



GERRARDS CROSS TOWN COUNCIL STANDING ORDERS

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1 Rules of debate at meetings

1.1 Motions on the agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear unless the order is changed at the discretion of the chairman of the meeting.

1.2 An amendment is a proposal to remove or add words to a motion. It shall not negate the motion.

1.3 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.

1.4 Subject to standing order 1.5, only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the chairman of the meeting.

1.5 One or more amendments may be discussed together if the chairman of the meeting considers this expedient but each amendment shall be voted upon separately.

1.6 Unless permitted by the chairman of the meeting, a councillor may speak once in the 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 he last spoke;
- c) to make a point of order;
- d) to give a personal explanation; or
- e) to exercise a right of reply.

1.7 During the debate on a motion, a councillor may interrupt on a point of order 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.

1.8 A point of order shall be decided by the chairman of the meeting and his decision shall be final.

1.9 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 action group 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.

1.10 Before an original or substantive motion is put to the vote, the chairman of the meeting shall be satisfied that the motion has been sufficiently debated.

1.11 The Chairman may limit contributions or speeches by a councillor to five minutes.

1.12 If prior to a meeting, a Councillor has submitted reasons for his absence at the meeting which is then approved by a resolution, such resolution shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting at which the approval was given.

2 Disorderly conduct at meetings

2.1 No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly. If this standing order is ignored, the chairman of the meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.

2.2 If person(s) disregard the request of the chairman of the meeting to moderate or improve their conduct, any councillor or the chairman of the meeting may move that the person be no longer heard or be excluded from the meeting. The motion, if seconded, shall be put to the vote without discussion.

2.3 If a resolution made under standing order 2.2 is ignored, the chairman of the meeting may take further reasonable steps to restore order or to progress the meeting. This may include temporarily suspending or closing the meeting.

3 Meetings generally

3.1 Full Council meetings shall take place monthly save in August and as otherwise duly called.

3.2 Committee meetings shall not take place in August and shall be based on the frequency as set out below. The schedule may be changed as specified below or by agreement of the Committee. The table below sets out the current standing committees of the-council

Planning	<p>Planning Committee shall take place monthly or twice a month as determined by its chairman based on the volume of proposals for review</p> <p>This committee is authorised by the Council to review and comment on all planning proposals on which the Council is a consultee</p>
Highways	<p>This committee shall consider matters relating to the Council's responsibilities for roads, pavement, lighting, CCTV and similar assets as well as promoting matters for proposed implementation either by or in co-operation with the Buckinghamshire Council.</p> <p>Highways Committee shall meet monthly or as may be determined by its chairman</p>

Commons	This committee shall consider matters relating to the Council's responsibilities for the Commons, the Camp and footpaths. Commons Committee shall meet monthly or as may be determined by its chairman
Communities	This committee shall consider decorations, events and other initiatives to enhance the community spirit of Gerrards Cross. Communities Committee shall meet quarterly or as may be determined by its chairman
Finance and General Purposes	This committee shall consider the budget, internal audit and audit matters including financial policies and procedures. It shall meet will meet as and when determined by its chairman
Staffing	This committee shall consider matters relating to the employment of the Clerk and Deputy Clerk including the conduct of staff appraisals. It shall meet will meet as and when determined by its chairman

3.3 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.

3.4 The minimum three clear days for notice of a meeting does not include the day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a day of the Christmas break, a day of the Easter break or of a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning.

3.5 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.

3.6 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.

3.7 Members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda.

3.8 The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with standing order 3.7 shall not exceed five minutes unless directed by the chairman of the meeting.

3.9 Subject to standing order 3.8, a member of the public shall not speak for more than five minutes

3.10 In accordance with standing order 3.7, a question or observation shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question or observation. The chairman of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.

3.11 A person may raise his hand when requesting to speak.

3.12 A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct his comments to the chairman of the meeting.

3.13 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.

3.14 Subject to standing order 3.15, 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.

3.15 A person present at a meeting may not provide an oral report or oral commentary about a meeting as it takes place without permission.

3.16 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.

3.17 Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chairman of the Council may in his absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chairman of the Council (if there is one).

3.18 The Chairman of the Council, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chairman is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chairman of the Council (if there is one) if present, shall preside. If both the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman are absent from a meeting, a councillor as chosen by the councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.

3.19 Subject to a meeting being quorate, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the councillors present and voting at the meeting.

3.20 The chairman of a meeting may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise his casting vote whether or not he gave an original vote.

3.21 See standing orders 5.6 and 5.7 for the different rules that apply in the election of the Chairman of the Council at the annual meeting of the Council.

3.22 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, abstained or against that question. Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.

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

- a) the time and place of the meeting;
- b) the names of councillors who are present and the names of councillors who are absent;
- c) interests that have been declared by councillors;
- d) the grant of dispensations (if any) to councillors;
- e) whether a councillor left the meeting when matters that they held interests in were being considered;

- f) if there was a public participation session; and
- g) the resolutions made.

3.24 A councillor 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.

3.25 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 four.

See standing order 4.2(g) for the quorum of a committee meeting.

3.26 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.

3.27 A meeting shall not exceed a period of two hours unless agreed by those present and voting.

4 Committees

4.1 The Council may appoint standing committees or other committees as may be necessary, and:-

- a) shall determine their terms of reference;
- b) shall determine the number and time of the ordinary meetings of a standing committee up until the date of the next annual meeting of the Council;
- c) shall permit a committee, other than in respect of the ordinary meetings of a committee, to determine the number and time of its meetings;
- d) shall, subject to standing orders 4.2, appoint and determine the terms of office of members of such a committee;
- e) shall, after it has appointed the members of a standing committee, appoint the chairman of the standing committee;
- f) shall permit a committee other than a standing committee, to appoint its own chairman at the first meeting of the committee;
- g) shall determine the place, notice requirements and quorum for a meeting of a committee shall be no less than three;
- h) shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a committee; and
- i) may dissolve a committee.

4.2 The members of a committee may include non-councillors unless it is a committee which regulates and controls the finances of the Council. Non councillors shall not have voting rights on any such committee.

4.3 Councillors other than the ones originally appointed to a particular committee may attend and vote at all committee meetings.

4.4 Each committee shall be responsible for its own minutes and their approval. Copies of all committee minutes (including where not signed off, drafts) shall be made available to Full Council as part of their meeting pack as an informational appendix.

5 Statutory annual meeting

5.1 Timing of the annual statutory meeting

5.1.1 In an election year, the meeting of the Council shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the councillors elected take office.

5.1.2 In a year which is not an election year, the meeting of the Council shall be held on such day in May as the Council decides.

5.2 The first business conducted at the annual meeting of the Council shall be the election of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor (if there is one) of the Council.

5.3 The Mayor 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.

5.4 The Deputy Mayor of the Council, if there is one, unless he resigns or becomes disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Mayor of the Council at the next annual meeting of the Council.

5.5 In an election year, if the current Mayor of the Council has not been re-elected as a member of the Council, he shall preside at the annual meeting until a successor Chairman of the Council has been elected. The current Chairman of the Council shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chairman of the Council but shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.

5.6 In an election year, if the current Mayor of the Council has been re-elected as a member of the Council, he shall preside at the annual meeting until a new Mayor of the Council has been elected. He may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Mayor of the Council and shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.

5.7 Following the election of the Mayor of the Council and Deputy Mayor (if there is one) of the Council at the annual meeting, the business shall include item (a) and (b) below and may include items (c) up until (u):-

- a) In an election year, delivery by the Mayor 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 Mayor of the Council of his acceptance of office form unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date;
- b) Receipt of the minutes of the last annual meeting of the council;
- c) Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the Council and any Committees not previously noted by Council;
- d) Consideration of the recommendations made by a committee;

- e) Review of delegation arrangements to committees, staff and other local authorities;
- f) Review of the terms of reference for committees;
- g) Appointment of members to existing committees as well as their respective Chairs and Deputy Chairs;
- h) Appointment of any new committees in accordance with standing order 4.1;
- i) Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations;
- j) Review of arrangements (including legal agreements) with other local authorities, not-for-profit bodies and businesses.
- k) Review of representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back;
- l) 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;
- m) Review of inventory of land and other assets including buildings and office equipment;
- n) Confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insurable risks;
- o) Review of the Council's and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies;
- p) Review of the Council's complaints procedure;
- q) Review of the Council's policies, procedures and practices in respect of its obligations under freedom of information and data protection legislation (see also standing orders 12, 21 and 22);
- r) Review of the Council's policy for dealing with the press/media;
- s) Review of the Council's employment policies and procedures;
- t) Review of the Council's expenditure incurred under s.137 of the Local Government Act 1972 or the general power of competence; or
- u) Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.

6 Annual Town meeting

6.1 The Council may resolve to hold an annual meeting of the Town.

6.1.1 In an election year this meeting shall take place at least 30 days prior to the scheduled date of elections.

6.1.2 In a non-election year this meeting shall take place on a Wednesday in May as determined by the council.

6.2 The agenda for the meeting shall include reports by the Mayor and the Chairs of each of the Committees of the Council.

7 Extraordinary meetings of the council and committees

7.1 The Chairman of the Council may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council at any time.

7.2 If the Chairman 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.

7.3 The chairman of a committee may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee at any time.

7.4 If the chairman of a committee does not call an extraordinary meeting within seven days of having been requested to do so by two members of the committee, any two members of the committee may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee.

8 Previous resolutions

8.1 A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least six councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 10, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the recommendation of a committee.

8.2 When a motion moved pursuant to standing order 8.1 has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved for a further six months.

9 Voting on appointments

9.1 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 chairman of the meeting.

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

10.1 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.

10.2 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 clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.

10.3 The Proper Officer may, before including a motion on the agenda received in accordance with standing order 10.2, correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.

10.4 If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with standing order 10.2 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 clear days before the meeting.

10.5 If the wording or subject of a proposed motion is considered improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the chairman of the forthcoming meeting or, as the case may be, the councillors who have convened the meeting, to consider whether the motion shall be included in the agenda or rejected.

10.6 The decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.

10.7 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

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

- a) to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes of a meeting;
- b) to move to a vote;
- c) to defer consideration of a motion;
- d) to delegate action of a matter to a committee, the Clerk or two or more Councillors.
- e) to appoint a person to preside at a meeting;
- f) to change the order of business on the agenda;
- g) to proceed to the next business on the agenda;
- h) to require a written report;
- i) to appoint a committee and their members;
- j) to dissolve a committee.
- k) to extend the time limits for speaking;
- l) to exclude the press and public from a meeting in respect of confidential or other information which is prejudicial to the public interest;
- m) to not hear further from a councillor or a member of the public;
- n) to exclude a councillor or member of the public for disorderly conduct;
- o) to temporarily suspend the meeting;
- p) to suspend a particular standing order (unless it reflects mandatory statutory or legal requirements);

- q) to adjourn the meeting;
- r) to close the meeting;
- s) to consider a report and/or recommendations made by an employee, professional advisor, expert or consultant;
- t) to authorise legal deeds signed by two councillors and witnessed by the Proper Officer;
- u) to amend a motion relevant to the original or substantive motion under consideration which shall not have the effect of nullifying it;
- v) to give the consent of the Council if such consent is required by standing orders;
or
- w) to answer questions from councillors.

12 Management of information

See also standing order 21.

12.1 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.

12.2 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).

12.3 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.

12.4 Councillors, staff, the Council's contractors and agents shall not disclose confidential information or personal data without legal justification.

13 Draft minutes

13.1 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.

13.2 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 11.1(a).

13.3 The accuracy of draft minutes, including any amendment(s) made to them, shall be confirmed by resolution and shall be signed by the chairman of the meeting and stand as an accurate record of the meeting to which the minutes relate.

13.4 If the chairman of the meeting does not consider the minutes to be an accurate record of the meeting to which they relate, he shall sign the minutes and include a paragraph in the following terms or to the same effect:

13.5 “The chairman of this meeting does not believe that the minutes of the meeting of the () held on [date] in respect of () were a correct record but his view was not upheld by the meeting and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.”

13.6 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.

13.7 Subject to the publication of draft minutes in accordance with standing order 13.6 and standing order 21.1 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 3.24.

14.1 All councillors shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the Council.

14.2 Unless he has been granted a dispensation, a councillor 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.

14.3 Unless he has been granted a dispensation, a councillor 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.

14.4 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.

14.5 A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by a meeting of the Council, or committee for which the dispensation is required.

14.6 A dispensation request shall confirm:-

- a) the description and the nature of the disclosable pecuniary interest or other interest to which the request for the dispensation relates;
- b) whether the dispensation is required to participate at a meeting in a discussion only or a discussion and a vote;
- c) the date of the meeting or the period (not exceeding four years) for which the dispensation is sought; and
- d) an explanation as to why the dispensation is sought.

14.7 Subject to standing orders 14.4 and 14.6, a dispensation request shall be considered at the beginning of the meeting of the Council, or committee for which the dispensation is required.

14.8 A dispensation may be granted in accordance with standing order 14.5 if having regard to all relevant circumstances any of the following apply:-

- a) without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from participating in the particular business would be so great a proportion of the meeting transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business;
- b) granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the Council's area;
or
- c) it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.

15 Code of conduct complaints

15.1 The Council may:

- a) provide information or evidence where such disclosure is necessary to investigate the complaint or is a legal requirement;
- b) seek information relevant to the complaint from the person or body with statutory responsibility for investigation of the matter;

15.2 Upon notification by the Unitary Council that a councillor or associate councillor 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.

16 Proper officer

16.1 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.

16.2 The Proper Officer shall:-

- a) at least three clear days before a meeting of the council,
 - (i) 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);
 - (ii) 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 3.4 for the meaning of clear days

- b) convene a meeting of the Council for the election of a new Chairman of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in his office;
- c) facilitate inspection of the minute book by local government electors;
- d) receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities;
- e) hold acceptance of office forms from councillors;
- f) hold a copy of every councillor's register of interests;

- g) 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;
- h) liaise, as appropriate, with the Council's Data Protection Officer;
- i) receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the Council except where there is a resolution to the contrary;
- j) manage 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);
- k) Process all requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Data Protection Act;
- l) Keep proper records required before and after meetings;
- m) arrange for legal deeds to be executed and signed in accordance with standing order 24;
- n) arrange or manage the prompt authorisation, approval, and instruction regarding any payments to be made by the Council in accordance with its financial regulations;
- o) record planning applications notified to the Council and refer a planning application received by the Council to the members of the Planning Committee for consideration at the next Planning meeting. The Clerk, who holds delegated authority to respond on behalf of the council to the Unitary Council, is to respond as appropriate. If the nature of a planning application requires consideration before the next scheduled meeting of Planning Committee, the Chairman, or in his absence the Vice Chairman of the Planning Committee may call an additional meeting;
- p) manage access to information about the Council; and
- q) Action or undertake activity or responsibilities instructed by resolution or contained in standing orders.

17 Responsible financial officer

17.1 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

18.1 "Proper practices" in standing orders refer to the most recent version of "Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioners' Guide".

18.2 All payments by the Council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the law, proper practices and the Council's financial regulations.

18.3 The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to each councillor financial reports as set out in the Financial Regulations

18.4 As soon as possible after the financial year end at 31 March, the Responsible Financial Officer shall provide:-

- a) each councillor with a statement summarising the Council's receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for the year to date for information; and
- b) to the Council the accounting statements for the year in the form of Section 1 of the annual governance and accountability return, as required by proper practices, for consideration and approval.

18.5 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 14 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

19.1 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:-

- a) the keeping of accounting records and systems of internal controls;
- b) the assessment and management of financial risks faced by the Council including the level of general reserve to be maintained;
- c) 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;
- d) the inspection and copying by councillors and local electors of the Council's accounts and/or orders of payments; and
- e) whether contracts with an estimated value below £25,000 due to special circumstances are exempt from a tendering process or procurement exercise.

19.2 Financial regulations shall be reviewed regularly and at least annually for fitness of purpose.

19.3 A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 with an estimated value in excess of £25,000 but less than the relevant thresholds in standing order 19.6 is subject to Regulations 109-114 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 which include a requirement on the Council to advertise the contract opportunity on the Contracts Finder website regardless of what other means it uses to advertise the opportunity.

19.4 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:-

- a) a specification for the goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall be drawn up;
- b) 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;
- c) the invitation to tender shall be advertised in a local newspaper and in any other manner that is appropriate;
- d) tenders are to be submitted in writing in a sealed marked envelope addressed to the Proper Officer;
- e) 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; and
- f) tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate meeting of the Council or a committee with delegated responsibility.

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

19.6 A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 with an estimated value in excess of the relevant threshold shall comply with the relevant procurement procedures and other requirements in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

19.7 A public contract in connection with the supply of gas, heat, electricity, drinking water, transport services, or postal services to the public; or the provision of a port or airport; or the exploration for or extraction of gas, oil or solid fuel with an estimated value in excess of the relevant threshold shall comply with the relevant procurement procedures and other requirements in the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016.

20 Handling staff matters

20.1 A matter personal to a member of staff that is being considered by a meeting of the Staffing Committee is subject to standing order 11.

20.2 Subject to the Council's policy regarding absences from work, the Council's most senior member of staff shall notify the chairman of Staffing Committee and the Chairman of the Council of absence occasioned by illness or other reason and that person shall report such absence to the Staffing Committee at its next meeting.

20.3 The chairman of the Staffing Committee or in his absence, the vice-chairman shall upon a resolution conduct a review of the performance and annual appraisal of the work of each member of staff. The reviews and appraisal shall be reported in writing and are subject to approval by resolution by Staffing Committee.

20.4 Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, the Council's most senior member of staff (or other members of staff) shall contact the chairman of the Staffing Committee and the Chairman 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 Staffing Committee.

20.5 Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, if an informal or formal grievance matter raised by a member of staff relates to either the chairman of the Staffing Committee or the Chairman of the Council, this shall be communicated to the person to whom the matter does not relate or, if to both, another member of the Staffing Committee, which shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the Staffing Committee.

20.6 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.

20.7 In accordance with standing order 12.1, persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to staff records referred to in standing order 20.5.

21 Responsibilities to provide information

See also standing order 22.

21.1 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.

21.2 The Council, shall publish information in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015.

22 Responsibilities under data protection legislation

(Below is not an exclusive list).

22.1 The Council shall appoint a Data Protection Officer.

22.2 The Council shall have policies and procedures in place to respond to an individual exercising statutory rights concerning his personal data.

22.3 The Council shall have a written policy in place for responding to and managing a personal data breach.

22.4 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.

22.5 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.

22.6 The Council shall maintain a written record of its processing activities.

See also standing order 12.

23 Relations with the press/media

23.1 Requests from the press or other media for an oral or written comment or statement from the Council, its councillors or staff shall be referred in the first instance to the Clerk and the Mayor who may refer the matter to the Council.

24 Execution of legal deeds

See also standing order 16.2(m).

24.1 A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the Council unless authorised by a resolution.

24.2 Subject to standing order 24.1, any two councillors may sign, on behalf of the Council, any deed required by law and the Proper Officer shall witness their signatures.

25 Communicating with unitary councillors

25.1 An invitation to attend a meeting of the Council shall be sent, together with the agenda, to the ward councillor(s) of the Unitary Council representing the area of the Council currently both the Gerrards Cross Ward and the Denham Ward of Buckinghamshire Council.

25.2 Unless the Council determines otherwise, a copy of each letter sent to the Unitary Council shall be sent to the ward councillor(s) representing the area of the Council via email.

26 Restrictions on councillor activities

26.1 Unless duly authorised no councillor shall issue orders, instructions or directions on behalf of the Council.

27 Standing orders generally

27.1 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.

27.2 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 two councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 10.

27.3 The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the Council's standing orders to a councillor as soon as possible.

27.4 The decision of the chairman of a meeting as to the application of standing orders at the meeting shall be final.

28 Associate Councillors

28.1 The Council may appoint individuals to hold the title of associate councillor for an indeterminate period. Such appointment can be withdrawn by resolution of the Council.

28.2 All associate councillors shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the Council.

28.3 Associate councillors may be appointed to a committee, but shall not have voting powers.