

# Annual Council Meeting

## Committee Meeting of Witney Town Council



**Wednesday, 6th May, 2026 at 7.00 pm**

To members of the Annual Council Meeting Committee - A Mubin, J Aitman, T Ashby, O Collins, R Smith, D Temple, D Enright, A Bailey, R Crouch, G Doughty, J Doughty, D Edwards-Hughes, G Meadows, D Newcombe, J Robertshaw, S Simpson and J Treloar (and all other Town Councillors for information).

You are hereby summonsed to the above meeting to be held in the **Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney** for the transaction of the business stated in the agenda below.

### **Admission to Meetings**

All Council meetings are open to the public and press unless otherwise stated.

Numbers of the public will be limited, with priority given to those who have registered to speak on an item on the agenda. Any member of the public wishing to attend the meeting should contact the Committee Clerk [derek.mackenzie@witney-tc.gov.uk](mailto:derek.mackenzie@witney-tc.gov.uk) in advance.

### **Recording of Meetings**

In accordance with the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, public meetings may be filmed, audio-recorded, or photographed. Anyone intending to record the proceedings is asked, as a courtesy, to inform the Committee Clerk before the meeting begins.

This meeting will be broadcast live via Microsoft Teams and recorded; by attending or participating, you consent to the recording and public sharing of audio and video, which may be made available for later viewing. For details on how personal data is handled, please see the [Privacy Notice](#)

To view the meeting please follow this link [Annual Council Meeting | Teams Link](#)

### **Agenda**

1. **Election of Town Mayor**

To receive nominations for the position of Chair/Mayor for the civic year 2026/27 and to elect the Chair/Mayor.

2. **Election of Deputy Mayor**

To receive nominations for the position of Deputy Chair/Mayor for the civic year 2026/27 and to elect the Deputy Chair/Mayor.

3. **Election of Leader**

To receive nominations for the position of Leader of Witney Town Council for the council year and to elect the Leader.

4. **Election of Deputy Leader**

To receive nominations for the position of Deputy Leader of Witney Town Council for the Council year and to elect the Deputy Leader.

5. **Apologies for Absence**

To consider apologies and reasons for absence.

Committee members who are unable to attend the meeting should notify the Committee Clerk [derek.mackenzie@witney-tc.gov.uk](mailto:derek.mackenzie@witney-tc.gov.uk) **prior to the meeting**, stating the reason for absence.

**Standing Order 8(e)(v)** permits the appointment of substitute Councillors to a Committee whose role is to replace ordinary Councillors at a meeting of a Committee if ordinary Councillors of the Committee have confirmed to the Proper Officer **before** the meeting that they are unable to attend.

6. **Declarations of Interest**

Members are reminded to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests in any of the items under consideration at this meeting in accordance with the Town Council's code of conduct.

7. **Minutes** (Pages 4 - 12)

To approve and adopt the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 13 April 2026 in accordance with Standing Order 26 including questions on the minutes as to the progress of any item.

8. **Public Participation**

The meeting will adjourn for this item

Members of the public may speak for a maximum of **five minutes** each during the period of public participation, in line with Standing Order 25. Matters raised shall relate to the following items on the agenda.

9. **Adoption of Meetings Calendar** (Page 13)

To formally adopt the timetable of Council Committee meetings for the 2026/27 municipal year.

10. **Appointment of any new Committees**

To consider whether to create any new Council Committees in accordance with Standing Order 9.

11. **Review (or request for the Town Clerk to review) any terms of reference**

To consider whether any Committee terms of reference should be reviewed for the municipal year 2026/27.

12. **Appointment of Committees, Sub-Committees & Working Parties and the Election of Chairs** (Pages 14 - 16)

To receive and consider the report of the Deputy Town Clerk, and appoint Members to the Standing Committees, Sub-Committees, Working Parties, Task & Finish Groups and elect Chairs for the municipal year 2026/27.

13. **Appointment to Advisory Committees & External Bodies/Outside Organisations** (Pages 17 - 21)

To receive and consider the report of the Deputy Town Clerk and appoint Members to Advisory Committees & External Bodies/Organisations and elect Chairs for the municipal year 2026/27.

14. **Review of any delegation arrangements** (Pages 22 - 32)

The Scheme of Delegation was adopted by Council in June 2025. The next formal review is set for June 2027. Dependent on the resolution of Agenda Item 10 an immediate review may be required.

15. **Review and adopt appropriate Standing Orders, financial regulations, code of conduct and other Council policies**

To review any Council policies, if appropriate in accordance with Standing Order 9.

Full reviews of both the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations will take place and will be presented to the meeting of the Council on 22 June 2026.

The Code of Conduct is the adopted Oxfordshire Code of Conduct. No changes are proposed, the Council may wish to consider a reaffirmation of the Code.

- a) **Standing Orders** (Pages 33 - 61)
- b) **Financial Regulations** (Pages 62 - 81)
- c) **Code of Conduct** (Pages 82 - 95)

16. **Councillor Attendance Register** (Page 96)

To receive the annual attendance list for Town Councillors during the municipal year 2025/26.

It should be noted Members are expected to attend all meetings to which they are summonsed, however they are volunteers and may not be able to attend for a variety of reasons such as ill health or caring commitments.



Town Clerk

# Agenda Item 7

## MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Monday, 13 April 2026

At 7.00 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney

### Present:

Councillor J Doughty (Vice-Chair, in the Chair)

Councillors:	O Collins	G Doughty
	J Aitman	D Edwards-Hughes
	T Ashby	D Newcombe
	D Enright	J Robertshaw
	R Smith	S Simpson
	A Mubin	J Treloar
	R Crouch	
Officers:	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
	Mark Lewis	Head of Estates & Operations
	Nigel Warner	Responsible Financial Officer
Others:	PC Hannah Leggott	Thames Valley Police

### 184 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A Bailey. Councillor T Ashby advised he would arrive late to the meeting.

*Before the formal proceedings of the meeting, the Chair read a short acknowledgement in memory of former Councillor & Mayor Clive Knowles, following which the Council observed a minute's silence.*

### 185 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members or Officers.

### 186 MINUTES

That, the minutes of the meeting held on 16 February 2026 were received.

### Resolved:

That, the minutes of the meeting held on 16 February 2026 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

187 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

188 **WITNEY COMMUNITY POLICING ISSUES**

The Council received a verbal update from PC Hannah Leggott of Thames Valley Police (TVP) on current policing matters in Witney.

PC Leggott advised that TVP had experienced no significant concerns locally and reported that the recent Easter period had passed without any notable issues, which was welcomed by Members. She also outlined recent community engagement via the two "Have a Go" days held by TVP, one at The Leys in Witney and another in Carterton.

Members then raised a number of questions to PC Leggott.

In response to a query regarding TVP's flag policy, PC Leggott explained that flags displayed on the public highway fell within the remit of OCC as the Highway Authority. Police only become involved where there was a risk to public safety, or where matters such as hate-related incidents arose.

Concerns were raised regarding three recent events held on Church Green by a group targeting teenagers, particularly in relation a monthly charge reportedly made to attendees and the distribution of multivitamins. PC Leggott confirmed TVP were aware of this activity and advised that their Schools Officer was actively reviewing the matter.

Members also raised concerns regarding individuals posing as veterans in and around the Woolgate area. PC Leggott confirmed that TVP was aware of the issue and that officers had attended and moved individuals on approximately three weeks prior. She was not aware of this being an ongoing issue, however encouraged further reporting should the behaviour continue.

A question was raised regarding whether the police station in Witney was currently manned, following a report that a member of the public had used the external telephone but received no immediate answer. Members heard that the telephone was connected to the TVP central call centre rather than directly to the station itself. Whilst there may occasionally be a delay, all calls were routed to that manned facility.

In response to a question on shoplifting, PC Leggott advised that offenders involved in recent incidents were typically individuals travelling into the town specifically to carry out this activity.

With regard to anti-social behaviour, PC Leggott responded that current levels were not considered high, although she acknowledged that such incidents were never pleasant for those affected.

A Member formally thanked Thames Valley Police for their persistence in addressing drug dealing activity in and around the Cogges estate.

**Resolved:**

That, the verbal updates be noted.

*Cllr T Ashby arrived at 7:16pm  
PC Leggott left the meeting at 7:18pm*

189 **AN UPDATE FROM WITNEY OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCILLORS AND WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCILLORS**

**Oxfordshire County Council**

Cllr J Robertshaw provided an update on the progress of pothole repairs across the area and advised that a review of booking for the recycling centre provision was being sought. He also confirmed that highway works at Shores Green were progressing well and remained on track for completion in June.

**West Oxfordshire District Council**

Cllr R Crouch advised that work on achieving Council of Sanctuary status was nearing completion and was expected to formally commence shortly. She also reported that the Ukraine resettlement and support programme was due to come to an end in November.

Cllr D Enright updated Members on activity at Marriotts Walk Shopping Centre, noting the introduction of bright, colourful umbrella displays which had enhanced the appearance of the area. He also advised that plans were being developed to review the public spaces within the centre, with a view to providing additional seating and planting, including improvements to under-utilised grassed areas. Members also heard that a successful Easter period had been experienced, including the delivery of an Easter egg hunt.

In response to this update, Cllr J Treloar asked that the lighting within the multi-storey car park be reviewed, having observed areas where it appeared to be underperforming.

Cllr R Smith advised that a business rates motion had been brought at West Oxfordshire District Council, resulting in a decision to review discounts for local businesses. She also highlighted plans for improved education and communication with businesses to provide greater clarity on how business rates were calculated. Additionally, she reported that the Local Plan 2043 remained on track, with a target for delivery in summer/autumn.

**Resolved:**

That, the verbal updates be noted.

190 **REPORT BACK FROM THE COUNCILLORS ON THE WORK WITH EXTERNAL BODIES WHERE THEY SERVE AS THE TOWN COUNCIL'S NOMINATED REPRESENTATIVE**

**Witney & District Twinning Association**

Cllr R Crouch provided an update which advised members that representatives in Le Touquet had established a dedicated team to promote and support the twinning relationship. A request was made for consideration to be given to the procurement of suitable gifts for the Mayor to present during official visits.

Members were also advised that limited information was available regarding the proposed visit of delegates from Le Touquet and Underhaching over the May bank holiday so it remained unclear whether an informal drinks reception would be required. It was hoped that confirmation would be received by 17 April.

Additionally, it was advised that Korbinian Rausch had been elected as the new Mayor of Unterhaching, appointed for a seven-year term from 4<sup>th</sup> May.

**Witney Town Charity**

Cllr R Crouch advised that the Charity continued to carry out regular inspections of the Almshouses to identify and address any issues affecting residents.

**RAF Brize Norton Local Consultation Group**

Cllr D Newcombe advised that two forthcoming events were planned for April. One event would promote the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Tactical Medical Wing to which all members had been invited, while the other would provide an update on the extensive runway improvement works that were continuing at the base.

**Resolved:**

That, the verbal updates be noted.

191 **PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE - 17 FEBRUARY, 10 MARCH & 31 MARCH 2026**

The Chair of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

Cllr J Treloar noted he was omitted from the attendees list for the meeting of 10 March.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the Cllr Treloar be added to the attendee list for 10 March 2026 and,
2. That, the minutes of the Planning & Development Committee held on 17 February, 10 March & 31 March 2026 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

192 **PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE - 9TH MARCH**

The Chair of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

**Resolved:**

That, the minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee held on 9 March 2026 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

193 **HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE - 16TH MARCH**

The Chair of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

**Resolved:**

That, the minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee held on 16 March 2026 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

194 **STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE - 23RD MARCH**

The Chair of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

SC147 – Members were updated that the Deputy Town Clerk would be reviewing the information gathered regarding the delivery of the newsletter.

**Resolved:**

That, the minutes of the Stronger Communities Committee held on 23 March 2026 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

195 **POLICY, GOVERNANCE & FINANCE COMMITTEE - 30TH MARCH**

The Vice-Chair of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

**Resolved:**

That, the minutes of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee held on 30 March 2026 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

196 **ANNUAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES - 18 MARCH 2026**

The Council received the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 18 March.

The Chair expressed his thanks to the Councillors who had attended and advised Members that it had been the best attended in the past 20 years.

The Committee Clerk provided a verbal update of the action taken as a result of questions that arose in the meeting which had been passed to other organisations for actioning and advised that Officers would publish updates to residents.

Additionally, in response to a Members question, it was confirmed that Officers were looking into the potential of a youth-based politics event to be held to garner younger residents' views.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 18 March be noted and,
2. That, the verbal update be noted and updates publicised in the most appropriate way.

197 **CIVIC ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Council received the report of the Mayor and Mayor's Secretary which highlighted the civic engagements of the Mayor and Deputy since the last meeting.

The Deputy Mayor also took the opportunity to specifically highlight and congratulate Volunteer Link-Up on achieving its recent Kings Award. Members heard that this reflected a significant level of long-term commitment, collaboration and sustained effort by the volunteers to achieve. Members recognised this a testament to the dedication and positive impact of the volunteers within the community, and the Council noted their appreciation for their work.

**Resolved:**

That, the report be noted.

198 **MAYOR ELECT**

The Chair, Cllr J Doughty invited nominations for the position of Town Mayor for the ensuing municipal year.

Cllr R Smith proposed, seconded by Cllr J Treloar that Deputy Mayor Cllr J Doughty serve as Town Mayor. With no further nomination's forthcoming, it was therefore duly agreed that Cllr Jane Doughty be Mayor Elect by the Council for the municipal year 2026/2027

**Resolved:**

That, Cllr Jane Doughty be Mayor Elect/Designate for the ensuing municipal year.

199 **HEALTH & SAFETY**

The Council received the report of Compliance & Environment Officer along with a verbal update from the Head of Estates & Operations concerning current Health & Safety matters.

The HE&O highlighted the outcome of recent Health & Safety checks at Tower Hill Chapel. These identified the need to introduce a formal booking arrangement for the building in order to ensure its use was properly recorded and managed. Members noted that this was necessary to maintain appropriate oversight and compliance with Health & Safety requirements.

Members were advised that the Health & Safety Policy Statement had been updated, including a change to the Council's appointed Health & Safety Advisor and it was explicitly emphasised that Health & Safety was the responsibility of the Council. Members unanimously agreed the adoption of the updated Health & Safety Policy Statement recognising their responsibilities under the Policy to support, promote and comply with the Council's Health & Safety arrangements in order to help maintain a safe working environment and mitigate risk.

Members were pleased to note an increase in the reporting of near-miss incidents, which was welcomed as a positive indication that encouragement to staff to report concerns was proving effective. It was recognised that near-miss reporting was an important mechanism for identifying potential hazards at an early stage, ensuring appropriate action could be taken and issues were not overlooked.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the report and verbal update be noted; and
2. That, the updated Health & Safety Policy Statement be adopted and Members' responsibilities under the Policy be recognised.

200 **VANDALISM & ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

The Council received the report of vandalism and anti-social behaviour that had occurred since the last meeting.

Members noted the incidents outlined and acknowledged the continued impact such behaviour can have on Council assets, staff and users, even when overall levels were not considered excessive.

The Council also heard that, upon completion of the Courtside development at The Leys, additional security measures would be introduced, including the installation of modern, high-quality CCTV. Members welcomed this improvement and noted that the enhanced security was expected to provide reassurance to users of the site and assist in the deterrence and investigation of future incidents.

**Resolved:**

That, the report be noted.

201 **FUTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN OXFORDSHIRE**

The Committee Clerk provide a verbal update advising Members that responses had been submitted in respect of all three proposed models as previously resolved by the Council. A decision was expected to be made in June or July 2026.

**Resolved:**

That, the verbal update be noted.

202 **CIVILITY & RESPECT**

Members received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk which outlined the options available to the Council in relation to the Civility & Respect initiative.

It was proposed by Cllr R Crouch, seconded by Cllr D Enright, that the Civility & Respect Pledge, as presented, be adopted and signed by all Members of the Council. The proposal was unanimously agreed.

During discussion, Members reflected on the importance of fully understanding the commitments being made when signing the pledge.

A Member raised a question regarding training. It was recognised that, whilst Council-provided training opportunities had been well supported and well attended by Members, there was currently no mandatory training that Members were required to undertake. However, it was acknowledged that some subject areas carried greater risk and importance than others, in particular GDPR and IT security training.

The Committee Clerk highlighted the availability of training opportunities for Members and advised that, should any Member feel, they would benefit from further or additional training, they should contact officers in order for this to be arranged.

**Resolved:**

That, the Civility & Respect Pledge be adopted and signed by all Members of the Council.

203 **COMMUNICATION FROM THE LEADER**

There was no communication from the Leader.

204 **POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER - NEWSLETTER**

The Council received the latest newsletter from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

**Resolved:**

That, the newsletter be noted.

205 **NOTIFICATION OF THE ELECTION RESULT AT LE TOUQUET**

The council received notification of the re-election of Daniel Fasquelle as Mayor of Le Touquet for a further five-year term in Witney's twinned French town of Le Touquet Paris Plage.

**Resolved:**

That, the correspondence be noted.

206 **NATIONAL EMERGENCY BRIEFING**

The Council received and considered the correspondence relating to the *National Emergency Briefing* film.

Members noted that the film was the work of private individuals and was not produced or endorsed by any Government body.

It was further noted that a public showing of the film was scheduled to take place on 13 June in Eynsham, which some Members indicated they may attend.

Following discussion, it was proposed that consideration as to whether Witney Town Council should arrange or support a showing of the film be deferred to the Climate & Biodiversity Committee for further consideration at its meeting scheduled for 19 May. This proposal was unanimously agreed.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the correspondence be noted; and
2. That, consideration of whether the Town Council should arrange a showing of the film be referred to the Climate & Biodiversity Committee.

207 **NOTICE OF DEFINITIVE MAP AND STATEMENT LEGAL EVENT MODIFICATION ORDER 2026**

The Council received the correspondence regarding the Notice of Definitive Map and Statement Legal Event Modification Order 2026 for Witney paths 43 and 55.

**Resolved:**

That, the correspondence be noted.

208 **NORTH LEIGH NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

The Council received and considered correspondence relating to the North Leigh parish Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Following discussion, it was proposed and unanimously agreed that the matter be deferred to the Planning & Development Committee for full consideration at its next meeting on 21 April 2026.

Members additionally requested that the Committee give specific consideration to any potential implications the development plan may have on the proposed Community Governance Review as part of its deliberations.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the correspondence be noted; and
2. That, consideration of the North Leigh Neighbourhood Development Plan be referred to the Planning & Development Committee at its meeting on 21 April 2026, with due regard given to any implications for the Community Governance Review.

209 **QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

There were no Questions for the Leader of the Council.

210 **SEALING OF DOCUMENTS**

**Resolved:**

That the seal of the Council be affixed to any documents arising from decisions taken by this meeting of the Council.

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The meeting closed at: 8.21 pm

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Chair

Witney Town Council – Calendar of Meetings 2026-27

All meetings held at the Corn Exchange, Witney unless otherwise stated on the published Agenda								
<b>PLANNING &amp; DEVELOPMENT</b>	6pm	Tuesday	21 April 12 May 2 Jun 23 Jun*	14 Jul 4 Aug 25 Aug 15 Sep 6 Oct*	27 Oct 17 Nov*	8 Dec 5 Jan 26 Jan*	23 Feb 16 Mar 13 Apr*	27 Apr
<b>CLIMATE &amp; BIODIVERSITY</b>	6pm	Tuesday	19 May	8 Sep		12 Jan		
<b>PARKS &amp; RECREATION</b>	6pm	Monday	1 Jun	7 Sep	2 Nov	11 Jan	8 Mar	
<b>HALLS, CEMETERIES AND ALLOTMENTS</b>	6pm		8 Jun	14 Sep	9 Nov	18 Jan	15 Mar	
<b>STRONGER COMMUNITIES</b>	6pm		15 Jun	21 Sep	16 Nov	25 Jan	22 Mar	
<b>POLICY, GOVERNANCE &amp; FINANCE (&amp; Personnel sub-committee)</b>	6pm		22 Jun	28 Sep	23 Nov	1 Feb	12 Apr	
<b>COUNCIL</b>	7pm		22 Jun*** 13 Jul	12 Oct	7 Dec 14 Dec ** 4 Jan ~	22 Feb	26 Apr	

**Sub- Committees**

**Working parties**

**Annual Council Meeting** – Monday 17 May 2027

**Annual Town Meeting** – Wednesday 24 Mar 2027

**NOTE:** CHRISTMAS BREAK – Meetings will not be called between 14 Dec 2026 and 04 Jan 2027 unless deemed necessary

\* Indicates Full Planning & Development Committee Meeting, including minutes which will be held 'in person' with other planning meetings being held online.

\*\* Meeting on 14 Dec 2026 for budget purposes only

\*\*\* Meeting for adoption of AGAR

× Meeting outside of normal schedule due to Bank Holiday

~ For Budget Precept Sign Off

**Witney Traffic Advisory Committee** at 3.00pm – 30 June 2026, 22 Sept 2026, 12 Jan 2027 & 23 March 2027

## ANNUAL COUNCIL



**Agenda Item:** Appointment of Standing Committees, Sub-Committees and Working Parties and the Election of Chairs

**Meeting Date:** Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> May 2026

**Contact Officer:** Deputy Town Clerk

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Council's Committees and for their Chairs to be elected for the ensuing municipal year in line with Standing Order 9(i)(vii).

### Background

Members will be aware of the Council's Committee Structure and how the membership works from the previous Annual Council meeting.

For ease the Deputy Town Clerk has provided the following table with details of the membership required.

Committee/Sub-Committee	Membership required
a) Climate & Biodiversity Committee	6 Members + Ex-officio Town Mayor & Leader
b) Planning & Development Committee	5 Members + Ex-officio Leader <i>This could be increased to 6 and include the Town Mayor ex-officio</i>
c) Parks & Recreation Committee	6 Members + Ex-officio Town Mayor & Leader
d) Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee	6 Members + Ex-officio Town Mayor & Leader
e) Stronger Communities	6 Members + Ex-officio Town Mayor & Leader
f) Policy, Governance & Finance	1 Member + Chair of the above 5 Standing Committees (a-e) and Ex-officio Town Mayor & Leader. <i>Dependent on whether Leader or Mayor is Chair of any other Committee</i>
g) Personnel Sub-Committee <i>[this is a sub-committee of the Policy, Governance &amp; Finance Committee]</i>	Town Mayor, Leader, and Chair of above Standing Committees (b to f). <b>Subject to inclusion of an elected Member with experience in this field maybe 1 additional Member</b>

h) Disciplinary & Grievance Panel	3 Members* – must not be Chair or Members of Personnel/Policy Governance & Finance Committee
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**NOTE: The Vice-chair of these Committees/Sub-Committees will be appointed at the first meeting.**

<b>Working Parties/ Task &amp; Finish Groups</b>	<b>Membership required</b>
Community Voices (Was Inclusivity & Diversity Panel)	Chairs of Committees
Climate Action Working Party	Currently elected: S Simpson, D Edwards-Hughes, D Enright, J Aitman, J Robertshaw  <i>Work ongoing.</i>
Pavilion Working Party	Currently elected: R Crouch, D Newcombe, R Smith, J Aitman, G Doughty  <i>Although this Working Group completed its task, Members may wish to consider leaving it in place for a further year.</i>
Witney: Past, Present & Future Working Party	Currently elected: J Treloar, R Crouch, G Meadows, A Mubin, J Robertshaw, R Smith  <i>Work ongoing.</i>
Community Governance T & F Group	Currently elected: O Collins, R Smith, A Bailey, G Meadows, S Simpson, R Crouch, D Edwards-Hughes  <i>It is suggested this group is left in place for the 2026/7 year as this issue is ongoing and with Local Government Reorganisation due in 2027/28.</i>

**NOTE: The Chair of the Working Parties/Task & Finish Groups will be appointed at the first meeting.**

#### VJ & VE-Day 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversaries Task & Finish Group

This T&FG was retained in 2025 as the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of VJ Day had yet to happen. It is suggested the T&F Group is disbanded as the work of the group has now completed.

### **Impact Assessments**

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Equality – no direct implications.
- b) Biodiversity – no direct implications.
- c) Crime & Disorder – no direct implications.

d) Environment & Climate Emergency – no direct implications.

## **Risk**

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

## **Social Value**

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates.

## **Recommendations**

Members are invited to note the report and consider the following;

1. that the membership to the Council's Standing Committees (a to e) be elected
2. that the Chairs of those Standing Committees be elected
3. that in order to form the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee at f – it be made up of the Committee Chairs (a to e) plus Ex-Officio Town Mayor and Leader
4. that the Personnel Sub-Committee is formed of the Town Mayor and Leader, plus the Chairs of the Standing Committees (b to f), and potentially plus 1 additional Member [preferably with personnel experience]
5. that a Disciplinary & Grievance Panel is elected – *to be formed from Councillors not sitting on the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee* – membership is a minimum of 3
6. that the membership of the Task & Finish Groups and Working Party's be reaffirmed
7. that the VJ & VE-Day 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversaries Task and Finish group be officially disbanded.

## ANNUAL COUNCIL



**Agenda Item:** Appointment to Advisory Committees & External Bodies/Outside Organisations

**Meeting Date:** Wednesday, 6th May 2026

**Contact Officer:** Deputy Town Clerk

The purpose of this report is to comply with Standing Order 9(i)(xii) concerning the representation on and arrangements for reporting back work of local organisations and groups the Council is connected with.

### Background

The Town Council appoints representatives to the following Advisory Committees/Outside Bodies, and it is usually recommended that those appointed as per below should serve until the Annual Council Meeting following the next ordinary election of Councillors in 2027, although Members may wish to step down at this juncture if they so wish.

Witney Traffic Advisory Committee	-	4 – J Aitman, D Enright, S Simpson, R Smith
Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils [Larger Councils]	-	1 – R Crouch
West Witney Sports & Social Club	-	2 – D Newcombe, R Smith
Witney Town Band	-	1 – O Collins
Witney & District Twinning Association	-	3 (Mayor (Ex officio)) R Crouch, R Smith
West Oxfordshire Museum Centre	-	1 – O Collins
St Mary's Church Preservation Trust	-	Mayor
Volunteer Link Up	-	1 – J Aitman
RAF Brize Norton – Local Consultation Working Group	-	1 – D Newcombe
Witney Allotment Association	-	1 – R Crouch
Witney Youth Council Mentors	-	2 – G Meadows, S Simpson, J Aitman
Friends of the Cemeteries	-	2 – D Enright, J Doughty

Home Start Champions	-	3 – J Aitman, A Bailey, S Simpson
Lower Windrush Valley Project	-	1 – A Bailey
West Oxfordshire Community Transport	-	1 – D Enright
Witney Fair Trade Action Group Champion	-	1 – R Smith
Witney Infrastructure Neighbourhood Group	-	2 – R Smith, D Enright
Henry Box Collection Trust	-	1 - G Meadows
Witney Community Profile Steering Group	-	2 – J Aitman
Witney Flood Group Liaison	-	1 – D Temple
Windrush Pavilion Community Trust	-	3 – J Aitman, R Crouch, G Doughty
Witney Town Centre Forum	-	3 – A Bailey, D Edwards-Hughes, G Meadows

### **NOMINEES – SERVING AS TRUSTEES**

Listed below are the Town Council nominees serving on other outside bodies. The expiry dates of terms of office on these bodies are shown. The terms of office are set by the various bodies, and Council appointments are made on the expiry of the term or vacancies caused by resignation, disqualification, etc.:

(\* Denotes Non-Member of Witney Town Council)

Term of office expires

#### Witney Town Hall Charity – 4-year term of office

The Witney Town Hall Charity owns the Town Hall, Townhouse and the Buttercross and is the Town Council's landlord. The primary purpose of the Charity is to ensure the properties are kept in good order, and secondly with the rental income a small grant pot is provided to support the work of local organisations.

Mr H B Eaglestone*	May 2029
Ms Mandy Collicut* (Co-opted Trustee)	Feb 2027
Cllr O Collins	May 2027
Cllr S Simpson	May 2027
Mrs R Crouch*	May 2026
Mr D Semaine* (Co-opted Trustee)	Oct 2027
Mrs L J Semaine*	Jun 2026

(The Town Council does not nominate co-opted Trustees)

#### Witney Town Charity – 4-year term of office

The charitable objectives of the Witney Town Charity are:

1. The provision and maintenance of Almshouses for poor persons

2. The relief of poor persons in conditions of need, hardship, or distress. It operates 18 Almshouses and also provides grants for those in need.

Within its constitution it allows for 6 Witney Town Councillors to be on the Trust as nominated Trustees

Mr B Beadle*	May 2026
Mrs M Jones*	Jun 2028
Mrs R Crouch*	May 2026
Cllr G Meadows	May 2027
Cllr J Aitman	Jun 2029
Mr C Woodward*	Feb 2026

#### Witney Educational Foundation (WEF) – 4-year term of office

WEF provides financial support for the schools of Witney and surrounding communities to enable all students to enjoy full range of activities offered by each school. It also provides grants for families in need, to assist with the cost of extra-curricular activities, educational visits, school clothing and other essential items.

Cllr J Aitman	Jul 2027
Mrs S Simpson	May 2029
Mr R W Barton*	May 2028
Mr C K Woodward*	May 2026

#### Cogges Welfare Trust Charity – 4-year term of office

The Cogges Welfare Trust Charity maintains the charities property including the upkeep of the Witney Market Clock and Clock House. Remaining income is used for the relief of hardship etc. by the way of grants to people in need.

Cllr J Aitman	Jul 2028
Cllr A Bailey	Jul 2028
Mr H W Chirgwin*	Jul 2028

#### Madley Park Hall Trust - 4-year term of office

Objectives and aims: The provision and maintenance of a village hall for the use of the inhabitants of Witney and the surrounding area without distinction of political, religious, or other opinions, including use for:

- (a) meetings, lectures, and classes, and
- (b) other forms of recreation and leisure-time occupation, with the object of improving the conditions of life for the inhabitants

J Aitman	May 2027
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## **Current Situation**

Arising from the above, the nominees required are listed below:

1. Witney Town Hall Charity: - **2 Council-nominated vacancies**

The term of office of Cllr R Crouch and Mrs L Semaine have come to an end. The Clerk to the Trustees has advised that Mrs Semaine would like to remain on the Trust.

2. Witney Town Charity: -

### **3 Council-nominated vacancies**

The term of office of Mr B Beadle, Mr C Woodward and Cllr R Crouch are due to come to an end in May/June. It is understood from the Committee they would like this arrangement to continue.

The Committee has also informed the Council of their need to expand their Trustee skill set and have a suitable candidate who could assist them with their aims if the Council were to forego one of their other positions.

3. Witney Educational Foundation: -

### **1 Council-nominated vacancy**

The term of office for Mr C Woodward is due to come to an end in May.

### Reporting Arrangements Review

In line with Standing Order 9 (d)(xii) Members are also to review the arrangements for reporting the work of the above bodies to the Council.

Previously, this has been a standing item on the Full Council agendas throughout the year. Members are asked if they would like this to continue or offer a suitable alternative.

## **Impact Assessments**

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Equality – no direct implications.
- b) Biodiversity – no direct implications.
- c) Crime & Disorder – no direct implications.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – no direct implications.

## **Risk**

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

## **Social Value**

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates.

## **Recommendations**

Members are invited to note the report and;

1. consider the appointments to the outside bodies/organisations, and
2. consider the appointments as trustees to the three organisations where trusteeships have or are due to expire this municipal year

- a. 2 x Witney Town Hall Charity
- b. 3 x Witney Town Charity (please note additional request from the Charity)
- c. 1 x Witney Educational Foundation

3. Consider arrangements for reporting back to Council on the work of the bodies/ organisations.



**WITNEY**  
TOWN COUNCIL

## **Scheme of Delegation**

Adopted: 23 June 2025 (min. 365)

Review Date: June 2027

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## 1. Introduction

This Scheme of Delegation outlines the responsibilities and decision-making processes within Witney Town Council, ensuring efficient governance, accountability, and transparency through appropriate delegation of authority.

Under Section 101(a) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Town Council has the power to arrange for the discharge of its functions to a committee, sub-committee, or officer of the authority. This scheme reflects the Council's use of that power and defines the framework within which Council Officers and Committees operate.

Delegation of certain decisions is essential for the effective operation of the Town Council, which manages a range of services and assets. While Members collectively make policy decisions through full Council and its Committees, no individual Member or informal grouping of Members holds authority to act or instruct Officers or contractors. Officers are responsible for advising Members on policy matters and ensuring those policies are carried out in accordance with the law, Council policies, and approved budgets.

The Scheme sets out:

- The roles and responsibilities of Officers and Committees;
- The job titles of those holding delegated authority;
- Any consultation requirements before action is taken;
- The importance of operating within the Council's strategic goals and legal obligations.

Day-to-day management of Council operations rests with the Town Clerk/CEO, who may nominate another named Officer or professional to carry out delegated duties. Such delegations must be recorded in writing.

All delegated powers must be exercised in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders, this Scheme, and any other relevant policies or conditions imposed by the Council. Any deviation from this Scheme must be reported to the Council at the earliest opportunity, with an explanation of the circumstances.

This Scheme will remain in force on an ongoing basis and will be reviewed annually, or sooner if required, to ensure it remains current and effective.

General Principles:

- a) The Town Council will operate within the legal framework set by relevant legislation and regulations
- b) Decision-making will be conducted in accordance with democratic principles, considering the best interests of the community.
- c) Delegated authority will be exercised responsibly, with due consideration for public scrutiny and accountability.

## **2. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **2.1 Council**

The following matters are reserved to the Council for decision, notwithstanding that the appropriate committee(s) may make recommendations for the Council's consideration.

- (1) Approving the Town Council's budget and setting the Precept;
- (2) Agreeing the Town Council's Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement;
- (3) Authorising borrowing;
- (4) Declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence;
- (5) Appointing the Mayor and Deputy Mayor in May each year;
- (6) Execution and sealing of documents;
- (7) Establishing committees and determining their terms of reference and membership;
- (8) Making, amending or revoking Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Committee Terms of Reference or this Scheme of Delegation;
- (9) Making, amending or revoking, re-enacting or adopting by-laws;
- (10) Making of orders under any statutory powers;
- (11) Matters of principle or policy;
- (12) Nomination and appointment of representatives of the Council to any other authority, organisation or body (excepting approved conferences or meetings);
- (13) Any proposed new undertakings;
- (14) Prosecution or defence in a court of law;
- (15) Confirming the appointment of a new Town Clerk, further to a recommendation from the appointed recruitment panel when a vacancy arises;
- (16) Dismissal of the Town Clerk on the recommendation of the Discipline & Grievance Panel;
- (17) Nomination or appointment of representatives of the Council at any inquiry on matters affecting the Town, excluding those matters specific to a committee.
- (18) All other matters which must, by law, be determined by resolution of Full Council.

### **2.2 Proper Officer**

The Town Clerk is employed by the Council (under section 112 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972) and is required to be independent, objective and professional at all times. The Town Clerk serves the Council as a Corporate Body and is answerable to that body, rather than to any individual councillor or group of councillors. Standing Order 3 applies.

The Town Clerk/Chief Executive Officer shall be the Proper Officer of the Council and as such is responsible for all statutory duties imposed, specifically:

- (1) To receive declarations of acceptance of office.
- (2) To receive and record notices disclosing personal and prejudicial interests.
- (3) To receive and retain plans and documents.
- (4) To sign notices or other documents on behalf of the Council.
- (5) To receive copies of by-laws made by the unitary authority.
- (6) To certify copies of by-laws made by the Council.
- (7) To sign summonses to attend meetings of the Council.

In addition, the Town Clerk/Chief Executive Officer has the delegated authority to undertake the following matters on behalf of the Council:

- (1) The day-to-day administration of services, together with routine inspection and control of assets and procedures.
- (2) Day to day supervision and control of all staff employed by the Council, including recruitment.
- (3) Authorisation of routine expenditure within the agreed budget.
- (4) Emergency expenditure up to £5,000 outside the agreed budget.

Delegated actions of the Town Clerk/Chief Executive Officer in accordance with Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and this Scheme of Delegation and with directions given by the Council from time to time.

The Town Clerk is the Council's Proper Officer and in their absence their duties will be fulfilled by the Deputy Town Clerk.

### **2.3 Responsible Financial Officer**

The Responsible Financial Officer to the Council, appointed in accordance with Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, shall be responsible for the Town Council's accounting procedures in compliance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations in force at any given time, and is responsible for all statutory duties imposed.

### **2.4 Mayor/Chair of the Council**

No matter may be delegated to the Mayor except for the following:

- a) Convening an extraordinary meeting of the Full Council.
- b) Receiving the resignation of any member.
- c) When attending a Full Council meeting, the powers granted to a chair of a meeting.

- d) Attending a civic function as a representative of the Council, it being understood that the contents of any speeches must not purport to being the view of the Council unless previously agreed.

## **2.5 Chair of a meeting**

When a councillor acts in the role of the chair of a meeting, they shall have the power to:

- a) Convene an extraordinary meeting of the relevant Council or committee.
- b) Direct the order of speaking.
- c) Direct any response to a question posed during public participation.
- d) Suspend or close a meeting, where a resolution has been made to that effect, or where the meeting is subject to disorderly conduct, in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders
- e) In the case of an equality of votes on any matter, exercise a casting vote.
- f) Determine the rules of debate, in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders.
- g) Determine a point of order.
- h) Put a motion to the vote.
- i) Sign the minutes of a previous meeting, once confirmed by a resolution as an accurate record.
- j) Move that a person be silenced or excluded from the meeting for disorderly conduct.

## **2.6 Councillors**

No matter may be delegated to an individual councillor, except that:

- a) Two councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council, should the Mayor refuse to do so.
- b) Matters may be delegated to an officer to determine *in consultation* with one or more councillors, it being understood that the officer shall not overrule any reasonable request of that member(s), but that the officer's decision shall be final.

No councillor may issue an instruction to an officer but may highlight any issue that they believe requires the attention of the Council.

Any issue regarding staff performance may only be raised with the Town Clerk or through the appropriate committee.

### 3. Committees

Matters delegated to the council's standing committees, sub-committees and task & finish groups are specified under each Terms of Reference; but for avoidance of doubt are summarised below:

**3.1 The Policy, Governance & Finance Committee**, being the Council's Executive Committee, shall consider and determine the following matters:

- Matters of Council administration and policy.
- Consideration of the Council's budget and recommendation of consolidated finance requirements.
- Budgetary control.
- Matters relating to Council owned property and property for which the Council is a tenant.
- Matters properly referred from other Committees within the requirements of Standing Orders.
- Annual, Discretionary, Subsidised Letting and any other Financial Grants.
- Staff Establishment – to make recommendations and to receive reports by the Standing Personnel Sub-Committee.
- To approve the Council's Strategic Plan and any other Council strategies and arrangements for their publication.
- To consider Service Reviews for all services and to report recommendations to Council at the conclusion of the matters reviewed.
- To deal with any other relevant issue arising from the implementation of any new legislation.
- To review and manage the Council's contracts

**3.2 The Parks & Recreation Committee** shall consider and determine the following matters – operating within budget and Council Policy:

- The operation of all recreation grounds, parks and public open spaces and to initiate and oversee all matters of control properly associated with this recreation function.
- To oversee all sports activities upon any recreation ground or other recreational open space and building erected for such purposes thereon.

**3.3 The Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee** shall consider and determine the following matters – operating within budget and Council Policy:

- The operation of the Council's public halls – currently the Corn Exchange and Burwell Hall (and any others that are leased to third parties or which may come into the Council's custodianship in the future).

- The operation of the cemeteries, burial responsibilities and associated duties, consequential to Statutory or Council requirements, together with the War Memorials.
- To carry out the Council's obligations with regard to the Closed Churchyards of St Mary's and Holy Trinity.
- Overseeing the management of the Council's allotments provision – currently run by the Witney Allotment Association.

**3.4** The **Stronger Communities Committee** shall consider and determine the following matters – operating within budget and Council Policy:

- To consider all matters not within the specific terms of reference of any other Committee such as; town centre street furniture (seats, litter bins), bus shelters/public transport, CCTV, noticeboards and Christmas Lights displays.
- To organise special events such as Freedom Parades, Remembrance Sunday and other Civic events within the programme and the budget agreed by the Council.
- To work in collaboration with other partnerships on town wide events such as Witney Music Festival, the Christmas Lights Switch-on and others that may arise from time to time.
- To help facilitate entertainment and community events in such parks, recreation grounds or elsewhere in the Council's management at its discretion.
- To oversee the Council's communication and publications – such as the website, social media and newsletters.
- To oversee the work of the Youth Council.
- To recognise the value and benefit of voluntary groups and endeavours within our community, including provision of youth services, supporting and helping to facilitate where possible.

**3.5** The **Planning & Development Committee** shall consider and determine the following matters – in accordance with Council Policy, the West Oxfordshire Local Plan, the National Planning Policy Framework and any other legislation which is appropriate:

- To comment on planning applications received from the local planning authority within statutory timescales.
- Licensing matters.
- To comment on behalf of the Council on Local Plans, Structure Plans, Mineral Plans, Waste Plans, Regional Plans and any other Plans or Studies as considered appropriate.
- To deal with matters relating to street and footway lighting; traffic control and traffic notices, including on and off-street parking; street naming and road closures; footpaths and subways.
- Any other matter which may be delegated to it by the Council from time to time

- To receive the minutes of the Witney Traffic Advisory Committee.

**3.6** The **Climate & Biodiversity Committee** shall consider and determine the following matters – operating within budget and Council Policy:

- To oversee the management of the Lake & Country Park, working with other organisations to ensure proper use – such as a grazier, the angling clubs and others.
- To deal with all other matters relating to the environment and biodiversity, including horticulture (trees, bulbs, wildflowers, shrubs, floral displays etc).
- To oversee the reduction in the Council’s Carbon footprint in response to the Climate Emergency declared in 2019 to help achieve neutrality by 2028.
- To lobby other Authorities and Organisations to improve the quality of life by residents in respect of water and air quality.

A Committee may refer matters on which it has delegated authority to the Council for a final decision if it so wishes.

## **4. Sub Committees**

**4.1** The **Personnel Sub-Committee** shall be delegated to make decisions on behalf of the Council in the following matters: relating to the appointment, conduct, promotion, dismissal, salary and conditions of service of all persons employed by the Council.

Policy on the following matters is reserved to the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee for decision but the sub-committee may also make policy recommendations relating to:

- Salaries;
- Conditions of service;
- Staff levels;
- Consideration of staffing reviews.

**4.2** The **Discipline & Grievance Panel** is delegated to make decisions on the behalf of the Council in the following matters:

- Hearings for grievance, disciplinary and capability matters for the Town Clerk/C.E.O and senior managers in accordance with the Council’s grievance and disciplinary procedure.
- Dealing with any grievance, disciplinary and capability matters for the Town Clerk/C.E.O and senior managers to a final conclusion, only reporting to Council when the time for any appeal has passed.

**4.3** An **Appeals Panel** will be formed as and when required ensuring impartiality and fairness for the employee at all times, to deal with and conclude matters relating to:

- Appeals against decisions made by or on behalf of the Town Clerk/C.E.O in grievance, disciplinary and capability matters
- Dealing with appeals to a final conclusion, only reporting to Council the actions it has taken at the end of the process

**4.4** Other standing sub-committees may be formed by resolution of the Council at any time under Standing Order 30 and delegated powers may be decided upon at the time the sub-committee is formed by means of a minute detailing the terms of reference.

## **5. Working Groups/Parties**

**5.1** Working groups/parties may be formed by resolution of the Council or a committee at any time. The work of such a working group/party will be decided upon at the time it is formed by means of a minute detailing the terms of reference. Each working group/party will report back with recommendations to the Council or the committee that formed it.

## **6. Urgent Matters**

In line with Standing Order 4:

- (1) In the event of any matter arising which requires an urgent decision, the Town Clerk/C.E.O shall consult the Leader of the Council and Chair of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee(or Vice Chair if they are one in the same), and with the concurrence of those member(s) shall have delegated power to act on behalf of the Council in respect of the particular matter then under consideration.
- (2) Before exercising the delegated powers granted by paragraph 7 (1) above, the Town Clerk/C.E.O and those members consulted shall consider whether the matter is of sufficient interest to justify the summoning of a special meeting of the appropriate committee and where a meeting is so summoned the committee concerned shall have delegated power to act on behalf of the Council in respect of the particular matter then under consideration.
- (3) Before exercising the delegated powers granted by paragraph 7 (1) above, the committee concerned shall consider whether the matter is of sufficient importance to justify recommending to the Mayor that a special meeting of the Council should be called in accordance with Standing Order 7.

- (4) Any action taken under this Standing Order must be recorded in writing and made available for inspection by any member of the Council. Full details of the circumstances justifying the urgency and of the action taken shall be submitted in writing to the next available meetings of the Committee concerned and of the Council.

## **7. Delegation - Limitations**

Committees and sub-committees shall, at all times, act in accordance with the Council's standing orders, financial regulations and this scheme of delegation and, where applicable, any other rules, regulations, schemes, statutes, by-laws or orders made and with any directions given by the Council from time to time.



**WITNEY**  
TOWN COUNCIL

## **Standing Orders**

Adopted: 23 June 2025 (minute. 363)

Review Date: May 2026

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## 1. Office Holders of the Council

- a) **The Chair, known as the Town Mayor, who shall chair meetings of the Council** and be an ex-officio voting member of every committee and carry out civic duties as required.
- b) **The Chair of the Council, unless they have resigned or becomes disqualified, shall continue in office, and preside at the annual meeting until their successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the Council.**
- c) The Vice-Chair, known as the Deputy Town Mayor, who shall deputise for the Mayor in all duties in the Mayor's absence.
- d) **Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chair of the Council may in their absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chair of the Council**
- e) **The Vice-Chair of the Council, unless they resign or become disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chair of the Council at the next annual meeting of the Council.**
- f) The Leader of the Council, who shall be an ex-officio voting member of every committee.
- g) The Deputy-Leader, who shall deputise for the Leader in all duties in the Leader's absence.

## 2. Election of Mayor Elect/Designate

- a) At the council meeting prior to the annual meeting of the council, the Mayor designate shall be appointed for the forthcoming year.

## 3. Proper Officer

- a) The Proper Officer shall be either the (i) Town Clerk/Chief Executive Officer or (ii) other staff member(s) appointed by the Council to undertake the work of the Proper Officer when the Proper Officer is absent.
- b) The Proper Officer shall:
  - i. **at least three clear days before a meeting of the Council, a committee, or a sub-committee,**
    - **serve on Councillors by delivery or post at their residences or by email authenticated in such manner as the Proper Officer thinks fit, a signed summons confirming the time, place, and the agenda (provided the Councillor has consented to service by email), and**

- **Provide, in a conspicuous place, a 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).**

Clarification on notice periods is as follows:

**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.**

**The minimum three clear days' 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.**

- ii. subject to SO 18, include on the agenda all motions in the order received unless a Councillor has given written notice at least 7 days before the meeting confirming withdrawal of it.
- iii. convene a meeting of full council for the election of a new Chair of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in their office;
- iv. **facilitate inspection of the minute book by local government electors;**
- v. **receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities;**
- vi. hold acceptance of office forms from Councillors;
- vii. hold a copy of every Councillor's register of interests;
- viii. assist with responding to requests made under Freedom of Information legislation and rights exercisable under data protection legislation in accordance with the council's policies and procedures;
- ix. liaise, as appropriate with the Council's Data Protection Officer;
- 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;
- xiii. arrange or manage the prompt authorisation, approval, and instruction regarding any payments to be made by the council in accordance with the council's financial regulations;

- xiv. record every planning application notified to the Council and the Council's response to the local planning authority.
- xv. refer a planning application received by the Council to the Chair, Vice-Chair and/or the Planning committee to facilitate a response if the nature or deadline of the consultation requires consideration before its next ordinary meeting. In such case, the details shall be raised as an agenda item at the next ordinary meeting to formalise the response.
- xvi. manage access to information about the council via the publication scheme; and
- xvii. retain custody of the seal of the council which shall not be used without a resolution to that effect.

#### 4. Delegation of Urgent and Routine Matters

- a) There shall be delegated to the Town Clerk/Chief Executive Officer the authority to act in respect of any function of the council on a matter, which in their opinion does not admit of delay or is routine. This delegated authority shall only be exercised in consultation with the Chair or Vice-Chair of the committee or sub-committee within whose terms of reference the particular function lies.
- b) Each exercise of delegated authority under this standing order shall be reported for information to the next meeting of the committee or sub-committee within whose terms of reference the particular function lies and to Council.
- c) The Town Clerk/Chief Executive Officer shall notify all members of any action taken under this standing order.
- d) The delegations in this standing order are in addition to and without prejudice to the powers of the council or its committees to arrange for the discharge of any of its functions by a sub-committee or an officer.

#### 5. Meetings

- Full Council meetings ●
- Committee meetings ●
- Sub-committee meetings ●

- a) **Meetings shall not take place in premises which at the time of the meeting are used for the supply of alcohol, unless no other premises are available free of charge or at a reasonable cost. ●**
  - i. Meetings of the Full Council shall be held at the Corn Exchange at 7pm on a Monday unless the Council decides otherwise.

- ii. Committee meetings shall generally be held at the Corn Exchange at 6pm on a Monday unless the Council decides otherwise. The exception being the Climate, Biodiversity & Planning meeting which shall generally be held at 6pm on a Tuesday unless the Council decides otherwise.
  
- b) **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. ●●**
  
- c) 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.
  
- d) The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with standing order 5(e) shall not exceed twenty minutes unless directed by the chair of the meeting.
  
- e) Subject to standing order 5(f), a member of the public shall not speak for more than five minutes
  
- f) In accordance with standing order 5(e), a question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The chair of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.
  
- g) A person shall raise their hand when requesting to speak and remain silent until directed by the Chair and may stand when speaking if they choose to do so;
  
- h) Whenever the Chair rises during a debate all other members shall be seated and silent;
  
- i) A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct their comments to the chair of the meeting.
  
- j) Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the chair of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.
  
- k) **Subject to standing order 5(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. ●●**

- l) **A person present at a meeting may not provide an oral report or oral commentary about a meeting as it takes place without permission. ●●**
- m) **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. ●●**
- n) **The Chair of the Council, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chair is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chair of the Council shall preside. If both the Chair and the Vice-Chair are absent from a meeting, a councillor as chosen by the councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting. ●**
- o) **Subject to a meeting being quorate, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the councillors and non-councillors with voting rights present and voting. ●●●**
- p) **The chair of a meeting may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise their casting vote whether or not he gave an original vote. ●●●**
- q) **Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on a question shall be by a show of hands ay council, committee or sub-committee. 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 their vote for or against that question. Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda. ●**
- r) The minutes of a meeting shall include an accurate record of the following:
  - i. the time and place of the meeting;
  - ii. the names of councillors who are present and the names of councillors who are absent with apologies received;
  - 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
- s) **A councillor or a non-councillor with voting rights who has a disclosable pecuniary interest or another interest as set out in the Council's code of conduct**

**in a matter being considered at a meeting is subject to statutory limitations or restrictions under the code on their right to participate and vote on that matter.**



- t) **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 5(u) for the quorum of a committee or sub-committee meeting.*

- u) Six members shall constitute a quorum of the Council, but a motion to suspend or amend this standing order shall not be moved without written notice signed by twice as many members as constitute the quorum.
- v) If, after ten minutes a Quorum is not present, **or 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. ●●●
- w) A meeting shall not exceed a period of two hours unless it has been specifically agreed by that meeting.

## **6. Rules of Debate at Meetings**

- a) Motions on the agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear unless the order is changed at the discretion of the Chair of the meeting.
- b) A motion (including an amendment) shall not be progressed unless it has been moved and seconded.
- c) A motion on the agenda that is not moved by its proposer may be treated by the Chair of the meeting as withdrawn.
- d) If a motion (including an amendment) has been seconded, it may be withdrawn by the proposer only with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
- e) An amendment is a proposal to remove or add words to a motion. It shall not negate the motion.
- f) If an amendment to the original motion is carried, the original motion (as amended) becomes the substantive motion upon which further amendment(s) may be moved.
- g) An amendment shall not be considered unless early verbal notice of it is given at the meeting and, if requested by the Chair of the meeting, is expressed in writing to the Chair.

- h) A councillor may move an amendment to their own motion if agreed by the meeting, If a motion has already been seconded, the amendment shall be with the consent of the seconder at the meeting.
- i) If there is more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion, the amendments shall be moved in the order directed by the Chair of the meeting.
- j) Subject to Standing Order 6(i), only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the Chair of the meeting.
- k) One or more amendments may be discussed together if the Chair of the meeting considers this expedient but each amendment shall be voted on separately.
- l) A Councillor may not move more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion.
- m) The mover of an amendment has no right to reply at the end of the debate on it.
- n) Where a series of amendments to an original motion are carried, the mover of the original motion shall have the right to reply either at the end of debate on the first amendment or at the very end of debate on the final substantive motion immediately before it is put to the vote.
- o) Unless permitted by the Chair of the meeting, a Councillor may speak once in the debate on the motion, except:
  - i. to speak on an amendment moved by another Councillor;
  - ii. to move or speak on another amendment if the motion has been amended since they last spoke;
  - iii. to make a point of order;
  - iv. to give a personal explanation; or
  - v. to exercise a right of reply.
- p) During the debate on a motion, a councillor may interrupt only on a point of order or a personal explanation and the Councillor who was interrupted shall stop speaking. A Councillor raising a point of order shall identify the standing order which they consider has been breached or specify the other irregularity in the proceedings of the meeting they are concerned by.
- q) A point of order shall be decided by the Chair of the meeting and their decision shall be final.

- r) When a motion is under debate, no other motion shall be moved except:
  - i. to amend the motion;
  - ii. to proceed to the next business;
  - iii. to adjourn the debate;
  - iv. to put the motion to a debate;
  - v. to ask a person to be no longer heard or to leave the meeting;
  - vi. to refer a motion to a committee or sub-committee for consideration;
  - vii. to exclude the press and public;
  - viii. to adjourn the meeting; or
  - ix. to suspend particular standing order(s) excepting those which reflect mandatory statutory or legal requirements.
- s) Before an original or substantive motion is put to the vote, the Chair of the meeting shall be satisfied that the motion has been sufficiently debated and that the mover of the motion under debate has exercised or waived their right to reply.
- t) Excluding motions moved under standing order 6(s), the contributions or speeches by a councillor shall relate only to the motion under discussion and shall not exceed 5 minutes without the consent of the Chair of the meeting.

## **7. 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 Chair of the meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.
- b) If person(s) disregard(s) the request of the Chair of the meeting to moderate or improve their conduct, any councillor or the Chair of the meeting may move that the person be no longer heard or excluded from the meeting. The motion, if seconded, shall be put to the vote without discussion.
- c) If a resolution made under paragraph (b) above is ignored, the Chair of the meeting may take further reasonable steps to restore order or to progress the meeting. This may include temporarily suspending or closing the meeting.

## **8. Committees and Sub-committees**

- a) **Unless the Council determines otherwise, a committee may appoint a sub-committee whose terms of reference and members shall be determined by that 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) The Mayor and Leader of the Council shall be an ex-officio member with voting rights on all committees.
- d) **Unless the Council determines otherwise, all the members of an advisory committee and sub-committee of the advisory committee may be non-councillors.**
- 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 the respect of the ordinary meetings of a committee, to determine the number and time of its meetings;
  - iv. shall, subject to Standing Order 8(b) and (d), appoint and determine the terms of office of members of such a committee;
  - v. may, subject to Standing Order 8(b) and (d), appoint and determine the terms of office of the substitute members to a Committee whose role is to replace the ordinary members at a meeting of a committee if the ordinary members of the committee confirm to the Proper Officer (or appointed officer) 7 days before the meeting that they are unable to attend;
  - vi. shall, after it has appointed the members of a standing committee, appoint the Chair of the standing committee;
  - vii. every committee shall at its first meeting elect a Vice-Chair, who shall hold office until the next annual meeting of the council
  - viii. shall permit a committee other than a standing committee, to appoint its own Chair at the first meeting of the committee;
  - ix. shall determine the place, notice requirements and quorum for a meeting of the committee and a sub-committee which, in both cases, shall be no less than three;
  - x. the Chair of the committee shall be a member of every sub- committee appointed by it unless wishing not to serve and such is recorded in the minutes of the committee appointing the sub- committee;
  - xi. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of the committee;

- xii. shall determine if the public and press are permitted to attend the meetings of a sub-committee and also the advance public notice requirements, if any, are required for the meeting of a sub-committee;
- xiii. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of the sub-committee that they are permitted to attend;
- xiv. may dissolve a committee or a sub-committee;
- XV. may appoint sub-committees for purposes to be specified by the committee but such sub-committee shall submit all recommendations to the committee unless power to act has been granted by the council for a specified purpose;
- xvi. the standing orders on rules of debate (except those parts relating to standing and to speaking more than once), voting and the standing order on interests of members and the code of conduct shall apply to committee and sub-committee meetings in so far as they are appropriate.
- xvii. In the event that an in-person meeting cannot be held, or if the business of the meeting is subject to a time limit set by statute and delegation is given to a committee under its terms of reference, it may be held virtually as an Advisory Committee with the same rules of debate as other committees. Any recommendations being affirmed at the full meeting of that committee, Full Council or under delegations to the Town Clerk/CEO.

## **9. Ordinary Council Meetings**

- a) **In an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the councillors elected take office.**
- b) **In a year which is not an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on such day in May as the Council decides.**
- c) **If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the Council shall take place at 6pm.**
- d) **In addition to the annual meeting of the council, at least three other ordinary meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times as the council directs.**
- e) **The first business shall be to elect a Chair** (Town Mayor, see standing order 4) **the Vice-Chair** (Deputy Town Mayor) and the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council.
- f) **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.**

- g) **In an election year, if the current Chair of the Council has not been re-elected as a member of the Council, they shall preside at the annual meeting until a successor Chair of the Council has been elected. The current Chair of the Council shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chair of the Council but shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**
- h) **In an election year, if the current Chair of the Council has been re-elected as a member of the Council, they shall preside at the annual meeting until a new Chair of the Council has been elected. They may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chair of the Council and shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**
- i) Following the elections and appointments at paragraph (e) above, the business at the annual meeting shall include:
  - i. **in an election year, delivery by the Town Mayor of the Council and councillors of their acceptance of office forms unless the council resolves for this to be done at a later date. In a year which is not an election year, delivery by the Chair of the Council of their acceptance of office form unless the council resolves for this to be done at a later date;**
  - ii. to receive apologies for absence;
  - iii. to receive any declarations of interests;
  - iv. Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.
  - v. confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the council;
  - vi. Receipt of the minutes of the committee cycle and consideration of its recommendations (if appropriate);
  - vii. appointment of members to committees, working parties, advisory committees, and outside organisations;
  - viii. review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, staff, and other local authorities;
  - ix. review of the terms of reference for committees;
  - x. appointment of any new committees;
  - xi. to review and adopt appropriate standing orders, financial regulations and other Council policies;
  - xii. review of representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back;
  - xiii. review of arrangements (including legal agreements) with other local authorities, not-for-profit bodies and businesses

- xiv. in an election year, to review the Council's eligibility to exercise the general power of competence.

## 10. Order of Business at Ordinary Meetings

- a) After the first business has been completed at meetings other than the annual meeting, the order of business, unless the Council decides otherwise on the ground of urgency, shall be as follows:
  - i. to receive apologies;
  - ii. to receive any declarations of interests;
  - iii. **to approve and adopt the minutes as a correct record in accordance with standing order 26;**
  - iv. **to deal with business expressly required by the statute to be done before any other business;**
  - v. to consider any requests for public participation in accordance with standing order 5(d);
  - vi. to receive and agree the Committee minutes including considering recommendations;
    - 1. The Chair shall propose that the minutes of the Council be approved as a correct record and seek a seconder;
    - 2. The Chair shall go through the minutes to allow members to raise any points of accuracy;
    - 3. No motion or discussion shall take place upon the minutes except upon their accuracy;
    - 4. The Chair shall sign the minutes;
    - 5. The Chair shall then page through the minutes for questions to the Leader of the Council as to the progress of any item;
    - 6. Subject to the publication of draft minutes and resolution which confirms their accuracy, the draft minutes, or recordings of the meetings for which approved minutes exist shall be destroyed at the earliest opportunity.
  - vii. to receive the Mayor's report;
  - viii. to dispose of business, if any, remaining from the last meeting;
  - ix. to agree the schedules of financial payments recommended by the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee;

- x. to receive such communications as the Leader of the Council may wish to bring before the Council and to consider the recommendation of the Leader on how such communications should be dealt with;
- xi. to consider motions in the order in which they have been notified;
- xii. to consider any other matters specified in the summons, including reports from officers;
- xiii. to receive correspondence for information;
- xiv. questions to the Leader of the Council;
- xv. to authorise the sealing of documents;
- xvi. to consider confidential and exempt matters.

#### **11. Extraordinary Meetings of the Council, Committees & Sub-committees**

- a) **The Chair of the Council may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council at any time.**
- b) **If the Chair of the Council does not call an extraordinary meeting of the council within seven days of having been requested in writing to do so by two Councillors, any two Councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of the council. The public notice giving the time, place, and agenda for such a meeting shall be signed by the two Councillors.**
- c) The Chair of a Committee or Sub-Committee, in consultation with the Proper Officer, may convene an extraordinary meeting at any time.

#### **12. Special Committee Meetings**

- a) The Chair of a committee or a sub-committee may convene a special meeting of the committee or the sub-committee at any time.
- b) If the Chair of a committee or a sub-committee does not or refuses to call a special meeting within seven days of having been requested to do so by two members of the committee or the sub-committee, any two members of the committee and the sub-committee may convene a special meeting of that committee and a sub-committee.

#### **13. Working Parties and Task & Finish Groups**

- a) The Council may from time to time appoint working parties or groups to deal with a specific function or project.

- b) Membership and terms of reference of such working parties or groups, including possible external membership, the number required for a quorum and voting rights, shall be determined at their formation.
- c) The provisions relating to committees and sub-committees in standing orders will apply, with the exception of standing order 8(c) which provides for the Mayor and Leader being ex-officio voting members of every committee.

#### **14. Presence of non-members of Committees and Sub-committees at Meetings**

- a) A Member who has proposed a motion which has been referred to any committee of which they are not a member, may explain their motion to the committee but shall not vote.
- b) Any Member shall, unless the council otherwise orders, be entitled to be present as a spectator at the meetings of any committee or sub-committee of which they are not a Member and may speak if so invited but shall not vote.

#### **15. 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 four members of the council to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 18, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the recommendation of a committee or a sub-committee.
- b) When a motion moved pursuant to standing order 15(b) above has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved within a further six months.

#### **16. Representation on Outside Bodies – Termination of Membership**

- a) The appointment of Members of the Council to outside bodies in their capacity as a Member of the Town Council shall, subject to the rules of that body, terminate if the Member appointed ceases to be a Member of the Council.

#### **17. 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 their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. A tie in votes may be settled by the casting vote exercisable by the Chair of the meeting.

## **18. 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 18(b), correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.
- d) If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with standing order 18(b) is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it, so that it can be understood, in writing, to the Proper Officer at least 7 clear days before the meeting.
- e) If the wording or subject of a proposed motion is considered improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the Chair of the forthcoming meeting or, as the case may be, the councillors who have convened the meeting, to consider whether the motion shall be included in the agenda or rejected.
- f) The decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.
- g) Motions received shall be recorded and numbered in the order in which they are received and entered in a book which shall be open for inspection by any member of the Council.
- h) Motions rejected shall be recorded with an explanation by the Proper Officer of the reason for rejection.
- i) The Clerk/Chief Executive Officer shall insert in the summons for every meeting all notices of motion properly given in the order in which they have been received unless the member giving a notice of motion has stated in writing that he/she intends to move at some later meeting or that he/she withdraws it.
- j) If a motion specified in the summons is not moved at the meeting, it shall, unless postponed by the Council, be treated as withdrawn and shall not be moved without fresh notice.

- k) If the subject matter of a motion comes within the responsibility of a Committee of the Council, it shall, upon being moved and seconded, stand referred without discussion to such Committee or to such other Committee as the Council may determine for report; provided that the Chair, if they considers it to be a matter of urgency, may allow it to be dealt with at the meeting at which it was moved.

## **19. 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 or matter to a particular committee or sub-committee;
  - v. to appoint a person to preside at a meeting;
  - vi. to change the order of business on the agenda;
  - vii. to proceed to the next business on the agenda;
  - viii. to require a written report;
  - ix. to appoint a committee or sub-committee and their members;
  - x. to extend the time limits for speaking;
  - xi. to exclude the press and public from a meeting in respect of confidential or sensitive information which is prejudicial to the public interest;
  - xii. to not hear further from a councillor or a member of the public;
  - xiii. to exclude a councillor or member of the public for disorderly conduct in accordance with standing order 7(a);
  - xiv. to temporarily suspend the meeting;
  - xv. to suspend a particular standing order (unless it reflects mandatory statutory requirements);
  - xvi. to adjourn the meeting; or
  - xvii. to close a meeting.

## **20. Motions on Expenditure**

- a) If any motion proposed, would, in the opinion of the Chair, if carried substantially increase the expenditure upon any service which is under the management of, or

reduce the revenue at the disposal of any committee, or would involve capital expenditure, it shall, when proposed and seconded stand adjourned without discussion until such time as any committee affected by it and the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee has reported on the matter.

## **21. Inspection of Documents**

- a) A Member may for the purposes of their duty as such (but not otherwise), inspect any document relevant to such purpose in possession of the Council or a Committee, and if copies are available shall, on request, be supplied for the like purpose with a copy

## **22. Questions**

- a) A Member of the Council may ask the Leader of the Council any question concerning the business of the Council. Any such questions shall be put when the item “Questions to the Leader of the Council” is reached.
- b) A Member of the Council, with or without notice, may ask the Chair of a Committee any question upon the proceedings of the Committee then before the Council if the question is put before the Council’s consideration of those proceedings is finished.
- c) Every question shall be put and answered without debate.
- d) A person to whom a question has been put may decline to answer.
- e) Where the desired information to a question is contained in any of the Council’s publications, it shall be deemed a sufficient reply if the publication containing the reply is indicated.
- f) Where the reply to any question cannot be conveniently given orally it shall be deemed a sufficient reply if the answer is circulated to the members of the Council with the minutes of the Meeting at which the question has been asked.

## **23. Handling Staff Matters**

- a) A matter personal to a member of staff that is being considered by a meeting of the Council is subject to standing order (management of information)
- b) All 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.
- c) If at a meeting there arises any question relating to the appointment, conduct, promotion, dismissal, salary or conditions of service, of any person employed by the

council, it shall not be considered until the council or committee (as the case may be) has decided whether or not the public and press shall be excluded

#### **24. Management of Information**

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

#### **25. Public Participation**

- a) For all meetings of the Council and its standing committees, an item entitled "public participation" shall be included on the agenda for that meeting immediately after "minutes"
- b) Members of the public may speak for a maximum of five minutes each during the period of public participation. Matters raised shall relate to items on the agenda for that particular meeting.
- c) Following submission by a member of the public, any Member of the Council may, through the Chair, ask questions of the person(s) concerned for clarification purposes or on points of information.
- d) Any question from the member of the public shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The Chair of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.
- e) A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct their comments to the Chair of the meeting.
- f) Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the Chair of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking. If more than one

person wants to speak on the same or a similar issue, they shall elect one person to speak on their behalf.

- g) The Chair may move the order of business be altered to take the matter on which the public has made representations immediately after the minutes of the meeting have been approved, or in such other place as seems appropriate.
- h) Total public participation lasts no longer for 25 minutes. Questions not answered within that period will receive a written reply.

## 26. Draft Minutes

Full Council meetings	●
Committee meetings	●
Sub-committee meetings	●

- a) If the draft minutes of a preceding meeting have been served on councillors with the agenda to attend the meeting at which they are due to be approved for accuracy, they shall be taken as read.
- b) There shall be no discussion about the draft minutes of a preceding meeting except in relation to their accuracy. A motion to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes shall be moved in accordance with standing order 19.
- c) The accuracy of draft minutes, including any amendment(s) made to them, shall be confirmed by resolution and shall be signed by the chair of the meeting and stand as an accurate record of the meeting to which the minutes relate.
- d) If the chair of the meeting does not consider the minutes to be an accurate record of the meeting to which they relate, he shall sign the minutes and include a paragraph in the following terms or to the same effect

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

- e) **If the Council’s gross annual income or expenditure (whichever is higher) does not exceed £25,000, it shall publish draft minutes on a website which is publicly accessible and free of charge not later than one month after the meeting has taken place.**
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- f) Subject to the publication of draft minutes in accordance with standing order 26(a)

and standing order 26(c) and following a resolution which confirms the accuracy of the minutes of a meeting, the draft minutes or recordings of the meeting for which approved minutes exist shall be destroyed.

## **27. Presentation of Committee Minutes**

- a) At each ordinary meeting of the council every standing committee shall present reports and recommendations in the form of draft minutes of any meeting held since the previous ordinary meeting of the council.
- b) The Committee Chair, or the member presenting the minutes, shall page through the minutes, and members may ask questions for answering.
- c) The Committee Chair, or member presenting the minutes, shall then propose that the minutes be adopted, and once seconded shall be discussed and dealt with by the council.
- d) Where an amendment is proposed prior to the adoption of the minutes by the council, the subject of any such amendment shall be discussed and disposed of before the adoption of the minutes are considered by the council.
- e) In moving the adoption of the minutes, the mover is deemed to have moved the minutes in their entirety and all paragraphs and recommendations contained therein shall be deemed to have been adopted unless any amendment thereto has been moved.
- f) Paragraphs which do not contain recommendations, or which relate to matters specifically and fully delegated to standing committees, may be discussed but no motion shall be considered other than a motion as to the future work of a committee in such matters.

## **28. Code of Conduct and Dispensations**

- a) All councillors or and non-councillors shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the Council.
- b) All Councillors will observe the NALC Civility & Respect Pledge taken by the town council.
- c) Unless they have been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest. They may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which they have the interest.
- d) Unless they have been granted a dispensation, a councillor or no-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which they have

another interest if so required by the Council's code of conduct. They may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which they had the interest.

- e) **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.
- f) A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by a meeting of the council, or committee or sub-committee for which the dispensation is required and that decision is final.
- g) 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.
- h) Subject to paragraphs (e) and (g) above, dispensations requests shall be considered at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.
- i) **A dispensation may be granted in accordance with paragraph (f) above if having regard to all relevant circumstances the following applies:**
  - i. **without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from participating in the particular business would be so great a proportion of the meeting transacting the business as to impede the 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.**

## 29. Code of Conduct Complaints

- a) **Upon notification by West Oxfordshire District Council that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the council's code of conduct, the council shall consider what, if any, action to take against them. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office.**

### **30. 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.

### **31. Accounts and Accounting Statements**

- a) 'Proper practices' in standing orders refer to the most recent version of 'Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioner's 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 or 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.
- f) A completed draft annual governance and accountability return shall be presented to all Councillors at least 7 days prior to anticipated approval by the Council. 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.

### **32. 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 £60,000 due to special circumstances are exempt from a tendering process or procurement exercise.
- a) Financial regulations shall be reviewed regularly and at least annually for fitness of purpose.
- b) 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. Tenders are to be submitted in writing in a sealed marked envelope addressed to the Proper Officer;
  - iv. Tenders shall be opened by the Proper Officer in the presence of at least one councillor after the deadline for the submission of tenders has passed;
  - v. Tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate meeting of the Council or a Committee or sub-committee with delegated responsibility.

- c) Neither the Council, nor a Committee or a sub-committee with delegated responsibility for considering tenders, is bound to accept the lowest value tender.
- d) **Where the value of the contract is likely to exceed the threshold specified by the Government from time to time, the Council must consider whether the contract is subject to the requirements of the current procurement legislation and, if so, the Council must comply with procurement rules.**

### **33. General Power of Competence**

- a) Before exercising the general power of competence, a meeting of the full council shall have passed a resolution to confirm it has satisfied the prescribed statutory criteria required to qualify as an eligible parish council.
- b) The Council's period of eligibility begins on the date that the resolution under standing order 9 was made and expires on the day of the annual meeting of the council that takes place in a year of ordinary elections.
- c) After the expiry of its preceding period of eligibility, the council continues to be an eligible council solely for the purpose of completing any activity undertaken in the exercise of the general power of competence which was not completed before the expiry of the council's preceding period of eligibility referred to in standing order 9.

### **34. Responsibilities to Provide Information**

- a) **In accordance with the freedom of information legislation, the Council shall publish information in accordance with its publication scheme and respond to requests for information held by the Council.**
- b) **The Council shall publish information in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015.**

### **35. Responsibilities under Data Protection Legislation**

- 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 their personal data;**
- c) **The Council shall have a written policy in place for responding to and managing a personal data breach.**

- d) **The Council shall keep a record of all personal data breaches comprising the facts relating to the personal data breach, its effects and the remedial action taken.**
- e) **The Council shall ensure that information communicated in its privacy notice(s) is in an easily accessible and available form and kept up to date.**
- f) **The Council shall maintain a written record of its processing activities.**

### **36. Relations with the Press & Media**

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

### **37. Execution and Sealing of Documents**

- a) A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the council unless authorised by a resolution.
- b) **Subject to standing order 3(b), the council's common seal shall alone be used for sealing a deed required by law. It shall be applied by the Proper Officer and Town Mayor.**

### **38. Signature of Documents**

- a) Where any document will be a necessary step in legal proceedings on behalf of the Council it shall be signed by the Town Clerk, unless any enactment otherwise requires or authorises, or the Council shall have given the necessary authority to some other person for the purpose of such attestation.

### **39. Canvassing of Recommendations by, and Relationship to Members**

- a) Canvassing of Members or of any committee, directly or indirectly, for any appointment under the council shall disqualify the candidate for such appointment. The Proper Officer shall make known this sub-paragraph to every candidate.
- b) A Member of the Council shall not solicit for any person any appointment under the council or recommend any person for such appointment or for promotion, but, nevertheless, a Member may give a written testimonial of a candidate's ability, experience or character for submission to the council with an application for appointment.

- c) If a candidate for any appointment under the council is to their knowledge related to any Member of, or the holder of any office under, the council, they and the person to whom they are related shall disclose the relationship in writing to the Proper Officer. Any breach of this standing order is to be reported to the council.
- d) This standing order shall apply to tenders as if the person making the tender were a candidate for an appointment.

#### **40. Restrictions on Councillor Activities**

- a) Unless duly authorised no Councillor shall:
  - i. inspect any land and/or premises which the Council has a right or duty to inspect; or
  - ii. issue orders, instructions or directions.

#### **41. Standing Orders Generally**

- a) All or part of a standing order, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory requirements and are in bold type, may be suspended by resolution in relation to the consideration of an item on the agenda for a meeting.
- b) A motion to add to or vary or revoke one or more of the council's standing orders, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory or legal requirements, shall be proposed by a special motion, the written notice by at least 4 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 18.
- c) A resolution permanently to add, vary or revoke a Standing Order shall when proposed and seconded stand adjourned without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council, and if so directed, upon a report of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee.
- d) The scheduled review of Standing Orders shall be initiated by the Proper Officer and once proposed and seconded, will stand adjourned without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council and, if so directed, upon a report to the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee (as the only exception to standing order 41(b)).
- e) The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the council's standing orders to a councillor as soon as possible.
- f) The decision of the Chair of a meeting as to the application of standing orders at the meeting shall be final.



**WITNEY**  
TOWN COUNCIL

## **FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

Adopted: 9<sup>th</sup> June 2025 (F328)

Review Date: June 2026

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## 1. General

- 1.1. These Financial Regulations govern the financial management of the council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the council. They are one of the council's governing documents and shall be observed in conjunction with the council's Standing Orders.
- 1.2. Councillors are expected to follow these regulations and not to entice employees to breach them. Failure to follow these regulations brings the office of councillor into disrepute.
- 1.3. Wilful breach of these regulations by an employee may result in disciplinary proceedings.
- 1.4. In these Financial Regulations:
  - 'Accounts and Audit Regulations' means the regulations issued under Sections 32, 43(2) and 46 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, or any superseding legislation, and then in force, unless otherwise specified.
  - "Approve" refers to an online action, allowing an electronic transaction to take place.
  - "Authorise" refers to a decision by the council, or a committee or an officer, to allow something to happen.
  - 'Proper practices' means those set out in *The Practitioners' Guide*
  - *Practitioners' Guide* refers to the guide issued by the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) and published by NALC in England or Governance and Accountability for Local Councils in Wales – A Practitioners Guide jointly published by One Voice Wales and the Society of Local Council Clerks in Wales.
  - 'Must' and **bold text** refer to a statutory obligation the council cannot change.
  - 'Shall' refers to a non-statutory instruction by the council to its members and staff.
- 1.5. The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) holds a statutory office, appointed by the council. The RFO;
  - acts under the policy direction of the council;
  - administers the council's financial affairs in accordance with all Acts, Regulations and proper practices;
  - determines on behalf of the council its accounting records and control systems;
  - ensures the accounting control systems are observed;
  - ensures the accounting records are kept up to date;

- seeks economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of council resources; and
- produces financial management information as required by the council.

1.6. **The council must not delegate any decision regarding:**

- **setting the final budget or the precept (council tax requirement);**
- **the outcome of a review of the effectiveness of its internal controls**
- **approving accounting statements;**
- **approving an annual governance statement;**
- **borrowing;**
- **declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence; and**
- **addressing recommendations from the internal or external auditors**

1.7. In addition, the council shall:

- determine and regularly review the bank mandate for all council bank accounts;
- authorise any grant or single commitment in excess of [£5,000];

**2. Risk management and internal control**

2.1. **The council must ensure that it has a sound system of internal control, which delivers effective financial, operational and risk management.**

2.2. The Clerk [with the RFO] shall prepare, for approval by Policy, Governance and Finance Committee , a risk management policy covering all activities of the council. This policy and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.

2.3. When considering any new activity, the Clerk [with the RFO] shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration by the council.

2.4. **At least once a year, the council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control, before approving the Annual Governance Statement.**

2.5. **The accounting control systems determined by the RFO must include measures to:**

- **ensure that risk is appropriately managed;**
- **ensure the prompt, accurate recording of financial transactions;**
- **prevent and detect inaccuracy or fraud; and**
- **allow the reconstitution of any lost records;**
- **identify the duties of officers dealing with transactions and**

- **ensure division of responsibilities.**
- 2.6. Copies of all bank reconciliations and the statements showing account balances at the end of each month shall be presented in a timely manner by the RFO for approval at the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee.
- 2.7. Regular back-up copies shall be made of the records on any council computer and stored either online or in a separate location from the computer. The council shall put measures in place to ensure that the ability to access any council computer is not lost if an employee leaves or is incapacitated for any reason.

### **3. Accounts and audit**

- 3.1. All accounting procedures and financial records of the council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 3.2. **The accounting records determined by the RFO must be sufficient to explain the council's transactions and to disclose its financial position with reasonable accuracy at any time. In particular, they must contain:**
- **day-to-day entries of all sums of money received and expended by the council and the matters to which they relate;**
  - **a record of the assets and liabilities of the council;**
- 3.3. The accounting records shall be designed to facilitate the efficient preparation of the accounting statements in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.
- 3.4. The RFO shall complete and certify the annual Accounting Statements of the council contained in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with proper practices, as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year. Having certified the Accounting Statements, the RFO shall submit them (with any related documents) to the council, within the timescales required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 3.5. **The council must ensure that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and internal control system in accordance with proper practices.**
- 3.6. **Any officer or member of the council must make available such documents and records as the internal or external auditor consider necessary for the purpose of the audit** and shall, as directed by the council, supply the RFO, internal auditor, or external auditor with such information and explanation as the council considers necessary.
- 3.7. The internal auditor shall be appointed by the council and shall carry out their work to evaluate the effectiveness of the council's risk management, control and

governance processes in accordance with proper practices specified in the Practitioners' Guide.

3.8. The council shall ensure that the internal auditor:

- is competent and independent of the financial operations of the council;
- reports to council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of two written reports during each financial year;
- can demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships; and
- has no involvement in the management or control of the council.

3.9. Internal or external auditors may not under any circumstances:

- perform any operational duties for the council;
- initiate or approve accounting transactions;
- provide financial, legal or other advice including in relation to any future transactions; or
- direct the activities of any council employee, except to the extent that such employees have been appropriately assigned to assist the internal auditor.

3.10. For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to internal audit the terms 'independent' and 'independence' shall have the same meaning as described in The Practitioners Guide.

3.11. The RFO shall make arrangements for the exercise of electors' rights in relation to the accounts, including the opportunity to inspect the accounts, books, and vouchers and display or publish any notices and documents required by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, or any superseding legislation, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

3.12. The RFO shall, without undue delay, bring to the attention of all councillors any correspondence or report from internal or external auditors.

#### **4. Budget and precept**

4.1. **Before setting a precept, the council must calculate its council tax requirement for each financial year by preparing and approving a budget, in accordance with The Local Government Finance Act 1992 or succeeding legislation.**

4.2. Budgets for salaries and wages, including employer contributions shall be reviewed by each committee at least annually as part of the "budget cycle" for the following

financial year and the final version shall be evidenced by a hard copy schedule of the complete budget, signed by the Town Clerk and Mayor following approval of the precept. The RFO will inform committees of any salary implications before they consider their draft budgets.

- 4.3. No later than December each year, the RFO shall prepare a draft budget with detailed estimates of all income and expenditure for the following financial year along with a forecast for the following four financial years, taking account of the lifespan of assets and cost implications of repair or replacement.
- 4.4. Unspent budgets for completed projects shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year although the Council may transfer them to an earmarked reserve for provide for future expenditure if this is, in the opinion of the RFO, affordable and prudent. Unspent funds for partially completed projects may only be carried forward (by placing them in an earmarked reserve) with the formal approval of the full council.
- 4.5. Each committee shall review its draft budget and submit any proposed amendments to the council Policy, Governance and Finance Committee not later than the end of December each year.
- 4.6. The draft budget forecast, including any recommendations for the use or accumulation of reserves, shall be considered by the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee which may make recommendations to the council.
- 4.7. Having considered the proposed budget and four-year forecast, the council shall determine its council tax (England) requirement by setting a budget. The council shall set a precept for this amount no later than the end of January for the ensuing financial year.
- 4.8. **Any member with council tax unpaid for more than two months is prohibited from voting on the budget or precept by Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and must disclose at the start of the meeting that Section 106 applies to them.**
- 4.9. The RFO shall **issue the precept to the billing authority no later than the end of February** and supply each member with a copy of the agreed annual budget.
- 4.10. The agreed budget provides a basis for monitoring progress during the year by comparing actual spending and income against what was planned.
- 4.11. Changes in earmarked reserves shall be approved by council as part of the budgetary control process. However the Council may by resolution delegate to individual committees the powers to utilise specific earmarked reserves for expenditure. Note that unless an earmarked reserve comprises capital receipts or restricted funds (e.g. a grant given to the Council for a specific purpose), they shall be considered to

comprise unrestricted revenue funds and therefore a specific earmarked reserve may be, by Council resolution, returned to the general fund at any time.

## 5. Procurement

- 5.1. **Members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times.**  
Any officer procuring goods, services or works should ensure, as far as practicable, that the best available terms are obtained, usually by obtaining prices from several suppliers.
- 5.2. The RFO should verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before it is made and in the case of new or infrequent purchases, should ensure that the legal power being used is reported to the meeting at which the order is authorised and also recorded in the minutes.
- 5.3. Every contract shall comply with the council's Standing Orders and these Financial Regulations and no exceptions shall be made, except in an emergency.
- 5.4. **For a contract for the supply of goods, services or works where the estimated value will exceed the thresholds set by Parliament, the full requirements of The Procurement Act 2023 and The Procurement Regulations 2024 or any superseding legislation ("the Legislation"), must be followed in respect of the tendering, award and notification of that contract.**
- 5.5. Where the estimated value is below the Government threshold, the council shall (with the exception of items listed in paragraph 5.12) obtain prices as follows:
- 5.6. For contracts estimated to exceed £65,000 including VAT, the Town Clerk shall seek formal tenders from at least three suppliers agreed by the relevant committee OR advertise an open invitation for tenders in compliance with any relevant provisions of the Legislation. Tenders shall be invited in accordance with Appendix 1.
- 5.7. **For contracts estimated to be over £30,000 including VAT, the council must comply with any requirements of the Legislation regarding the publication of invitations and notices.**
- 5.8. For contracts greater than £5,000 excluding VAT the Town Clerk or duly authorised officer shall seek at least [3] fixed-price quotes;
- 5.9. where the value is between £500 and £5,000 excluding VAT, the Town Clerk or duly authorised officer shall have executive power and shall try to obtain three estimates which might include evidence of online prices, or recent prices from regular suppliers.
- 5.10. For smaller purchases, Town Clerk or duly authorised officer shall seek to achieve value for money.

**5.11. Contracts must not be split to avoid compliance with these rules.**

5.12. The requirement to obtain competitive prices in these regulations need not apply to contracts that relate to items (i) to (iv) below:

- i. for the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telephone services;
- ii. specialist services, such as legal professionals acting in disputes;
- iii. repairs to, or parts for, existing machinery or equipment;
- iv. works, goods or services that constitute an extension of an existing contract;
- v. goods or services that are only available from one supplier or are sold at a fixed price.

5.13. When applications are made to waive this financial regulation to enable a price to be negotiated without competition, the reason should be set out in a recommendation to the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee. Avoidance of competition is not a valid reason.

5.14. The council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.

5.15. Individual purchases within an agreed budget for that type of expenditure may be authorised by the Town Clerk, under delegated authority. The Town Clerk has the discretion to seek the advice or approval of the relevant committee if deemed necessary.

5.16. Payments in respect of grants shall be made following agreement by the Council within the budget set and in accordance with any policy statement agreed by the council.}

5.17. No individual member, or informal group of members may issue an official order or make any contract on behalf of the council.

5.18. No expenditure may be authorised that will exceed the amount provided in the revenue budget for that class of expenditure other than by resolution of the council, or duly delegated committee. During the budget year and with the approval of council having considered fully the implications for public services, unspent and available amounts may be moved to other budget headings or to an earmarked reserve as appropriate ('virement'). Conditions regarding these are as follows:-

- (a) Within the same cost centre a departmental head may recommend to the RFO transfers between budget lines provided that this does not distort Council policy, and that the RFO may authorise such transfers provided that this does not distort Council policy.

(b) A committee may authorise a reallocation of resources between its departments/cost centres.

(c) A reallocation of resources between committees will require the approval of the Council, acting on the advice of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee and the committees concerned.

(d) A reallocation of resources between capital projects will require the approval of the Council, acting on the advice of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee and the committees concerned.

5.19. In cases of serious risk to the delivery of council services or to public safety on council premises, the Town Clerk may authorise expenditure of up to £5,000 excluding VAT on repair, replacement or other work that in their judgement is necessary, whether or not there is any budget for such expenditure. The Town Clerk shall report such action to the Chair of the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee as soon as reasonably possible and to the council as soon as practicable thereafter.

5.20. No expenditure shall be authorised, no contract entered into or tender accepted in relation to any major project, unless the council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available and that where a loan is required, Government borrowing approval has been obtained first.

5.21. An official order or letter shall be issued for all work, goods and services unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate. Copies of orders shall be retained, along with evidence of receipt of goods.

5.22. Access to any ordering system them shall be controlled by the RFO to avoid misuse.

## **6. Banking and payments**

6.1. The council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the RFO in consultation with the Town Clerk and authorised by the council; banking arrangements shall not be delegated to a committee. The council has resolved to bank with Barclays Bank. The arrangements shall be reviewed annually for security and efficiency.

6.2. The council must have safe and efficient arrangements for making payments, to safeguard against the possibility of fraud or error. For payments in excess of £5,000 more than one person should be involved in any payment, by dual online authorisation or dual cheque signing. Even where a purchase has been authorised, the payment must also be authorised and only authorised payments shall be approved or signed to allow the funds to leave the council's bank.

- 6.3. All purchase invoices shall be authorised by the appropriate Head of Service or officer prior to them being passed to Finance for payment. Each initial purchase invoice shall be supported by a purchase order which is attached to the invoice. Subsequent invoices for the same goods or service do not require additional purchase orders. Each purchase invoice shall be coded to a cost centre / account code for which the authoriser has authority to charge to and which has sufficient budget available.
- 6.4. All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the Head of Service or officer/budget holder to confirm that the work, goods or services to which each invoice relates has been received, carried out, examined and represents expenditure previously approved by the council through its budget setting process. All invoices shall be coded by the Head of Service or Officer to a budget area appropriate to the nature of the invoice.
- 6.5. The Admin Support Assistant or RFO shall examine invoices for arithmetical accuracy and analyse them to the appropriate expenditure heading.
- 6.6. All invoices shall also be examined and then countersigned by the RFO or in their absence the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk. The RFO shall take all steps to pay all invoices submitted, and which are in order, at the next available payment run as appropriate.
- 6.7. Officers authorised to sign off purchase invoices and purchase orders within agreed limits up to £1,000 without requiring authorisation by the Town Clerk are:
  - a. Biodiversity and Green Spaces Officer
  - b. Communications & Community Engagement Officer
  - c. Compliance & Environment Officer
  - d. Deputy Town Clerk
  - e. Head of Estates and Operations
  - f. Operations Manager
  - g. PA to Town Clerk
  - h. Project Officer
  - i. Responsible Financial Officer
  - j. Senior Admin Officer and Committee Clerk
  - k. Town Clerk and Chief Executive Officer
  - l. Venue & Events Officer

Personal payments (including salaries, wages, expenses and any payment made in relation to the termination of employment) may be summarised to avoid disclosing any personal information.

- 6.8. All payments shall be made by online banking/cheque, in accordance with a resolution of the council unless the council resolves to use a different payment method.
- 6.9. For each financial year the RFO may draw up a schedule of regular payments due in relation to a continuing contract or obligation (such as Salaries, PAYE, National Insurance, pension contributions, rent, rates, regular maintenance contracts and similar items), which the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee may authorise in advance for the year.
- 6.10. The Town Clerk shall have delegated authority:
  - a. to authorise payments within an agreed budget for that type of expenditure. The Town Clerk has the discretion to seek the advice or approval of the relevant committee if deemed necessary.
  - b. payments of up to £5,000 excluding VAT where there is no budget available in cases of serious risk to the delivery of council services or to public safety on council premises.
  - c. Fund transfers within the councils banking arrangements.
- 6.11. The RFO shall present a schedule of payments made under delegated powers, forming part of the agenda for the meeting, to the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee. The Committee shall review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied itself, approve the payments by resolution.

## **7. Electronic payments**

- 7.1. Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the RFO shall be appointed as the Service Administrator. The bank mandate agreed by the council shall detail the arrangements for execution of payments. Payments of up to £5,000 may be authorised by the Town Clerk/CEO or the Deputy Town Clerk. Payments of £5,000 or more must be authorised by one Councillor and the Town Clerk or Deputy, or two Councillors. No signatory should be involved in approving any payment to themselves.
- 7.2. All authorised signatories shall have access to view the council's bank accounts online on request.
- 7.3. No employee or councillor shall disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the council or its banking, to anyone not authorised in writing by the council or a duly delegated committee.

- 7.4. The Service Administrator (RFO) shall set up all items due for payment online, which are assigned a payment reference, which is known as the ELP – Electronic Payment Number. The RFO may delegate this task to the Admin Support Assistant.
- 7.5. All electronic payments shall be processed at the Council's offices. When signatories are authorising payments they shall be given a list of payments for approval, together with copies of the relevant invoices, which they will be required to sign when authorising the payments.
- 7.6. In the prolonged absence of the Service Administrator the Town Clerk/ CEO shall make arrangements for another council officer to set up any payments due before the return of the Service Administrator.
- 7.7. Evidence shall be retained showing who approved the payment online. The ELP will be written on the invoice together with the payment date. A file will be retained with a printout each time an electronic payment is made.
- 7.8. The Town Clerk/ CEO may determine that Regular payments (such as gas, electricity, telephone, broadband, water, National Non-Domestic Rates, refuse collection, pension contributions and HMRC payments) may be made by variable direct debit, provided that the instructions are Signed in accordance with the bank mandate.
- 7.9. Payment may be made by BACS or CHAPS in accordance with the bank mandate provided that each payment is approved online by authorised signatories (see 7.1 above), evidence is retained and any payments are reported, together with other payments made, to the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee.
- 7.10. If thought appropriate by the Town Clerk/ CEO regular payments of fixed sums may be made by banker's standing order, provided that the instructions are signed or approved online in accordance with the bank mandate, evidence of this is retained and any payments are reported, together with other payments made, to the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee.
- 7.11. Bank account details of suppliers are a potential area for fraud and therefore reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that they are genuine. When the first electronic payment is made to a supplier the bank account details which have been submitted by the supplier will be verified by the RFO or another member of staff at their direction, in accordance with the advice of the Council's bankers. Account details for suppliers may only be changed upon written notification by the supplier verified by the RFO or another member at his direction in accordance with the advice of the Council's bankers.
- 7.12. Members and officers shall ensure that any computer used for the council's financial business has adequate security, with anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall software installed and regularly updated.

7.13. Remembered password facilities {other than secure password stores requiring separate identity verification} should not be used on any computer used for council banking.

## **8. Cheque payments**

- 8.1. Cheques or orders for payment for up to £5,000 and which are made in accordance with a resolution or delegated decision shall be signed by the Town Clerk or two members. Cheques of £5,000 or more shall be signed by two members. In addition cheques of up to £500 and which required to reimburse the petty cash only, may be signed by the Deputy Town Clerk or RFO.
- 8.2. A signatory having a family or business relationship with the beneficiary of a payment shall not, under normal circumstances, be a signatory to that payment.
- 8.3. To indicate agreement of the details on the cheque with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall also initial the cheque counterfoil and invoice.

## **9. Payment cards**

- 9.1. Any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk (in the Town Clerk's absence) and will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £1,000 unless authorised by council or finance committee in writing before any order is placed.
- 9.2. A pre-paid debit card may be issued to employees with varying limits. These limits will be set by the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee. Transactions and purchases made will be reported to the Committee. Authority for topping-up shall be at the discretion of the Town Clerk.
- 9.3. Any corporate credit card or trade card account opened by the council will be specifically restricted to use by the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk (in the Town Clerk's absence) and any balance shall be paid in full each month.
- 9.4. Personal credit or debit cards of members or staff shall not be used except for expenses of up to £500 including VAT in a single transaction, incurred in accordance with council policy and budget.

## **10. Petty Cash**

- 10.1. The RFO shall maintain a petty cash [float/imprest account] of £500 and may provide petty cash to officers for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses.

- a) Vouchers for payments made from petty cash shall be kept, along with receipts to substantiate every payment.
- b) Cash income received must not be paid into the petty cash float but must be separately banked, as provided elsewhere in these regulations.
- c) Payments to maintain the petty cash float shall be shown separately on any schedule of payments presented for approval.

## **11. Payment of salaries and allowances**

- 11.1. As an employer, the council must make arrangements to comply with the statutory requirements of PAYE legislation.**
- 11.2. Councillors allowances (where paid) are also liable to deduction of tax under PAYE rules and must be taxed correctly before payment.**
- 11.3. Salary rates shall be agreed by the council, or a duly delegated committee. No changes shall be made to any employee's gross pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the Personnel Sub-Committee, Policy, Governance and Finance Committee or full council.
- 11.4. Payment of salaries shall be made, after deduction of tax, national insurance, pension contributions and any similar statutory or discretionary deductions, on the dates stipulated in employment contracts.
- 11.5. Deductions from salary shall be paid to the relevant bodies within the required timescales, provided that each payment is reported, as set out in these regulations above.
- 11.6. Each payment to employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall be recorded in a payroll control account or other separate confidential record by the RFO, with the total of such payments each calendar month reported in the cashbook. Payroll reports will be reviewed by [the Town Clerk to ensure that the correct payments have been made.
- 11.7. Each payment to employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall be recorded in a separate confidential record (confidential cash book). This confidential record is not open to inspection or review (under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or otherwise) other than:
  - a) by any councillor who can demonstrate a need to know to the Town Clerk;
  - b) by the internal auditor;
  - c) by the external auditor; or
  - d) by any person authorised under Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation.

11.8 The total of such payments in each calendar month shall be reported with all other payments as made as may be required under these Financial Regulations. , to ensure that only payments due for the period have actually been paid.

11.9 Any termination payments shall be supported by a report to the Personnel Sub-Committee, setting out a clear business case. Termination payments shall only be authorised by the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee.

11.10 Before employing interim staff, the council must consider a full business case. However this will not be required if there is an existing budgetary provision and as long as this does not distort council policy.

## **12. Loans and investments**

12.1. Any application for Government approval to borrow money and subsequent arrangements for a loan must be authorised by the full council and recorded in the minutes. All borrowing shall be in the name of the council, after obtaining any necessary approval.

12.2. Any financial arrangement which does not require formal borrowing approval from the Secretary of State (such as Hire Purchase, Leasing of tangible assets or loans to be repaid within the financial year) must be authorised by the full council, following a written report on the value for money of the proposed transaction.

12.3. The council shall consider the requirement for an Investment Strategy and Policy in accordance with Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments, which must be written in accordance with relevant regulations, proper practices and guidance. Any Strategy and Policy shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.

12.4. All investment of money under the control of the council shall be in the name of the council.

12.5. All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO.

12.6. Payments in respect of short term or long-term investments, including transfers between bank accounts held in the same bank, shall be made in accordance with these regulations.

## **13. Income**

13.1. The collection of all sums due to the council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO.

13.2. The council will review all fees and charges for work done, services provided, or goods sold at least annually as part of the budget-setting process and included in the

reports of the RFO to the various committees. The RFO shall be responsible for the collection of all amounts due to the council.

- 13.3. Individual sums of £100 or more which are considered by the RFO to be irrecoverable shall be reported to the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee and shall be written off by the full Council, subject to a resolution of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee. Individual sums of less than £100 may be written off by the RFO with the agreement of the Town Clerk or in their prolonged absence, the Deputy Town Clerk.
- 13.4. Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts shall be reported to the council by the RFO when they considered that the debt is irrecoverable. The council's approval shall be shown in the accounting records.
- 13.5. All sums received on behalf of the council shall be deposited intact with the council's bankers, with such frequency as the RFO considers necessary. The origin of each receipt shall clearly be recorded on the paying-in slip or other record.
- 13.6. Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the council.
- 13.7. The RFO shall ensure that VAT is correctly recorded in the council's accounting software and that any VAT Return required is submitted from the software by the due date.

The RFO shall ensure that a cash handling procedure is effective to avoid any losses, including fraud and that other appropriate controls are in place. Banking of cash shall be undertaken in accordance with the conditions set out in the Council's insurance policy document, which for 2025-26 is in part D (Money), section 5.

#### **14. Payments under contracts for building or other construction works**

- 14.1. Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the RFO shall maintain a record of all such payments, which shall be made within the time specified in the contract based on signed certificates from the architect or other consultant engaged to supervise the works.
- 14.2. Any variation of, addition to or omission from a contract must be authorised by the Town Clerk to the contractor in writing, with the council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the contract sum by 5% or more, or likely to exceed the budget available.

#### **15. Stores and equipment**

- 15.1. The officer in charge of each section shall be responsible for the care and custody of stores and equipment in that section.

- 15.2. Delivery notes shall be obtained in respect of all goods received into store or otherwise delivered and goods must be checked as to order and quality at the time delivery is made.
- 15.3. Stocks shall be kept at the minimum levels consistent with operational requirements.
- 15.4. The senior manager in each section shall be responsible for ensuring that they or another officer conduct periodic checks of stocks and stores, at least annually. This may be, as in the case of the café/bar, be contracted to an external professional.

## **16. Assets, properties and estates**

- 16.1. The Town Clerk/CEO shall make arrangements for the safe custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the council.
- 16.2. The RFO shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date, with a record of all properties held by the council, their location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held, in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 16.3. The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the Register shall be verified at least annually.
- 16.4. No interest in land shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law. In each case a written report shall be provided to council, via the relevant committee(s) in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate where required by law).
- 16.5. No tangible moveable property shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of unless the Council has made budgetary provision for such property and any other consents required by law have been obtained.
- 16.6. Inventories shall be maintained by all departments and therein shall be recorded an adequate description of furniture, fittings and equipment, plant and machinery. All inventories shall be in a form approved by the RFO, who in consultation with the Town Clerk may agree that certain items may be excluded from the records.
- 16.7. Each departmental head shall be responsible for maintaining an annual check of all items on the inventory, for taking action in relation to surpluses or deficiencies and noting the inventory accordingly, and possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.

## **17. Insurance**

- 17.1. The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the council and the property and risks covered, reviewing these annually before the renewal date in conjunction with the council's review of risk management in consultation with other council officers as appropriate.
- 17.2. Each officer shall give prompt notification to the RFO of all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.
- 17.3. The RFO shall be notified of any loss, liability, damage or event likely to lead to a claim, and shall report these to Policy, Governance and Finance Committee at the next available meeting. The RFO shall negotiate all claims on the council's insurers {in consultation with the Town Clerk/ CEO}.
- 17.4. All appropriate members and employees of the council shall be included in a suitable form of security or fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined by the council, or duly delegated committee.

## **18. Suspension and revision of Financial Regulations**

- 18.1 It shall be the duty of the Council to review the Financial Regulations of the council from time to time. The Town Clerk shall make arrangements to monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and shall advise the council of any requirement for a consequential amendment to these Financial Regulations.
- 18.2 The council may, by resolution duly notified prior to the relevant meeting of council, suspend any part of these Financial Regulations, provided that reasons for the suspension are recorded and that an assessment of the risks arising has been presented to all members. Suspension does not disapply any legislation or permit the council to act unlawfully.
- 18.3 The council may temporarily amend these Financial Regulations by a duly notified resolution, to cope with periods of absence, local government reorganisation, national restrictions or other exceptional circumstances.

### ***Appendix 1 - Tender process***

- 1) Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to and in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Procurement Policy and any other policies which the Council may have in place and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.
- 2) Any invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases.
- 3) The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the Town Clerk/CEO in the ordinary course of post, unless an electronic tendering process has been agreed by the Town Clerk/CEO
- 4) Where a postal process is used, each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specifically marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract. All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the Town Clerk/CEO in the presence of at least one member of council.
- 5) Where an electronic tendering process is used, the council shall use a specific email address that will be monitored to ensure that nobody accesses any tender before the expiry of the deadline for submission.
- 6) Where the council, or duly delegated committee, does not accept any tender, quote or estimate, the work is not allocated and the council requires further pricing, no person shall be permitted to submit a later tender, estimate or quote who was present when the original decision-making process was being undertaken.



## Member Code of Conduct

### 1.0 Introduction

The Council has a duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members of the Council, and formally adopt a code of conduct, in accordance with the *Localism Act 2011*.

### 2.0 Purpose of the Code of Conduct

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to assist you, as a Councillor, in modelling the behaviour that is expected of you, to provide a personal check and balance, and to set out the type of conduct that could lead to action being taken against you. It is also to protect you, the public, fellow Councillors, local authority officers and the reputation of local government. It sets out general principles of conduct expected of all Councillors and your specific obligations in relation to standards of conduct. The fundamental aim of the Code is to create and maintain public confidence in the role of the Councillor and in Local Government.

### 3.0 Definitions

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, a “Councillor” means a member or co-opted member of the local authority. A “co-opted member” is defined in the *Localism Act 2011 Section 27(4)* as “a person who is not a member of the authority but who

- 3.1 is a member of any committee or sub-committee of the authority, or;
- 3.2 is a member of, and represents the authority on, any joint committee or joint sub-committee of the authority;

and who is entitled to vote on any question that falls to be decided at any meeting of that committee or sub-committee”.

### 4.0 General Principles of Councillor Conduct

Everyone in public office and all who serve the public or deliver public services, including Councillors and local authority officers, should uphold the Seven Principles of Public Life, also known as the Nolan Principles, (see Appendix A).

Building on these principles of selflessness, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and integrity and leadership, the following general principles have been developed specifically for the role of Councillor.

In accordance with the public trust placed in Councillors, on all occasions a Councillor shall:

- act with integrity and honesty
- act lawfully
- treat all persons fairly and with respect; and
- lead by example and act in a way that secures public confidence in the role of Councillor.
- impartially exercise their responsibilities in the interests of the local community
- not improperly seek to confer an advantage, or disadvantage, on any person
- avoid conflicts of interest
- exercise reasonable care and diligence; and
- ensure that public resources are used prudently in accordance with the local authority's requirements and in the public interest.

These general principles have been incorporated into the obligations of the Code of Conduct as set out below.

### **5.0 Application of the Code of Conduct**

This Code of Conduct applies to you as soon as you sign your declaration of acceptance of the office of Councillor or attend your first meeting as a co-opted member and continues to apply to you until you cease to be a Councillor.

This Code of Conduct applies to you when you are acting in your capacity as a Councillor which may include when:

- you misuse your position as a Councillor
- Your actions would give the impression to a reasonable member of the public with knowledge of all the facts that you are acting as a Councillor;

The Code applies to all forms of communication and interaction, including at face-to-face meetings, at online or telephone meetings, in written communication, in verbal communication, in non-verbal communication and in electronic and social media communication, posts, statements and comments.

Your Monitoring Officer has statutory responsibility for the implementation of the Code of Conduct, and you are encouraged to seek advice from your Monitoring Officer on any matters that may relate to the Code of Conduct. Town and parish Councillors are encouraged to seek advice from their Clerk, who may refer matters to the Monitoring Officer.

### **6.0 Standards of Councillor Conduct**

This section sets out the obligations (in bold below), which are the minimum standards of conduct required of a Councillor. Should a Councillor's conduct fall short of these standards, a complaint may be made against them, which may result in action being taken.

Guidance is also included below each obligation to help explain the reasons for the

obligations and how they should be followed.

## **6.1 Respect**

**A Councillor:**

**6.1.1 Shall treat everyone, including other Councillors and members of the public with respect.**

**6.1.2 Shall treat local authority employees, employees and representatives of partner organisations and those volunteering for the local authority with respect and respect the role they play.**

Respect means politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech, and in the written word. Debate and having different views are all part of a healthy democracy. As a Councillor, you can express, challenge, criticise and disagree with views, ideas, opinions and policies in a robust but civil manner. You should not, however, subject individuals, groups of people or organisations to personal attack.

In your contact with the public, you should treat them politely and courteously. Rude and offensive behaviour lowers the public's expectations and confidence in Councillors.

In return, you have a right to expect respectful behaviour from everyone. If members of the public are being abusive, intimidatory or threatening you are entitled to stop any conversation or interaction in person or online and report them to the relevant social media provider and/or the police. This also applies to fellow councillors, where action could then be taken under the Councillor Code of Conduct, and local authority employees, where concerns should be raised in line with the local authority's councillor- officer protocol.

## **6.2 Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination**

**A Councillor:**

**6.2.1 Shall not bully any person.**

**6.2.2 Shall not harass any person.**

**6.2.3 Shall promote equalities and not discriminate against any person.**

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Bullying might be a regular pattern of behaviour or a one-off incident, happen face-to-face, on social media, in emails or phone calls, happen in the workplace or at work social events and may not always be obvious or noticed by others.

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 defines harassment as conduct that causes

alarm or distress or puts people in fear of violence and must involve such conduct on at least two occasions. It can include repeated attempts to impose unwanted communications and contact upon a person in a manner that could be expected to cause distress or fear in any reasonable person.

Discrimination is where someone is treated unfairly because of a protected characteristic. Protected characteristics are specific aspects of a person's identity defined by the Equality Act 2010. They are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Legislation places specific duties on local authorities. Councillors have a central role to play in ensuring that equality issues are integral to the local authority's performance and strategic aims, and that there is a strong vision and public commitment to equality across public services.

### **6.3 Impartiality of Officers of the Council**

A Councillor:

#### **6.3.1 Shall not compromise, or attempt to compromise, the impartiality of anyone who works for, or on behalf of, the local authority.**

Officers work for the local authority as a whole and must be politically neutral, (other than political assistants where applicable). They should not be coerced or persuaded to act in a way that would undermine their neutrality. A Councillor may question officers in order to understand, for example, their reasons for proposing to act in a particular way, or the content of a report that they have written. However, a Councillor must not try and force them to act differently, change their advice, or alter the content of that report, if doing so would prejudice their professional integrity.

### **6.4 Confidentiality and access to information**

A Councillor:

#### **6.4.1 Shall not disclose information either given to them in confidence by anyone or acquired by them which they believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature, unless**

- i. They have received the consent of a person authorised to give it; or**
- ii. They are required by law to do so; or**
- iii. the disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional legal advice provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person; or**
- iv. the disclosure is reasonable and in the public interest; and also made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the**

**local authority and consultation with the Monitoring Officer has taken place prior to its release.**

- 6.4.2 Shall not improperly use knowledge gained solely as a result of their role as a Councillor for the advancement of themselves, their friends, family members, employer or business interests.**
- 6.4.3 Shall not prevent anyone from getting information that they are entitled to by law.**
- 6.4.4 When making decisions on behalf of, or as part of, the Council shall have due regard to any professional advice provided by the Council's Officers.**

## **6.5 Disrepute**

A Councillor:

- 6.5.1 Shall not bring their role or local authority into disrepute.**

As a Councillor, you are trusted to make decisions on behalf of your community and your actions and behaviour are subject to greater scrutiny than that of ordinary members of the public. You should be aware that your actions might have an adverse impact on you, other Councillors and/or your local authority and may lower the public's confidence in your or your local authority's ability to discharge your/its functions.

## **6.6 Use of position**

A Councillor:

- 6.6.1 Shall not use, or attempt to use, their position improperly to the advantage or disadvantage of anyone.**

A Councillor should not take advantage of opportunities, responsibilities and privileges to further their own or others' private interests or to disadvantage anyone unfairly.

## **6.7 Local authority Resources and Facilities**

A Councillor:

- 6.7.1 Shall not misuse council resources.**
- 6.7.2 Shall, when using the resources of the local authority or authorising their use**

**by others, act in accordance with the local authority's requirements; and ensure that such resources are not used for political purposes unless that use could reasonably be regarded as likely to facilitate, or be conducive to, the discharge of the functions of the local authority or of the office to which they have been elected or appointed.**

A Councillor may be provided with resources and facilities by the local authority to assist them in carrying out their duties as a Councillor. Examples may include office support, stationery, equipment such as phones, computers and transport and access and use of local authority buildings and rooms.

## **6.8 Compliance with the Code of Conduct**

A Councillor:

- 6.8.1 Shall undertake Code of Conduct training as required by the local authority.**
- 6.8.2 Shall cooperate with any Code of Conduct assessment, investigation, hearing and/or determination.**
- 6.8.3 Shall not intimidate or attempt to intimidate any person who is likely to be involved with the administration of any investigation or proceedings.**
- 6.8.4 Shall comply with any sanction imposed on them following a finding that they have breached the Code of Conduct.**

It is extremely important for a Councillor to demonstrate high standards, to have your actions open to scrutiny and not to undermine public trust in the local authority or its governance. If you do not understand or are concerned about the local authority's processes in handling a complaint you should raise this with the Monitoring Officer.

## **7.0 Registering and Declaring Interests**

You need to register your interests so that the public, local authority employees and fellow councillors know which of your interests might give rise to a conflict of interest. The register is a public document that can be consulted when (or before) an issue arises. The register also protects you by allowing you to demonstrate openness and a willingness to be held accountable. You are personally responsible for deciding whether or not you should disclose an interest in a meeting, but it can be helpful for you to know early on if others think that a potential conflict might arise. It is also important that the public know about any interest that might have to be disclosed by you or other councillors when making or taking part in decisions, so that decision making is seen by the public as open and honest. This helps to ensure that public confidence in the integrity of local governance is maintained.

### **7.1 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

A Councillor must, within 28 days of taking office as a member or co-opted member, notify the Council's Monitoring Officer of any disclosable pecuniary interest as defined by regulations made by the Secretary of State (see Appendix B), where the pecuniary interest is yours, your spouse's or civil partner's, or is the pecuniary interest of somebody with whom you are living with as a husband or wife, or as if you were civil partners. Section 29 of the Localism Act 2011 requires the Monitoring Officer to establish and maintain a register of interests of members of the authority.

You must disclose the interest at any meeting of the Council at which you are present, where you have a disclosable interest in any matter being considered and where the matter is not a 'sensitive interest'. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you must disclose the fact that you have an interest but do not have to disclose the nature of it. (A sensitive interest is an interest which, in the opinion of the Monitoring Officer, if disclosed, could lead to the Councillor, or a person connected with them, being subjected to violence or intimidation.) You are personally responsible for deciding whether or not you should disclose an interest in a meeting.

Following any disclosure of an interest not on the Council's register, or the subject of pending notification, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days beginning with the date of disclosure.

Unless dispensation has been granted, by the Clerk, you may not participate in any discussion of, or vote on, or discharge any function related to any matter in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest. You must withdraw from the room or chamber when the meeting discusses and votes on the matter.

Where you have a disclosable pecuniary interest on a matter to be considered, you must notify the Clerk of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it.

You must ensure that your register of interests is kept up to date and within 28 days of becoming aware of any new interest, or of any change to a registered interest, notify the Clerk and Monitoring Officer.

You should note that failure to register or disclose a disclosable pecuniary interest as set out in Appendix B is a criminal offence under the Localism Act 2011.

## **7.2 Other Registerable Interests**

You must also register your other registerable interests with the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of taking office and ensure these are kept up to date by notifying any changes within 28 days.

Where a matter arises at a meeting which ***directly relates*** to the financial interest or wellbeing of one of your Other Registerable Interests (as set out in Appendix C), you must disclose the interest. Wellbeing can be described as a condition of contentedness, healthiness and happiness; anything that could be said to affect a person's quality of life, either positively or negatively, is likely to affect their wellbeing. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Where you have an Other Registerable Interest on a matter to be considered, you must notify the Clerk of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it.

### **7.3 Non-Registerable Interests**

Where a matter arises at a meeting which ***directly relates*** to your financial interest or wellbeing (and does not fall under disclosable pecuniary interests at 7.1 above), or the financial interest or wellbeing of a relative or close associate, you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a sensitive interest you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Where a matter arises at a meeting which ***affects*** your own financial interest or wellbeing, a financial interest or wellbeing of a relative or close associate or a financial interest or wellbeing of a body included under Other Registrable Interests as set out at 7.2 above and appendix C you must disclose the interest. In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied:

Where a matter affects the financial interest or well-being:

- a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decisionand;
- b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Where you have a Non-Registerable Interest on a matter to be considered, you must notify the Clerk of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it.

## **8.0 Gifts and Hospitality**

A Councillor:

- 8.1 Shall not accept gifts or hospitality, irrespective of estimated value, which could give rise to real or substantive personal gain or a reasonable suspicion of influence to show favour from persons seeking to acquire, develop or do business with the local authority or from persons who may apply to the local authority for any permission, licence or other significant advantage.**
- 8.2 Shall register with the Monitoring Officer any gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £50 within 28 days of its receipt.**
- 8.3 Shall register with the Monitoring Officer any significant gift or hospitality that they have been offered but have refused to accept.**

The presumption should always be not to accept significant gifts or hospitality but there may be times when such a refusal may be difficult if it is seen as rudeness in which case you could accept it but must ensure it is publicly registered.

You do not need to register gifts and hospitality which are not related to your role as a Councillor.

It is appropriate to accept normal expenses and hospitality associated with your duties as a Councillor.

## **Appendix A – The Seven Principles of Public Life**

The principles are:

### **Selflessness**

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

### **Integrity**

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must disclose and resolve any interests and relationships.

### **Objectivity**

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

### **Accountability**

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

### **Openness**

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

### **Honesty**

Holders of public office should be truthful.

### **Leadership**

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

## Appendix B: Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

“**Disclosable Pecuniary Interest**” means an interest of yourself, or of your partner if you are aware of your partner's interest, within the descriptions set out in the table below.

"**Partner**" means a spouse or civil partner, or a person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom you are living as if you are civil partners.

This table sets out the explanation of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in the [Relevant Authorities \(Disclosable Pecuniary Interests\) Regulations 2012](#).

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation</b>	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
<b>Sponsorship</b>	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses.  This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

<p><b>Contracts</b></p>	<p>Any contract made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the council —</p> <p>(a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and</p> <p>(b) which has not been fully discharged.</p>
<p><b>Land and Property</b></p>	<p>Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council.</p> <p>‘Land’ excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.</p>
<p><b>Licenses</b></p>	<p>Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer.</p>

<p><b>Corporate tenancies</b></p>	<p>Any tenancy where (to the councillor's knowledge)—</p> <p>(a) the landlord is the council; and</p> <p>(b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.</p>
<p><b>Securities</b></p>	<p>Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where—</p> <p>(a) that body (to the councillor's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and</p> <p>(b) either—</p> <p>(i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or</p> <p>(ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/ her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners have a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issues share capital of that class.</p>

\* 'Director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

\* 'Securities' means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

## Appendix C: Disclosure of Other Registrable Interests

You must register as an Other Registrable Interest:

- a) any unpaid directorships
- b) any Body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority
- c) any Body
  - (i) exercising functions of a public nature
  - (ii)** directed to charitable purposes or
  - (iii)** one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)

of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management

**Councillor Meeting Attendance 2025-2026**

	<b>Expected Attendances</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Absent</b>	<b>Apologies received</b>	<b>In Attendance</b>
Cllr Abdul Mubin	24	14	58%	4	6	0
Cllr Andy Bailey	40	23	57%	0	17	0
Cllr David Edwards-Hughes	27	24	89%	0	3	0
Cllr Dean Temple	44	31	70%	5	8	0
Cllr Denis Newcombe	20	18	90%	0	2	0
Cllr Duncan Enright	24	21	88%	0	3	1
Cllr Geoff Doughty	48	43	90%	0	5	3
Cllr Georgia Meadows	44	36	82%	6	2	2
Cllr Jack Treloar	41	37	90%	0	4	1
Cllr James Robertshaw	26	23	88%	0	3	1
Cllr Jane Doughty	46	42	91%	0	4	0
Cllr Joy Aitman	49	32	65%	0	17	1
Cllr Owen Collins	20	12	60%	0	8	0
Cllr Rachel Crouch	36	33	92%	0	3	2
Cllr Ruth Smith	61	43	87%	0	8	0
Cllr Sandra Simpson	31	27	87%	0	4	0
Cllr Thomas Ashby	31	26	84%	0	5	1

Please note that Members of Witney Town Council are unpaid volunteers, some in full time employment or with a variety of caring needs which affects their ability to attend.

Also, Councillors may sit on varying Committees, for example the Planning & Development Committee held 16 Meetings during the 2025-26 Council Year.