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LYTCHETT MINSTER AND UPTON TOWN COUNCIL STANDING ORDERS 2023-24

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How to use model standing orders

Standing orders are the written rules of a local council. They are used to confirm a council's internal organisational, administrative and procurement procedures and procedural matters for meetings. They are not the same as the policies of a council but they may refer to them. A local council must have standing orders for the procurement of contracts.

Meetings of full council, councillors, the Responsible Financial Officer and Proper Officer are subject to many statutory requirements. A council should have standing orders to confirm those statutory requirements. A council should have standing orders to control the number, place, quorum, notices and other procedures for committee and sub-committee meetings because these are subject to fewer statutory requirements. If it does not, committees and sub-committees may adopt their own standing orders.

Model standing orders that are in bold type contain statutory requirements. It is recommended that councils adopt them without changing them. Other model standing orders not in bold are designed to help councils operate effectively but do not contain statutory requirements so they may be adopted as drafted or amended to suit a council's needs. For convenience, the word "councillor" is used in model standing orders and includes a non-councillor with or without voting rights unless otherwise stated.

The model standing orders do not include model financial regulations. Financial regulations are standing orders to regulate and control the financial affairs and accounting procedures of a local council. The financial regulations, as opposed to the standing orders of a council, include most of the requirements relevant to the Responsible Financial Officer.

Index Of Standing Orders

	Page
1. <u>Rules of debate at meetings</u>	4
2. <u>Disorderly conduct at meetings</u>	6
3. <u>Meetings generally</u>	6
4. <u>Committees and sub-committees</u>	9
5. <u>Ordinary council meetings</u>	10
6. <u>Extraordinary meetings of the council and committees and sub-Committees</u>	12
7. <u>Previous resolutions</u>	12
8. <u>Voting on appointments</u>	13
9. <u>Motions for a meeting that require written notice to the Proper Officer</u>	13
10. <u>Motions at a meeting that do not require written notice</u>	14
11. <u>Management of Information</u>	14
12. <u>Draft minutes</u>	15
13. <u>Code of conduct and dispensations</u>	16
14. <u>Code of conduct complaints</u>	17
15. <u>Proper Officer</u>	17
16. <u>Responsible Financial Officer</u>	19
17. <u>Accounts and accounting statements</u>	19
18. <u>Financial controls and procurement</u>	20
19. <u>Handling staff matters</u>	21
20. <u>Responsibilities to Provide Information</u>	22
21. <u>Responsibilities Under Data Protection Legislation</u>	22
22. <u>Relations with the press/media</u>	22
23. <u>Execution and sealing of legal deeds</u>	23
24. <u>Communicating County councillors</u>	23
25. <u>Restrictions on councillor activities</u>	23

1. Rules of debate at meetings

- a) Motions on the agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear unless the order is changed at the discretion of the chairman of the meeting.
- b) A motion (including an amendment) shall not be progressed unless it has been moved and seconded.
- c) A motion on the agenda that is not moved by its proposer may be treated by the chairman of the meeting as withdrawn.
- d) If a motion (including an amendment) has been seconded, it may be withdrawn by the proposer only with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
- e) An amendment is a proposal to remove or add words to a motion. It shall not negate the motion.
- f) If an amendment to the original motion is carried, the original motion 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 chairman of the meeting, is expressed in writing to the chairman.
- 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 and 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 chairman of the meeting.
- j) Subject to standing order 1(k) below, only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the chairman of the meeting.
- k) One or more amendments may be discussed together if the chairman of the meeting considers this expedient but each amendment shall be voted upon separately.
- 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 of reply at the end of debate on it.

- n) Where a series of amendments to an original motion are carried, the mover of the original motion shall have a right of reply either at the end of debate of 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 chairman of the meeting, a councillor may speak once in the debate on a 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 he last spoke;
 - iii) to make a point of order;
 - iv) to give a personal explanation; or
 - v) in exercise of a right of reply.
- p) During the debate of 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 chairman of the meeting and that 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 vote;
 - v) to ask a person to be no longer heard or to leave the meeting;
 - vi) to refer a motion to a committee or sub-committee for consideration;
 - vii) to exclude the public and press;
 - viii) to adjourn the meeting; or
 - ix) to suspend particular standing order(s) excepting those which reflect mandatory statutory requirements.
- s) Before an original or substantive motion is put to the vote, the chairman of the meeting shall be satisfied that the motion has been sufficiently debated and that the mover of the motion under debate has exercised or waived their right of reply.
- t) Excluding motions moved under Standing Order 1(r) above, the contributions or speeches by a councillor shall relate only to the motion under discussion and shall not exceed 3 minutes without the consent of the chairman of the meeting.

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2. Disorderly conduct at meetings

- a) No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly. If this standing order is ignored, the chairman of the meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.
- b) If person(s) disregard the request of the chairman of the meeting to moderate or improve their conduct, any councillor or the chairman of the meeting may move that the person be no longer heard or excluded from the meeting. The motion, if seconded, shall be put to the vote without discussion.
- c) If a resolution made under standing order 2(b) above is ignored, the chairman of the meeting may take further reasonable steps to restore order or to progress the meeting. This may include temporarily suspending or closing the meeting.

3. Meetings generally

- X Full Council meetings
- Y Committee meetings
- Z Sub-committee meetings

- X 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. 'Meeting' shall include synchronous group interaction mediated via electronic means when Government legislation permits. For the conduct of a meeting in a virtual mode, the Clerk will undertake the action of host, having responsibility for the scheduling and operation of the session, but may if required, pass the electronic hosting function to the Chairman of Council or Chairman of Committee. The role of the Clerk as host is distinct from that of Chair, the powers and responsibilities of which are as in a meeting held in the conventional mode.**
- X b) **The minimum three clear days for notice of a meeting does not include the day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a day of the Christmas break, a day of the Easter break or of a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning.**
- Y c) **The minimum three clear days' public notice of a meeting does not include the day on which the notice was issued or the day of the meeting.**
- d) **Meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential**

nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. The confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons (Exempt Business), in accordance with s1(2) Public Bodies (Admission of Meetings) Act 1960, as extended by s100 of the Local Government Act 1972, on the grounds that an agenda item being considered involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (for example sensitive information relating to employees or legal privilege). **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. In the case of a virtual meeting, because of the nature of the technology, members of the public will be required to submit to the Host a request for an access key which shall be granted and will allow participation in the proceedings. Such a request must be lodged with the Host at least twelve hours before the scheduled start of the meeting.**

- e) Members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda.
 - f) The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with standing order 3(e) above shall not exceed 15 minutes unless directed by the chairman of the meeting.
 - g) Subject to standing order 3(f) above, a member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes.
 - h) In accordance with standing order 3(e) above, a question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The chairman of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.
 - i) A person shall raise their hand when requesting to speak and, at a physical meeting, stand when speaking (except when a person has a disability or is likely to suffer discomfort)]. At a physical meeting the chairman of the meeting may at any time permit a person to be seated when speaking.
 - j) A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct their comments to the chairman of the meeting.
 - k) Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the chairman of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.
- X Y l) A person may not orally report or comment about a meeting as it takes place if they are present at the meeting of the Town Council or its committees but otherwise may:**
- i) Film, photograph or make an audio recording of a meeting
 - ii) Use any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear proceedings at a meeting as it takes place or later

- iii) Report or comment on the proceedings in writing during or after a meeting or orally report or comment after the meeting.

At the beginning of each physical meeting, the Chairman of the meeting will remind everyone in attendance and those participating in the meeting that they may be filmed, recorded, photographed or otherwise reported about.

At a physical meeting any member of public in attendance that objects to the conditions above, and children and vulnerable adults, must inform the Chairman and an area within the Council Chamber will be designated to them. At a virtual meeting the visual and sound feeds from such a person will be disabled so that their speech or image cannot be recorded in a capture of the meeting.

Any member of the public or press carrying out the above reporting must ensure that their activities do not disrupt the proceedings of the meeting or they may be asked to stop or leave.

- X Y** 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.** In the case of a virtual meeting, because of the nature of the technology press representatives will be required to submit to the Host a request for an access key which shall be granted and will allow participation in the proceedings. Such request must be lodged with the Host twelve hours before the scheduled start of the meeting.
- X** n) **Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chairman of the Council may in their absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chairman of the Council (if any).**
- X** o) **The Chairman, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chairman is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chairman, if present, shall preside. If both the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman are absent from a meeting, a councillor as chosen by the councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.**
- X Y Z** p) **Subject to a meeting being quorate, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the councillors or councillors with voting rights present and voting.**
- X Y Z** q) **The chairman of a meeting may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise their casting vote whether or not they gave an original vote.**
See standing orders 5(i) and (j) below for the different rules that apply in the election of the Chairman of the Council at the annual meeting of the council.
- r) **Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on a question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a councillor, the**

voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave 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.

- s) 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 present and absent;
 - iii) interests that have been declared by councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
 - iv) whether a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights left the meeting when matters that they held interests in were being considered;
 - v) if there was a public participation session; and
 - vi) the resolutions made.
- X Y Z** t) **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.**
- X** u) **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 4d(viii) below for the quorum of a committee or sub-committee meeting.
- X Y Z** v) **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 2.5 hours.

4. 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 the committee.
- b) The members of a committee may include non-councillors unless it is a committee which regulates and controls the finances of the council.
- c) Unless the council determines otherwise, all the members of an advisory committee and a sub-committee of the advisory committee may be non-councillors.
- d) 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 full council;
 - iii) shall permit a committee, other than in respect of the ordinary meetings of a committee, to determine the number and time of its meetings;
 - iv) shall, subject to standing orders 4(b) and (c) above, appoint and determine the terms of office of members of such a committee;
 - v) may, subject to standing orders 4(b) and (c) above, 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 7 days before the meeting that they are unable to attend;
shall, after it has appointed the members of a standing committee, appoint the chairman of the standing committee
 - vi) shall permit a committee other than a standing committee, to appoint its own chairman at the first meeting of the committee;
 - vii) shall determine the place, notice requirements and quorum for a meeting of a committee and a sub-committee which shall be no less than three;
 - viii) shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a committee;
 - ix) shall determine if the public and press are permitted to attend the meetings of a sub-committee and also the advance public notice requirements, if any, required for the meetings of a sub-committee;
 - x) shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a sub-committee that they are permitted to attend; and
 - xi) may dissolve a committee.
- e)** The Mayor and Deputy Mayor shall be ex officio members of a standing committee but cannot normally serve as the Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Amenities (AMMI) and Environment and Planning (ENPLAN) Committees
- f)** The Mayor and Deputy Mayor can be members of every sub-committee.
- g)** The business of committee and sub-committee shall be that which is set out in their Terms of Reference.
- h)** Recommendations contained in the minutes of committees shall be resolved by Town Council. Recommendations contained in the minutes of sub-committees shall be referred to the parent committee for consideration and (where appropriate) resolution.
- i)** The rules of Standing Orders shall apply to committees and sub-committees.
- j)** The Council shall have three committees, Finance and Administration, Amenities (AMMI) and Environment & Planning (ENPLAN), and may at the Annual Statutory meeting, or any other time, appoint additional committees that is felt necessary.

5. Ordinary council meetings

- a) In an election year, the annual meeting of the council shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the new councillors elected take office.**
- b) In a year which is not an election year, the annual meeting of a council shall be held on such day in May as the council may direct.**
- c) If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the council shall take place at 7.30pm.**
- d) (*England*) 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 conducted at the annual meeting of the council shall be the election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman (if any) of the Council, in accordance with Appendix 1.**
- f) The Chairman of the Council, unless he has resigned or becomes disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until his successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the council.**
- g) The Vice-Chairman of the Council, if any, unless he resigns or becomes disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chairman of the Council at the next annual meeting of the council.**
- h) In an election year, if the current Chairman of the Council has not been re-elected as a member of the council, he shall preside at the meeting until a successor Chairman of the Council has been elected. The current Chairman of the Council shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chairman of the Council but must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**
- i) In an election year, if the current Chairman of the Council has been re-elected as a member of the council, he shall preside at the meeting until a new Chairman of the Council has been elected. He may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chairman of the Council and must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**
- j) Following the election of the Chairman of the Council and Vice-Chairman (if any) of the Council at the annual meeting of the council, the business of the annual meeting shall include:**

- i) **In an election year, delivery by the Chairman of the Council and councillors of their acceptance of office forms unless the council resolves for this to be done at a later date. In a year which is not an election year, delivery by the Chairman of the Council of his acceptance of office form unless the council resolves for this to be done at a later date;**
- ii) Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the council;
- iii) Receipt of the minutes of the last meeting of a committee;
- iv) Consideration of the recommendations made by a committee;
- v) Review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, staff and other local authorities;
- vi) Review of the terms of reference for committees;
- vii) Appointment of members to existing committees;
- viii) Appointment of any new committees in accordance with standing order 4 above;
- ix) Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations;
- x) Review of arrangements, including any charters and agency agreements, with other local authorities and review of contributions made to expenditure incurred by other local authorities;
- xi) Review of representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back;
- xii) (*England*) In an election year, to make arrangements with a view to the council becoming eligible to exercise the general power of competence in the future;
- xiii) Review of inventory of land and assets including buildings and office equipment;
- xiv) Confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insured risks;
- xv) Review of the council's and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies;
- xvi) Review of the council's complaints procedure;
- xvii) Review of the council's procedures for handling requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998;
- xviii) Review of the council's policy for dealing with the press/media; and
- xix) Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the full council up to and including the next annual meeting of full council.

6. Extraordinary meetings of the council and committees and sub-committees

- a) **The Chairman of the Council may convene an extraordinary meeting of the council at any time.**
- b) **If the Chairman of the Council does not or refuses to 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 must be signed by the two councillors.**

- c) The chairman of a committee [or a sub-committee] may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee [or the sub-committee] at any time.
- d) If the chairman of a committee [or a sub-committee] does not or refuses to call an extraordinary meeting within 7 days of having been requested by to do so by 2 members of the committee [or the sub-committee], any 2 members of the committee [and the sub-committee] may convene an extraordinary meeting of a committee [and a sub-committee].

7. Previous resolutions

- a) A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least 4 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9 below, 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 7(a) above has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved within a further six months.

8. Voting on appointments

- a) Where more than two persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the council and none of those persons has received an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. A tie in votes may be settled by the casting vote exerciseable by the chairman of the meeting.

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

- a. A motion shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting which it is tabled for and in any event shall relate to the performance of the council's statutory functions, powers and obligations or an issue which specifically affects the council's area or its residents.
- b. No motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is on the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least 7 clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.

- c. The Proper Officer may, before including a motion on the agenda received in accordance with standing order 9(b) above, 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 9(b) above is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it in writing to the Proper Officer so that it can be understood 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 chairman of the forthcoming meeting or, as the case may be, the councillors who have convened the meeting, to consider whether the motion shall be included in the agenda or rejected.
- f. Subject to standing order 9(e) above, 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 in a book for that purpose and numbered in the order that they are received.
- h. Motions rejected shall be recorded in a book for that purpose with an explanation by the Proper Officer for their rejection.

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

- a) The following motions may be moved at a meeting without written notice to the Proper Officer;
 - i) to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes of a meeting;
 - ii) to move to a vote;
 - iii) to defer consideration of a motion;
 - iv) to refer a motion to a particular committee or 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;
 - 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.

11. Management of Information

- a) The agenda, papers that support the agenda and the minutes of a meeting shall not disclose or otherwise undermine confidential or sensitive information which for special reasons would not be in the public interest.
- b) Councillors and staff shall not disclose confidential or sensitive information which for special reasons would not be in the public interest.
- c) The Council shall have in place and keep under review, technical and organisational measures to 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.
- d) 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).
- e) 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.
- f) Councillors, staff, the Council's contractors and agents shall not disclose confidential information or personal data without legal justification.

12. Draft minutes

- a) If the draft minutes of a preceding meeting have been served on councillors with the agenda to attend the meeting at which they are due to be approved for accuracy, they shall be taken as read.
- b) There shall be no discussion about the draft minutes of a preceding meeting except in relation to their accuracy. A motion to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes shall be moved in accordance with standing order 10(a)(i) above.
- c) The accuracy of draft minutes, including any amendment(s) made to them, shall be confirmed by resolution and shall be signed by the chairman of the meeting and stand as an accurate record of the meeting to which the minutes relate.
- d) If the chairman of the meeting does not consider the minutes to be an accurate record of the meeting to which they relate, they shall sign the minutes and include a paragraph in the following terms or to the same effect:

“The chairman of this meeting does not believe that the minutes of the meeting of the (xyz) held on [date] in respect of (abc) 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) Upon 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.
- f) The minutes shall record the number of votes taken on any resolution to show in favour, against, abstentions and non-votes. If all councillors present vote in favour of a resolution, then it will be recorded as unanimous.

13. Code of conduct and dispensations

See also standing order 3(t) above.

- a) All councillors and non-councillors with voting rights shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the council.
- b) 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 had the interest.
- 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 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.
- d) **Dispensation requests shall be in writing and submitted to the Proper Officer** as soon as possible before the meeting, or failing that, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.
- e) A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by a meeting of the council, or committee or sub-committee for which the dispensation is required and that decision is final.
- f) A dispensation request shall confirm:
 - i. the description and the nature of the disclosable pecuniary interest or other interest to which the request for the dispensation relates;
 - ii) whether the dispensation is required to participate at a meeting in a discussion only or a discussion and a vote;
 - iii) the date of the meeting or the period (not exceeding four years) for which the dispensation is sought; and
 - iv) an explanation as to why the dispensation is sought.
- g) Subject to standing orders 13(d) and (f) above, dispensations requests shall be considered [by the Proper Officer before the meeting or, if this is not

possible, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required] OR [at the beginning of the meeting of the council, or committee or a sub-committee for which the dispensation is required].

- h) A dispensation may be granted in accordance with standing order 13(e) 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 or**
 - ii) granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the council's area or**
 - iii) it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.**

14. Code of conduct complaints

- a) Upon notification by the District or Unitary Council that it is dealing with a complaint that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the council's code of conduct, the Proper Officer shall, subject to standing order 11 above, report this to the council.
- b) Where the notification in standing order 14(a) above relates to a complaint made by the Proper Officer, the Proper Officer shall notify the Chairman of Council of this fact, and the Chairman shall nominate another staff member to assume the duties of the Proper Officer in relation to the complaint until it has been determined [(England) and the council has agreed what action, if any, to take in accordance with standing order 14(d) below].
- c) The council may:
 - i) provide information or evidence where such disclosure is necessary to progress an investigation of the complaint or is required by law;
 - ii) seek information relevant to the complaint from the person or body with statutory responsibility for investigation of the matter.
- d) Upon notification by the District or Unitary 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.**

15. Proper Officer

- a) The Proper Officer shall be either (i) the clerk or (ii) other staff member(s) nominated by the council to undertake the work of the Proper Officer when the Proper Officer is absent.
- b) The Proper Officer shall:

- i) at least three clear days before a meeting of the council sub-committee serve on councillors a summons, by email, confirming the time, place and the agenda provided any such email contains the electronic signature and title of the Proper Officer. In the event of a member not having access to a computer, a hard copy will be posted.

See standing order 3(b) above for the meaning of clear days for a meeting of a full council and standing order 3 (c) above for a meeting of a committee.

- iii) **give public notice of the time, place and agenda at least three clear days before a meeting of the council or a meeting of a committee or a sub-committee (provided that the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the council convened by councillors is signed by them);**

See standing order 3(b) above for the meaning of clear days for a meeting of a full council and standing order 3(c) above for a meeting of a committee.

- iv) subject to standing order 9 above, include on the agenda all motions in the order received unless a councillor has given written notice at least 3 days before the meeting confirming their withdrawal of it;
- v) **convene a meeting of full council for the election of a new Chairman of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in their office;**
- vi) facilitate inspection of the minute book by local government electors;
- vii) **receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities;**
- viii) retain acceptance of office forms from councillors;
- ix) retain a copy of every councillor's register of interests;
- x) assist with responding to requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Data Protection Act 1998, in accordance with and subject to the council's policies and procedures relating to the same;
- xi) receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the council except where there is a resolution to the contrary;
- xii) manage the organisation, storage of, access to and destruction of information held by the council in paper and electronic form;
- xiii) arrange for legal deeds to be executed;
- xiv) 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;
- xv) record every planning application notified to the council and the council's response to the local planning authority in a book for such purpose;
- xvi) refer a planning application received by the council to the Chairman or in their absence the Vice-Chairman of the Planning (or in their absence the Council Chairman and in their absence the Vice Chairman) within two working days of receipt to facilitate an extraordinary meeting if the nature of a planning application requires

consideration before the next ordinary meeting of the Council or the Planning Committee.

- xvii) manage access to information about the council via the publication scheme; and
- xviii) retain custody of the seal of the council (if any) which shall not be used without a resolution to that effect.
- xix) In periods of restricted activity, council decisions are delegated to the Clerk (such as in respect of COVID-19 virus). Such delegation is to enable the Council to fulfil its responsibilities to its residents.

See also standing order 22 below.

16. Responsible Financial Officer

- a) The council shall appoint appropriate staff member(s) to undertake the work of the Responsible Financial Officer when the Responsible Financial Officer is absent.

17. Accounts and accounting statements

- a) "Proper practices" in standing orders refer to the most recent version of Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioners' Guide (England)
- 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, as a minimum 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 for each quarter;
 - ii) the council's aggregate receipts and payments for the year to date; 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 for the last quarter and the year to date for information; and
 - ii) to the full council the accounting statements for the year in the form of Section 1 of the annual return, as required by proper practices, for consideration and approval.
- e) The year-end accounting statements shall be prepared in accordance with proper practices and applying the form of accounts determined by the

council (receipts and payments, or income and expenditure) for a year to 31 March. A completed draft annual return shall be presented to each councillor before the end of the following month of May. The annual return of the council, which is subject to external audit, including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to council for consideration and formal approval before 30 June.

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18. Financial controls and procurement

- a) The council shall consider and approve financial regulations drawn up by the Responsible Financial Officer, which shall include detailed arrangements in respect of the following:
 - i) the keeping of accounting records and systems of internal controls;
 - ii) the assessment and management of financial risks faced by the council;
 - iii) the work of the independent internal auditor in accordance with proper practices and the receipt of regular reports from the internal auditor, which shall be required at least annually;
 - iv) the inspection and copying by councillors and local electors of the council's accounts and/or orders of payments; and
 - v) policies (subject to standing order 18(c) below) including the setting of values for different procedures where a contract has an estimated value of less than £25,000.
- b) Financial regulations shall be reviewed regularly and at least annually for fitness of purpose.
- c) A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 with an estimated value in excess of £25,000 but less than the relevant thresholds referred to in standing order 18(f) is subject to the "light touch" arrangements under Regulations 109-114 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 unless it proposes to use an existing list of approved suppliers (framework agreement).
- d) Subject to additional requirements in the financial regulations of the council, the tender process for contracts for the supply of goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall include, as a minimum, the following steps:
 - i) a specification for the goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall be drawn up;
 - ii) an invitation to tender shall be drawn up to confirm (i) the council's specification (ii) the time, date and address for the submission of tenders (iii) the date of the council's written response to the tender and (iv) the prohibition on prospective contractors contacting councillors or staff to encourage or support their tender outside the prescribed process;
 - iii) the invitation to tender shall be advertised in a local newspaper and in any other manner that is appropriate;
 - iv) tenders are to be submitted in writing in a sealed marked envelope addressed to the Proper Officer;
 - v) tenders shall be opened by the Proper Officer in the presence of at least one councillor after the deadline for submission of tenders has passed;
 - vi) tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate meeting of the council or a committee or sub-committee with delegated responsibility.
- e) Neither the council, nor a committee or a sub-committee with delegated responsibility for considering tenders, is bound to accept the lowest value tender.

- f) Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed the threshold specified by the Office of Government Commerce from time to time, the Council must consider whether the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016 apply to the contract and, if either of those Regulations apply, the Council must comply with procurement rules. NALC's procurement guidance contains further details.

19. Handling staff matters

- a) A matter personal to a member of staff that is being considered by a meeting of is subject to standing order 11 above.
- b) The Town Clerk, as the Proper Office, is responsible for the employment of the staff and shall operate within the agreed employment practices in line with local government terms and conditions.
- c) Records documenting reasons for an employee's absence due to ill health or details of a medical condition shall be made available only to those persons with responsibility for the same.
- d) The council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters is documented in the Grievance Policy.
- e) Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, if an informal or formal grievance matter raised by an employee relates to a councillor this shall be communicated to the Chairman of the Council which shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the Council.
- f) Any persons responsible for all or part of the management of staff shall treat the written records of all meetings relating to their performance, capabilities, grievance or disciplinary matters as confidential and secure.
- g) The council shall keep all written records relating to employees secure. All paper records shall be secured and locked and electronic records shall be password protected and encrypted.
- h) Only persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to staff records referred to in standing orders 19(f) and (g) above if so justified.
- i) Access and means of access by keys and/or computer passwords to records of employment referred to in standing orders 19(f) and (g) above shall be provided only to the Proper Officer.

20. Responsibilities to Provide Information

- a) Requests for information held by the council shall be handled in accordance with the council's policy in respect of handling requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

- b) Correspondence from, and notices served by, the Information Commissioner shall be referred by the Proper Officer to the chairman of the Council. The Town Council shall have the power to do anything to facilitate compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

21. 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 their rights concerning his personal data.
- c) The Council shall have a written policy in place for responding to and managing a personal data breach.
- d) The Council shall keep a record of all personal data breaches comprising the facts relating to the personal data breach, its effects and the remedial action taken.
- e) The Council shall ensure that information communicated in its privacy notice(s) is in an easy accessible and available form and kept up to date.
- f) The Council shall maintain a written record of all processing activities.

22. Relations with the press/media

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.

23. Execution and sealing of legal deeds

See also standing orders 15(b)(xii) and (xvii) above.

- a) A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the council unless authorised by a resolution.
- b) Subject to standing order 23(a) above, any two councillors may sign, on behalf of the council, any deed required by law and the Proper Officer shall witness their signatures.

The above is applicable to a Council without a common seal.

24. Communicating County Councillors

- a) An invitation to attend a meeting of the council shall be sent, together with the agenda, to the ward councillor(s) of the County Council representing the area of the Council.
- b) Unless the council determines otherwise, a copy of each letter sent to the County Councillor shall be sent to the ward councillor(s) representing the area of the council.

25. Restrictions on councillor activities

- a) Unless authorised by a resolution, 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.

26. Standing orders generally

- a) All or part of a standing order, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory requirements, 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 requirements, shall be proposed by a special motion, the written notice by at least 2 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9 above.
- c) The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the council's standing orders to a councillor as soon as possible after they have delivered his acceptance of office form.
- d) The decision of the chairman of a meeting as to the application of standing orders at the meeting shall be final.

Appendix 1 – Procedure to elect the Mayor

Notwithstanding the statutory provisions relating to the same, the election of the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor shall be in accordance with the following.

1. The Mayoral position will commence at the Annual Meeting (held in May of each year) from the time of election.
2. Statutory procedures in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 will prevail at all times and the position of Mayor is subject to the signing and delivering of the acceptance of office.
3. Nominations are subject to the following qualification criteria:
 - i. To have served as a councillor for a minimum of 1 year
 - ii. To not have been subject of an upheld grievance or code of conduct complaint within the preceding 2 years or any pending grievance or code of conduct complaints.
4. The Mayor will hold office until the next mayoral term when his/her successor will be elected at the Annual Council meeting.
5. Any nominations to the position of Mayor must be submitted to the Town Clerk for consideration at the Full Council meeting in April of each year, in advance of the Annual Council Meeting in May.
6. Nominations must be made on a form to be supplied by the Town Clerk. This form must be submitted to the Town Clerk by the deadline on the nomination form which will be 2 weeks prior to the April Full Council meeting as referenced in 5) above. Nominations after this date will not be accepted and no nomination can be considered unless made in accordance with the requirements set above.
7. Nominations must be supported by two serving councillors of Lytchett Minster & Upton Town Council.
8. No person can be considered for the Office of Mayor unless properly nominated.
9. All eligible nominations will be taken forward to the April Full Council meeting for review and information.
10. The Mayor will not be elected at the April Full Council meeting; it is a statutory requirement that the election of Mayor (Chair) is the first item of business at the Annual Meeting to be held in May (LGA 1972, s15(2)).
11. Election of the Mayor at the Annual Meeting will be the first item of business.
12. Election of the Mayor will be by a secret ballot and the successful candidate will be the properly nominated Member with the majority of votes.

13. The Mayor can only serve for two consecutive years in the role unless no other candidates come forward. This will not preclude any councillor from being elected as Mayor who has a break in the role of at least 2 years.
14. The position of Deputy Mayor is to support the role of the Mayor, deputising for civic events and ceremonies in his/her absence. The role of Deputy Mayor is not a "rising right of office" but it is recognised that there is significant benefit in the Deputy Mayor subsequently being elected to the position of Mayor.

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