

## ANNUAL COUNCIL



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**Agenda Item:** Witney Town Council Standing Orders - Review

**Meeting Date:** Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup> May 2025

**Contact Officer:** Deputy Town Clerk

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The purpose of this report is to propose updated Standing Orders for Witney Town Council.

In line with best practice, Standing Orders should be reviewed annually. This process, initiated by the Proper Officer/Town Clerk (Standing Order 47(b)), is to align such a review with the Annual meetings of the Council.

### Background

Standing Orders are the written rules of the Council and are used to confirm its internal, organisational, administrative procedures and procedural matters for meetings.

The Standing orders refer to, but do not contain financial regulations, which are separate procedures to regulate the councils' financial affairs and accounting procedures.

### Current Situation

The Council's current Standing Orders were last reviewed in February 2023 and can be accessed via the following link: [WTC Standing Orders 2023](#)

Officers have now undertaken a scheduled review of the Standing Orders to ensure they reflect current legislation, best practices, and align with the latest Model Standing Orders issued by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC). The NALC model was updated in 2025 and includes simplified language in several sections.\*

The proposed revised Standing Orders are attached as **Appendix A**. Statutory requirements are highlighted in **bold**, while additional provisions have been included to support the effective operation of the Council.

The layout of the document has been redesigned for ease of reference. Key updates in the 2025 NALC version include changes to:

- Code of Conduct Complaints
- Financial Controls and Procurement

Additional amendments have been made to the *Rules of Debate*, which were previously grouped under separate headings.

Due to the extensive changes in format, a version showing tracked changes is not available. However, the previous version can be viewed using the link provided above.

If proposed and seconded by Members, the revised Standing Orders will stand adjourned until the Full Council meeting scheduled for 23 June 2025, in accordance with Standing Order 47(c). They will be formally considered at that meeting.

**The period between meetings is intended to provide Members with sufficient time to review and reflect on the proposed revisions. Standing Orders are a critical document that define how the Council operates and form the written rules governing its procedures.**

\* It is noted that the latest NALC update has received some criticism. As such, the Standing Orders may be subject to further review within the year, should additional updates be released.

## **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. Review the policy document,
2. Note the changes as referred to in the report and,
3. Approve the proposed Standing Orders for Witney Town Council, which if agreeable, will stand adjourned until the Full Council meeting on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> June where they can be discussed further.