall be handled in accordance with the Council's employment policies and any applicable ACAS guidance.
- 19.5** If an informal or formal grievance raised by the Proper Officer or Responsible Financial Officer relates to the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Staffing Committee, the matter shall be communicated to another member of the Staffing Committee and progressed in accordance with Council policy.

**19.6** Any person responsible for all or part of staff management shall treat written records of meetings relating to performance, capability, grievance or disciplinary matters as confidential.

**19.7** In accordance with standing order 11, persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to staff records only where necessary for their role and in accordance with data protection requirements.

## **20. Responsibilities to provide information**

**20.1** 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.

**20.2** Where the Council's gross annual income or expenditure, whichever is higher, does not exceed £25,000, the Council shall publish information in accordance with the Smaller Authorities (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015.

**20.3** The Council shall publish agendas, minutes, financial information and other governance documents on its website where required by law or adopted policy, subject to lawful confidentiality and data protection requirements.

## **21. Responsibilities under data protection legislation**

**21.1** The Council may appoint a Data Protection Officer where required or appropriate.

**21.2** The Council shall have policies and procedures in place to respond to an individual exercising statutory rights concerning their personal data.

**21.3** The Council shall have a written policy for responding to and managing a personal data breach.

**21.4** The Council shall keep a record of all personal data breaches comprising the facts relating to the breach, its effects and the remedial action taken.

**21.5** The Council shall ensure that information communicated in its privacy notice(s) is easily accessible, available and kept up to date.

**21.6** The Council shall maintain a written record of its processing activities where required.

## **22. Relations with the press/media**

**22.1** 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 Communications Policy and any policy for dealing with the press and media.

**22.2** Unless authorised by Council resolution, by the Communications Policy or by delegated authority, no councillor shall claim to speak on behalf of the Council. Personal views must be clearly identified as personal views.

**22.3** Official Council social media, website and press statements shall be published or authorised by the Proper Officer or other authorised officer in accordance with Council policy.

## **23. Execution of legal deeds**

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

**23.2** Where a document is required to be executed as a deed, any two councillors may sign it on behalf of the Council, and the Proper Officer shall witness their signatures.

**23.3** Other legal documents, contracts, agreements or correspondence may be signed by the Proper Officer or another authorised officer where authorised by Council resolution, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, the Scheme of Delegation, or an approved contract/procurement process.

**23.4** The Council does not currently have a common seal. If the Council adopts a common seal in future, this Standing Order shall be reviewed and amended as necessary.

## **24. Communicating with district and county councillors**

**24.1** An invitation to attend a meeting of the Council shall be sent, together with the agenda, to the ward councillor(s) of South Kesteven District Council and Lincolnshire County Council representing the Council's area.

**24.2** Unless the Council determines otherwise, a copy of relevant formal correspondence sent to South Kesteven District Council or Lincolnshire County Council shall be sent to the appropriate ward councillor(s), where it is lawful and appropriate to do so.

**24.3** Planning-related correspondence and liaison shall be handled in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation, Planning Working Group Terms of Reference, Communications Protocol and any specific resolution of the Council. Formal planning consultation responses submitted on behalf of the Council shall normally be sent by the Proper Officer or another authorised officer. Councillors may, where appropriate, undertake factual enquiries, evidence gathering, routine liaison or lead-member/working-group communication with the local planning authority, provided that they do not purport to bind the Council, make clear the capacity in which they are communicating, and copy the Clerk into the correspondence for governance and record-keeping purposes.

**24.4** Where a principal authority or local planning authority requests a single point of contact, the Council may have regard to that request for administrative efficiency, but such a request shall not prevent councillors from undertaking authorised factual enquiries, routine liaison, ward/community representation, or working-group activity in accordance with these Standing Orders, the Communications Protocol and the Code of Conduct.

## **25. Restrictions on councillor activities**

**25.1** Unless duly authorised, no councillor shall inspect any land or premises which the Council has a right or duty to inspect.

**25.2** Unless duly authorised, no councillor shall issue orders, instructions or directions to the Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer, Assistant Clerk, any other employee, contractor, volunteer or agent of the Council.

**25.3** Councillors may not individually exercise statutory functions of the Council. Decisions must be made by Council, committee, sub-committee or officer acting under lawful delegated authority.

**25.4** Councillors shall observe the Member/Officer Protocol, Communications Policy, Code of Conduct and any other relevant Council policies when engaging with staff, volunteers, contractors, developers, principal authorities, residents and the public.

## **26. Standing Orders generally**

- 26.1** All or part of a standing order, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory or legal requirements, may be suspended by resolution in relation to consideration of an item on the agenda for a meeting.
- 26.2** A motion to add to, vary or revoke one or more Standing Orders, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory or legal requirements, shall be proposed by a special motion with written notice by at least three councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9.
- 26.3** The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the Council's Standing Orders to each councillor as soon as possible after adoption and to any new councillor as part of induction.
- 26.4** The decision of the Chair of a meeting as to the application of Standing Orders at the meeting shall be final.
- 26.5** Standing Orders shall be reviewed at least annually, normally at or before the Annual Meeting of the Council, and earlier where legislation, NALC guidance or Council structure changes.