



# **Wolverton & Greenleys Town Council**

# **Standing Orders**

# 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- c A motion on the agenda that is not moved by its proposer may be treated by the chair of the meeting as withdrawn.
- d If a motion (including an amendment) has been seconded, it may be withdrawn by the proposer only with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.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 If an amendment is proposed to remove or add words to a motion, it shall not negate the motion. If the proposed motion negates the original motion then it shall be treated as a new motion and the original motion will be debated first.
- f The mover of the original motion shall be asked if they approve the amendment before the motion is debated. If the amendment is not accepted the mover of the original motion may speak first before the amendment is discussed. If an amendment to the original motion is carried, the original motion becomes the substantive motion upon which further amendment(s) may be moved. If the amendment is not accepted the original motion will be voted on first before voting on the amendment.
- 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 his 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.
- j Subject to standing order 1(k) below, only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the 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 debate of the first amendment or at the very end of debate on the final substantive motion immediately before it is put to the vote.
- o Unless permitted by the chair of the meeting, a Councillor may speak once in the debate on a motion except:
  - i. to speak on an amendment moved by another Councillor;
  - ii. to move or speak on another amendment if the motion has been amended since he last

spoke;

- iii. to make a point of order;
  - iv. to give a personal explanation; or
  - v. in exercise of a right of reply.
- p During the debate of a motion, a Councillor may interrupt only on a point of order or a personal explanation and the Councillor who was interrupted shall stop speaking. A Councillor raising a point of order shall identify the standing order which he considers has been breached or specify the other irregularity in the proceedings of the meeting he is concerned by.
- q A point of order shall be decided by the chair of the meeting and his decision shall be final.
- r When a motion is under debate, no other motion shall be moved except:
- i. to amend the motion;
  - ii. to proceed to the next business;
  - iii. to adjourn the debate;
  - iv. to put the motion to a vote;
  - v. to ask a person to be no longer heard or to leave the meeting;
  - vi. to refer a motion to a committee or sub-committee for consideration;
  - vii. to exclude the public and press;
  - viii. to adjourn the meeting; or
  - ix. to suspend particular standing order(s) excepting those which reflect mandatory statutory requirements.
- s Before an original or substantive motion is put to the vote, the 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 his right of reply.
- t Excluding motions moved under standing order 1(r) above, the contributions or speeches by a Councillor shall relate only to the motion under discussion and shall not exceed 4 minutes without the consent of the chair of the meeting.

## 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

- 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' public notice for a meeting does not include the day on which the notice was issued or the day of the meeting.** Where possible this notice will also be published on the Council website and will include background papers and or reports. If the whole or part of a report is not available this will be stated on the agenda.
- c **Councillors will receive summons and papers electronically in-line with the council policy.**
- ■ 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 if they are invited to do so by the Chair, 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 This section of the meeting will be limited to 4 minutes.
- f The period of time designated for written public questions at a meeting shall not exceed 15 minutes unless directed by the chair of the meeting. The question will include the name and address of questioner and the name of the person who the question is to be put.
- g A record of the public question shall be included in the minutes of that meeting.
- 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 person who speaks at a meeting shall direct his comments to the chair of the meeting. For expediency the Chair may request that speaker is nominated to

Speak on behalf of the public if there is a number of members of the public wishing to speak on the same item.

- 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, audio-recording, use of social media and filming is permitted from the public seating area during public meetings, provided prior notice of this intent should be provided to the Clerk before the commencement of the meeting and the recorder adhere's to the Council's policy on 'Reporting on a public meeting'.**
-   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 casting vote whether or not he 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 his 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 written question received and answered
- 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 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 sub-committee 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 If the committee view to exclude the press and public from the meeting in the public interest, Councillors present, but not on the committee shall also be excluded from the meeting.
- w A meeting shall not exceed a period of 3 hours. Where the council has two meetings in an evening the total period of the meetings should not exceed a combined period of three hours.
- x All adopted policies should be reviewed every three years in rotation.
- y At the start of the meeting all councillors should be reminded to put their phones on silent whilst the meeting is on progress. This item to be included at the start of each agenda.

## 4. Committees and sub-committees

- a **Unless the Council determines otherwise, a committee may appoint a sub-committee whose terms of reference and members shall be determined by the committee.** All members of the committee must receive training before attending their first meeting, where possible.

- b The members of a committee may include non-Councillors unless it is a committee which regulates and controls the finances of the Council.**
- c Unless the Council determines otherwise, all the members of an advisory committee and a sub-committee of the advisory committee may be non-Councillors.**
- d The Council may appoint standing committees or other committees as may be necessary, and:
  - i. shall determine their terms of reference;
  - ii. shall determine the number and time of the ordinary meetings of a standing committee up until the date of the next annual meeting of town Council;
  - iii. shall permit a committee, other than in respect of the ordinary meetings of a committee, to determine the number and time of its meetings;
  - iv. shall, subject to standing orders 4(b) and (c) above, appoint and determine the terms of office of members of such a committee;
  - v. may, subject to standing orders 4(b) and (c) above, appoint and determine the terms of office of the substitute members to a committee whose role is to replace the ordinary members at a meeting of a committee if the ordinary members of the committee confirm to the Proper Officer 3 days before the meeting that they are unable to attend;
  - vi. shall, after it has appointed the members of a standing committee, appoint the chair of the standing committee;
  - vii. shall permit a committee other than a standing committee, to appoint its own chair at the first meeting of the committee;
  - viii. shall determine the place, notice requirements and quorum for a meeting of a committee and a sub-committee which shall be no less than three;
  - ix. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a committee;
  - x. shall determine if the public and press are permitted to attend the meetings of a sub-committee and also the advance public notice requirements, if any, required for the meetings of a sub-committee;
  - xi. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a sub-committee that they are permitted to attend; and
  - xii. 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 6pm.
- 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 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 any, unless he 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 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 shall preside at the meeting until a new Chair of the Council has been elected. He 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 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 of representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back;

- x. (*England*) In an election year, to make arrangements with a view to the Council becoming eligible to exercise the general power of competence in the future;
- xi. Review of the Council's and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies;
- xii. Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the full Council up to and including the next annual meeting of full Council.

## 6. Extraordinary meetings of the Council and committees and sub-committees

- a **The 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 [or a sub-committee] may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee [or the sub-committee] at any time.
- d If the chair of a committee [or a sub-committee] does not or refuses to call an extraordinary meeting within 7 days of having been requested by to do so by 4 members of the committee [or the sub-committee], any 4 members of the committee [and the sub-committee] may convene an extraordinary meeting of a committee [and a sub-committee].

## 7. Previous resolutions

- a A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least 6 Councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9 below, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the recommendation of a committee or a sub-committee.
- b When a motion moved pursuant to standing order 7(a) above has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved within a further six months.

## 8. Voting on appointments

- a Where more than two persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the Council and none of those persons has received an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh

vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. A tie in votes may be settled by the casting vote exercisable by the chair of the meeting.

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

- a A motion shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting which it is tabled for and in any event shall relate to the performance of the Council's statutory functions, powers and obligations or an issue which specifically affects the Council's area or its residents.
- b All agenda items are checked against the council plan before being included on the agenda. If the proposed item is in conflict with the plan then this item can be rejected by the clerk after consultation with the chair.
- c 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 5 clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.
- d The Proper Officer may, before including a motion on the agenda received in accordance with standing order 9(b) above, correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.
- e If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with standing order 9(b) above is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it in writing to the Proper Officer so that it can be understood at least 4 clear days before the meeting.
- f 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.
- g Subject to standing order 9(e) above, the decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.

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

- a The following motions may be moved at a meeting without written notice to the Proper Officer;
  - i. to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes of a meeting;

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

## **11. 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.
- c A councillor in breach of the provisions of standing order 11 b above may be removed from a committee or a sub-committee by a resolution of the Council.

## **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 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 view was not upheld by the meeting and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.”
- e Upon a resolution which confirms the accuracy of the minutes of a meeting, the draft minutes or recordings of the meeting for which approved minutes exist shall be destroyed.
- f Minutes of the Annual Town Council Meeting are to be approved at the following Full Council Meeting.
- g Once approved the minutes of the Full Council and committees will be displayed on the noticeboard in the Square and on the council website.

## 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 he 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 he has a disclosable pecuniary interest. He may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which he had the interest.
- c Unless he 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 he has another interest if so required by the Council's Code of Conduct. He may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which he 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 the Proper Officer] OR [by a meeting of the Council, or committee or sub-committee for which the dispensation is required] and that decision is final.
- f A dispensation request shall confirm:
  - i. the description and the nature of the disclosable pecuniary interest or other interest to which the request for the dispensation relates;
  - ii. whether the dispensation is required to participate at a meeting in a discussion only or a discussion and a vote;
  - iii. the date of the meeting or the period (not exceeding four years) for which the dispensation is sought; and
  - iv. an explanation as to why the dispensation is sought.
- g Subject to standing orders 13(d) and (f) above, dispensations requests shall be considered [by the Proper Officer before the meeting or, if this is not possible, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required] OR [at the beginning of the meeting of the Council, or committee or a sub-committee for which the dispensation is required].
- h **A dispensation may be granted in accordance with standing order 13(e) above if having regard to all relevant circumstances the following applies:**
  - i. **without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from participating in the particular business would be so great a proportion of the meeting transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business or**
  - ii. **granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the Council's area or**
  - iii. **it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.**

## 14. Code of Conduct complaints

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

responsibility for investigation of the matter;

- d Upon notification by Milton Keynes 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.**

## 15. Proper Officer

- a The Proper Officer shall be either (i) the clerk or (ii) other staff member(s) nominated by the Council to undertake the work of the Proper Officer when the Proper Officer is absent.
- b The Proper Officer shall:
- i. at least three clear days before a meeting of the Council, a committee and a sub-committee serve on Councillors a summons, by email, confirming the time, place and the agenda provided any such email contains the electronic signature and title of the Proper Officer.  
*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 sub-committee (provided that the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the Council convened by Councillors is signed by them);**  
*See standing order 3(b) above for the meaning of clear days for a meeting of a full Council and standing order 3(c) above for a meeting of a committee.*
  - 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 5 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 General Data Protection Regulation 2018, 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. manage the organisation, storage of, access to and destruction of information held by the Council in paper and electronic form;
  - xii. arrange for legal deeds to be executed;  
*See also standing order 22 below.*

- xiii. 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;
- xiv. record every planning application notified to the Council and the Council's response to the local planning authority in a book for such purpose;
- xv. manage access to information about the Council via the publication scheme; and
- xvi. retain custody of the seal of the Council (if any) which shall not be used without a resolution to that effect.
- xvii. Action or undertake activity or responsibilities instructed by resolution or contained in standing orders

*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 the 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 As soon as possible after the financial year end at 31 March, the Responsible Financial Officer shall provide:
  - i. each Councillor with a statement summarising the Council's receipts and payments for the last quarter and the year to date for information; and
  - ii. to the 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.

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 [£25,000].

These Financial Regulations shall be reviewed every three years for fitness of purpose.

- b. **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 [£25,000] shall be procured on the basis of a formal tender as summarised in standing order 18(d) below, unless it is proposed to use an existing list of approved suppliers.**

Subject to additional requirements in the Financial Regulations of the Council, the tender process for contracts for the supply of goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall include, as a minimum, the following steps:

- i. a specification for the goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall be drawn up;
- ii. an invitation to tender shall be drawn up to confirm (i) the Council's specification (ii) the time, date and address for the submission of tenders (iii) the date of the Council's written response to the tender and (iv) the prohibition on prospective contractors contacting Councillors or staff to encourage or support their tender outside the prescribed process;
- iii. the invitation to tender shall be advertised in a local newspaper and in any other manner that is appropriate;
- iv. tenders are to be submitted in writing in a sealed marked envelope addressed to the Proper Officer;
- v. tenders shall be opened by the Proper Officer in the presence of at least one Councillor after the deadline for submission of tenders has passed;
- vi. tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate meeting of the Council or a committee or sub-committee with delegated responsibility.

Neither the Council, nor a committee or a sub-committee with delegated responsibility for considering tenders, is bound to accept the lowest value tender.

Where a public contract exceeds £25,000 the council must comply with articles 109 to 114 of 2015 Regulation 110, which provides that a council must advertise a contract opportunity on the 'Contract Finder' website, within 24 hours of advertising it elsewhere. Public contracts are defined

as having the object for the execution of works, the supply of products or the provision of services. The information published on the Contracts Finder website must include a response date for interested parties, how they must respond, plus any other requirements for participating in the procurement. Once the contract is awarded the council must publish on the Contracts Finder website the name of the contractor, data in which the contract is entered into, value of the contract, whether the contractor is a Small or Medium enterprise (SME) or a non-governmental organisation which re-invests its surpluses to further to social, environmental or cultural activities (VCSE). **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 OR the Personnel committee is subject to standing order 11 above.
- 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 Personnel committee or, if he is not available, the vice-chair of the Personnel committee.
- c The chair of the Personnel committee OR the Chair of Council or in his absence, the vice-chair shall upon a resolution conduct a review of the performance and annual appraisal of the work of the Clerk's job title.
- d Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, the Council's most senior employee (or other employees) shall contact the chair of the Personnel committee or in his absence, the vice-chair of the Personnel committee in respect of an informal or formal grievance matter, and this matter shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the Personnel committee.
- e Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, if an informal or formal grievance matter raised by Clerk relates to the chair or vice-chair of the Personnel committee, this shall be communicated to the Chair of Council, which shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of Full Council.
- f Any persons responsible for all or part of the management of staff shall treat the written records of all meetings relating to their performance, capabilities, grievance or disciplinary matters as confidential and secure.
- g The Council shall keep all written records relating to employees secure. All paper records

shall be secured and locked and electronic records shall be password protected and encrypted.

- h Only persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to staff records referred to in standing orders 19(f) and (g) above if so justified.
- i Access and means of access by keys and/or computer passwords to records of employment referred to in standing orders 19(f) and (g) above shall be provided only to (post holder) and/or the Chair of the Council OR the Personnel committee.

## 20. Requests for information

- a The Council may appoint a Data Protection Officer
- b 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 General Data Protection Regulation 2018
- c Correspondence from, and notices served by, the Information Commissioner shall be referred to the Data Protection Officer.

## 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.

### Policy on the reporting of meetings of the Council

This policy details the acceptable use for public meetings to be filmed, audio-recorded, photographed and the permitted use of social media. Under these new regulations:

1. Officers, councillors, guests and members of the public may be filmed, audio-recorded or photographed during a meeting which is open to the public. This may only be performed from the public seating area allocated at each meeting.
2. Out of courtesy any persons present wishing to film or audio record a public meeting must advise the Clerk before the meeting commences of their intent to do so, submitting their name and contact details which will be held by the Clerk. Filming and audio recording may be performed from the public seating area allocated at each meeting. Flashes must be switched off before the start of the meeting and intrusive lighting and zooming is prohibited.
3. Vulnerable children and adults, plus children under the age of 18 years may only be filmed after consent has been obtained from the parent, guardian or carer.
4. The Chair will announce at the start of each meeting, any notice which has been provided of the intent to film or audio-record the meeting including the person's name who will be

performing this recording. The persons recording must ensure that personal data is used and stored in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation 2018.

5. Anyone present who actively objects to being filmed must inform the Chair following this announcement at the start of the meeting, so the recorder can ensure that this request is adhered to; so long as it does not undermine the transparency of the meeting. A designated area will be identified for those persons not wishing to be filmed. All persons present have the right to view the footage recorded at the meeting, which must be supplied to the Clerk following the meeting.
6. Meetings where the press and public are excluded, may not be filmed and all recording equipment and devices must be removed and switched off before this closed session begins, to ensure that confidentiality is not breached. This includes Council and councillor equipment. The Council must ensure that they satisfy themselves that this has been adhered to before the closed part of the meeting commences.
7. The use of social media such as blogging, Facebook and Twitter is also permitted by the public during this meeting, so long as it does not disrupt the proceedings. All devices must be switched onto silent during the meeting to prevent any disruption. Councillors or officers wishing to film or use social media during a meeting should retire to the public gallery area designated for this purpose.
8. Under the Council Standing Orders any disruptive behaviour may result in you being asked to be excluded from the meeting. In relation to this policy examples of disruptive behaviour, but are limited to are; asking people to repeat statements for the purpose of the recording, flash photography, excessive noise in recording or setting up of equipment during the meeting, filming or recording from any other area than the designated public seating area or oral commentary during the meeting.

## 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, 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 the deed as witnesses.**

*The above is applicable to a Council with a common seal.*

## 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 the [(England Unitary Council representing the area of the Council.

- b Unless the Council determines otherwise, a copy of each letter sent to Milton Keynes 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;
  - 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 two thirds of Councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9 above.
- c The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the Council's standing orders to a Councillor as soon as possible after 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.

## 26. Co-Option Policy

In the event of there being a vacancy to serve as a councillor that is to be filled by co-option, the Council shall adopt the following procedure:

1. The co-option shall be advertised in the next edition of Wolverton and Greenleys News and on the public noticeboards, with an appropriate deadline, advising that an application form can be obtained from the Town Hall Office or from our website.
2. The Clerk will advise each applicant if he/she is legally qualified to serve as a councillor. (Requirements as for elections run by MKC)
3. The names of eligible applicant(s) will be included on the agenda for the meeting at which the co-option will take place.

4. The applicant shall be asked to submit information about themselves in writing on the application form, limited to 300 words. The applicant(s) written statements will be included in the papers for the relevant meeting.
5. The applicant(s) shall then be invited to give a verbal presentation to full council that lasts no more than three minutes.
6. Councillors will then be given the opportunity to ask questions of the applicant(s). The total question and answer time will be limited to a maximum of ten minutes.
7. Any councillor arriving at the meeting after the first applicant has started to speak may not take part in any voting.
8. The Chair will then ask the Council if it wants to proceed to a vote and two thirds of councillors able to vote must be willing to do so. The Council reserves the right not to make a co-option at this stage.
9. If it is agreed to go to a vote, the Council will suspend Standing Orders 1r and conduct a vote by signed ballot.
10. The Clerk, or person acting as Clerk, shall conduct the ballot. Ballot papers will be distributed to all eligible councillors present and a vote taken immediately, without discussion.
11. Councillors should write the name of their preferred applicant or write the word "abstain" on the ballot paper and sign it and hand it back to the clerk.
12. If an applicant has received more than 50% of the vote, he/she is duly co-opted.
13. In the event of a tie between only 2 applicants, a coin will be tossed for the deciding vote.

At a Meeting of Wolverton & Greenleys Town Council on the 26<sup>th</sup> November 2015 the aforementioned policy was approved.

Minute reference TC15/198

# Appendix of Standing Orders

1.	Rules of debate at meetings	2
2.	Disorderly conduct at meetings	3
3.	Meetings generally	4
4.	Committees and sub-committees	6
5.	Ordinary Council meetings	7
6.	Extraordinary meetings of the Council and committees and sub-committees	9
7.	Previous resolutions	9
8.	Voting on appointments	10
9.	Motions for a meeting that require written notice to be given to the Proper Officer	10
10.	Motions at a meeting that do not require written notice	11
11.	Handling confidential or sensitive information	11
12.	Draft minutes	12
13.	Code of conduct and dispensations	12
14.	Code of conduct complaints	13
15.	Proper Officer	14
16.	Responsible Financial Officer	15
17.	Accounts and accounting statements	15
18.	Financial controls and procurement	16
19.	Handling staff matters	17
20.	Requests for information	18
21.	Relations with the press/media	18
22.	Execution and sealing of legal deeds	19
23.	Communicating with District and County or Unitary Councillors	20
24.	Restrictions on Councillor activities	20
25.	Standing orders generally	20
26.	Co-option Policy	21

TC18/109 changes made to 17i, 20 and 18b