

## Standing Orders (Approved May 2021)

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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.

This document contains the standing orders adopted by Aldcliffe with Stodday Parish Council.

### **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 chair of the meeting.
- b. A motion (including an amendment) shall not be progressed unless it has been moved and seconded.
- c. A motion on the agenda that is not moved by its proposer may be treated by the chair of the meeting as withdrawn.

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

### **3. Meetings generally**

- 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. Alcohol should not be consumed by any persons present at a meeting for the duration of the meeting.
- b. The minimum three clear days for notice of a meeting of full council 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.

- c. The minimum three clear days' public notice of a meeting of a committee 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 public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion.
- e. Members of the public may, at the discretion of the chair of the meeting, 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 normally exceed 15 minutes unless directed by the chair of the meeting.
- g. Subject to standing order 3(f) above, a member of the public shall not normally speak for more than 5 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 chair of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.
- i. A member of the public shall raise his/her hand when requesting to speak and stand when speaking (except when a person has a disability or is likely to suffer discomfort). The chair of the meeting may at any time permit a person to be seated when speaking.
- j. Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the chair of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.
- k. Photographing, recording, broadcasting or transmitting the proceedings of a meeting is permitted in accordance with The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014.
- l. 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.
- m. Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chair of the Council may in his absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chair of the Council (if any).
- n. The Chair, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chair is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chair, if present, shall preside. If both the Chair and the Vice-Chair are absent from a meeting, a councillor as chosen by the councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.
- o. Subject to a meeting being quorate, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the councillors or councillors with voting rights present and voting.
- p. The chair of a meeting may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise his/her casting vote whether or not he/she gave an original vote.

*See standing orders 5(i) and (j) below for the different rules that apply in the election of the Chair of the Council at the annual meeting of the council.*

- q. 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.
- r. The minutes of a meeting shall include an accurate record of the following:
  - i. the time and place of the meeting;
  - ii. the names of councillors 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.
- s. A councillor or a non-councillor with voting rights who has a disclosable pecuniary interest or another interest as set out in the council's code of conduct in a matter being considered at a meeting is subject to statutory limitations or restrictions under the code on his/her right to participate and vote on that matter.
- t. No business may be transacted at a meeting unless at least one-third of the whole number of members of the council are present and in no case shall the quorum of a meeting be less than three.

*See standing order 4d(viii) below for the quorum of a committee or subcommittee meeting.*
- u. 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.
- v. A meeting shall not normally exceed a period of 2 ½ hours.
- w. A meeting can be cancelled at short notice as long as notification of the cancellation is displayed on Parish Notice Boards and the Council's website.

#### **4. Committees and sub-committees**

- a. Unless the council determines otherwise, a committee may appoint a subcommittee whose 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 the number and time of the ordinary meetings of a standing committee (which may be flexible as and when required).
  - ii. shall permit a committee, other than in respect of the ordinary meetings of a committee, to determine the number and time of its meetings;
  - iii. shall, subject to standing orders 4(b) and (c) above, appoint and determine the terms of office of members of such a committee;
  - iv. 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.
  - v. shall permit a committee to appoint its own chair at the first meeting of the committee;
  - vi. shall determine the quorum for a meeting of a committee and a subcommittee which shall be no less than three;
  - vii. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a committee;
  - viii. shall determine if the public and press are permitted to attend the meetings of a sub-committee; and
  - ix. may dissolve a committee.

## **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 7.00pm.
- d. In addition to the annual meeting of the council, at least three other ordinary meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times as the council directs.
- e. The first business conducted at the annual meeting of the council shall be the election of the Chair and Vice-Chair (if any) of the Council.
- f. The Chair of the Council, unless he/she has resigned or becomes disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until their successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the council.

- g. The Vice-Chair of the Council, if any, unless he/she resigns or becomes disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chair of the Council at the next annual meeting of the council.
- h. In an election year, if the current Chair of the Council has not been re-elected as a member of the council, he/she shall preside at the meeting until a successor Chair of the Council has been elected. The current Chair of the Council shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chair of the Council but must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.
- i. In an election year, if the current Chair of the Council has been re-elected as a member of the council, he/she shall preside at the meeting until a new Chair of the Council has been elected. He/she may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chair of the Council and must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.
- j. Following the election of the Chair of the Council and Vice-Chair (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 Chair of the Council and councillors of their acceptance of office forms unless the council resolves for this to be done at a later date. In a year which is not an election year, delivery by the Chair of the Council of his/her 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. 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 subcommittees**

- a. The Chair of the Council may convene an extraordinary meeting of the council at any time.
- b. If the Chair of the Council does not 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 chair of a committee may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee at any time.
- d. If the chair of a 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, any 2 members of the committee may convene an extraordinary meeting of a 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 2 councillors to be given to the Clerk 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 exercisable by the chair of the meeting.

## **9. Motions for a meeting that require written notice to be given to the Clerk**

- 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
- c. The Clerk 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 Clerk 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 Clerk so that it can be understood at least 7 clear days before the meeting inclusive of weekends and bank holidays.
- e. If the wording or subject of a proposed motion is considered improper, the Clerk shall consult with the chair of the forthcoming meeting or, as the case may be, the councillors who have convened the meeting, to consider whether the motion shall be included in the agenda or rejected.
- f. Subject to standing order 9(e) above, the decision of the Clerk as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.
- g. Motions received shall be recorded in a book or electronic document for that purpose and numbered in the order that they are received.
- h. Motions rejected shall be recorded in a book or electronic document for that purpose with an explanation by the Clerk 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 Clerk;
- b. to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes of a meeting;
  - i. to move to a vote;
  - ii. to defer consideration of a motion;
  - iii. to refer a motion to a particular committee or sub-committee;
  - iv. to appoint a person to preside at a meeting;
  - v. to change the order of business on the agenda;
  - vi. to proceed to the next business on the agenda;
  - vii. to require a written report;

- viii. to appoint a committee or sub-committee and their members;
- ix. to extend the time limits for speaking;
- x. to exclude the press and public from a meeting in respect of confidential or sensitive information which is prejudicial to the public interest;
- xi. to not hear further from a councillor or a member of the public;
- xii. to exclude a councillor or member of the public for disorderly conduct;
- xiii. to temporarily suspend the meeting;
- xiv. to suspend a particular standing order (unless it reflects mandatory statutory requirements);
- xv. to adjourn the meeting; or
- xvi. to close a meeting.

## **11. Handling confidential or sensitive 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.

## **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 chair of the meeting and stand as an accurate record of the meeting to which the minutes relate.
- d. If the chair of the meeting does not consider the minutes to be an accurate record of the meeting to which they relate, he/she shall sign the minutes and include a paragraph in the following terms or to the same effect:

*“The chair of this meeting does not believe that the minutes of the meeting of the Aldcliffe with Stodday Aldcliffe with Stodday Parish Council held on (date) in respect of agenda item (insert agenda item number) were a correct record but his/her 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.

### **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 he/she has 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 Clerk 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 the Clerk 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 Clerk 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 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 Clerk 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 Clerk, the Clerk shall notify the Chair of Council of this fact, and the Chair shall nominate a councillor to assume the duties of the Clerk 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 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 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/her. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office.

## 15. Clerk

- a. The Clerk shall be either (i) the clerk or (ii) volunteer (councillor) nominated by the council to undertake the work of the Clerk when the Clerk is absent.
- b. The Clerk shall:
  - i. at least three clear days before a meeting of the council, a committee and a sub-committee serve on councillors, by delivery or post at their residences, or by electronic communication (e.g. email), a signed summons confirming the time, place and the agenda. *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.*
  - ii. 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 subcommittee (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.*
  - iii. 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 7 days before the meeting confirming his withdrawal of it;
  - iv. convene a meeting of full council for the election of a new Chair of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in his office;

- v. facilitate inspection of the minute book by local government electors;
- vi. receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities;
- vii. retain acceptance of office forms from councillors;
- viii. retain a copy of every councillor's register of interests;
- ix. 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;
- x. receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the council except where there is a resolution to the contrary;
- xi. liaise with both District and County Councillors on behalf of the council members to ensure that actions identified within the minutes of the council are carried out;
- 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; *See also standing order 22 below.*
- 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 or electronic record for such purpose;
- xvi. refer a planning application received by the council to the Chair or in his/her absence the Vice-Chair of the Council within two working days of receipt to consider whether the nature of a planning application requires consideration before the next ordinary meeting of the council.
- 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.

*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.
- b. All payments by the council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the law, proper practices and the council’s financial regulations.
- c. The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to each councillor as soon as practicable after 30 June, 30 September and 31 December in each year a statement to summarise:
  - i. the council’s receipts and payments for each quarter;
  - ii. the council’s aggregate receipts and payments for the year to date;
  - iii. the balances held at the end of the quarter being reported and which includes a comparison with the budget for the financial year and highlights any actual or potential overspends.
- d. As soon as possible after the financial year end at 31 March, the Responsible Financial Officer shall provide:
  - i. each councillor with a statement summarising the council’s receipts and payments for the last quarter and the full year for information; and
  - ii. to the full council the accounting statements for the year in the form of Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), 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.

## **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. procurement 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 £5,000.
- b. Financial regulations shall be reviewed regularly and at least annually for fitness of purpose.
- c. Financial regulations shall confirm that a proposed contract for the supply of goods, materials, services and the execution of works with an estimated value in excess of £5,000 shall be procured on the basis of a formal tender as summarised in standing order 18(d) below.
- 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 the council's specification, the time, date and address for the submission of tenders, the date of the council's written response to the tender and 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 Clerk;
  - v. tenders shall be opened by the Clerk 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 £138,893 (or other threshold specified by the Office of Government Commerce from time to time) the council must consider whether the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 (SI No. 5, as amended) and the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2006 (SI No. 6, as amended) apply to the contract and, if either of those Regulations apply, the council must comply with EU procurement rules.

## **19. Handling staff matters**

- a. A matter personal to a member of staff that is being considered by a meeting of council is subject to standing order 11 above.
- b. The Clerk shall notify the chair or, if he/she is not available, the vice-chair of any absence occasioned by illness or other reason and that person shall report such absence to council at its next meeting.
- c. The chair or in his/her absence, the vice-chair shall upon a resolution conduct a review of the performance and annual appraisal of the work of the Clerk. The reviews and appraisal shall be reported in writing and is subject to approval by resolution by the council.
- d. The Clerk shall contact the chair or in his/her absence, the vice-chair in respect of an informal or formal grievance matter, and this matter shall be progressed in line with the council's grievance procedure.
- e. If an informal or formal grievance matter raised by the Clerk relates to the chair or vice-chair of the council, this shall be communicated to another member of the council which shall be reported back and progressed in line with the council's grievance procedure.
- f. Any persons responsible for all or part of the management of the Clerk 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 the Clerk secure. All paper records shall be secured and locked and electronic records shall be password protected.
- 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 Clerk and the Chair of the Council.

## **20. Requests for 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 Clerk to the chair of the council. The council has the power to do anything to facilitate compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

## **21. Relations with the press/media**

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

## **22. 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 22(a) above, any two councillors may sign, on behalf of the council, any deed required by law and the Clerk shall witness their signatures.

## **23. Communicating with District and County or Unitary councillors**

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

## **24. 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.

## **25. 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 3 councillors to be given to the Clerk in accordance with standing order 9 above.
- c. The Clerk shall provide a copy of the council's standing orders to a councillor as soon as possible after he has delivered his acceptance of office form.
- d. The decision of the chair of a meeting as to the application of standing orders at the meeting shall be final.

**Approved: 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

**Review due: May 2022**