

POLICY, GOVERNANCE & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Date: Monday, 21 November 2022

Title: Standing Orders Review

Contact Officer: Deputy Town Clerk - Adam Clapton

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 do not contain financial regulations, which contain separate procedures to regulate the councils' financial affairs and accounting procedures.

Members will be aware that officers have reviewed the Town Council's Standing Orders to ensure they are in line with current legislation, practice and are based upon the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) Model Standing Orders 2018 for England (revised 2020).

Current Situation

The proposed, revised Standing Orders are attached as **Appendix A**. Those in **bold** contain statutory requirements while others are included to help the Council operate effectively to the Council's needs.

On agreement, in line with the Current Standing Order 47(b), the following process will be applied:

'A motion to add to or vary or revoke one or more of the council's standing orders, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory requirements, shall be proposed by a special motion, the written notice by at least 4 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer.'

Administrative changes to the standing orders include:

- Changing Chairman/Vice-Chairman to Chair/Vice-Chair*
- Taking out reference to he/she and his/her in line with other Oxfordshire Councils*
- Updating relevant officer positions and titles
- Updating relevant committee names
- Updating meeting days and terms since the last review

*It should be noted for legal reference that although these terms have been changed in the standing orders as proposed, the original terms are listed in the legislation.

Key proposed changes include:

- Affirming delegation to committees on matters which have a time set by statute (Climate, Biodiversity and Planning). Standing Order 8(xv) refers
- **Statutory voting limitations for members who have a disclosable pecuniary interest.** Standing Order 10(b) refers
- Adhering to NALC model standing orders on Notices of Motion. Standing Order 13 refers
- Destruction of draft minute notes and recordings of meetings once minutes have been approved. Standing Order 18(g) refers
- **Rules regarding non-councillors being elected to sub-committees, advisory committees and working parties.** Standing Order 30 refers
- Council rules on in-person meetings and delegations from Advisory meetings. Standing Order 32(b) refers.
- **New wording relating to the disclosure of confidential information or personal data without legal justification.** Standing Order 40(b) refers
- Altering the order of business to take a matter on which the public are offering representations. Standing Order 42(g) refers
- Placing a maximum of 25 minutes on Public Participation. Standing Order 42(h) refers.
- **Clarification on reporting during a meeting.** Standing Order 42(i) refers.
- Observation by all Councillors to the NALC Civility & Respect Pledge. Standing Order 45(c) refers.
- Simplification of the rules regarding to the regular review of Standing Orders. Standing Order 47(d) refers.
- **Management of Information.** Standing Order 49 refers.
- **Responsibilities to provide Information** Standing Order 50 refers.
- **Responsibilities under Data Protection Legislation** Standing Order 51 refers.
- Relations with the Press & Media. Standing Order 52 refers.
- Signature of Documents Standing Order 53 refers.

Following amendment/agreement of this Committee, the proposed Standing Orders will be presented to the Full Council meeting on 5 December 2022.

As best practice, the revised Standing Orders will then stand adjourned for the Council meeting scheduled for 13 February 2022 and it is at that meeting that the revised standing orders will be discussed.

The period between the Full Council meetings is intended to give members plenty of time to read through and consider the proposed revised standing orders which are an important document and state how the council operate and are the written rules of the council.

Environmental impact

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates.

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.

Financial implications

There are no financial implications from this report.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note this report and;

- 1) Review the policy document and,
- 2) Note the administrative changes and acknowledge legislation terms and,
- 3) Agree revised Standing Orders are presented to the Full Council meeting on 5 December 2022 by way of four Councillors providing written notice to the Proper Officer/ Town Clerk.