



STANTON FITZWARREN STANDING ORDERS

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Based on model standing orders 2025 Update (England)

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With reference to standing order 28(a), standing orders in blue type contain legal and statutory requirements.

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- c) A motion on the agenda that is not moved by its proposer may be treated by the chair of the meeting as withdrawn.
- d) If a motion (including an amendment) has been seconded, it may be withdrawn by the proposer only with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
- e) An amendment is a proposal to remove or add words to a motion. It shall not negate the motion.
- f) If an amendment to the original motion is carried, the original motion (as amended) becomes the substantive motion upon which further amendment(s) may be moved.
- g) An amendment shall not be considered unless early verbal notice of it is given at the meeting and, if requested by the chair of the meeting, is expressed in writing to the chair.
- h) A councillor may move an amendment to their own motion if agreed by the meeting. If a motion has already been seconded, the amendment shall be with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
- i) If there is more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion, the amendments shall be moved in the order directed by the chair of the meeting.
- j) Subject to standing order 1(k), only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the chair of the meeting.
- k) One or more amendments may be discussed together if the chair of the meeting considers this expedient, but each amendment shall be voted upon separately.
- l) A councillor may not move more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion.
- m) The mover of an amendment has no right of reply at the end of debate on it.
- n) Where a series of amendments to an original motion are carried, the mover of the original motion shall have a right of reply either at the end of the debate on the first amendment or at the very end of debate on the final substantive motion immediately before it is put to the vote.
- o) Unless permitted by the chair of the meeting, a councillor may speak once in debate on a motion except: -
 - a. to speak on an amendment moved by another councillor;
 - b. to move or speak on another amendment if the motion has been amended since s/he last spoke;
 - c. to make a point of order;
 - d. to give a personal explanation; or

- e. to exercise a right of reply.
- p) During the debate on a motion, a councillor may interrupt only on a point of order or a personal explanation and the councillor who was interrupted shall stop speaking. A councillor raising a point of order shall identify the standing order which they consider has been breached or specify the other irregularity in the proceedings of the meeting they are concerned by.
- q) A point of order shall be decided by the chair of the meeting and that decision shall be final.
- r) When a motion is under debate, no other motion shall be moved except: -
 - a. to amend the motion;
 - b. to proceed to the next business;
 - c. to adjourn the debate;
 - d. to put the motion to a vote;
 - e. to ask a person to be no longer heard or to leave the meeting;
 - f. to refer a motion to a committee or sub-committee for consideration;
 - g. to exclude the public and press;
 - h. to adjourn the meeting; or
 - i. to suspend particular standing order(s) excepting those which reflect mandatory statutory or legal requirements.
- s) Before an original or substantive motion is put to the vote, the chair of the meeting shall be satisfied that the motion has been sufficiently debated and that the mover of the motion under debate has exercised or waived their right of reply.
- t) Excluding motions moved under standing order 1(r), the contributions or speeches by a councillor shall relate only to the motion under discussion and shall not exceed 5 minutes without the consent of the chair of the meeting.

2. Meetings generally

Full Council meetings ●

Committee meetings ●

Sub-committee meetings ●

- 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.
- b) The minimum three clear days for notice of a meeting of the full Council or any of its committees or sub-committees 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) 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.
- d) Members of the public, by invitation of the Chairman, may make representations, answer questions, and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda.
- e) The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with standing order 2 (d) shall not exceed 10 (10) minutes.
- f) Subject to standing order 2(e), a member of the public shall not speak for more than two (2) minutes.
- g) In accordance with standing order 2(d), a question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The chairman of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.
- h) A person shall raise their hand when requesting to speak. They may also be asked to stand should it be required in order for the Council to be able to better hear them (except when a person has a disability or is likely to suffer discomfort)
- i) A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct their comments to the chair of the meeting.
- j) Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the chairman of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.
- ● k) Subject to standing order 2 (m) a person who attends a meeting is permitted to report on the meeting whilst the meeting is open to the public. To "report" means to film, photograph, make an audio recording of meeting proceedings, use any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear the meeting as it takes place or later or to report or to provide oral or written commentary about the meeting so that the report or commentary is available as the meeting takes place or later to persons not present.
- ● l) A person present at a meeting may not provide an oral report or oral commentary about a meeting as it takes place without permission.
- ● m) The press shall be provided with reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present.
- ● n) 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 their absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chair of the Council.
- ● o) The Chair of the Council, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chair is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chair of the Council 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.

- p) Subject to a meeting being quorate, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the councillors present and voting.
- q) 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 their casting vote whether or not they gave an original vote.

● See standing orders 5(h) and (i) for the different rules that apply in the election of the Chair of the Council at the annual meeting of the Council.

- r) Voting shall be by a show of hands at the request of a councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave their vote for or against that question. Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.

- s) The minutes of a meeting shall include an accurate record of the following:

- i the time and place of the meeting;
- ii the names of councillors who are present and the names of councillors who are absent;
- iii interests that have been declared by councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
- iv the grant of dispensations (if any) to councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
- v whether a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights left the meeting when matters that they held interests in were being considered;
- vi if there was a public participation session; and
- vii the resolutions made.
- viii Some background information may also be included for any item discussed, but it will be a short summary and not a verbatim account.

- t) A councillor or a non-councillor with voting rights who has a disclosable pecuniary interest or another interest as set out in the Council's code of conduct in a matter being considered at a meeting is subject to statutory limitations or restrictions under the code on his/her right to participate and vote on that matter.

- u) No business may be transacted at a meeting unless at least one-third of the whole number of members of the Council are present and in no case shall the quorum of a meeting be less than three.

See standing order 4d(viii) for the quorum of a committee or sub-committee meeting.

- v) If a meeting is or becomes inquorate no business shall be transacted and the meeting shall be closed. The business on the agenda for the meeting shall be adjourned to another meeting. (See standing order 21 for Planning applications)

- w) The Proper Officer may speak at the meeting to help clarify a point, clarify legal positions, clarify correct administration procedures and present information for Council Members for their debate.
- x) A meeting shall not exceed a period of 2 hours.

3. 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 a person disregards 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 be excluded from the meeting. The motion, if seconded, shall be put to the vote without discussion.
- c) If a resolution made under standing order 3(b) 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.

4. Working party and steering groups

- a) The Council may appoint working parties or steering groups as may be necessary, and;
 - i. Shall determine their terms of reference;
 - ii. Shall permit a working party or steering group to determine the number and time of the meetings;
 - iii. Shall permit a working party or steering group to agree its own lead member;
 - iv. Appointments to working party and steering groups will be reviewed at each Annual Meeting (standing order 5 j(vii)), but members can be appointed as required during the year;
 - v. Unless specified by resolution at the meeting of the full Council, working parties and steering groups do not have delegated powers. All actions must be reported at a full Council meeting, and resolution by the full Council upon them;

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 councillors elected take office.

- b) In a year which is not an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on such day in May as the Council decides.
- c) If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the Council shall take place at 6.30pm.
- 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 decides.
- e) The first business conducted at the annual meeting of the Council shall be the election of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council.
- f) The Chair of the Council, unless he has resigned or becomes disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until his successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the Council.
- g) The Vice-Chair of the Council, if there is one, unless they resign 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, they shall preside at the annual 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 shall 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, they shall preside at the annual meeting until a new Chair of the Council has been elected. They may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chair of the Council and shall 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 there is one) of the Council at the annual meeting, the business 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. Review of Council finances (including review of the Council's expenditure incurred under s.137 of the Local Government Act 1972)
 - iii. Consideration of annual audit documents
 - iv. Confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insurable risks;
 - v. Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council;
 - vi. Appoint representatives to outside bodies;

- vii. Review, and if required, appointment of members to existing working parties and steering groups;
- viii. Appointment of any working parties or steering groups in accordance with standing order 4.
- ix. Review of the Council's adopted procedures or policies as required;
- x. Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the Council;

6. Extraordinary Meetings of the Council

- 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 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 shall be signed by the two councillors.

7. Previous resolutions

- a) A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least two (2) councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 10
- b) When a motion moved pursuant to standing order 7(a) has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved for a further six months.

8. Voting on appointments

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) Vacancies and Co-Option

- a) In the event of a resignation or another reason for creation of a vacancy the Clerk will immediately contact Swindon Borough Council electoral registration office on the effective date of the vacancy and request advertising of the Notice of Vacancy.

- b) If this advertisement does not result in the 10 signatures of electors in the period of time required by legislation (at present 14 working days), the Clerk will move to the co-option process step c), otherwise the election process will be followed.
- c) The co-option process will be advertised within 21 days of the end of the time for the Notice of Vacancy.
- d) The co-option notice will include the final date for acceptance of requests for consideration and the number of vacancies. (Where possible this should be a minimum of seven (7) days after the date of notice)
- e) The notice will be placed on the village notice board as well as being published on the Stanton Fitzwarren PC Website & any other Parish Council media pages.
- f) Councillors may point out the vacancies and the process to any qualifying candidate(s).
- g) Candidates found to be offering inducements of any kind will be disqualified.
- h) All candidates will be asked to complete an Expression of Interest in Co-option form, to ensure that the candidate qualifies to stand for co-option. The form will also request candidates provide some background information on why they wish to join the Council and any skills/work history they can bring to role of a parish councillor. Upon invitation by the Chairman, the background information can be given verbally by the candidate at the meeting where co-option is being considered. However, an Expression of Interest form must still be completed for all the other relevant information required, in order to confirm the candidate qualifies to stand.
- i) The written information disclosed by the candidates as per item (h) will be deemed private and thus should not be disclosed to any other party outside the Council either before or after voting. Doing so would be a breach of the Council's Privacy Policy and could subject anyone doing so to scrutiny by the Information Commission Office or the Monitoring Officer at Swindon Borough Council.
- j) If required, discussion will take place in Council session without intervention from the candidates or public.
- k) Each candidate standing for co-option must receive a nomination from a councillor present at the meeting where co-option is being considered. Should none be forthcoming, the candidate will not be considered for co-option. If required, the vacancy will be re-advertised.
- l) A vote may be taken by signed paper ballot of all candidates that received a nomination, if a resolution is put at this stage.
- m) The first candidate to receive an absolute majority of votes is declared elected. Should no single candidate receive a majority on the first vote, the person(s) with the lowest number of votes is eliminated, voting takes place on the remainder. This continues until one person receives an absolute majority. This process will be repeated for each subsequent vacancy.

- n) Candidates will be furnished with a full agenda of the meeting at which they are to be considered for election. The successful candidates will sign their Declaration of Acceptance of Office following the meeting to which they were elected. If the Chairman allows, the candidate may sign their Declaration of Acceptance of Office immediately and then take part in the remainder of the meeting. Register of Interest must be submitted within 28 days of co-option

10. Motions for a meeting that require written notice to be given to the proper officer

- a) A motion shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting for which it is tabled and, in any event, shall relate to the performance of the Council's statutory functions, powers and obligations or an issue which specifically affects the Council's area or its residents.
- b) No motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is on the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least five (5) clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.
- c) The Proper Officer may, before including a motion on the agenda received in accordance with standing order 10(b), correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.
- d) If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with standing order 13(b) is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it, so that it can be understood, in writing, to the Proper Officer at least five (5) clear days before the meeting.
- e) If the wording or subject of a proposed motion is considered improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the 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) The decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.
- g) Motions received shall be recorded and numbered in the order that they are received.
- h) Motions rejected shall be recorded with an explanation by the Proper Officer of the reason for rejection.

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

- a) The following motions may be moved at a meeting without written notice to the Proper Officer:

- i to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes of a meeting;
- ii to move to a vote;
- iii to defer consideration of a motion;
- iv to refer a motion to a particular steering group or working party;
- v to appoint a person to preside at a meeting;
- vi to change the order of business on the agenda;
- vii to proceed to the next business on the agenda;
- viii to require a written report;
- ix to appoint a steering group or working party and their members;
- x to extend the time limits for speaking;
- xi to exclude the press and public from a meeting in respect of confidential or other information which is prejudicial to the public interest;
- xii to not hear further from a councillor or a member of the public;
- xiii to exclude a councillor or member of the public for disorderly conduct;
- xiv to temporarily suspend the meeting;
- xv to suspend a particular standing order (unless it reflects mandatory statutory or legal requirements);
- xvi to adjourn the meeting; or
- xvii to close the meeting.

12. Management of information

See also standing order 21

- a) The Council shall have in place and keep under review, technical and organisational measures to keep secure information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. Such arrangements shall include deciding who has access to personal data and encryption of personal data.
- b) The Council shall have in place, and keep under review, policies for the retention and safe destruction of all information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. The Council's retention policy shall confirm the period for which information (including personal data) shall be retained or if this is not possible the criteria used to determine that period (e.g. the Limitation Act 1980).
- c) The agenda, papers that support the agenda and the minutes of a meeting shall not disclose or otherwise undermine confidential information or personal data without legal justification.
- d) Councillors, staff, the Council's contractors, and agents shall not disclose confidential information or personal data without legal justification.

13. Draft minutes

Full Council meetings ●

Committee meetings ●

Sub-committee meetings ●

- 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 11(a)(i).
- 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, s/he 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 () held on [date] in respect of () 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) If the Council’s gross annual income or expenditure (whichever is higher) does not exceed £25,000, it shall publish draft minutes on a website which is publicly accessible and free of charge not later than one month after the meeting has taken place.
- f) Subject to the publication of draft minutes in accordance with standing order 12(e) and standing order 22(a) and following 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.

14. Code of conduct and dispensations

See also standing order 1(t)

- 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 shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest. They may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which they had the interest.

- c) Unless they have been granted a dispensation, a councillor shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which they have another interest if so required by the Council's code of conduct. They may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which they had the interest.
- d) [Dispensation requests shall be in writing and submitted to the Proper Officer](#) as soon as possible before the meeting, or failing that, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.
- e) A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by a meeting of the Council, 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 14(d) and (f), a dispensation request shall be considered at the beginning of the meeting of the Council, or committee or sub-committee for which the dispensation is required.
- h) [A dispensation may be granted in accordance with standing order 14\(e\) if having regard to all relevant circumstances any of the following apply:](#)
 - 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;](#)
 - 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.](#)

15. Code of conduct complaints

Upon notification by Swindon Borough Council that it is dealing with a complaint that a councillor has breached the Council's code of conduct, the Council shall consider what, if any, action to take against them. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office.

16. Proper officer

- a) The Proper Officer shall be either (i) the Clerk or (ii) other person(s) nominated by the Council to undertake the work of the Proper Officer when the Proper Officer is absent.
- b) The Proper Officer shall:
 - i. at least three clear days before a meeting of the Council, a working party or steering group
 - serve on councillors by delivery or post at their residences or by email authenticated in such manner as the Proper Officer thinks fit, a signed summons confirming the time, place, and the agenda (provided the councillor has consented to service by email), and
 - provide, in a conspicuous place, public notice of the time, place and agenda (provided that the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the Council convened by councillors is signed by them).

See standing order 2(b) for the meaning of clear days for a meeting of the full Council or any of its committees.

- ii. subject to standing order 10, include on the agenda all motions in the order received unless a councillor has given written notice at least seven (7) days before the meeting confirming his withdrawal of it;
- iii. convene a meeting of the Council for the election of a new Chairman of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in their office;
- iv. facilitate inspection of the minute book by local government electors;
- v. receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities;
- vi. hold acceptance of office forms from councillors;
- vii. hold a copy of every councillor's register of interests;
- viii. assist with responding to requests made under freedom of information legislation and rights exercisable under data protection legislation, in accordance with the Council's relevant policies and procedures;
- ix. liaise, as appropriate, with the Council's Data Protection Officer (if there is one);
- x. receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the Council except where there is a resolution to the contrary;
- xi. assist in the organisation of, storage of, access to, security of and destruction of information held by the Council in paper and electronic form subject to the requirements of data protection and freedom of information legislation and other legitimate requirements (e.g. the Limitation Act 1980);

- xii. arrange for legal deeds to be executed (see also standing order 25);
- xiii. arrange or manage the prompt authorisation, approval, and instruction regarding any payments to be made by the Council in accordance with its financial regulations;
- xiv. record every planning application notified to the Council. (*see also standing order 21*)
- xv. manage access to information about the Council via the publication scheme; and
- xvi. retain custody of the seal of the Council (if there is one) which shall not be used without a resolution to that effect (see also standing order 25).

17. Responsible financial officer

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

18. 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 on a regular basis and in any case every quarter a statement to summarise:
 - i. the Council’s receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for each quarter;
 - ii. the Council’s aggregate receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) 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 (or income and expenditure) for the last quarter and the year to date for information; and
 - ii. to the Council the accounting statements for the year in the form of Section 2 of the annual governance and accountability return, as required by proper practices, for consideration and approval.

- e) The year-end accounting statements shall be prepared in accordance with proper practices and apply the form of accounts determined by the Council (receipts and payments, or income and expenditure) for the year to 31 March. A completed draft annual governance and accountability return shall be presented to all councillors at least 5 days prior to anticipated approval by the Council. The annual governance and accountability return of the Council, which is subject to external audit, including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to the Council for consideration and formal approval before 30 June.

19. 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 whether contracts with an estimated value below £30,000 due to special circumstances are exempt from a tendering process or procurement exercise.
- b) Financial regulations shall be reviewed regularly and at least annually for fitness of purpose.
- c) Subject to additional requirements in the financial regulations of the Council, the tender process for contracts for the supply of goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall include, as a minimum, the following steps:
 - i. a specification for the goods, materials, services, or the execution of works shall be drawn up;
 - ii. an invitation to tender shall be drawn up to confirm (i) the Council's specification (ii) the time, date and address for the submission of tenders (iii) the date of the Council's written response to the tender and (iv) the prohibition on prospective contractors contacting councillors or staff to encourage or support their tender outside the prescribed process;
 - iii. the invitation to tender shall be advertised in a local newspaper and in any other manner that is appropriate;
 - iv. tenders are to be submitted in writing in a sealed marked envelope addressed to the Proper Officer;
 - v. tenders shall be opened by the Proper Officer in the presence of at least one councillor after the deadline for submission of tenders has passed;

- d) Tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate meeting of the Council. The Council is not bound to accept the lowest value tender.

Where the value of the contract is likely to exceed the threshold specified by the Government from time to time, the Council must consider whether the contract is subject to the requirements of the current procurement legislation and, if so, the Council must comply with procurement rules. NALC's procurement guidance contains further details.

20. Handling staff matters

- a) A matter personal to a member of staff that is being considered by a meeting of the Council is subject to standing order 12.
- b) Subject to the Council's policy regarding absences from work, the Council's most senior member of staff shall notify the Chair of the Council of absence occasioned by illness or other reason.
- c) Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, the Council's most senior member of staff shall contact the chair of the Council in respect of an informal or formal grievance matter, and this matter shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the Council. Any persons responsible for all or part of the management of staff shall treat as confidential the written records of all meetings relating to their performance, capabilities, grievance, or disciplinary matters.
- d) In accordance with standing order 12(a), persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to staff records referred to in standing order 20 (c).

21. Planning Applications

- a) Where possible all planning applications will be considered at a meeting of the Council. This can be at an ordinary meeting, or if necessary, an extra ordinary meeting.
- b) Should it not be possible to send a response before the expiry date for comments, the Clerk will consult with all Councillors via email. Delegated powers are given to the Clerk to respond on behalf of the Council based on the feedback given by Councillors and once any questions or disagreements have been resolved.
- c) Any delegated comments sent will be read into the minutes at the next available meeting.

22. Responsibilities to provide information

See also standing order 23.

- a) In accordance with freedom of information legislation, the Council shall publish information in accordance with its publication scheme and respond to requests for information held by the Council.
- b) The Council shall publish information in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015.

23. Responsibilities under data protection legislation

The list below is not exclusive. See also standing order 12.

- a) The Council may appoint a Data Protection Officer.
- b) The Council shall have policies and procedures in place to respond to an individual exercising statutory rights concerning his personal data.
- c) The Council shall have a written policy in place for responding to and managing a personal data breach.
- d) The Council shall keep a record of all personal data breaches comprising the facts relating to the personal data breach, its effects and the remedial action taken.
- e) The Council shall ensure that information communicated in its privacy notice(s) is in an easily accessible and available form and kept up to date.
- f) The Council shall maintain a written record of its processing activities.

24. Relations with the press/media

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

25. Execution and sealing of legal deeds

See also standing orders 16(b)(xii) and (xvi).

- a) A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the Council unless authorised by a resolution.
- b) Subject to standing order 25(a), any two councillors may sign, on behalf of the Council, any deed required by law and the Proper Officer shall witness their signatures.

The above is applicable to a Council without a common seal

26. Communicating with 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 the Swindon Borough Council representing the area of the Council.
- b) The ward councillors may be invited to sit at the table with the Council but must not participate in Council business unless invited to do so by the Chairman of the meeting at which they are present.
- c) Unless the Council determines otherwise, a copy of each letter sent to Swindon Borough Council shall be sent to the ward councillor(s) representing the area of the Council.

27. Restrictions on councillor activities

Unless duly authorised no councillor shall:

- i. inspect any land and/or premises which the Council has a right or duty to inspect;
- ii. issue orders, instructions, or directions.

28. Standing orders generally

- a) All or part of a standing order, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory or legal 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 or legal requirements, shall be proposed by a special motion, the written notice by at least three councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 10.
- c) The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the Council's standing orders to each councillor.
- d) The decision of the chair of a meeting as to the application of standing orders at the meeting shall be final.