



Standing Orders & Financial Regulations

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(Any reference in these Standing Orders to the feminine gender shall be taken to include the masculine and any reference to the masculine gender shall be taken to include the feminine)

MEETINGS

1. Meetings of the Council shall be held in each year on such dates and times and at such place as the Council may direct.

THE STATUTORY ANNUAL MEETING

- 2. In an election year shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the councillors are elected take office**
- 3. In a year which is not an election year shall be held on such day in May as the Council may direct.**
- 4. In addition to the Statutory Annual Meeting at least three other meetings shall be held in each year.**

CHAIRMAN OF THE MEETING

- 5. The person presiding at a meeting may exercise all the powers and duties of the Business Chair in relation to the conduct of the meeting.**

PROPER OFFICER

6. Where a statute, regulation or order confers function or duties on the proper officer of the Council in the following cases, he shall be the Town Clerk:
 - (a) To receive declarations of acceptance of office.
 - (b) To receive and record notices disclosing pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests.
 - (c) To receive and retain plans and documents.
 - (d) To sign notices or other documents on behalf of the Council.
 - (e) To receive copies of bylaws made by a Unitary Council.
 - (f) To certify copies of bylaws made by the Council.
 - (g) To sign summons to attend meetings of the Council.
 - (h) To keep proper records for all Council meetings.

QUORUM OF THE COUNCIL

- 7. One third of the total membership of the Council (six members) shall constitute a quorum.**
8. If a quorum is not present or if during a meeting the number of councillors present falls below the required quorum (the quorum does not include those temporarily debarred by virtue of a pecuniary interest), the meeting shall be adjourned and business not transacted shall be transacted at the next meeting or on such other day as the Business Chair may fix.
9. For a quorum relating to a committee or sub-committee, please refer to Standing Order 60. Standing Order 8 shall also apply to all committees.

VOTING

10. Members shall vote by show of hands or, if at least two members so request, by signed ballot.
- 11. If a member so requires, the Town Clerk shall record the names of the members who voted on any question so as to show whether they voted for or against it. Such a request may be made before or after the vote but in any event before moving on to the next business.**
- 12. Subject to (a) and (b) below the Business Chair may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in any case of an equality of votes may give a casting vote whether or not he gave an original vote.**
 - (a) If the person presiding at the annual meeting would have ceased to be a member of the council but for the statutory provisions which preserve the membership of the Business Chair and Vice Business Chair until the end of their term of office he may not give an original vote in an election for Business Chair.**
 - (b) The person presiding must give a casting vote whenever there is an equality of votes in an election for Civic Head.**

ORDER OF BUSINESS

- 13. At each Annual Meeting the first business shall be:-**
 - (a) To elect a Business Chair of the Council**
 - (b) To receive the Business Chair's declaration of acceptance of office or, if not then received, to decide when it shall be received.**
 - (c) In the ordinary year of election of the Council to fill any vacancies left unfilled at the election by reason of insufficient nominations.**
 - (d) To elect a Vice Business Chair of the Council.**
 - (e) To receive the Vice Business Chair's declaration of acceptance of Office or, if not then received, to decide when it shall be received.**

- (f) To elect a Civic Head for the Civic Year of Office**
 - (g) To elect a Deputy Civic Head for the Civic Year of Office**
 - (h) If there are Political Groups of Councillors, to appoint a Leader and Deputy Leader, being the Leader and Deputy Leader of the largest Political Group on the Council
 - (i) To appoint representatives to outside bodies.
 - (j) To appoint to committees in accordance with the agreed structure and schedule of delegations and shall thereafter refer to Standing Order 16
14. **At every meeting other than the Annual Meeting the first business shall be to appoint a Chairman if the Business Chair and Vice-Business Chair be absent and to receive such declarations of acceptance of office (if any) as are required by law to be made, or if not then received, to decide when they shall be received.**
15. In every year, not later than the meeting at which the estimates for next year are settled, the Council shall review the pay and conditions of service of existing employees. Standing Order 47 must be read in conjunction with this requirement.
16. After the first business has been completed, the order of business, unless the Council otherwise decides on the ground of urgency, shall, if necessary, include the following:
- (a) To read and consider the Minutes; provided that if a copy has been circulated to each member not later than the day of issue of the summons to attend the meeting, the Minutes may be taken as read.**
 - (b) After consideration to approve the signature of the Minutes by the person presiding as a correct record.**
 - (c) To deal with business expressly required by statute to be done.**
 - (d) To decide when any declarations of acceptance of office and written undertakings to comply with the Code of Conduct (Annex A) adopted by the Council which have not been received as provided by law shall be received.**
 - (e) To answer questions from Councillors.
 - (f) To receive and consider resolutions or recommendations in the order in which they have been notified.
 - (g) To authorise the sealing of documents.
 - (i) If necessary, to authorise the signing of orders for payment.

URGENT BUSINESS

17. (a) The chairman may, at their discretion, alter the order of business as specified on the agenda
- (b) A motion to vary the order of business on the grounds of urgency may be proposed by any member and after being seconded shall be put to the vote without discussion.

RESOLUTIONS MOVED ON NOTICE

18. Except as provided by these Standing Orders, no resolution may be moved unless the business to which it relates has been put on the Agenda by the Town Clerk or the mover has given notice in writing (notice of motion) of its terms and has delivered the notice to the Town Clerk at least 7 working days prior to the next meeting of the Council.
19. The Town Clerk shall insert in the summons for every meeting all notices of motion or recommendation 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 intends to move at some later meeting or that he withdraws it.
20. The proper officer may, before including a motion on the agenda, correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion. If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it in writing so that it can be understood at least 5 clear days before the meeting.
21. 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 motions shall be included in the agenda or rejected.
22. If a resolution or recommendation specified in the summons is not moved either by the member who gave notice of it or by any other member, it shall, unless postponed by the Council, be treated as withdrawn and shall not be moved without fresh notice.
23. If the subject matter of a resolution comes within the province 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 Chairman, if he considers it to be a matter of urgency, may allow it to be dealt with at the meeting at which it was moved.
24. Every resolution or recommendation shall be relevant to some subject over which the Council has power or duties which affects its area.

RESOLUTIONS MOVED WITHOUT NOTICE

25. Resolutions dealing with the following matters may be moved without notice:
 - (a) To appoint a Chairman of the meeting.
 - (b) To correct the Minutes.
 - (c) To approve the Minutes.
 - (d) To alter the order of business.
 - (e) To proceed to the next business.
 - (f) To close or adjourn the debate.
 - (g) To refer a matter to a committee.
 - (h) To appoint a committee or any members thereof.

- (i) To adopt a report.
- (j) To authorise the sealing of documents.
- (k) To amend a motion.
- (l) To give leave to withdraw a resolution or amendment.
- (m) To extend the time limit for speeches.
- (n) To exclude the public. (see Order 94 below)
- (o) To silence or eject from the meeting a member named for misconduct.
(see order 36 below)
- (p) To give the consent of the Council where such consent is required by these Standing Orders.
- (q) To suspend any Standing Order. (see Order 110 below)
- (r) To adjourn the meeting.

QUESTIONS

- 26. A member may ask the Business Chair or the Town Clerk any question concerning the business of the Council. The Business Chair or Town Clerk may respond immediately or within an agreed timescale.
- 27. No questions not connected with business under discussion shall be asked except during the part of the meeting set aside for questions.
- 28. Every question shall be put and answered without discussion.
- 29. A person to whom a question has been put may decline to answer.

DRAFT MINUTES

- 30. 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
- 31. 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 25C
- 32. 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.
- 33. If the chairman 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 chairman 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 his view was not upheld by the meeting and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.”

34. Following the preparation of Draft Minutes, the Town Clerk shall issue them to the relevant Chairman for comment prior to publication in draft form on the Council's website.

RULES OF DEBATE

35. (a) A resolution or amendment shall not be discussed unless it has been proposed and seconded, and, unless proper notice has already been given, it shall, if required by the Business Chair/Chairman, be reduced to writing and handed to him before it is further discussed or put to the meeting.
- (b) A member when seconding a resolution or amendment may, if he then declares his intention to do so, reserve his speech until a later period of the debate.
- (c) A member shall direct his speech to the question under discussion or to a personal explanation or to a question of order.
- (d) No speech by a mover of a resolution shall exceed 5 minutes and no other speech shall exceed 5 minutes except by consent of the Council.
- (e) An amendment shall be either to:
- i. leave out words.
 - ii. leave out words and insert others
 - iii. insert or add words.
- (f) An amendment shall not have to effect of negating the resolution before the Council.
- (g) If an amendment be carried, the resolution, as amended, shall take the place of the original resolution and shall become the resolution upon which any further amendment may be moved.
- (h) A further amendment shall not be moved until the Council has disposed of every amendment previously moved.
- (i) The mover of a resolution or of an amendment shall have a right of reply, not exceeding 5 minutes.
- (j) A member may make a point of order or a personal explanation. A member stating verbally 'point of order' or 'personal explanation' shall be heard forthwith. A personal explanation shall be confined to some material part of a former speech by him which may have been misunderstood.
- (k) A motion or amendment may be withdrawn by the proposer with the consent of the Council, which shall be signified without discussion, and no member may speak upon it after permission has been asked for its withdrawal unless such permission has been refused.
- (l) When a resolution is under debate no other resolution shall be moved except the following:
- i. To amend the resolution.
 - ii. To proceed to the next business.
 - iii. To adjourn the debate.
 - iv. That the question be now put.
 - v. That a member named be not further heard.
 - vi. That a member named do leave the meeting.
 - vii. That the resolution be referred to a committee.
 - viii. To exclude the public and press.
 - ix. To adjourn the meeting.

36. (a) The ruling of the Business Chair/Chairman on a point of order or on the admissibility of a personal explanation shall not be discussed.
- (b) Members shall address the Business Chair/Chairman.
- (c) If two or more members wish to speak, the Business Chair /Chairman shall call upon one of them to speak first, the others shall be called in turn.
- (d) Whenever the Business Chair /Chairman invites a Member to speak during a debate all other members shall be seated and silent.

CLOSURE

37. At the end of any speech a member may, without comment, move "*that the question be now put*", "*that the debate be now adjourned*" or "*that the Council do now adjourn*". If such motion is seconded, the Business Chair /Chairman shall put the motion but, in the case of a motion "*that the question be now put*", only if he is of the opinion that the question before the Council has been sufficiently debated. If the motion "*that the question be now put*" is carried, he shall call upon the mover to exercise or waive his right of reply and shall put the question immediately after that right has been exercised or waived. The adjournment of a debate or of the Council shall not prejudice the mover's right of reply at the resumption.

DISORDERLY CONDUCT

38. **All members must behave in a manner required by the Code of Conduct (Annex A) which was adopted by the council on 3 July 2012, a copy of which is annexed to these Standing Orders.**
39. No member shall at a meeting persistently disregard the ruling of the Chairman, wilfully obstruct business, or behave irregularly, offensively, improperly **or in such a manner as to bring the Council into disrepute. If a member reasonably believes another member is in breach of the code of conduct, that member is under a duty to report the breach in line with the code of conduct.**
40. If, in the opinion of the Chairman, a member has broken the provisions of paragraph 38 or 39 of this Order, the Chairman shall express that opinion to the Council and thereafter any member may move that the member named be no longer heard or that the member named do leave the meeting, and the motion, if seconded, shall be put forthwith and without discussion.
41. If either of the motions mentioned in paragraph 40 is disobeyed, the Chairman may suspend the meeting or take such further steps as may reasonably be necessary to enforce them.

RIGHT OF REPLY

42. The mover of a resolution shall have a right to reply immediately before the resolution is put to the vote. If an amendment is proposed the mover of the

amendment shall be entitled to reply immediately before the amendment is put to the vote. A member exercising a right of reply shall not introduce a new matter. After the right of reply has been exercised or waived, a vote shall be taken without further discussion.

ALTERATION OF RESOLUTION

43. A member may, with the consent of the seconder; move amendments to his/her own resolution.

RESCISSION OF PREVIOUS RESOLUTION

44. A decision (whether affirmative or negative) of the Council shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special resolution, the written notice whereof bears the names of at least 5 members of the Council, or by a resolution moved in pursuance of the report or recommendation of a committee.
45. When a special resolution or any other resolution moved under the provisions of paragraph 44 of this Order has been disposed of, no similar resolution may be moved within a further six months.

VOTING ON APPOINTMENTS

46. Where more than two persons have been nominated for any position to be filled by the Council and of the votes given there is not an absolute majority in favour of one person, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken, and so on until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person.

In the event there is no casting vote available then the matter shall be decided by the toss of a coin.

DISCUSSIONS AND RESOLUTIONS AFFECTING EMPLOYEES OF THE COUNCIL

47. 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 shall be excluded. (See Standing Order No. 94)

RESOLUTIONS ON EXPENDITURE

48. Any resolution (which is moved otherwise than in pursuance of a recommendation of the Finance Committee or of another committee after recommendation by the Finance Committee) and which, if carried, would, in the opinion of the Chairman

substantially increase the expenditure upon any service which is under the management of the Council or reduce the revenue at the disposal of any committee, or which would involve capital expenditure, shall, when proposed and seconded, stand adjourned without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council, and any committee affected by it shall consider whether it desires to report thereon (and the Finance Committee shall report on the financial aspect of the matters).

HANDLING CONFIDENTIAL OR SENSITIVE INFORMATION

49. 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.
50. Councillors and staff shall not disclose confidential or sensitive information which for special reasons would not be in the public interest.

EXPENDITURE

51. **All payments by the Council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the law, proper practices and the Council's Financial Regulations**

SEALING OF DOCUMENTS

52. A document shall not be sealed on behalf of the Council unless its sealing has been authorised by a resolution.
53. Subject to standing order 52 above, the council's common seal shall alone be used for sealing a deed required by law. It shall be applied by the Proper Officer in the presence of two councillors who shall sign as witnesses.

COMMITTEES AND SUB COMMITTEES

54. The Council may at its Annual Meeting appoint standing committees and may at any other time appoint such other committees as are necessary clearly defining roles of the committees and any delegated powers, but subject to any statutory provision on that behalf:
 - (a) Shall not appoint any member of a committee so as to hold office later than the next Annual Meeting.
 - (b) Each Town Council ward must have at least one representative assigned to each committee although it is not a requirement that each ward be represented at every meeting.
 - (c) May appoint persons other than members of the Council to any Committee (such persons shall not have the right to vote); and

(d) May, subject to the provisions of Order 38 above, at any time dissolve or alter the membership of committee.

55. The Civic Head and Deputy Civic Head shall be ex-officio members of every committee for the sake of clarity this is to allow them voting rights at all committees either or both may attend.
56. Every committee shall at its first meeting before proceeding to any other business, elect a Chairman and may elect a Deputy-Chairman who shall hold office until the next Annual Meeting of the council.

In the event that there is no casting vote available then the matter shall be decided by the toss of a coin. The Business Chair and Civic Head shall not be elected as Chairman or Vice-Chairman of any committee save with the express approval of the Council given on consideration of a report from the committee setting out the exceptional reasons justifying the election.

SPECIAL MEETING

57. The Chairman of a committee or the Business Chair of the Council may summon an additional meeting of that committee at any time. An additional meeting shall also be summoned on the requisition in writing of not less than a quarter of the members of the committee. The summons shall set out the business to be considered at the special meeting and no other business shall be transacted at that meeting.

SUB-COMMITTEES

58. Every committee may appoint sub-committees for purposes to be specified by the committee.
59. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the committee shall be members of every sub-committee appointed by it unless they signify that they do not wish to serve.
60. Except where ordered by the Council in the case of a committee, or by the Council or by the appropriate committee in the case of a sub-committee, the quorum of a committee or subcommittee shall be one-half of its members, noting that the general rule under Standing Order 7 also applies.
61. The Standing Orders on rules of debate and the Standing Order on interests of members in contracts and other matters shall apply to committee and sub-committee meetings.
62. Without prejudice to the powers of committees under Standing Order 58, the Council may direct a committee whether in its terms of reference or otherwise to establish a sub-committee for the purposes specified by the Council. For the avoidance of doubt, the power of the Council under this standing order to direct a

committee to establish a sub-committee also applies to the establishment of Working Parties or Groups by committees.

ADVISORY COMMITTEES

63. The Council may create advisory committees, whose name, and number of members and the bodies to be invited to nominate members shall be specified.
64. The Town Clerk shall inform the members of each advisory committee of the terms of reference of the committee.
65. An advisory committee may make recommendations and give notice thereof to the Council
66. An advisory committee may consist wholly of persons who are not members of the Council.

VOTING IN COMMITTEES

67. Members of committees and sub-committees entitled to vote (see relevant terms of reference) shall by show of hands, or, if at least two members so request, by signed ballot.
68. **Chairman of committees and sub-committees shall in the case of an equality of votes have a second or casting vote.**

PRESENCE OF NON-MEMBERS OF COMMITTEES AT COMMITTEE MEETINGS

69. A member who has proposed a resolution which has been referred to any committee of which he is not a member, may explain his/her resolution to the committee but shall not vote.
 - (a) Except as otherwise provided by the Terms of Reference of a committee, any member of the council may attend any committee or sub-committee of the council of which they are not a member. A member attending under this standing order may speak, but not vote. A resolution passed under Standing Order 91 excluding the press and public from a meeting shall not apply to a member attending under this standing order.

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

- (b) Unless the council at any time determines to the contrary, the Committees of the council to be appointed in each year shall be the Finance & General Services Committee. The committees shall have the matters referred to it the delegated powers and be constituted in the manner described in the Terms of reference contained in Annex B to these Standing Orders.

- (c) All working groups established by the Council or a committee shall have a terms of reference in the format as prescribed by Appendix C.

ACCOUNTS AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT

70. Except as provided in paragraph 72 of this Standing Order or by statute, all accounts for payment and claims upon the Council shall be laid before the Council or Finance and General Services Committee
71. Where payment is made in line with budget approval and delegation, before it has been authorised by the Council or Finance and General Services Committee, such payment shall be certified as to its correctness and urgency by the appropriate officer. Such payment shall be authorised by the committee, if any, having charge of the business to which it relates, or by the proper officer for payment with the approval of the Business Chair or Vice Business Chair.
72. All payments ratified under paragraph 71 of this Standing Order shall be included in the next schedule of payments before the Council or Finance and General Services Committee.
73. The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to each member at the ordinary meeting next after the end of the Financial Year a Financial statement of receipts and payments for the Council.

ESTIMATES / PRECEPTS

74. The council shall approve written estimates for the coming financial year at its meeting at the first meeting in January.
75. Any committee desiring to incur expenditure shall give the Town Clerk a written estimate of the expenditure recommended for the coming year no later than the end of October.
76. Annual Budget and precept setting process – Ordinarily in line with the terms of reference of Committees, those Committees with budget responsibilities will meet to produce a recommendation to Finance and General Services Committee as to their budget requirements by the end of November, such that Finance and General Services Committee can meet ordinarily in December to review a consolidated budget and make a precept recommendation to the Town Council prior to the deadline for precept submissions (normally late January).

The Finance and General Services Committee may at the outset of the process each year agree revised process timescales to take account of the circumstances pertaining at that time. The Finance and General Services Committee must however ensure the timetable allows proper consideration of the budget by Council prior to precept submission deadlines. For the avoidance of doubt and in a spirit of openness and transparency, the Finance and General Services Committee must also submit its own budget request albeit to itself in line with the timetable for all other committees.

CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISPENSATIONS

77. All councillors with voting rights shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the council
78. A member who has declared a pecuniary interest may remain in the room; may make a statement of fact on the item but may not participate in discussion or vote on the item under discussion.
79. 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.
80. A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by the Proper Officer in consultation with the Business Chair or, failing that, the Committee chairman and that decision is final. 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.
81. Subject to Standing Orders 78 and 79 above, dispensations requests shall be considered by the Proper Officer in consultation with the Business Chair or, failing that, the Committee Chairman before the meeting or, if this is not possible, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.
82. A dispensation may be granted in accordance with Standing Order 79 above if having regard to all relevant circumstances the following applies:
- (a) 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
 - (b) granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the council's area or
 - (c) it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.
83. **The Town Clerk shall hold a copy of the Register of Member's Interests in accordance with instructions received from the Monitoring Officer of the Responsible Authority and/or as required by statute. The registers of Member's Interests will also be published on the Council website.**
84. If a candidate for any appointment under the Council is to his knowledge related to any member of or the holder of any office under the Council, he and the person to whom he is related shall disclose the relationship in writing to the Town Clerk. A candidate who fails so to do shall be disqualified for such appointment, and, if

appointed, may be dismissed without notice. The Town Clerk shall report to the Council or to the appropriate committee any such disclosure. Where relationship to a member is disclosed this Standing Order shall apply. The Town Clerk shall make known the purport of this Standing Order to every candidate.

CANVASSING OF AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY MEMBERS

85. Canvassing of members of the Council or of any committee, directly or indirectly, for any appointment under the Council shall disqualify the candidate for such appointment. The Town Clerk shall make known the purport of this sub-paragraph of this Standing Order to every candidate.
86. A member of the Council or of any committee shall not solicit for any person any appointment under the Council or recommend any person for such appointment or for promotion; but, nevertheless, any such member may give a written testimonial of a candidate's ability, experience or character for submission to the Council with an application for appointment.
87. Standing Orders 84, 85 & 86 shall apply to tenders as if the person making the tender were a candidate for an appointment.

INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS

88. A member may for the purpose of his duty as such (but not otherwise), inspect any document 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.
89. **(a) All minutes kept by the Council and by any committee shall be open for the inspection of any member of the Council.**
- (b) The minutes of the Council and its committees shall be open to inspection by any local government elector of the parish without charge.**

UNAUTHORISED ACTIVITIES

90. No member of the Council or of any committee or sub-committee shall in the name of or on behalf of the Council:
- (a) Inspect any lands or premises which the Council has a right or duty to inspect; or
- (b) Issue orders, instructions or directions unless authorised to do so by the Council or the relevant committee or sub-committee.

ADMISSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS TO MEETINGS

91. **The public shall be admitted to all meetings of the Council and its Committees** and subcommittees, which may, however, temporarily exclude the public by means of the following resolutions:

“That in view of the [special] [confidential] nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the public be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw”

92. The Council shall state the special reason for exclusion.
93. At all meetings of the Council the Chairman may at his discretion and at a convenient time in the transaction of business, adjourn the meeting so as to allow any members of the public to address the meeting in relation to the business to be transacted at that meeting.
94. With the exception of the Personnel Committee, all Council meetings shall permit an opportunity for time to be allocated to allow members of the public to make statements and ask questions.
95. The Town Clerk shall afford to the press reasonable facilities for taking their report of any proceedings at which they are entitled to be present.
96. If a member of the public interrupts the proceedings at any meeting, the Chairman may, after warning, order that he be removed from the meeting

CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

97. No member of the Council or of any committee or sub-committee shall disclose to any person not a member of the Council any business declared to be confidential by the Council, the committee or the sub-committee as the case may be.
98. Any member in breach of the provisions of paragraph 97 of this Standing Order shall be removed from any committee or sub-committee of the Council.

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

99. 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 Data Protection Act 1998.
100. Correspondence from, and notices served by the Information Commissioner shall be referred by the Proper Officer to the chairman of the Personnel Committee and the Business Chair. The said committee shall have the power to do anything to facilitate compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

LIAISON WITH COUNTY COUNCILLORS

101. A notice of meeting shall be sent together with an invitation to attend to the County Councillor for the appropriate ward.
102. Unless the Council otherwise orders, a copy of each letter ordered to be sent to the County Council shall be transmitted to the County Councillor for the division.

PLANNING AND LICENSING APPLICATIONS

103. The Town Clerk shall, as soon as it is received, shall record the particulars of every planning or licensing application notified to the Council.

ATTENDANCE AT COUNCIL MEETINGS

104. If a member fails throughout six consecutive months to attend any meetings of the Council or any of its Committees or Sub-Committees of which he/she is a member, or of a joint Committee, joint board or other body to which any of the Council's powers have been transferred or delegated, he/she has a "statutory excuse" or his/her failure is due to a reason approved by the Council or, he/she has attended as an appointed representative of the Council at a meeting of any outsider body. The period begins with the last meeting attended.

STANDING ORDER ON FINANCIAL MATTERS

105.
 - (a) The Council shall ensure its financial management is adequate and comprehensive and facilitates the effective exercise of the Council functions, its risk management and the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption.
 - (b) The Clerk of the Council is the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) and the RFO shall administer the Councils financial affairs in accordance with proper accounting practices and under the direction of the Council.
 - (c) The RFO will determine on behalf of the Council its accounting records and control systems and shall ensure they are observed, maintained and kept up to date. All accounting procedures and financial records shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations which means the Regulations issued under the provisions of section 27 of the Audit Commission Act 1998 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 or as amended.
 - (d) The RFO will provide the Council with a Budget breakdown and any other financial reports as often as the Council may determine not less than usually four times per annum.

(e) CONTRACTS

- I. Where it is intended to enter into a contract exceeding £20,000 but not exceeding £50,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works, the Clerk shall endeavour to invite tenders from at least three local firms.
- II. Where the value of the intended contract exceeds £50,000 the Clerk shall give a least three weeks public notice of such intention in the same manner as public notice of meetings of the Council is given and also in such newspapers circulating in the district as the Council shall direct.
- III. Any notice of a contract exceeding £20,000 shall state the general nature of the intended contract and state the name and address of the person to whom tenders are to be addressed and the last date by which those tenders should reach that person in the ordinary course of post.
- IV. Tenders shall be opened by the Clerk or other person to whom tenders are required to be addressed on the date specified pursuant to paragraph (e) iii of this Order and shall be reported by the person who opened them to the Council or, where the tenders have been sought by a Committee or Sub-Committee to that Committee or Sub-Committee.
- V. Neither the Council nor any Committee, or Sub-Committee is bound to accept the lowest tender.
- VI. If no tenders are received or if all the tenders are identical the Council may make such arrangements for procuring the goods or materials or executing the works as it thinks fit.
- VII. A notice issued under this standing order shall contain a statement of the effect of Standing Orders Nos. 60, 61,62.
- VIII. Where the Council is to enter into a contract less than £20,000 and more than £5,000 for the supply of goods and materials or for the execution of works or specialist services the Clerk shall endeavour to obtain three quotations from local firms.
- IX. Where the Council is to enter into a contract less than £5,000 the Clerk shall ensure as far as reasonable and practicable that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction usually by obtaining three quotations or estimates.
- X. The Clerk may incur expenditure on behalf of the Council which is delegated to him/her or which is necessary to carry out any repair, replacement or other work which is of such urgency that it must be done at once and whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £1,000 and the Clerk shall report to the Council as soon as practical thereafter.

Every contract shall comply with the financial regulations, and no exceptions shall be made other than in an emergency provided that these regulations shall not apply to contracts which relate to items (a) to (f) below:

- (a) for the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telephone services.
- (b) for specialist services such as are provided by solicitors, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants.
- (c) for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which consist of repairs to or parts for existing machinery or equipment or plant
- (d) for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the Council;
- (e) for additional audit work of the external Auditor up to an estimated value of £250 (in excess of this sum the RFO shall act after consultation with the Business Chair and Vice Business Chair of Council);
- (f) for goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and/or are only sold at a fixed price.

CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS

106. Upon notification by Northumberland County 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 Orders 49 and 50 above, report this to the council.

107. Where the notification in standing order 106 above relates to a complaint made by the Proper Officer, the Proper Officer shall notify the Business Chair of this fact, and the Business Chair shall nominate another staff member to assume the duties of the Proper Officer in relation to the complaint until it has been determined and the council has agreed what action, if any, to take in accordance with Standing Order 109 below.

108. 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;

109. Upon notification by the Northumberland County 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 him. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office

VARIATION, REVOCATION AND SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

110. Any or every part of the Standing Orders except those printed in bold type may be suspended by resolution in relation to any specific item of business.
111. 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.

STANDING ORDERS TO BE GIVEN TO MEMBERS

112. A copy of these Standing Orders shall be given to each member by the Town Clerk upon delivery to him of the member's declaration of acceptance of office and written undertaking to comply with the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council and at other times when the Standing Orders are amended.
113. These standing orders and in particular the Terms of Reference of Committees shall be reviewed annually at the ordinary meeting of the council next before the Annual Meeting

ANNEX A – CODE OF CONDUCT

The Code of conduct was adopted by the Town Council on 3RD July 2012.

Introduction

Pursuant to section 27 of the Localism Act 2011, Ashington Town Council ('the Council') has adopted this Code of Conduct to promote and maintain high standards of behaviour by its members and co-opted members whenever they conduct the business of the Council, including the business of the office to which they were elected or appointed, or when they claim to act or give the impression of acting as a representative of the Council.

This Code of Conduct is based on the principles of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

Definitions

For the purposes of this Code, a 'co-opted member' is a person who is not a member of the Council but who is either a member of any committee or sub-committee of the Council, or a member of, and represents the Council, and who is entitled to vote on any question that falls to be decided at any meeting of that committee or sub-committee.

For the purposes of this Code, a 'meeting' is a meeting of the Council, any of its committees, sub-committees, joint committees or joint sub-committees.

For the purposes of this Code, and unless otherwise expressed, a reference to a member of the Council includes a co-opted member of the Council.

Member obligations

When a member of the Council acts, claims to act or gives the impression of acting as a representative of the Council, he/she has the following obligations.

1. He/she shall behave in such a way that a reasonable person would regard as respectful.
2. He/she shall not act in a way which a reasonable person would regard as bullying or intimidatory*.
3. He/she shall not behave in a manner which a reasonable person would regard as likely to bring the Council, or his/her office as a member of the Council, into disrepute
4. he/she shall not seek improperly to confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person.

5. He/she shall use the resources of the Council in accordance with its requirements.
6. He/she shall not disclose information which is confidential or where disclosure is prohibited by law.

*“Bullying” may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious, insulting or humiliating behaviour and includes “cyber bullying”. It may happen once or be part of a pattern of behaviour. It can be contrasted with the legitimate challenges a member may make in challenging policy or scrutinising performance. You may challenge others as to why they hold their views but must take care to raise issues in the appropriate forum. Ideas and policies may be robustly criticised but individuals should not be subject to unreasonable or excessive personal attack.

General obligations

Whenever you are acting as a member or co-opted member of this authority you must act in accordance with the following obligations:

Selflessness

You must act solely in the public interest and must never use or attempt to use your position improperly to confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person or act to gain financial or other material benefits for yourself, your family, friends or close associates.

Integrity

You must not place yourself under a financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence you in the performance of your official duties. You should exercise independent judgement. Although you may take account of the views of others (including a political group), you should reach your own conclusions on the issues before you and act in accordance with those conclusions.

Objectivity

When carrying out your public duties you must make all choices, such as making public appointments, awarding contracts or recommending individuals for rewards or benefits, on merit. You should remain objective, listen to the interests of all parties appropriately and impartially and take all relevant information, including advice from the authority’s officers, into consideration.

Accountability

You are accountable to the public for your decisions and you must co-operate fully with whatever scrutiny is appropriate to your office, including by local residents.

Openness

- (i) You must be open and transparent where possible about your decisions and actions and the decisions and actions of your authority. You should

be prepared to give reasons for those decisions and actions. You must not prevent anyone getting information that they are entitled to by law.

- (ii) Where the law or the wider public interest requires it, you must not disclose confidential information or information to which public access is restricted. (see footnote)

Honesty

- (i) You must declare any private interests, both pecuniary and non-pecuniary, that relate to your public duties and must take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest, including registering and declaring interests as set out in Section B below.
- (ii) You must only use or authorise the use of the authority's resources in accordance with the authority's requirements. You must, when using or authorising the use by others of such resources, ensure that they are used for proper purposes only. Resources must not be used improperly for political purposes (including party political purposes) and you must have regard to any applicable Local Authority Code of Publicity made under the Local Government Act 1986

Respect for others

- (i) You must treat others with courtesy. You should engage with colleagues and staff in a manner that underpins mutual respect and courtesy, essential to good local government.
- (ii) You must not do anything which may cause your authority to breach any equality laws.
- (iii) You must not compromise or attempt to compromise the impartiality of anyone who works for, or on behalf of, the authority.
- (iv) You must not bully any person, including other councillors, officers of the authority or members of the public. (see footnote)

Leadership

You must promote and support high standards of conduct when serving as member or co-opted member of the authority, by leadership and example, championing the interests of the community. You should uphold the law and, on all occasions, act in accordance with the trust that the public is entitled to place in you.

Gifts and Hospitality

You must within 28 days of receipt, notify the Monitoring Officer in writing of any gift, benefit or hospitality with a value in excess of £100 which you have accepted as a member from any person or body other than the authority. The Monitoring Officer will place your notification on a public register of gifts and hospitality.

Registration of interests

7. Within 28 days of this Code being adopted by the Council, or the member's election or the co-opted member's appointment (where that is later), he/she shall register with the Monitoring Officer the interests which fall within the categories set out in Appendices A and B.
8. Upon the re-election of a member or the re-appointment of a co-opted member, he/she shall within 28 days re-register with the monitoring Officer any interests in Appendices A and B.
9. A member shall register with the Monitoring Officer any change to interests or new interests in Appendices A and B within 28 days of becoming aware of it.
10. A member need only register the existence but not the details of any interest which the Monitoring Officer agrees is a 'sensitive interest'. A sensitive interest is one which, if disclosed on a public register, could lead the member or a person connected with the member to be subject to violence or intimidation.

Declaration of interests at meetings

11. Where a matter arises at a meeting which relates to an interest in Appendix A the member shall:
 - (a) declare what his/her interest is;
 - (b) not participate in a discussion or vote on the matter;
 - (c) leave the room while the matter is discussed and voted upon.
12. Subject to paragraph 11, where a matter arises at a meeting which relates to an interest in Appendix A which is a sensitive interest, the member shall disclose he/she has an interest but not the nature of it.
13. Where a matter arises at a meeting which relates to an interest in Appendix B, the member;
 - (a) shall declare what his/her nature of the interest
 - (b) may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting.
 - (c) shall not vote on the matter.
14. Subject to paragraph 13, where a matter arises at a meeting which relates to an interest in Appendix B which is a sensitive interest, the member shall disclose he/she has an interest but not the nature of it.
15. Where a matter arises at a meeting which relates to a financial interest of a friend, relative or close associate (other than an interest in Appendix A), the member:
 - (a) shall disclose the nature of the interest

- (b) may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting
- (c) shall not vote on the matter.

If it is a 'sensitive interest'* the member shall declare the interest but not the nature of the interest.

**A 'sensitive interest' is described in the Localism Act 2011 as a member or co-opted member of an authority having an interest, and the nature of the interest being such that the member or co-opted member, and the authority's monitoring officer, consider that disclosure of the details of the interest could lead to the member or co-opted member, or a person connected with the member or co-opted member, being subject to violence or intimidation.*

16. If a Council function can be discharged by the member acting alone, and he/she is aware that they have an interest in Appendices A or B, he/she shall not deal with that matter except to enable the matter to be dealt with by someone else.

Dispensations

17. On a written request made to the Council's Clerk, the Council may grant a member a dispensation to participate in a discussion and vote on a matter at a meeting if he/she has an interest in Appendices A and B if the Council believes that:
- (a) the number of members otherwise prohibited from taking part in the meeting would impede the transaction of the business
 - (b) it is in the interest of the inhabitants in the Council's area to allow the member to take part or
 - (c) it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.

Promotion and maintenance of standards

18. A member shall:

- (a) familiarise him/herself with the Council's Code of Conduct and any other policies or standing orders of the Council which relate to members' conduct
- (b) support the Council in the promotion of high standards, and in ensuring access by the public to the Council's records regarding the registration and declarations of members' interests.
- (c) ensure that the Council seeks guidance as appropriate, from the Council's Monitoring Officer, before it makes any material alterations to its Code of Conduct or to any other policies or standing orders of the Council which relate to members' conduct.

Ashington Town Council has adopted this Code of Conduct to promote and maintain high standards of conduct and underpin public confidence in the authority and its members and co-opted members.

The Code has been adopted under section 27 of the Localism Act 2011 and is based on the following core principles of public life - selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership. It sets out general obligations about the standards of conduct expected of members and co-opted members of the authority, together with provisions about registering and declaring interests.

Notes

“Confidential Information” should not be disclosed except in limited circumstances, for example:

- You have the consent of the person authorised to give it
- You are required by law to do so
- The disclosure is made on a confidential basis to a third party in order to obtain professional advice
- You have satisfied yourself that the disclosure is in the public interest

Appendix A: Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.

Interests defined by regulations made under section 30(3) of the Localism Act 2011 and described in the table below. They include interests which are held by: the member; his spouse or civil partner; a person with whom he/she is living as husband and wife; or a person with whom he/she is living as if they were civil partners, and the member is aware that the other person has the interest.

Extract from the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012

- The following categories are Disclosable Pecuniary Interests
- “M” denotes the relevant Elected Member

Subject	Subject Prescribed description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the relevant authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by M in carrying out duties as a member, or towards the election expenses of M. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992(1).
Contracts	Any contract which is made between the relevant person (or a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest) and the relevant authority— (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the relevant authority.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to M's knowledge)—

	<p>(a) the landlord is the relevant authority; and</p> <p>(b) the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest.</p>
Securities	<p>Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where—</p> <p>(a) that body (to M’s knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; 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 relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.</p>

(1) 1992 c. 52.

Appendix B

An interest which relates to or is likely to affect:

- (i) Any body of which the member is in a position of general control or management and to which he/she is appointed or nominated by the Council;
- (ii) Any body –
 - (a) Exercising functions of a public nature
 - (b) Directed to charitable purposes; or
 - (c) One of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which the member of the Council is a member or in a position of general control or management
- (iii) Any person from whom the member has received within the previous three years gifts or hospitality worth more than an estimated value of £50 which the member has received by virtue of his or her office.

ANNEX B – TERMS OF REFERENCE

FINANCE AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

The powers, duties and functions of this Committee are as follows:

1. Constitution

The Constitution of this Committee shall be All Members of the Council. A third of the membership of this Committee shall constitute a quorum. If the number of Councillors present falls below the required quorum, the meeting shall be adjourned and business not transacted shall be placed before the next meeting of this Committee. The Committee shall elect a Chair and Vice-Chair from its membership at the first meeting of the Committee after the Council's Annual Meeting.

2. Attendance at Meetings

The Committee will meet eleven (11) times per annum and has full delegated powers.

3. Delegated Powers

The Finance and General Services Committee is authorised to make binding decisions on behalf of Ashington Town Council with regard to all aspects detailed below, provided that in all cases the meeting is quorate:

3.1 FINANCE

- (a) Dealing with all matters relating to the general day-to-day administration and financial management of the Council
- (b) Dealing with matters specifically referred by the Council or any other designated Standing Committee and with all matters not specifically referred or delegated to any other Standing Committee
- (c) Dealing with the Terms and Conditions of Service and Pension arrangements of the Town Council's staff and making appropriate recommendations relying on, where appropriate, the Scheme of Conditions of Service of the National Joint Council's and the National Association of Local Councils
- (d) Giving consideration to, agreeing and making appropriate a recommendation to Full Council in respect of the Town Council's budget estimates and final accounts and emerging Council financial strategies and policies

- (e) Dealing with financial issues within existing budget provision, except that in an emergency 20% of general reserves could be used
- (f) Budget Monitoring and Final Accounts
- (g) Approving the Monthly Payments Schedule; and
- (h) The consideration of Contracts, Leases and Service Level Agreements
- (i) The making of annual subsidies and small grants and donations from the Town Council's revenue funds to organisations, for the encouragement and support of the work of those organisations concerned with cultural, charitable, sporting and leisure activities within the Town; and
- (j) The facilitation, management and financial administration of all Working Groups including Annual Fayre Day and Christmas Lights Switch-On events.

3.2 PLANNING & REGENERATION

- (a) The making of representations to Local Planning Authorities on applications for planning permission which have been notified in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, Section 20, Schedule 16 and other relevant legislation
- (b) The making of representations in respect of appeals against the refusal of planning permission
- (c) The making of recommendations to the Planning Authority regarding street naming
- (d) To consider and monitor the Town and other developmental plans and the making of all appropriate representations
- (e) The making of representations to the appropriate Planning Authority in respect of other planning matters not otherwise referred to in Terms of Reference (b) – (d) above i.e. Tree Preservation Orders, Public Rights of Way etc
- (f) The making of representations to the appropriate authority in respect of all highways matters
- (g) The making of representations to the appropriate authority in respect of public transport services
- (h) The facilitation and support of all economic development and regeneration initiatives for Ashington, including schemes specific to the major redevelopment and promotion of the Town Centre and High Street; and

- (i) The facilitation and support of all development and improvement schemes and initiatives for Ashington Market.

3.3 ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES

- (a) The consideration and planning of all matters relating to the direct provision of environmental and local neighbourhood services, including, but not restricted to:-

- Allotments
- Seasonal Lighting
- Litter Bin provision (new and replacement)
- Grass Cutting
- Tree and hedge maintenance
- Floral Bedding Enhancements
- Parks and
- General Environmental Enhancement Schemes

- (b) The consideration and planning of all matters relating to the provision of direct services for general amenities including, but not restricted to:-

- Public Conveniences
- Bus Shelters
- Public Seating
- Play Areas
- Cemeteries; and
- War Memorials

- (c) Planning and organisation of the Annual Gardens Competition

- (d) The planning and development of all appropriate environmental initiatives including Anti-Litter campaigns, Keep Britain Tidy initiatives and “Big Tidy Up” clearance schemes.

ANNEX C – WORKING GROUP GENERAL TERMS OF REFERENCE

[insert name] Working Group Terms of Reference

1. The Working Group will consist of [insert no.] councillors, determined by the [insert committee name or Council] and the [officer] in an advisory capacity. Membership to be determined by the parent body at its first meeting at start of a new Civic Year. The working group may invite members of the public to attend meetings in an advisory capacity on an adhoc usually temporary basis.
2. At its first meeting of the civic year the working group members shall:
 - a. Review these terms of reference / complete the skeleton Terms of Reference for approval as appropriate.
 - b. Appoint an elected member as Lead Member who should ensure the entire working group's members are kept informed and involved with progress and act as the primary reporting channel back to the parent body.
3. In line with the task set by the [Council / committee], the purpose and remit of the working group is to:
 - a. [insert remit]
 - b. [insert remit]
 - c. [insert remit]
4. The group does not have delegated powers to make decisions on behalf of the [insert committee if applicable] or the Town Council nor should exceed its purpose and remit (above) without the parent body's sanction to a change to this Terms of Reference
5. The group reports to the [committee/council]
6. The group shall provide timely reports to the parent body in the following manner:
 - a. [insert manner of reports]
7. Meetings of the working group are not usually but may be public meetings.