

Swale Borough Council Constitution



INDEX

	Pages
Part 1 Summary and Explanation	1 - 6
Parts 2.1 to 2.6 Responsibility for functions	7 - 22
Part 2.7 Proper officer schedule	23 - 34
Part 2.8 Scheme of officer delegations	35 - 68
Part 3.1 Council and Committee Procedure Rules	69 - 94
Appendix 1 - Petitions Scheme	95 - 98
Appendix 2 - Swale Joint Transportation Board	99 - 102
Appendix 3 - Standards Committee Procedure Rules	103 - 112
Part 3.2 Access to Information Procedure Rules	113 - 118
Part 3.3 Budget and Policy Framework Rules	119 - 122
Part 3.4 Officer Employment Procedure Rules	123 - 128
Part 3.5 Financial Regulations	129 - 160
Part 3.6 Contract Standing Orders	161 - 174
Part 3.7 Membership of Council Committees and Advisory Bodies	175 - 180
Part 4.1 Members' Code of Conduct	181 - 196
Appendix - Code of Conduct Complaint Assessment Criteria	197 - 200
Appendix - Engaging in pre-planning application discussions	201 - 204
Appendix - Gifts and Hospitality	205 - 206
Appendix - Defamation and Qualified Privilege	207 - 210
Appendix - Communications and Media Issues	211 - 214
Part 4.2 Officers Code of Conduct and Guide	215 - 224
Part 4.3 Member Officer Protocol	225 - 242
Part 5 Members' Allowances Scheme	243 - 250

PART 1 - SUMMARY AND EXPLANATION

1.1 The Constitution

- 1.1.1. This document is Swale Borough Council's Constitution. It sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which need to be followed. The Council will exercise all its powers and duties in accordance with the law and this Constitution.

1.2 Purpose

- 1.2.1 The purpose of the Constitution is to:

- a) enable the Council to provide clear leadership to the community in partnership with the public, businesses and other organisations;
- b) support the active involvement of citizens in the process of local authority decision-making;
- c) help Councillors represent their constituents more effectively;
- d) enable decisions to be taken efficiently and effectively;
- e) create a powerful and effective means of holding decision-makers to public account;
- f) ensure that no one will review or scrutinise a decision in which they were directly involved;
- g) ensure that those responsible for decision making are clearly identifiable to local people and that they explain the reasons for decisions; and
- h) provide a means of improving the delivery of services to the community.

1.3 How the Council operates

- 1.3.1 The Council is composed of 47 Members, otherwise called Councillors and elections are held every four years. One or more Councillors will be elected by the voters of each ward in accordance with a scheme drawn-up by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. Councillors are democratically accountable to residents of their ward.

- 1.3.2 Only registered voters of the Borough or those living or working or owning land or premises in Swale will be eligible to hold the office of Councillor.
- 1.3.3 The overriding duty of Councillors is to the whole community but they have a special duty to their constituents, including those who did not vote for them.
- 1.3.4 All Councillors will:
- a) represent their communities and bring their views into the Council's decision-making process, i.e. become the advocate of and for their communities;
 - b) collectively be the ultimate policy-makers and carry out a number of strategic and corporate management functions;
 - c) deal with individual casework and act as an advocate for constituents in resolving particular concerns or grievances;
 - d) balance different interests identified within the ward and represent the ward as a whole;
 - e) be involved in decision-making;
 - f) be available to represent the Council on other bodies; and
 - g) maintain the highest standards of conduct and ethics.
- 1.3.5 Councillors will have such rights of access to such documents, information, land and buildings of the Council as are necessary for the proper discharge of their functions and in accordance with the law.
- 1.3.6 Councillors will not make public information which is confidential or exempt without the consent of the Council, or divulge information given in confidence to anyone other than a Councillor or Officer entitled to know it. For these purposes, "confidential" and "exempt" information are defined in the Procedural Rules in Part 3.2 of this Constitution.
- 1.3.7 Councillors have to agree to follow a Code of Conduct set out in Part 4 of this Constitution to ensure high standards in the way they undertake their duties. The Standards Committee is responsible for matters relating to the Code of Conduct.
- 1.3.8 Councillors will be entitled to receive allowances in accordance with the Members' Allowances Scheme set out in Part 5 of this Constitution. The Scheme is approved by Full Council following advice from an Independent Members' Allowances Panel.

1.4 The Committee System

- 1.4.1 The Council operates a 'committee system' form of governance. This means that decisions are made by Full Council or delegated to Committees, Subcommittees and Officers. Full Council is the meeting of all 47 Councillors and Full Council is ultimately responsible for the exercise of all functions and certain matters are expressly reserved to be taken by a meeting of the Full Council.
- 1.4.2 The Council does not have an overview and scrutiny committee. In the committee system a cross-section of administration and opposition members are involved in the decision-making process and therefore hold the administration to account on their policies as they proceed through the committee system.

1.5 How Decisions Are Made

- 1.5.1 This part of the Constitution explains who takes decisions and sets out the responsibilities of the Council, Committees, Subcommittees and officers.
- 1.5.2 All Councillors meet together a number of times each year as the Full Council. The main role of Full Council meetings is to decide the Council's overall policies and set the budget each year. Further details are set out in Part 3.3 of the Constitution.
- 1.5.3 Full Council elects a Mayor as Chair of the Full Council meeting and who performs the Council's civic role and represents the Council in the community. The Mayor is the representative of the Crown in the Borough and as such is the First Citizen of the Borough. They are the principal ambassador of the council. The Mayoralty cannot be used for political purposes. The Full Council also elects a Deputy Mayor who will deputise for the Mayor when they are unavailable or absent.
- 1.5.4 Meetings of the Full Council will generally be open for the public to attend except where exempt or confidential matters are being discussed.
- 1.5.5 There are three different types of Full Council meeting:
- a) The Annual Meeting of the Council;
 - b) Ordinary meetings; and
 - c) Extraordinary meetings, which will be called as and when required in accordance with the Council Procedure Rules.

- 1.5.6 The Council will issue and keep up-to-date a record of what part of the Council or individual has responsibility and for particular types of decisions or decisions relating to particular areas or functions. This record is set out in Part 2 of this Constitution.
- 1.5.7 All decisions of the Council will be made in accordance with the following principles:
- a) due consultation and the taking of professional advice from officers;
 - b) respect for human rights;
 - c) a presumption in favour of openness;
 - d) clarity of aims and desired outcomes;
 - e) due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty; and
 - f) due regard for the individuals and communities served by the Council.

1.6 Committees

- 1.6.1 Whilst certain functions are reserved to the Council, the Council can delegate many of its functions to a Committee, a Subcommittee, a joint Committee or an Officer. These are set out in Part 2 of the Constitution. Part 2 of the Constitution also sets out the responsibilities for the Council's functions which are not the responsibility of the Full Council.
- 1.6.2 The Committee system consists of a number of service-based and other committees taking decisions under their terms of reference which are agreed by Full Council and set out at Part 2 of this Constitution.

1.7 The Council's Staff

- 1.7.1 The Council has people working for it (called 'Officers') to give advice, implement decisions and manage the day-to-day delivery of its services. Some Officers have a specific duty to ensure that the Council acts within the law and uses its resources wisely. A structure chart is attached as Appendix 1 to this constitution.

1.8 Finance, Contracts and Legal Matters

- 1.8.1 The management of the Council's financial affairs will be conducted in accordance with the Financial Procedure Rules as set out in Part 3.8 of this Constitution.

- 1.8.2 Every contract made by the Council will comply with the Contract Standing Orders as set out in Part 3.9 of this Constitution.
- 1.8.3 The Directors/Head of Legal are authorised to institute, defend or participate in and settle any legal proceedings in any case where such action is necessary to give effect to decisions of the Council or is in accordance with Council policy or in any case where they consider that such actions are necessary to protect or pursue the Council's interests. If the action is not required to give effect to a decision or policy of Council the Director/Head of Legal will consult with the Chair of Policy and Resources or Vice-Chair in their absence.
- 1.8.4 Where any documents are necessary to any legal procedure or proceedings on behalf of the Council, it will be signed by the Head of Legal Partnership or other person authorised by them, unless any enactment otherwise authorises or requires, or the Council has given requisite authority to some other person.
- 1.8.5 The Common Seal of the Council will be kept in a safe place in the custody of the Head of Legal. A decision of the Council, or any part of it, will be sufficient authority for sealing any document necessary to give effect to the decision. The Common Seal will be affixed to those documents which in the opinion of the Head of Legal Partnership should be sealed. The affixing of the Common Seal will be attested by the Head of Legal Partnership or some other person authorised by them.

1.9 Review and Publication of the Constitution

- 1.9.1 This Constitution will be kept under review by the Monitoring Officer.
- 1.9.2 The Proper Officer will give a printed copy or summary of this Constitution to each Member of the authority upon delivery to them of that individual's Declaration of Acceptance of Office on the Member first being elected to the Council, and advise Members of any changes.
- 1.9.3 The Proper Officer will ensure that copies are available for inspection at the Council offices. The Constitution will also be available to view on the Council's website. If requested, hard copies will be made available on payment of a reasonable fee.
- 1.9.4 The Proper Officer will ensure that the summary of the Constitution is made widely available within the area and is updated as necessary.

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PART 2 – RESPONSIBILITY FOR FUNCTIONS

2.0 Introduction

The Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) sets out the arrangements authorities can make for the discharge of their functions. Authorities may discharge their functions through Committees, Subcommittees, etc. There is no power to delegate Council functions to an individual Member, but powers can be delegated to an Officer in consultation with a Member.

2.1 Functions of Full Council

2.1.1 The following functions are the responsibility of the Full Council and will be discharged by the Full Council unless specifically delegated to another Committee, Subcommittee, body or Officer elsewhere in this Constitution:

- a) to adopt and approve the budget and any amendments to it which cannot be made by other bodies pursuant to the Financial Regulations;
- b) to adopt and amend any policies reserved to Full Council by law or this constitution;
- c) to adopt and amend the Constitution;
- d) to appoint the Mayor and Deputy Mayor;
- e) to elect the non-executive Leader of the Council;
- f) to make appointments to Committees;
- g) to make appointments to outside bodies;
- h) to nominate directors of any companies in which the Council has shares or owns wholly or partly, where the Council has a right to nominate directors;
- i) to change the name of the area;
- j) to confer the title of Honorary Alderman/Alderwoman or Freeman of the Borough;
- k) to adopt the Codes of Conduct for Members and Officers;
- l) to adopt a Members' Allowances Scheme, after considering the report of the Independent Members' Allowances Panel;

- m) to appoint or dismiss the Head of Paid Service and Returning Officer, the Monitoring Officer or the Section 151 Officer;
- n) to resolve any matters requiring Member involvement, relating to local elections, electoral registration, revisions of electoral boundaries, orders in respect of parishes and related matters pertaining to the Borough or Parish Councils;
- o) to make, amend, revoke, re-enact or adopt bylaws and promote or oppose the making of local legislation or personal Bills; and
- p) all other matters which, by law, must be reserved to Council.

2.2 Committees of the Council

2.2.1 Policy and Resources Committee

Membership and functions of the Policy and Resources Committee

2.2.1.1 The Policy and Resources Committee shall be comprised of 15 members of the Council.

2.2.1.2 The functions of the Committee are:

- i. to propose an annual revenue budget, capital budget, medium-term financial plan, and schedule of fees and charges to Council;
- ii. to coordinate the development of the Council's strategy and policy across service committees, and to adopt strategies and policies, where appropriate based on proposals from other service committees;
- iii. to propose to Council the strategies and policies the adoption of which is reserved to Council;
- iv. to maintain strategic oversight of all Council services, including oversight of resources, performance and risks;
- v. to exercise and delegate authority on behalf of the Council over all non-regulatory matters falling within the Committee's area of responsibility;
- vi. to exercise and delegate authority on behalf of the Council over all non-regulatory matters which fall within the area of responsibility of multiple service committees, or to determine which service committee should exercise or delegate such authority;
- vii. to commission, procure and manage external contractors on matters falling within the Committee's area of responsibility, and to maintain strategic oversight of the Council's commissioning and procurement processes;

- viii. to oversee the Council's relationships with partner organisations, and involvement in formal and informal partnerships, in matters falling within the committee's area of responsibility, including strategic relationships with government and Kent County Council;
- ix. to receive, and optionally to give effect to, recommendations from other Service Committees and from Subcommittees of the Policy and Resources Committee; and
- x. To consider amendments to the Constitution and to make recommendations on amendments or changes to Full Council.

2.2.1.3 The areas of responsibility of the Policy and Resources Committee are:

- i. corporate strategy and corporate plan;
- ii. development of annual budget and medium-term financial plan;
- iii. overall budget management;
- iv. overall risk management;
- v. overall performance management;
- vi. organisational health and safety;
- vii. customer services, including oversight of service-related complaint handling;
- viii. communications including website;
- ix. transformation and digitisation;
- x. commissioning and procurement systems and processes;
- xi. revenues and benefits, including council tax collection and council tax support;
- xii. corporate services including all Mid-Kent Services functions;
- xiii. members' and officers' learning and development;
- xiv. equality and diversity;
- xv. resilience, including emergency planning and business continuity; and
- xvi. all matters relating to the Council's responsibilities as an employer.

Subcommittees and Working Groups

2.2.1.4 The Policy and Resources Committee may establish such subcommittees and/or working groups as it requires and may set the terms of reference and membership of those subcommittees and working groups. It shall also have the following subcommittees each comprised of 7 members of the

Committee who have received appropriate training on the conducting of hearings and employment:

Appointments Subcommittee

2.2.1.5 The functions of the Appointments Subcommittee shall be to:

- i. agree the appointments of Directors of the Council/Shared Services; and
- ii. make recommendations to Full Council on the appointments of the Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer.

Investigation and Disciplinary Subcommittee

2.2.1.6 The function of this Subcommittee shall be to consider any disciplinary action against one of the Council's statutory officers, the Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer or the section 151 Officer. The powers of the Subcommittee shall include, in accordance with the Employment Procedure Rules to;

- i. suspend a statutory officer;
- ii. appoint an investigating officer to carry out a disciplinary investigation in respect of a statutory officer;
- iii. conduct a disciplinary hearing;
- iv. recommend to Council the dismissal of a statutory officer; and
- v. determine disciplinary action short of dismissal in respect of a statutory officer.

Statutory Officers Disciplinary Appeals Subcommittee

2.2.1.7 The function of this Subcommittee shall be to hear any disciplinary appeals brought by a statutory officers on any disciplinary sanction short of dismissal. No member may sit on the Appeals Subcommittee on a case which has been considered by them as a member of the Investigation and Disciplinary Subcommittee.

Planning and Transportation Policy Working Group

2.2.1.8 The Policy and Resources Committee shall establish a working group to make recommendations to it on the following areas:

- i. The development of planning policy including policies forming the local plan for recommendation to Council;
- ii. Section 106 and community infrastructure levy;
- iii. building and development control;

- iv. transport; and
- iv land charges.

2.3 Service Committees

2.3.1 Membership and functions of all service committees

2.3.1.1 All service committees shall be comprised of 15 members of the Council.

2.3.1.2 All of the service committees shall exercise the following functions within their areas of responsibility:

- i. to exercise and delegate authority on behalf of the Council over all non-regulatory matters falling wholly within the committee's area of responsibility;
- ii. to provide strategic oversight of Council services falling within the committee's area of responsibility, including oversight of resources and performance;
- iii. to commission, procure and manage external contractors on matters falling within the committee's area of responsibility;
- iv. to oversee Council relationships with partner organisations, and involvement in formal and informal partnerships, in matters falling within the committee's area of responsibility;
- v. to make recommendations to the Policy and Resources Committee on policies, strategies, budgets, fees and charges concerning services and other matters falling within the committee's area of responsibility; and
- vi. to appoint and oversee the work of any subcommittees.
- vii. To note reports presented to the committee. Items for noting will be tabled at the beginning of the agenda. The Chair will list the items for noting and any member may request that an item is discussed.

2.3.2 The areas of responsibility of the Environmental Services and Climate Change Committee are:

- i. Refuse collection and recycling;
- ii. Street Cleansing;
- iii. Climate and ecological emergency;
- iv. Air quality;
- v. Active travel;
- vi. Environmental response, including fly-tipping, animal welfare, littering and illegal encampments;

- vii. Environmental health, including management of public health and safety risks, contaminated land, and pollution control;
- viii. Green spaces, open spaces and grounds maintenance;
- ix. Cemeteries;
- x. Parking;
- xi. Heritage and conservation, including closed churchyards;
- xii. Flooding, sea defences and coastal protection; and
- xiii. Public conveniences.

2.3.3 The areas of responsibility of the Economy and Property Committee are:

- i. Regeneration;
- ii. economic development;
- iii. town centres and markets;
- iv. visitor economy;
- v. property asset management, including beach huts;
- vi. learning and skills; and
- vii. sea fronts, harbours and quays.

2.3.4 The areas of responsibility of the Housing, Health and Communities Committee are:

- i. Inclusivity and tackling disadvantage;
- ii. Crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour;
- iii. CCTV;
- iv. Culture;
- v. Leisure and sport;
- vi. Play areas and outdoor fitness equipment;
- vii. Voluntary and community sector;
- viii. Liaison with town and parish councils;
- ix. To act as the Council's crime and disorder (overview and scrutiny) committee for the purposes of and with the powers set out in the Police and Justice Act 2006, the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and any regulations made under those Acts;
- x. Housing advice, homelessness prevention and housing register;
- xi. Affordable and social housing;
- xii. Disabled facilities grants, home improvements and Staying Put;
- xiii. Empty dwellings;
- xiv. Private-sector housing support and enforcement;
- xv. Health inequalities;

- xvi. Liaison with public health, health providers and adult social care;
- xvii. Children and young people, including liaison with children's services; and
- xviii. Child and vulnerable adult safeguarding.

2.3.5 Subcommittees and Working Groups

- 2.3.5.1 Service committees may set up subcommittees and/or working groups. The subcommittees will have decision making powers where these are delegated to them by the Committee. The subcommittees may make recommendations to the whole committee on particular elements of the area of responsibility of the committee.
- 2.3.5.2 The Housing, Health and Communities Committee shall have a Subcommittee called the Swale Rainbow Homes Shareholder Representation Subcommittee which shall be made up of members who have received appropriate training. This shall make decisions in respect of the Council's role as shareholder of Swale Rainbow Homes.
- 2.3.5.3 Any Subcommittee or Working Group must report to the Service Committee and its membership will be set by the Service Committee. The membership of a Subcommittee must be drawn from the parent committee but the membership of a working group need not do. The political balance rules and access to information rules will not apply to any working groups but they will operate in an open and transparent way and membership will be drawn from members who are from different political groups on the Council. Where a working group is to be supported by officers the Chief Executive will be consulted before it is established.

2.4 Other Committees

2.4.1 Audit Committee

- 2.4.1.1 The Audit Committee shall comprise of 9 members of the Council.
- 2.4.1.2 The purpose of the Audit Committee is to provide independent assurance of the adequacy of the risk management framework and the associated control environment, independent scrutiny of the authority's financial and nonfinancial performance to the extent that it affects the authority's exposure to risk and weakens the control environment, and to oversee the financial reporting process.

2.4.1.3 The Audit Committee has responsibility for:

Audit Activity

- i. To consider the Head of Audit Partnership's annual report and opinion, and a summary of audit activity (actual and proposed) and the level of assurance it can give over the council's governance arrangements, and any report from Internal Audit on agreed recommendations not implemented within a reasonable timescale;
- ii. To consider reports dealing with the management and performance of Internal Audit Services, including consideration and endorsement of Internal Audit Plans;
- iii. To consider the external auditor's annual letter, the report to those charged with governance, and any specific reports as agreed with the external auditor;
- iv. To oversee the appointment of the Council's external auditor, comment on the scope and depth of external audit work and ensure that it gives value for money;

Regulatory Framework

- v. To review any issue referred to it by the Chief Executive or the Director or any Council body;
- vi. To monitor the effective development and operation of risk management and corporate governance in the Council;
- vii. To monitor council policies on 'Whistleblowing' and the 'Antifraud and Corruption Strategy';
- viii. To consider and comment on the authority's Annual Governance Statement and agree its adoption as part of the
- ix. approval of the annual accounts;
- x. To consider the Council's arrangements for governance and whether adequate safeguards are in place to secure compliance with its own and other published standards and controls and best practice;

Accounts

- xi. To review and approve the annual statement of accounts. Specifically, to consider whether there are concerns arising from the financial statement or from the audit that need to be brought to the attention of the Policy and Resources Committee or the Council;
- xii. To consider the external auditor's report to those charged with governance on issues from the audit of the accounts;

- xiii. To be responsible for ensuring effective scrutiny of the treasury management strategy and policies (Note: Council is responsible for adopting the Treasury Management strategy and policy); and

Reporting

- xiv. To present an annual report to the Council providing assurance that the responsibilities of the Committee have been met.

2.4.2 Urgent Decisions Committee

2.4.2.1 The Committee shall comprise of 7 Members of the Council, to include the Group Leaders subject to political balance rules.

2.4.2.2 The Committee shall have responsibility for exercising the functions of Full Council, if necessary, in cases where it is not possible to call a Full Council meeting, subject to a full report to the next available meeting of Full Council for information.

2.4.3 Licensing Committee

2.4.3.1 The Licensing Committee shall comprise of 15 members of the Council.

2.4.3.2 The Committee shall have responsibility for:

- i. To review and make recommendations to Policy and Resources Committee and thereafter full Council upon policy in relation to licensing matters under the Licensing Act 2003 and the statement of licensing policy;
- ii. To discharge the Council's functions as a Licensing Authority under the Licensing Act 2003, within agreed policy;
- v. To arrange for the discharge of any of the licensing functions exercisable by the Committee to an Officer of the Licensing Authority subject to the limitations set out in Section 10(4) of the Licensing Act 2003;
- vi. To review and make recommendations to Policy and Resources Committee and thereafter full Council upon policy in relation to licensing matters under the Gambling Act 2005 and the statement principles;

- vii. To discharge the Council's functions as a Licensing Authority under the Gambling Act 2005, within agreed policy;
- viii. To arrange for the delegation of any of the licensing functions exercisable by the Committee to an Officer of the Licensing Authority subject to the limitations set out in Section 154 of the Gambling Act 2005;

General Licensing Matters

- ix. To make recommendations to Policy and Resources Committee on any matters of licensing policy;
- x. To review and make decisions in accordance with Council policy in licensing matters under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 Schedule 3 (Sex Establishments) and Schedule 4 (Street Trading) and the statement of principles;
- xi. to discharge the Council's functions as a Licensing Authority under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982, within agreed policies;
- xii. To arrange for the delegation of any of the licensing functions exercisable by the Committee to an officer of the Licensing Authority subject to the limitations set out in Schedule 3 and Schedule 4 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982;
- xiii. To discharge all licensing functions of the Council not reserved to Full Council;
- xiv. To exercise the Council's functions under any of the relevant statutory provisions relating to Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, as far as they are the responsibility of the Council; and
- xv. To make decisions on matters relating to the Council's responsibilities in respect of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles and Drivers.

- 2.4.3. The Licensing Committee shall have a Licensing Act Subcommittee and a General Licensing Subcommittee each comprised of 3 members of the Committee.

2.4.3.1 The Licensing Act Subcommittee shall have responsibility for:

Licensing Act 2003

- i. Application for a personal licence if any objection is made;
- ii. Application for a personal licence where a person has any unspent convictions;
- iii. Application for a premises/club premises licence if a representation is made;
- iv. Application for a provisional statement if representation is made;
- v. Application to vary the DPS if the police object;
- vi. Application for the transfer of premises licence if the police object;
- vii. Application for interim authority if the police object;
- viii. Application to review a premises/club premises licence
- ix. Decision to object when the Councils a consultee and not the Licensing Authority; and
- x. 10. Application for a temporary event notice when the police object.

Gambling Act

- xi. Application for a premises licence where representations have been received;
- xii. Application to vary a premises licence where representations have been received;
- xiii. Application to transfer a licence where representations have been received;
- xiv. Application for a provisional statement where representations have been received;
- xv. Review of a premises licence;
- xvi. Application for club gaming machine permits where representations have been received;
- xvii. Cancellation of a club gaming machine permit; and
- xviii. Application for more than 4 gaming machine permits in a licensed premises.

2.4.3.2 The General Licensing Subcommittee shall have responsibility for making decisions about individual licensing matters and appeals where not otherwise delegated to the Head of Environment and Leisure Services or the Head of Housing and Community Services.

2.4.3.3 The Licensing Committee shall have a General Licensing Act Sub-Committee comprising 3 members of the Council who have received training on the relevant areas of licensing law.

2.4.4 Planning Committee

2.4.4.1 The Planning Committee shall be comprised of 17 members of the Council who have received appropriate training on planning.

2.4.4.2 The Committee shall have responsibility for making decisions under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, including:

- i. The granting of permissions, or approvals;
- ii. Refusals of permissions;
- iii. Applications for listed building and conservation area consent;
- iv. Resolution to make and confirm tree preservation orders;
- v. Orders under Section 215 relating to maintenance of waste land and resolution to prosecute for noncompliance with an order;
- vi. Resolution to serve enforcement notices and listed building enforcement notices and service of "stop notices", or resolution to prosecute in the case of failure to comply with any type of confirmed order;
- vii. Resolution to serve a repairs notice and to carry out urgent works to preserve listed buildings under Sections 48 and 54 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990;
- viii. Resolution to prosecute for the unauthorised display of advertisements.
- ix. Agreements under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended);
- x. Notices under Section 79 of the Building Act 1984;
- xi. To respond to consultations on any planning applications to be carried out by and/or determined by other Authorities, Agencies or Government Departments;

- xii. The determination of applications for development to be carried out by the Council;
- xiii. To resolve to make an Article 4 Direction;
- xiv. To resolve to make an 'Area of Special Control' under the Advertisement Regulations;
- xv. To resolve to secure the preservation of a building under Sections 3 and 4 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 or such other relevant legislation as may be enacted thereafter;
- xvi. To resolve to revoke a planning permission;
- xvii. To resolve to accept a Purchase Notice;
- xviii. To resolve to serve a discontinuance order;
- xix. To determine other related planning matters including conservation, tree preservation, advertisement control, building preservation and functions the subject of agency.

NOTE

- A. that in cases where the Committee is minded to make a decision that would be contrary to officer recommendation and contrary to policy and/or guidance, the Chair should invite the Head of Planning to request the Committee to consider if the application should be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee or if there should be a short adjournment for Officers to consider the views of the Planning Committee and to give further advice.
- B. that in cases where the Committee determines an application contrary to officer recommendation a full record should be made of the reasons for rejecting the recommendation.

2.4.4.3 The Committee shall have a Working Group called the Planning Committee Site Visits Group. It shall be comprised of members of the committee and ward councillors will be invited to attend. Its responsibility will be to visit sites the subject of planning applications, as directed by the Planning Committee,

and report back to the subsequent meeting Planning Committee. See Planning Committee Procedural Rules in Part 3 of this Constitution.

2.4.5 Standards Committee

2.4.5.1 The Committee shall be comprised of 11 members of the Council plus three non-voting co-opted Parish representatives.

2.4.5.2 The Committee shall have the following responsibilities:

- i. to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members and co-opted members of the authority and Parish Councils within the Borough;
- ii. to recommend to Full Council for adoption a code dealing with the conduct that is expected of members and co-opted members of the Council when they are acting in that capacity;
- iii. to monitor and review the Code of Conduct as appropriate to ensure it is consistent with the following principles: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership;
- iv. to ensure that the Code of Conduct includes the provision that the authority considers appropriate in respect of the registration in its register, and disclosure, of (a) pecuniary interests, and (b) interests other than pecuniary interests which the Council thinks appropriate;
- v. to put in place arrangements under which allegations can be investigated and decisions on allegations can be made. Such arrangements to include provision for the appointment by the authority of at least one independent person and to cover Parish Councils in the Borough;
- vi. to consider applications for the grant of dispensations in accordance with the provisions contained within S.33 (b) (c) and (d) of the Localism Act 2011; and
- vii. to set the allowances and expenses for the Independent Person.

2.4.5.3 The Committee shall have a Subcommittee called the Standards Hearing Panel.

2.4.5.4 The Standards Hearing Panel shall be comprised of 3 members of the Committee who have received appropriate training on the conducting of hearings.

2.4.5.5 The Standards Hearing Panel shall have the following responsibilities:

- i. to consider any matter referred for investigation in accordance with the arrangements adopted by the Council for considering any allegation that a member or co-opted member of the Council or a Parish Council in the Borough has failed to comply with the Code of conduct; and
- ii. to conduct a hearing and decide whether a member has failed to comply with the Code of Conduct and, if so determine what action(s) to take in accordance with the Council's arrangements

2.5 Area Committees

2.5.1 The purpose of area committees is to enhance the quality of life and of council services in the relevant area and to bring greater local insight to bear in council decision-making.

2.5.2 The Membership of each Area Committee shall include all ward members in the area. Area committee boundaries will align with ward boundaries. Substitute Members are not permitted on Area Committees.

2.5.3 There shall be Area Committees for the following areas;

- i. Eastern (Abbey; Boughton and Courtenay; East Downs; Priory; St Ann's; Teynham and Lynsted; Watling). 12 Members (quorum: four Members);
- ii. Sheppey (Minster Cliffs; Queenborough and Halfway; Sheerness; Sheppey Central; Sheppey East). 14 Members (quorum: five Members);
- iii. Sittingbourne (Chalkwell; Homewood; Kemsley; Milton Regis; Murston; Roman). 11 Members (quorum: four Members);
- iv. Western (Bobbing, Iwade and Lower Halstow; Borden and Grove Park; Hartlip, Newington and Upchurch; The Meads; Woodstock; West Downs). 10 Members (quorum: three Members).

2.5.4. The Area Committees shall have the following responsibilities:

- i. develop a work programme to enhance core services within the area and take a report to council on an annual basis to provide an update on progress;
- ii. agree spending decisions in relation to specific funding allocated to members of the Committee;
- iii. provide area intelligence to the Policy and Resources Committee and heads of service, and assist with policy development on relevant matters; and
- iii. make recommendations to Full Council, Policy and Resources Committee or any Service Committee on issues in the committee's area and respond to any other specific matter referred to it by Full Council, a committee or a senior council officer.

2.6 Joint Arrangements

- 2.6.1 Kent Resource Partnership: Swale representative appointed by the Environment Committee.
- 2.6.2 South Thames Gateway Building Control Joint Committee: Swale representative appointed by the Policy and Resources Committee.

PART 2.7 - THE “PROPER OFFICER” PROVISIONS

Function	Proper Officer	Person to act in the event of the Proper officer being absent or otherwise unable to act
(1) Any reference in any enactment passed before or during the 1971/72 Session of Parliament, other than the Local Government Act 1972, or in any instrument made before 26 October 1972 to the Clerk of a Council or the Town Clerk of a Borough.	Chief Executive	Monitoring Officer
(2) The following provisions in the Local Government Act 1972:- (a) Section 88(2) – the Officer who may convene a meeting for the election of Chairman of the Council following a casual vacancy in that office. (b) Schedule 12, Part 1, para 4(2)(b) – the officer who shall sign a summons to attend a Council meeting.	Chief Executive Chief Executive	Monitoring Officer Democratic Services Manager
(3) Any reference in any enactment passed before or during the 1971/72 Session of Parliament, other than the Local Government Act 1972, or in any instrument made before 26 October 1972 to the Treasurer of a local authority.	Chief Financial Officer (Director of Resources)	Head of Finance & Procurement

Function	Proper Officer	Person to act in the event of the Proper officer being absent or otherwise unable to act
<p>(4) The following provisions of the Local Government Act 1972:-</p> <p>(a) Section 115(2) – the officer who shall receive all money due from any other Officer of the Council.</p> <p>(b) Section 146(1) – the officer who (upon a transfer of securities the alteration of the name of the District) shall make a statutory declaration specifying the securities and verifying the change of name and identify of the Council or shall give such a certificate as it is prescribed by paragraph of this subsection.</p> <p>(c) Section 151 – the officer having responsibility for the administration of the financial affairs of the Council.</p>	<p>Chief Financial Officer (Director of Resources)</p> <p>Chief Financial Officer (Director of Resources)</p> <p>Chief Financial Officer (Director of Resources)</p>	<p>Head of Finance & Procurement</p> <p>Head of Finance & Procurement</p> <p>Head of Finance & Procurement</p>

Function	Proper Officer	Person to act in the event of the Proper officer being absent or otherwise unable to act
<p>(5) The following provisions of the Representation of the People Act 1983:-</p> <p>(a) Section 8 and Section 52 – the Registration Officer for any constituency of part of a constituency coterminous with or situated in the Borough.</p> <p>(b) Section 35(1) – the Returning Officer for elections of Councillors of the District and for elections of Councillors of Parishes within the District.</p>	<p>Chief Executive</p> <p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>Electoral Services Manager</p> <p>Electoral Services Manager</p>
<p>(6) The following provisions of the Local Government Act 1972:-</p> <p>(a) Section 83(1) – the Officer to whom a person elected to the office of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Councillor or elected Mayor of the Council of the district shall deliver a declaration of acceptance of office in a form prescribed by rules made under Section 42 of the Act.</p> <p>(b) Section 84 – the Officer to whom a person elected to any office under the Act or elected as an elected Mayor may give written notice of resignation.</p> <p>(c) Section 89(1) – the Officer to whom notice shall be given of any casual vacancy occurring in the office of</p>	<p>Chief Executive</p> <p>Chief Executive</p> <p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>Democratic Services Manager</p> <p>Democratic Services Manager</p> <p>Democratic Services Manager</p>

Function	Proper Officer	Person to act in the event of the Proper officer being absent or otherwise unable to act
<p>Councillor.</p> <p>(d) Section 191(2) – the Officer who shall receive an application under section 1 of the Ordnance Survey Act 1841.</p> <p>(e) Section 210(6) – the Officer who shall exercise the powers relating to charities conferred by these subsections.</p> <p>(f) Section 225(1) – the Officer who shall receive and retain documents deposited with the Council pursuant to the Standing Orders of either Houses of Parliament or to any enactment or instrument, and shall take such action relating to these documents as may be directed.</p> <p>(g) Schedule 12, Part I, para 4(3) – the officer to whom a member of the Council shall give notice in writing desiring summonses to attend meetings of the Council to be sent to an address specified in the notice other than his place of residence.</p> <p>(h) Schedule 14, Part II, para 25(7) – the officer who shall certify a resolution of the Council under this paragraph.</p> <p>(k) Section 236(9) – the officer who shall send a copy of every byelaw made by the Council and confirmed to the</p>	<p>Chief Executive</p> <p>Chief Executive</p> <p>Chief Executive</p> <p>Chief Executive</p> <p>Head of Legal Partnership</p> <p>Head of Legal Partnership</p>	<p>Democratic Services Manager</p> <p>Democratic Services Manager</p> <p>Democratic Services Manager</p> <p>Democratic Services Manager</p> <p>Chief Executive</p> <p>Monitoring Officer</p>

Function	Proper Officer	Person to act in the event of the Proper officer being absent or otherwise unable to act
<p>Proper Officer of every parish to which they apply.</p> <p>(l) Section 236(10) – the officer who shall send a copy of every byelaw made by the Council and confirmed to the Council of the County.</p> <p>(m) Section 238 – the officer who shall certify a printed copy of a byelaw of the Council.</p> <p>(n) In relation to Section 13(3) of the Local Government Act 1972 – the Officer who together with the Chairman of the Parish Member shall be a body corporate by the name “The Parish Trustees”.</p>	<p>Head of Legal Partnership</p> <p>Head of Legal Partnership</p> <p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>Monitoring Officer</p> <p>Chief Executive</p> <p>Democratic Services Manager</p>
(7) The Proper Officer for the purposes of Part I of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.	Chief Executive	Head of Human Resources Partnership
(8) In relation to Section 41 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 – the officer for certifying documents as provided for under this section – evidence of resolutions and minutes of proceedings	Head of Legal Partnership	All other authorised legal officers exercising delegated powers

Function	Proper Officer	Person to act in the event of the Proper officer being absent or otherwise unable to act
<p>(9) The following provisions of the Local Government Act 1972:-</p> <p>(a) Section 229(5) – the officer who shall certify a photographic copy of a document in the custody of the Council, or of a document which has been destroyed while in the custody of the Council, or of any part of any such document.</p> <p>(b) Section 234(1) – the officer whose signature shall authenticate any notice, order of other document which the Council is required or authorised to issue by or under any enactment.</p>	<p>Head of Legal Partnership</p> <p>Head of Legal Services</p>	<p>All other authorised legal officers exercising delegated powers</p> <p>All other authorised legal officers exercising delegated powers</p>
<p>(10) Any reference in any enactment passed before or during the 1971/72 Session of Parliament, other than the Local Government Act 1972 or in any instrument made before 26 October 1972 to the Public Health Inspector.</p>	<p>Mid-Kent Environmental Services Manager</p>	<p>Food and Safety Team Leader</p>
<p>(11) The officer responsible for the convening of newly created Parish Councils.</p>	<p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>Electoral Services Manager</p>
<p>(12) To be the Proper Officer for receipt of the Record of Officer Decisions required by The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014.</p>	<p>Monitoring Officer</p>	<p>Deputy Monitoring Officer</p>

Function	Proper Officer	Person to act in the event of the Proper officer being absent or otherwise unable to act
<u>PART I PUBLIC HEALTH ENACTMENTS</u> (13) <u>Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984</u>	Consultant in Health Protection Kent Health Protection Unit Clinical Director of the Kent Health Protection Unit Clinical Director of the Kent Health Protection Unit Clinical Director of the Kent Health Protection Unit Clinical Director of the Kent Health Protection Unit	Mid-Kent Environmental Services Manager Mid-Kent Environmental Services Manager Mid-Kent Environmental Services Manager Mid-Kent Environmental Services Manager Mid-Kent Environmental Services Manager

Function	Proper Officer	Person to act in the event of the Proper officer being absent or otherwise unable to act
(13) Continued	Clinical Director of the Kent Health Protection Unit	Mid-Kent Environmental Services Manager
	Clinical Director of the Kent Health Protection Unit	Mid-Kent Environmental Services Manager
	Clinical Director of the Kent Health Protection Unit	Mid-Kent Environmental Services Manager
	Clinical Director of the Kent Health Protection Unit	Mid-Kent Environmental Services Manager
	Clinical Director of the Kent Health Protection Unit	Mid-Kent Environmental Services Manager
	Clinical Director of the Kent Health Protection Unit	Mid-Kent Environmental Services Manager
	Clinical Director of the Kent Health Protection Unit	Mid-Kent Environmental Services Manager

Function	Proper Officer	Person to act in the event of the Proper officer being absent or otherwise unable to act
<p>(13) Continued</p> <p>Section 48 - Removal of dead body to mortuary for burial.</p> <p>Section 58 - Authentication of documents.</p> <p>Section 60 - Service of notices and other documents.</p>	<p>Clinical Director of the Kent Health Protection Unit</p> <p>Clinical Director of the Kent Health Protection Unit</p> <p>Clinical Director of the Kent Health Protection Unit</p> <p>Clinical Director of the Kent Health Protection Unit</p> <p>Clinical Director of the Kent Health Protection Unit</p> <p>Clinical Director of the Kent Health Protection Unit</p> <p>Clinical Director of the Kent Health Protection Unit</p>	<p>Mid-Kent Environmental Services Manager</p> <p>Mid-Kent Environmental Services Manager</p> <p>Mid-Kent Environmental Services Manager</p> <p>Mid-Kent Environmental Services Manager</p> <p>Mid-Kent Environmental Services Manager</p> <p>Mid-Kent Environmental Services Manager</p> <p>Mid-Kent Environmental Services Manager</p>

Function	Proper Officer	Person to act in the event of the Proper officer being absent or otherwise unable to act
<u>PART II STATUTORY INSTRUMENT</u>		
<u>Health Protection (Notification) Regulations 2010</u> Regulation 6 – Duty on the relevant local authority to disclose notification to others	Clinical Director of the Kent Health Protection Unit	Mid-Kent Environmental Services Manager
	Clinical Director of the Kent Health Protection Unit	Mid-Kent Environmental Services Manager
	Clinical Director of the Kent Health Protection Unit	Mid-Kent Environmental Services Manager
	Clinical Director of the Kent Health Protection Unit	Mid-Kent Environmental Services Manager
	Clinical Director of the Kent Health Protection Unit	Mid-Kent Environmental Services Manager
	Clinical Director of the Kent Health Protection Unit	Mid-Kent Environmental Services Manager
<i>Swale Borough Council Constitution Part 2.7 The Proper Officer Provisions</i>		

*Swale Borough Council Constitution
Part 2.7 The Proper Officer Provisions*

April 2023 (job title update)

Function	Proper Officer	Person to act in the event of the Proper officer being absent or otherwise unable to act
Public Health (Aircraft) Regulations 1979 No. 1434).	Clinical Director of the Kent Health Protection Unit	Mid-Kent Environmental Services Manager
Public Health (Ships) Regulations 1979 (SI 1979 No. 1435).	Clinical Director of the Kent Health Protection Unit	Mid-Kent Environmental Services Manager
	Clinical Director of the Kent Health Protection Unit	Mid-Kent Environmental Services Manager
	Clinical Director of the Kent Health Protection Unit	Mid-Kent Environmental Services Manager
<u>PART III OTHER ENACTMENTS</u> <u>National Assistance Act 1948</u> Section 47 - The removal to suitable premises of persons in need of care and attention subject to the “Medical Officer of Health” certifying in writing that “he is satisfied..... it is necessary to remove any such persons.....”	Food and Safety Team Leader	Mid-Kent Environmental Services Manager

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PART 2.8 – SCHEME OF OFFICER DELEGATIONS

2.8.1 INTRODUCTION

- 2.8.1.1 This scheme has been adopted by Swale Borough Council and is the list of delegations to officers under Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and all other powers enabling delegations to officers.
- 2.8.1.2 The delegations which follow are subject to the responsibility of the Chief Executive to ensure the efficient management and execution of the Council's functions and implementation of its policies. The purpose of the delegations is to lead to a streamlining of the processes of the Council.
- 2.8.1.3 Any reference to any Act of Parliament shall include references to regulations, subordinate legislation and European Union legislation upon which either UK legislation is based, or from which powers, duties and functions of the Council are derived.
- 2.8.1.4 Reference to any enactment, regulation, order or byelaw shall include any amendment, re-enactment or re-making of the same.
- 2.8.1.5 Any post referred to below shall be deemed to include any successor post or a post which includes within the job description elements relevant to any particular delegation, which were also present in the earlier post and shall include anyone acting up, seconded, or employed on an interim basis.
- 2.8.1.6 The exercise of any delegated power is subject to:-
- The overriding requirement to ensure that the financial effect of the delegation will fall within an approved budget;
 - The Council's policies including the Budget and Policy framework, the Procedure Rules, Protocols and Codes in this Constitution;
 - Any statutory restrictions; and
 - The right of Council or any Committee to decide on any matter in a particular case.
- 2.8.1.7 In streamlining, wherever possible the scheme of delegation, reference is made only where appropriate to the policies under which the delegation is being exercised. There is an overriding requirement that all delegations are agreed with the law and the Council's policies.

- 2.8.1.8 Before deciding whether to exercise the delegation the officer concerned should ensure that the Director and/or Heads of Service have considered whether the matter is of a controversial nature, or involving significant changes in policy, to require consultation upon, with the relevant Committee Chair and recorded or agreement reached to report to the Council and/or a Committee as appropriate.
- 2.8.1.9 Officers shall also undertake all the operational duties within the remit of their team or service and all necessary powers to do this are therefore deemed to be delegated to the relevant Director or Head of Service or Officer who has responsibility for the discharge of the function.
- 2.8.1.10 So far as the delegations relate to powers which arise by virtue of agency agreements, they are subject also to any qualifications contained in the respective agreements.
- 2.8.1.11 Except where specific provision is made by legislation or by resolution of the Council, the Heads of Service are appointed to be the proper officers in respect of any legislation falling within the scope of their respective services.
- 2.8.1.12 The Director and all Heads of Service shall designate an appropriate responsible officer to deputise during their absence or indisposition.
- 2.8.1.13 The delegated powers held by an officer may be exercised by the line manager of that officer. Any officer with a delegation in this scheme of delegations may authorise other responsible officers who have the relevant skills and knowledge to act on their behalf. A written record of such onward delegations will be kept, identifying the post to whom the delegation is given, the precise delegation(s) involved, and any conditions to which the onward delegation is subject.
- 2.8.1.14 Where the Council, a Committee or Sub-Committee has delegated a function to an officer, the person or body making the delegation may at any time resume responsibility for the function either in respect of a particular matter or generally, and so may exercise the function despite the delegation.

2.8.2 Conflicts of Interest

- 2.8.2.1 Every officer is responsible for identifying whether they have any conflict of interest, actual or perceived, in any matter on which it would otherwise fall to them to make a decision, and for notifying the authority of this (including under s117 of the Local Government Act 1972).
- 2.8.2.2 Where any officer is unable to act on a matter because of a conflict of interest, that officer's line managers up to and including the Chief Executive may discharge the matter or arrange for another officer to discharge the matter.

- 2.8.2.3 Where the Chief Executive is unable to act on a matter because of a conflict of interest, the Chief Executive will arrange for another officer to discharge the matter.
- 2.8.2.4 Where the Monitoring Officer is unable to act on a matter in their statutory capacity under s5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the matter shall be discharged by the Deputy Monitoring Officer.
- 2.8.2.5 Where the Monitoring Officer is unable to act on a matter under the Localism Act 2011 in relation to Member conduct, the matter shall be discharged by the person appointed by the Monitoring Officer for this purpose.

2.8.3 INDEX

Delegations	Page No.
Delegations to the Chief Executive	38
Delegations to Directors	41
Delegations to Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods	42
Delegations to the Director of Resources	42
Delegations to the Monitoring Officer	46
Delegations to the Data Protection Officer	46
Delegations that apply to all Heads of Services	46
Delegations to the Head of Finance and Procurement	47
Delegations to the Head of Legal Partnership	47
Delegations to the Head of Environment and Leisure	49
Delegations to the Head of Planning Services	55
Delegations to the Head of Human Resources Partnership	58
Delegations to the Head of Audit Partnership	59
Delegations to the Head of Housing and Community Services	60

Delegations to the Head of Regeneration & Economic Development	64
--	----

Delegations to the Mid-Kent Environmental Services Manager	66
--	----

2.8.4 DELEGATIONS TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

General

- 2.8.4.1 To be and to carry out the duties of Head of Paid Service and to exercise authority over all other officers of the Council so far as is necessary for the efficient management of the Council's functions.
- 2.8.4.2 All appointments, discipline and dismissals of staff at and below Head of Service level are delegated to the Chief Executive (for Heads of Service appointments, a joint Member officer consultation panel will be constituted, the membership of which will be agreed between the Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee and the Chief Executive).
- 2.8.4.3 To exercise the power to appoint a person in respect of disciplinary investigations or proceedings in respect of statutory officers. This delegation is to be exercised in consultation with the Chair of Policy and Resources Committee and in accordance with Part 4.8 of the Constitution.
- 2.8.4.4 To nominate a deputy who may exercise the Chief Executive's powers in the absence or incapacity of the Chief Executive.
- 2.8.4.5 To exercise any of the powers delegated to any other officer, including the Director.
- 2.8.4.6 To bring forward proposals for restructuring of the Council where it may be required or thought to be desirable to ensure that the Council has advice on the establishment and structure needed to carry out efficiently the work of the Council. This includes undertaking any statutory consultation or other consultation.
- 2.8.4.7 To be responsible for Health and Safety and Welfare.
- 2.8.4.8 To be responsible for Security.
- 2.8.4.9 To liaise with national and local associations, authorities, groups, companies, organisations and individuals to further the policies and objectives of the Council.

- 2.8.4.10 To be responsible for undertaking negotiations and consultation with staff through their trade unions on all matters relating to employment.
- 2.8.4.11 To submit responses to government and other bodies, consulting on changes to legislation and policy, as considered appropriate, following consultation with the Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee.

Emergency Measures – in exercising these delegations the Chief Executive will ensure that the Leader is informed in accordance with the Council’s Emergency Plan.

- 2.8.4.12 In emergencies or any other circumstance which makes it impractical for the Council or a Committee to meet, to take any decision which could be taken by the Council or a Committee (save for any decision expressly reserved to Full Council under Statutory or Regulatory provisions), having regard as fully as possible to the views of the Members who would otherwise have made the decision.
- 2.8.4.13 To be authorised in response to a serious emergency/disaster within the Borough, and on the border of the Borough, to commit staff and resources until such time as the Emergency Committee can meet.
- 2.8.4.14 To discharge the Council’s duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.
- 2.8.4.15 Authority to take any urgent action between meetings in consultation with the Leader or Deputy Leader of the Council, on matters which are outside the scope of powers expressly delegated to the Director or any Head of Service.

Crime and Disorder

- 2.8.4.16 To consult with other agencies and with the Chair of the Community Safety Partnership and Ward Members and to take such action as may be necessary to secure the proper implementation of Orders under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, or any amendment or re-enactment thereof.
- 2.8.4.17 To authorise officers to apply for judicial approval and to undertake surveillance under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000, including exceptional cases where it is likely that knowledge of confidential information will be acquired or where a vulnerable or juvenile Covert Human Intelligent Source is to be used.

Complaints

- 2.8.4.18 To deal transparently with issues relating to the Commission for Local Administration (Complaints to the Local Government Ombudsman) in consultation with the relevant committee Chair or Leader.

2.8.4.19 To make maladministration payments in consultation with the Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee up to £2,000.

Elections

2.8.4.20 To be the Electoral Registration Officer.

2.8.4.21 To be the Returning Officer.

2.8.4.22 To discharge the Council's functions regarding Parliamentary, Local Government (Kent County Council, Borough Council and Parish/Town Council) Elections and Referendum.

2.8.4.23 To make an order, under Section 91 of the Local Government Act 1972, to appoint temporary members to Parish Councils.

Corporate Strategy and Communications

2.8.4.24 To produce and publish publicity and information material.

2.8.4.25 To manage and co-ordinate press and media relations.

2.8.4.26 To issue press statements following discussion with the relevant Committee Chair, and where appropriate other involved Members.

2.8.4.27 To co-ordinate consultation on behalf of the Council.

Miscellaneous

2.8.4.28 To take preliminary steps to protect the rights and interests of the Council relating to any White Paper, Bill or Statutory Instrument or Order in Parliament.

2.8.4.29 Authority to reallocate the delegations to the Director/Heads of Service as and when required.

2.8.4.30 To determine arrangements for civic hospitality and transport in consultation with the Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee.

2.8.4.31 To administer the approved Members' Allowances Scheme.

2.8.4.32 To be the "Proper Officer" for the functions designated to the Proper Officer under the Local Government Act 1972; Representation of the People Act 1983; Local Elections (Parishes and Communities) Rules 1986; Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

2.8.4.33 To report to Council on any requests to approve extended absence of Councillors from any meetings, and the declaration of vacancies of any seats of the Council.

2.8.4.34 To record, hold and administer civic gifts.

2.8.4.35 To be the Petitions Officer.

2.8.4.36 To receive requests for Call for Action and to place items on the Appropriate Committee.

2.8.4.37 To authorise approval of conference attendance for Members appointed to outside bodies, or in connection with their Council responsibilities, in consultation with the Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee.

2.8.5 DELEGATIONS TO DIRECTORS

2.8.5.1 To award contracts for the winning tender in accordance with Contract Standing Orders.

2.8.5.2 In consultation with the relevant Committee Chair, to authorise waivers to competitive tendering process for the amounts not exceeding the limit set out in Contract Standing Orders.

2.8.5.3 In consultation with the relevant Committee Chair, to authorise the extension of contracts for amounts not exceeding the limit set out in Contract Standing Orders.

2.8.5.4 To appoint staff within the approved establishment. The Chief Executive has delegated authority to Directors for all appointments, discipline and dismissal of staff below Heads of Service within their Directorate.

2.8.5.5 To authorise Occasional or Regular Car User Allowances in accordance with the Council's Conditions of Service.

2.8.5.6 To determine requests for honoraria within their directorate in accordance with the Council's HR policies.

2.8.6 DELEGATIONS TO THE DIRECTOR REGENERATION AND NEIGHBOURHOODS

- 2.8.6.1 Authority to write-off any irrecoverable debt not delegated to the Chief Financial Officer and Head of Environment and Leisure in accordance with the financial regulations.
- 2.8.6.2 To donate or write-off surplus goods or equipment which are not economically viable to sell.
- 2.8.6.3 On receipt of a detailed report from the relevant Head of Service to approve virement on the approved budget of a cost centre, subject to the limitations outlined in the Financial Regulations.
- 2.8.6.4 To issue requisitions for information under Section 16 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.
- 2.8.6.5 To provide management and administration of grant schemes and payments, including the signing and sealing of grant agreements, in accordance with the Council's policy framework and/or the requirements of the funding body.

Customer Services

- 2.8.6.6 To provide the frontline service for all residents contacting the Council using varying methods of communication and multiple locations.
- 2.8.6.7 The development of the Council's Customer Charter, Complaints Strategy and procedures.

Miscellaneous

- 2.8.6.8 To authorise officers to apply for judicial approval and to undertake surveillance under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 including cases, in the absence of the Chief Executive, where it is likely that knowledge of confidential information will be acquired or where a vulnerable or juvenile Covert Human Intelligence Source is to be used.
- 2.8.6.9 To give consent to the exercise by the Police of powers to disperse groups of young persons under Part 5 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003.

2.8.7 DELEGATIONS TO THE DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

- 2.8.7.1 On designation by the Council, to be the Chief Financial Officer and be responsible for the administration of the financial affairs of the Council under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended); to exercise the

duties of the Chief Financial Officer under Section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988; and to discharge functions under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011.

- 2.8.7.2 To deal with matters specified by Financial Regulations.
- 2.8.7.3 Negotiate with the external auditor on the level and type of audit resources required to carry out the statutory and management audit requirements of the Council.
- 2.8.7.4 To write-off any irrecoverable debt in accordance with the Financial Regulations, and the information to be kept in a register.
- 2.8.7.5 To estimate any collection fund surplus or deficit and to subsequently notify the major precepting authority.
- 2.8.7.6 To make loans to officers for car purchase and to keep a register of these loans.
- 2.8.7.7 To enter into leasing agreements to lease non-property assets for use by the Council as approved by the Capital Programme or Policy and Resources Committee.
- 2.8.7.8 To arrange and review insurance in accordance with the Council's Policy.
- 2.8.7.9 To raise loans and make investments as and when required.
- 2.8.7.10 To manage the Council's treasury management activities in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Practice for Treasury management and CLG Guidelines.
- 2.8.7.11 To authorise financial leases in accordance with approved capital financing arrangements.
- 2.8.7.12 To make arrangements for the collection of income due to the Council.
- 2.8.7.13 To sign all necessary claim forms in respect of any grants or other funds payable to the Council.
- 2.8.7.14 To set the Council Tax and Business Rate Base.
- 2.8.7.15 To publish in a local newspaper, within 21 days, notice of the amount of Council Tax set by the authority in accordance with Section 38 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

- 2.8.7.16 To exercise responsibility for the accounting arrangements for the operation of the collection fund in connection with the administration of Council Tax and Non- Domestic Rate.
- 2.8.7.17 To authorise Statutory Returns in connection with Council Tax and Council Tax Benefit, Non-Domestic Rate and Discretionary Housing Payments.
- 2.8.7.18 To authorise statutory subsidy calculations and returns in connection with the administration of Housing Benefit.
- 2.8.7.19 To determine and declare local average interest rates in accordance with legislation and the interest rate for loans to housing associations.
- 2.8.7.20 To issue, renew or repay temporary loans.
- 2.8.7.21 To administer matters in respect of mortgages granted by the Council.
- 2.8.7.22 To a uthorise the premature repayment of mortgages issued by the Council.
- 2.8.7.23 To provide financial services either on an agency basis or where required by statute.
- 2.8.7.24 To a uthorise persons to act for the Council at company and creditor meetings.
- 2.8.7.25 Where appropriate to elect for VAT status on particular land or property.
- 2.8.7.26 To determine the most appropriate source of funding for the capital programme each year in order to minimise borrowing costs.

Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates

- 2.8.7.27 To exercise all of the Council's powers and duties to bill, administer and collect the Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates.
- 2.8.7.28 Pursuant to Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972, to issue enforcement proceedings including making complaints on behalf of the Swale Borough Council in the Magistrates Court under the following Regulations:-
- The Community Charges (Administration and Enforcement) Regulations 1989;
 - The Community Charges (Administration and Enforcement) (Amendment) Regulations 1989;

- Community Charges (Co-Owners) Regulations 1990 (as amended);
- Non-Domestic Rating (Collection and Enforcement) (Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 1990 (as amended);
- Non-Domestic Rating Collection and Enforcement) (Local Lists) Regulations 1989 (as amended);
- Any other further regulations issued by the Secretary of State under the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (Schedule 9);
- The Council Tax (Administration & Enforcement) Regulations 1992 (as amended); and
- Any further regulations issued by the Secretary of State under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (Schedule 4).

2.8.7.29 To write-off any irrecoverable debt in respect of Council Tax, Non-Domestic Rates and Housing Benefit Overpayments in accordance with the Financial regulations and the information to be kept in a register.

2.8.7.30 To appear on behalf of the Council at a Valuation Tribunal.

2.8.7.31 To consider applications for non-domestic rate relief from charitable and other organisations pursuant to Sections 43 and 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

2.8.7.32 To consider applications for the reduction and remission of rates pursuant to Section 49 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

2.8.7.33 To write-off any irrecoverable debt in the case of council tax, business rates or housing benefit overpayments in accordance with the Financial Regulations, and the information to be kept in a register.

Housing and Council Tax Benefit

2.8.7.34 To exercise all of the Council's powers and responsibilities for Housing and Council Tax Benefits, including the payment of benefits and the determination of discretionary payments.

2.8.7.35 To administer rent rebates for Local Authority tenants and rent allowances for Private/Housing pursuant to Section 134 of the Social Security Administration Act 1992 (as amended).

2.8.8. DELEGATIONS TO THE MONITORING OFFICER

- 2.8.8.1 To be and to carry out the duties of the Monitoring Officer in accordance with Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the Local Government Act 2000 and any other enactments and the Council's constitution, and to nominate a member of staff to deputise as Monitoring Officer.
- 2.8.8.2 To maintain a record of notices of disclosable pecuniary interests and disclosable non-pecuniary interests by any Councillor and personal and prejudicial and personal and non-prejudicial interests by any officer and to maintain the register of Councillors interests and declarations.
- 2.8.8.3 To maintain the record of officer delegations.
- 2.8.8.4 To make any necessary updates to the Constitution (as required by law) where there is no discretion in consultation with the Leader of the Council.
- 2.8.5.5 To deal with all complaints under the Members' Code of Conduct.
- 2.8.5.6 To publish and maintain the Council's Constitution with authority to make minor textual changes and amendments to Officer Delegations to take account of changes in legislation in consultation with the Leader of the Council.
- 2.8.8.7 To put in place appropriate arrangements to record relevant Officer Decisions required under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014.

2.8.9 DELEGATIONS TO THE DATA PROTECTION OFFICER

- 2.8.9.1 To be responsible for decisions relating to Data Protection and Freedom of Information law.
- 2.8.9.2 To implement the provisions of Environmental Information Regulations 1995 and be responsible for decisions made under the Regulations.

2.8.10 DELEGATIONS TO HEADS OF SERVICE

- 2.8.10.1 Authority to approve staffing structures within existing budgets. The Directors have delegated authority to Heads of Service for all appointments, discipline and dismissal of staff within their teams.
- 2.8.10.2 Authorisation to approve the payment of overtime to members of staff in accordance with the Council's Conditions of Service or the appropriate negotiated conditions within their department.

2.8.10.3 To sign any document needed to implement a decision by, or in the name of, the Council that is within the scope of the powers delegated to them.

2.8.10.4 Authority to authorise staff to enter land or premises.

2.8.10.5. To serve statutory notices and arrange for works in default.

2.8.10.6 Authority to spend in accordance with the financial regulations. This includes authority to award contracts that are within the approved budget for the current financial year, having gone through the tendering procedures as set out in contract standing orders. (Relevant Committee Chair to be kept informed of any waivers granted).

2.8.10.7 Authority to implement new and existing legislation.

2.8.10.8 To respond to consultations on behalf of the Council in consultation with the relevant Committee Chair where appropriate.

2.8.11 DELEGATIONS TO THE HEAD OF FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT

2.8.11.1 To develop the key Commissioning and Procurement Strategies, Plans and Procedures for officers to follow.

2.8.11.2 To monitor and make suggested changes to the Contract Standing Orders document in order to comply with legislation.

2.8.11.3 To agree waivers in accordance with Contract Standing Orders.

2.8.11.4 To agree to the extension or termination of contracts within the parameters set out in Contract Standing Orders.

2.8.11.5 To monitor and record expressions of interest for the Community Right to Challenge as per the Localism Act 2011 and The Community Right to Challenge (Expressions of Interest and Excluded Services) (England) Regulations 2012.

2.8.12 DELEGATIONS TO THE HEAD OF LEGAL PARTNERSHIP

These delegations are subject to the Law Society practice procedures and requirements of the Solicitors Regulation Authority.

General

2.8.12.1 Authority to sign, or, where necessary, seal, any document needed to implement a decision taken by, or in the name of, the Council, and to authorise other officers to do so and to keep a record.

- 2.8.12.2 To act as Solicitor to the Council and carry out all related work on behalf of the Council.
- 2.8.12.3 To institute, conduct, prosecute and defend any legal proceedings on behalf of the Council, including cases where the Council considers it expedient for the protection or the promotion of the interests of the inhabitants of the Council's area.
- 2.8.12.4 On instruction from client departments to settle, if appropriate, and in the interests of the Council any actual or threatened legal proceedings, and in consultation where necessary with the relevant statutory officers. If the action is not required to give effect to a decision or policy of Council the Head of Legal Partnership will consult with the Chair of Policy and Resources or Vice-Chair in their absence.
- 2.8.12.5 To ensure with regard to 3 and 4 above that the early involvement of the Council's External Auditor be sought where appropriate in cases of an unusual and significant nature, and that an information report be presented thereafter at the earliest opportunity to the Policy and Resources Committee.
- 2.8.12.6 To instruct Counsel and professional advisors as appropriate and in accordance with the agreed procedures of the Mid-Kent Legal Services Partnership.
- 2.8.12.7. To give legal undertakings and indemnities on behalf of the Council and to keep a register.
- 2.8.12.8 Under Section 223 of the Local Government Act 1972 to authorise officers who are not admitted solicitors to appear in Magistrates' Courts on behalf of the Council.
- 2.8.12.9 To determine procedural arrangements for the issue of all consents, refusals, decisions and notices on behalf of the Council.
- 2.8.12.10 To accept on behalf of the Council the service of notices, orders and legal procedures.

Land and Property

- 2.8.12.11 To dispose of any land or any interest in land in accordance with the law, following appropriate Member approval.
- 2.8.12.12 To acquire properties which the Council is under a legal obligation to acquire under planning legislation, following Member approval.
- 2.8.12.13 To complete all property transactions and contractual arrangements.

- 2.8.12.14 To make and carry out the statutory notifications and advertisement procedure in relation to Footpath Orders, in accordance with S257 of the Town and Country Planning Act, and where there are no objections, or any objections made are withdrawn, to confirm the Order.

Miscellaneous

- 2.8.12.15 To maintain a central record of Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) applications and authorisations in-line with RIPA Orders and Codes of Practice.

2.8.14 DELEGATIONS TO THE HEAD OF ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE SERVICES

Waste Collection and Disposal

- 2.8.14.1 To exercise powers in relation to refuse collection, street cleansing, public conveniences, recycling and minor works.
- 2.8.14.2 To levy charges regarding the collection and disposal of waste other than household waste, and for the provision of bins and sacks.
- 2.8.14.3 To implement and enforce the provisions of Part II and Schedule 4 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.
- 2.8.14.4 To implement and enforce the provisions of the Public Health Act 1961 regarding the accumulations of rubbish.

Seafront and Harbour

- 2.8.14.5 To manage and maintain seafront facilities.
- 2.8.14.6 To commission and monitor the beach lifeguarding service.
- 2.8.14.7 To grant and renew licences and leases for beach huts.
- 2.8.14.8 To undertake responsibility for the effects of oil pollution on the coast line.
- 2.8.14.9 To work with the key authorities on coastal risk management and flood planning.

Leisure and Green Spaces

- 2.8.14.10 To manage, maintain and control (including temporary or permanent closure of) parks, open spaces, country parks, equipped play areas and outdoor sports facilities.

- 2.8.14.11 To prepare the key strategic documents and plans for sport, leisure and open spaces to support the Local Plan process.
- 2.8.14.12 To let parks and open spaces for sporting and recreation facilities including fairs, exhibitions and displays subject to suitability.
- 2.8.14.13 To grant and to renew licences for fitness and leisure coaches and instructors using Council land.
- 2.8.14.14 To be responsible for the development and provision of indoor leisure facilities including the leisure centre contract.
- 2.8.14.15 To make arrangements for the provision and advertising of leisure services and events.
- 2.8.14.16 To deal with petitions in relation to ball games on open spaces in consultation with Ward Members.

Cemeteries and Closed Churchyards

- 2.8.14.17 To manage and maintain Council owned cemeteries and to maintain “closed churchyards” under Section 18 of the Burial Act 1855 and Section 215 of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 2.8.14.18 To exercise powers in relation to the granting of rights of burial, rights to erect memorials and maintenance of graves pursuant to the Local Government Act 1972, Public Health Act 1936 and Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977.
- 2.8.14.19 To grant reductions in burial fees and charges, on a case-by-case basis, where the Council has admitted fault in a service or burial.

Parking and Highways Management

- 2.8.14.20 To manage, maintain and control off-street parking and to make necessary amendments to the Off-Street Parking Order.
- 2.8.14.21 To manage on-street parking enforcement in accordance with the Road Traffic (Permitted Parking and Special Parking Area) (County of Kent) (Borough of Swale) Order 1999.
- 2.8.14.22 To agree to the temporary use of car parks for other activities and to temporarily suspend on and off-street parking bays.
- 2.8.14.23 To enforce the provisions of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978 regarding the removal of vehicles and any other offence.

2.8.14.24 To enforce the provisions of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 in relation to fixed penalty notices for nuisance parking offences.

2.8.14.25 To exercise the Council's powers to provide and maintain footway Lighting systems and street naming and numbering.

2.8.14.26 To exercise the power to provide and maintain bus shelters and to give consent to Parish Councils for the erection of seats and shelters.

2.8.14.27 In conjunction with the Head of Legal Partnership to make Orders for the closure of highways for a period of 24 hours or less for special purposes under Section 21 of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 and Road Traffic Act 1984.

Allotments

2.8.14.28 To administer allotments and the discharge of related statutory functions.

Contract Management

2.8.14.29 To lead on contract management within the authority, including monitoring of the Council's major contracts – waste and recycling, street cleansing, public conveniences, leisure centres and grounds maintenance.

2.8.14.30 To issue defaults and rectification notices to contractors who do not meet the terms of service.

Climate and Ecological Emergency

2.8.14.31 To manage green infrastructure projects and promote biodiversity.

Environmental Services

2.8.14.32 To discharge the Council's responsibilities with regard to statutory nuisances.

2.8.14.33 To enforce the provisions of the following Acts in relation to the welfare of animals:

- Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976;
- Zoo Licensing Act 1981;
- Animal Welfare Act 2006;

- The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals (England) Regulations 2018;
- Dogs Act 1871, 1906 and Dangerous Dogs Act 1991;
- Dog Control Orders (Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act) 2005;
- Breeding and Sale of Dogs (Welfare) Act 1999;
- Section 11(2) of The Microchipping of Dogs (England) Regulations 2015

2.8.14.34 To enforce the provisions of the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949.

2.8.14.35 To implement and enforce the provisions of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

2.8.14.36 To implement and enforce the Environment Act 1995.

2.8.14.37 To enforce the provisions of the Clean Air Act 1993.

2.8.14.38 To enforce the provisions of the Control of Pollution Act 1974.

2.8.14.39 To implement and enforce the provisions of the Noise and Statutory Nuisance Act 1993.

2.8.14.40 To implement and enforce the provisions of Part 6 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003.

2.8.14.41 To enforce the provisions of the Noise Act 1996.

2.8.14.42 To implement and enforce the provisions of the Criminal Damage Act 1971, the Antisocial Behaviour Act 2003, Part IV of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in relation to graffiti, littering and fly posting.

2.8.14.43 To implement and enforce the provisions of the Clean Neighbourhood Act 2005.

2.8.14.44 To enforce the provisions of the Control of Pollution Amendment Act 1989 and the Environmental Protection (Duty of Care) Regulations 1991 regarding transport of waste.

2.8.14.45 To implement and enforce the provisions of the Environmental

Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2007.

- 2.8.14.46 To implement and enforce the provisions of Part II and Schedule 4 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.
- 2.8.14.47 To enforce the provisions of the Health Act 2006 relating to smoke-free offences.
- 2.8.14.48 To enforce the provisions of The County of Kent Act 1981.
- 2.8.14.49 To implement and enforce the provisions of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 and 1982.
- 2.8.14.50 To administer the Waste to Land (Use in Agriculture) Regulations 1989.
- 2.8.14.51 To enforce the provisions of Sections 3-6 of the Refuse Disposal Amenity Act 1978, Part VIII of the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984 and The Removal and Disposal of Vehicles (England) (Amended) Regulations 2002.
- 2.8.14.52 To implement and enforce the provisions of Sections 235-238 of Part XI of the Local Government Act 1972 in relation to the enforcement of Byelaws.
- 2.8.14.53 To implement and enforce the provisions of Parts 1, 2, 4, 6, 7 and Part 11, Sections 154 only, of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.
- 2.8.14.54 To implement and enforce the provisions of the Littering From Vehicles Outside London (Keepers: Civil Penalties) Regulations 2018.
- 2.8.14.55 To implement and enforce the provisions of the Control of Waste (Dealing with seized property) (England & Wales) Regulations 2015.
- 2.8.14.56 To appoint suitably qualified inspectors under Part 2 of The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018.
- 2.8.14.57 To inspect any premises on which a licensable activity or any part of it is being or is to be carried on under Part 2 of The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018, and following that inspection, grant a licence to the operator, or renew the operator's licence.
- 2.8.14.58 To implement and enforce the provisions of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016.
- 2.8.14.59 To authorise officers to apply for judicial approval and to undertake

surveillance under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000, excluding cases where it is likely that knowledge of confidential information

will be acquired or where a vulnerable or juvenile Covert Human Intelligent Source is to be used.

Gypsy Sites and Unlawful Encampments

2.8.14.60 To monitor the number of gypsies/land travellers, legally and illegally encamped within the Borough and to maintain a continuing dialogue with the Kent County Council over gypsy site provision.

2.8.14.61 To issue Notices in relation to the removal of unauthorised encampments on the highway under the Highways Act 1980 and from Council owned land under the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994.

Miscellaneous

2.8.14.62 In conjunction with the Head of Legal Partnership, to serve Notices under Section 23 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 in relation to dangerous trees.

2.8.14.63 To implement and enforce the provisions of the Land Drainage Act 1991.

2.8.14.64 To enforce the provisions of the Sunday Trading Act 1994 and to enforce any breaches of street trading under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982.

2.8.14.65 To exercise the Council's power to secure unoccupied buildings under the provisions of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982.

2.8.14.66 To provide management and administration of grant schemes and payments, including the signing and sealing of grant agreements, in accordance with the Council's policy framework and/or the requirements of the funding body.

Anti-idling Legislation

2.8.14.67 To authorise relevant officers or persons to stop the commission of stationary idling offences and issue fixed penalty notices (FPNs) in respect of such offences, in accordance with Regulation 6(3) of the 2002 Regulations.

2.8.15 DELEGATIONS TO THE HEAD OF PLANNING SERVICES

Development Management

2.8.15.1 To determine applications, negotiate and enter into Section 106 Agreements, to agree minor variations to planning obligations, to respond to prior notifications, and to make observations on behalf of the Borough Council in

accordance with the provisions of the appropriate Development Plan or other adopted Borough Council Planning Policy Guidance.

2.8.15.2 The delegated powers in paragraph 2.18.15.1 above shall not be exercised in the following circumstances:

(a) Any planning applications submitted by a member of the Council or Members of staff and for Council development (whether involving Council owned land or not) or on Council-owned land.

(b) Applications where the decision of the Head of Planning would conflict with (a) reason(s) set out in any written representation received during the statutory consultation period (as specified within the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order (2015) or any superseding legislation, or within an extension of time period agreed by officers, such consent not to be unreasonably withheld or delayed, from:

- (i) Any Member of the Borough Council;
- (ii) A statutory consultee;
- (iii) A Parish or Town Council where it is clearly stated that the Parish or Town Council would like the application to be decided by the Planning Committee in the event that the officer's recommendation conflicts with the Parish or Town Council view.

Provided that any such representations from (ii) or (iii) above are, in the opinion of the Head of Planning, based upon relevant planning considerations.

(c) Applications where the decision of the Head of Planning would conflict with letters of representations, or petitions, from at least three separate addresses received within the specified representation period from persons or bodies (other than those set out in (a) above) provided that any such representations are, in the opinion of the Head of Planning, based upon relevant planning considerations and relevant Ward Member requests that the application should be reported to the Planning Committee; and

- (d) Applications which the Head of Planning considers to be in the public interest, such as those which would meet the standard triggers for Environmental Impact Assessment submission or raise difficult questions of policy interpretation.

Where the head of planning determines that a representation from (iii) above is not based on relevant planning considerations, they will write to the town or parish council to advise them of this, including the relevant ward member(s) in copy.

Where the Head of Planning determines that a representation from (iii) above is based on relevant considerations and the Town or Parish Council has stated that they want the application to be reported to the Planning Committee, the Head of Planning will write to the Town or Parish Council to remind them of their right to send a speaker to the relevant Planning Committee meeting.

- 2.8.15.3 During the appeal process to negotiate and enter into Section 106 Agreements and conditions in accordance with Council Local Plan policies and any pre-appeal discussions with relevant Members.

Trees, Hedgerows and High Hedges

- 2.8.15.4 To respond to notifications under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 of intention to cut down, uproot, top or lop a tree within a Conservation Area or for trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders.

- 2.8.15.5 To determine Felling Licence applications.

- 2.8.15.6 To make and confirm, where there are no objections, Tree Preservation Orders.

- 2.8.15.7 To refuse permission to cut down trees and approvals to lopping, silvicultural thinning of woodlands and routine cutting of coppice woodland not affecting draw trees.

- 2.8.15.8 Authority under Regulation 12 of the Hedgerows Regulations 1997 (as amended) and Section 214B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) to enter onto land.

- 2.8.15.9 To respond to hedgerow notifications.

- 2.8.15.10 Subject to consultation with the Head of Legal Partnership, to service notices relating to dangerous trees, in accordance with Section 23 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

2.8.15.11 To consider and determine the Council's response to formal complaints in relation to high hedges, to issue remedial notices and determine all other matters in relation to high hedges in accordance with Part 8 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003.

Enforcement

2.8.15.12 To authorise, sign and serve all enforcement and other notices under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990; the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) regulations 2007 on behalf of the Council following consultation with all borough Councillors.

2.8.15.13 To authorise the Head of Legal Partnership to take necessary legal proceedings in respect of planning enforcement legislation, including applications for injunction and taking direct action.

Conservation of Historic Environment

2.8.15.14 To authorise, sign and serve all Building Preservation Notices and Urgent Works Notices under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

2.8.15.15 To carry out works where it is considered urgently necessary for the preservation of a listed building.

2.8.15.16 To respond to consultations by Church Authorities under the Ecclesiastical Exemption Regulations.

Miscellaneous

2.8.15.17 To respond to any pre-application or other consultation on nationally significant infrastructure projects submitted or to be submitted to the Major Infrastructure Planning Unit under the Planning Act 2008.

2.8.15.18 To respond to consultations from neighbouring planning authorities including Kent County Council following consultation with the Planning Committee Chair or Vice Chair, and the relevant Ward Member(s).

2.8.15.19 To authorise the Head of Legal Partnership to apply for Judicial Review of decisions made by the Planning Inspectorate in consultation with the Planning Committee Chair or Vice Chair and Ward Member.

2.8.15.20 To exercise powers of entry in accordance with Sections 196A and 324 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and Section 88 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended).

- 2.8.15.21 To determine whether an Environmental Impact Assessment is required, in accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999 (as amended) and to screen and scope such assessments.
- 2.8.15.22 To determine applications for Certificates of Lawful Use or Development.
- 2.8.15.23 To carry out consultations under the procedure set out for minor developments by Government departments.
- 2.8.15.24 To accept non-material amendments to approve schemes including minor amendments to conditions and planning obligations.
- 2.8.15.25 To approve details reserved in conditional permissions (facing materials, landscaping, joinery details etc.).
- 2.8.15.26 To determine whether an application should not be considered in outline.
- 2.8.15.27 To serve notices requiring information regarding disposal of waste pursuant to Section 93 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974.
- 2.8.15.28 To act as “responsible authority” within the meaning of the Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2005.
- 2.8.15.29 To implement the provisions of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.
- 2.8.15.30 To authorise officers to apply for judicial approval and to undertake surveillance under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000, excluding cases where it is likely that confidential information will be acquired.
- 2.8.15.31 To be responsible for the Council’s Building Control function by way of representation at the Joint Committee of the South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership.
- 2.8.15.32 To implement and enforce the provisions of the Antisocial Behaviour Act 2003 in relation to high hedges and miscellaneous powers.
- 2.8.15.33 To exercise responsibility for local land charges.
- 2.8.15.34 To authorize the Head of Legal Partnership to delegate all legal work in exercising all functions relating to public rights of ways (including the creation, stopping-up and diversion of footpaths, bridleways and restricted byways).

2.8.16 DELEGATIONS TO THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES PARTNERSHIP

General

- 2.8.16.1 To operate the Severance Policy with any redundancies or business cases for enhancements being approved by the appropriate Director or Chief Executive, and signed-off by the Chair of Policy and Resources Committee.
- 2.8.16.2 To enter into agreements with trade unions where implementation does not increase expenditure.
- 2.8.16.3 To enter into agreements with staff for the purpose of regulating work time.
- 2.8.16.4 To assimilate staff on appointment, promotion or re-grading.
- 2.8.16.5 To grant removal expenses and lodging allowances in accordance with any scheme approved by the Council.
- 2.8.16.6 To determine requests for provision of temporary accommodation for employees.
- 2.8.16.7 To make changes in accordance with legal requirements and best practice to HR policies and procedures following informal consultation with staff and the agreement of the Chair of Policy and Resources Committee.
- 2.8.16.8 To administer the Council's Pension Discretionary Policy.

Training

- 2.8.16.9 To grant financial assistance for post entry training.
- 2.8.16.10 To determine proposals to attend corporate and service training courses.
- 2.8.16.11 To determine proposals for the retention of fees for trainers.

Payroll

- 2.8.16.12 To implement all negotiated salary or wage awards where no exercise of a discretion is involved.
- 2.8.16.13 To administer staff benefits and expenses and review rates annually.
- 2.8.16.14 To pay salaries, wages, pensions and insurance contributions without reference to Members in accordance with the agreed arrangements.
- 2.8.16.15 To make payments in respect of Members' allowances and expenses under Sections 173 to 178 of the Local Government Act 1972, and to keep a register of such payments.

2.8.17 DELEGATIONS TO THE HEAD OF AUDIT PARTNERSHIP

- 2.8.17.1 To oversee the provision of an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the Council's accounting records and its system of internal control in accordance with the proper practices in relation to internal control as prescribed by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.
- 2.8.17.2 The maintenance of the Council's Comprehensive Risk Register and the provision of advice and guidance on the principles and practices of Risk Management.

2.8.18 DELEGATIONS TO THE HEAD OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Community Services

- 2.8.18.1 To enable community development services across the Borough.
- 2.8.18.2 To provide management and administration of grant schemes and payments, including the signing and sealing of grant agreements, in accordance with the Council's policy framework and/or the requirements of the funding body.
- 2.8.18.3 To manage Community halls and asset transfer projects.
- 2.8.18.4 To manage the CCTV service.
- 2.8.18.5 To deliver services in accordance with statutory and legislative requirements including Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act.
- 2.8.18.6 To manage the Community Safety Unit.
- 2.8.18.7 To implement and enforce the provisions of Parts 1, 2, 4, and 6 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.
- 2.8.18.8 To enable the delivery of sports and physical activities across the Borough.

Housing

- 2.8.18.9 To implement and enforce the provisions of the Housing Act 1985 (as amended) and the Housing Act 2004 in relation to demolition orders, housing conditions, licensing of houses in multiple occupation, and additional control provisions in relation to residential accommodation including overcrowding.

- 2.8.18.10 Power to approve disabled facilities grants in accordance with statutory criteria and authority to allow applicants to start work before grants are approved pursuant to Part I of the Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (as amended).
- 2.8.18.11 To implement the provisions of Article 3 of the Regulatory Reform Act (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 with power to provide housing assistance in accordance with the Council's published policy and grant/loan conditions, and power in consultation with the relevant Committee Chair to recover the grant in total or in part where a house is sold within five years.
- 2.8.18.12 To implement the provisions of Part VI of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended).
- 2.8.18.13 To enter into agreements for the supply for goods and services in connection with grant and financial assistance schemes.
- 2.8.18.14 To promote group repair and renewal schemes.
- 2.8.18.15 To implement Enforced Sale Procedure under the Law of Property Act 1925 including service of notice under Section 103 of the Act.
- 2.8.18.16 To implement and enforce the Redress Schemes for Lettings Agency Work and Property Management Work (Requirement to Belong to a Scheme etc.) (England) Order 2014.
- 2.8.18.17 To implement and enforce the Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020.
- 2.8.18.18 To implement and enforce the Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015 in relation to private sector rented properties.
- 2.8.18.19 To implement and enforce relevant housing provisions of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 or regulations made under the Act.

Homelessness

- 2.8.18.20 To adopt the power given in the Localism Act 2011 to discharge Homelessness Duty into the Private Rented Sector.
- 2.8.18.21 To implement the provisions of Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) in relation to processing and determining all homeless applications.
- 2.8.18.22 To implement the provisions contained in the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 in relation to the prevention and relief of homelessness.

2.8.18.23 To contract out the homelessness review functions under Section 202 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended).

Caravans

2.8.18.24 To implement and enforce the provisions of the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960.

Public Health

2.8.18.25 To implement and enforce the provisions of the Public Health Act 1936 and 1961.

2.8.18.26 To implement and enforce the provisions of the Water Industry Act 1991 in relation to private water supplies.

Buildings

2.8.18.27 To implement and enforce the provisions of the Building Act 1984.

2.8.18.28 To enforce the provisions of Part XI of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982.

2.8.18.29 To implement and enforce the provisions of the Water Act 1989.

Drainage

2.8.18.30 To implement and enforce the provisions of the Land Drainage Act 1991.

2.8.18.31 To enforce the provisions of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

Pests

2.8.18.32 To implement and enforce the provisions of the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949.

Miscellaneous

2.8.18.33 To implement and enforce the provisions of Part III of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

2.8.18.34 To enforce the provisions of The County of Kent Act 1981.

2.8.18.35 To enter into agreements and contracts for the supply of goods and services in connection with the service.

2.8.18.36 To enable the delivery of markets on Council owned sites by working with market cooperatives in the Borough.

2.8.18.37 To authorise officers to apply for judicial approval and to undertake surveillance under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000, excluding cases where it is likely that knowledge of confidential information will be acquired or where a vulnerable or juvenile Covert Human Intelligent Source is to be used.

2.8.18.38 To implement the provisions of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

2.8.18.39 To implement the provisions of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

2.8.18.40 To implement the provisions of the Children's Act 2004.

2.8.18.41 To be responsible for safeguarding.

Licensing

2.8.18.42 To carry out all licensing functions in respect of:

- Street trading in licensed streets pursuant to the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982;
- Premises, club premises, personal licences, provisional statement, Designated Premises Supervisor, Temporary Event Notices in accordance with the Council's Licensing Policy and the Licensing Act 2003;
- Premises, provisional statement, Temporary Use Notices, Game Machine Permits, Lotteries, Prize Gaming Permits, acting as the Responsible Authority and instituting proceedings for non-compliance in accordance with the Council's Gambling Policy and the Gambling Act 2005;
- Street collections pursuant to Section 5 of the Police, Factories etc. (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1916 (as amended);
- House to House collections pursuant to Section 2 of the House to House Collections Act 1939 (as amended);
- Sex establishments pursuant to Schedule 3 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982;

- To act as the “responsible authority” within the meaning of the Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2005;
- To maintain a register of persons carrying out business as a scrap metal dealer pursuant to the provisions of the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 1964 and 2013.
- To exercise all powers under sections 19 – 28 of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001, with all powers of prosecution and court litigation reserved to the Head of Legal Partnership.

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles

2.8.18.43 To undertake all functions regarding Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 and the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

Other

2.8.18.44 To grant and to renew licences for pleasure boats and for pleasure boatmen pursuant to the Public Health Acts Amendment Act 1907 (as amended by the Local Government Act 1974) and to dispose of boats and ancillary equipment abandoned or uncollected on any port or foreshore in the Council's ownership.

2.8.19 DELEGATIONS TO THE HEAD OF REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development and Regeneration

2.8.19.1 To implement key regeneration projects across the Borough.

2.8.19.2 To work in partnership to promote and enable the delivery of learning and skills, economic development (including the visitor economy), arts, heritage, and culture-based projects and services across the Borough.

2.8.19.3 To engage with business and relevant representative organisations to promote and signpost services, and to further the economic development of the Borough.

2.8.19.4 To develop and submit bids for external funding for corporate and service priorities.

2.8.19.5 To provide management and administration of grant schemes and payments, including the signing and sealing of grant agreements, in accordance with the Council's policy framework and/or the requirements of the funding body.

Property Services

- 2.8.19.6 To enter into all 'de-minimis' Agreements, e.g. minor wayleaves, easements, rights of way, temporary occupation of land, tenants-at-will etc.
- 2.8.19.7 To negotiate and agree terms for the modification, variation or release of covenants contained in conveyances and transfers in accordance with the Property Asset Strategy and Property Procedure Rules, the Community Asset Transfer Policy and Disposals Policy, and any other related or successor Strategies and Policies.
- 2.8.19.8 To deal with Blight Notices (ensuring final compensation where the notices have been accepted by the Council for conveyancing purposes), encroachments and adverse possession claims.
- 2.8.19.9 To approve disturbance payments, etc. other than payments in respect of well- maintained houses.
- 2.8.19.10 To enter into and finalise negotiations in the case of confirmed Compulsory Purchase Orders.
- 2.8.19.11 To deal with applications for the sale of sub-station sites.
- 2.8.19.12 Following engagement with ward members and any relevant Town or Parish Council, to deal with the freehold disposal and purchase of land where the proposed consideration does not exceed £100,000 or where the land is to be sold or purchased on behalf of the Kent County Council. In all matters relating to the disposal of land and property, delegations are subject to the duty under S123 of the Local Government Act 1972 to obtain the best consideration for the land, and any other disposal will require a Committee decision.
- 2.8.19.13 To assign leases, subject to investigation of the financial abilities of the new lessees and change of use consents.
- 2.8.19.14 To terminate or accept the surrender of a leasehold interest in land where it is of benefit to the Council.
- 2.8.19.15 To approve rent reviews and lease renewals.
- 2.8.19.16 To enter into leases for less than seven years to which statutory security of tenure does not apply or to enter into leases where the annual rent is less than £30,000.
- 2.8.19.17 To grant rent concessions in line with Council Policy.

- 2.8.19.18 To appoint and retain agents to advise upon terms for sales, leases, purchases, easements, compensation claims and similar matters or otherwise in connection therewith.
- 2.8.19.19 To negotiate the terms of, and authorise the granting of, landlords licences and consents and variations under existing leases.
- 2.8.19.20 To administer all aspects of short-term tenancies of Swale House.
- 2.8.19.21 To carry out any site investigation which he/she considers necessary for the operation of the service.
- 2.8.19.22 To be responsible for all aspects of the Community Right to Bid/Assets of Community Value process as per legislation and including engagement with ward members.

2.8.20 DELEGATIONS TO THE MID-KENT ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES MANAGER

- 2.8.20.1 To discharge the Council's responsibilities with regard to statutory nuisances.
- 2.8.20.2 To administer all Port Health matters and monitor and enforce all other matters of public health and environmental health.
- 2.8.20.3 To appoint inspectors under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.
- 2.8.20.4 To implement and enforce the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, together with any other health and safety regulations and enactments.
- 2.8.20.5 To implement the provisions of the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985, the Control of Pesticides Regulations 1986 and of the Food Safety Act 1990 and any Orders or Regulations made thereunder or relating to the foregoing and any modifications or re-enactment to the foregoing.
- 2.8.20.6 To enforce the provisions of the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949.
- 2.8.20.7 To implement and enforce the provisions of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.
- 2.8.20.8 To implement and enforce the Environment Act 1995.
- 2.8.20.9 To enforce the provisions of the Clean Air Act 1993.
- 2.8.20.10 To enforce the provisions of the Control of Pollution Act 1974.

2.8.20.11 To enforce the provisions of the Pollution Prevention and Control Act 1999.

2.8.20.12 To implement and enforce the provisions of the Noise and Statutory Nuisance Act 1993.

2.8.20.13 To implement and enforce the provisions of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010.

2.8.20.14 To implement and enforce the provisions of the Public Health Acts 1936 and 1961, together with any other public health regulations and enactments.

2.8.20.15 To enforce the provisions of The Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984.

NB: The Clinical Director of the Kent Health Protection Unit is appointed as the Proper Officer of the Council to carry out duties under the above Act, the Public Health (Prevention of Tuberculosis) Regulations 1925, the Public Health Act 1936, the Public Health (Ships) Regulations 1979 and any other Regulations made under the Act, and any consultants in Communicable Disease Control, authorised by the Clinical Director, are similarly appointed to act on his behalf.

2.8.20.16 To implement and enforce the provisions of the Water Industry Act 1991 and Private Water Supplies Regulations 2009 in relation to private water supplies.

2.8.20.17 To implement and enforce the provisions of the Building Act 1984.

2.8.20.18 To enforce the provisions of The County of Kent Act 1981.

2.8.20.19 To implement and enforce the provisions of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 and 1982.

2.8.20.20 To enforce the provisions of the Land Drainage Act 1991.

2.8.20.21 To enforce the provisions of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005:

Part 5, Chapter 1 Sections 77 – 79, Chapter 2, Sections 82 – 86, Part 7, Chapter 1 Sections 69 – 73, Part 9, Sections 101 – 105

2.8.20.22 To enforce the provisions of the Environmental Damage (Prevention And Remediation) (England) Regulations 2015.

2.8.20.23 To enforce the provisions of the Noise Act 1996.

2.8.20.24 To enforce the provisions of the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 – Chapter 1 Sections 43 – 93.

2.8.20.25 To enforce the provisions of the Health Act 2006 – Part 1 Chapter 1.

2.8.20.26 To enforce the provisions of the Plant Protection Product Regulations 2011.

2.8.20.27 To enforce the provisions of the Plant Protection Products (Sustainable Use) Regulations 2012.

Anti-idling Legislation

2.8.20.28 To authorise relevant officers or persons to stop the commission of stationary idling offences and issue fixed penalty notices (FPNs) in respect of such offences, in accordance with Regulation 6(3) of the 2002 Regulations.

Miscellaneous

2.8.20.29 To enforce the provisions of the Offices, Shops and Railway Premises Act 1963.

2.8.20.30 To arrange burials and cremations pursuant to Section 46 of the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984.

PART 3.1 – COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE PROCEDURE RULES

3.1.0 Introductory Note

These rules are generally applicable to Council and committee meetings. Those which are applicable only to Council are marked with an asterisk. See Rule 3.1.34 for more details.

3.1.1 Annual Meeting of the Council *

In a year where there is an ordinary election of Members, the Annual Meeting of the Council will take place within 21 days of the retirement of the outgoing Members. (The meeting usually takes place on the 12th day after the first Thursday in May). In any other year the Annual Meeting will take place in May.

The Annual Meeting will:

- (1) Elect a person to preside if the Mayor is not present;
- (2) Elect the Mayor; (see Procedure Rule 3.1.2 below);
- (3) Elect the Deputy Mayor (see Procedure Rule 3.1.2 below);
- (4) Approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the last meeting;
- (5) Receive any announcements from the Mayor and Returning (or Acting Returning) Officer;
- (6) Elect the Leader of the Council;
- (7) Note the appointment of Deputy Leader, as made by the Leader;
- (8) Decide to establish at least such Committees as the Council considers appropriate, deciding their terms of reference and size, deciding the allocation of seats in accordance with the political balance rules and appointing Chair and Vice-Chair of all Committees of the Council as set out in Part 2 of the Constitution and appointing committee members, in accordance with nominations from Group Leaders, where applicable and voted on by Members of the relevant Committee only;
- (9) Approve a programme of meetings for the year;
- (10) Receive nominations of Councillors to serve on outside bodies and to appoint to outside bodies;
- (11) Receive nominations of Councillors and/or officers to be appointed as Directors of Companies where the Council has a right to appoint Directors;

(12) Agree any plan or strategy which forms part of the policy framework requiring implementation from the start of the civic year;

(13) Agree any other urgent item that cannot reasonably wait until the next ordinary meeting of the Council pursuant to Procedure Rule 3.1.5;

N.B. This does not mean that any other variations to the policy framework cannot be considered at a later date during the civic year.

(14) Note the Chief Executive's objectives for the forthcoming year.

3.1.2 Election of Mayor and Deputy Mayor *

The Council has agreed the following protocol in respect of the Election of Mayor and Deputy Mayor:

- (a) The selection of Mayor and Deputy Mayor is not confined to one party;
- (b) The Mayor and Deputy Mayor will be chosen on merit;
- (c) The term of office for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor will normally be for one year;

The Mayor elect and Deputy Mayor elect will be agreed by the Council meeting prior to the Annual Meeting (usually February) with a proviso that in the year of ordinary Council elections, should those nominated not be re-elected at those elections, a meeting of Group Leaders will take place between those elections and the Annual Council Meeting.

Nominations for Mayor and Deputy Mayor shall be delivered to the Proper Officer no later than noon on the Thursday before the February Council meeting, signed by a proposer and a seconder, both of whom at the time of delivery of the nominations, shall be elected Members of the Council, who have made declarations of acceptance of office as Councillors.

Should more than one nomination be received for Mayor and/or Deputy Mayor, voting will be by secret ballot at the February Council meeting. At that meeting a ballot paper will be circulated for Members to cast one vote, and the result will be declared at the end of that meeting.

If no nominations are received, nominations for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor shall be requested at the Annual Meeting.

3.1.3 Ordinary Meetings *

Ordinary meetings of the Council will take place in accordance with a programme decided at the Council's Annual Meeting. Ordinary meetings will:

- (1) Elect a person to preside if the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are not present;

(2) Approve as a correct record the minutes of the last meeting and the Mayor will sign the minutes;

(3) Give Members the opportunity to make Declarations of Interest as follows:

Councillors should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves or their spouse, civil partner or person with whom they are living with as a spouse or civil partner. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

The Chair will ask Members if they have any interests to declare in respect of items on this agenda, under the following headings:

(a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) under the Localism Act 2011. The nature as well as the existence of any such interest must be declared. After declaring a DPI, the Member must leave the meeting and not take part in the discussion or vote. This applies even if there is provision for public speaking.

(b) Disclosable Non Pecuniary (DNPI) under the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council in May 2012. The nature as well as the existence of any such interest must be declared. After declaring a DNPI interest, the Member may stay, speak and vote on the matter.

(c) Where it is possible that a fair-minded and informed observer, having considered the facts would conclude that there was a real possibility that the Member might be predetermined or biased the Member should declare their predetermination or bias and then leave the room while that item is considered.

(4) Receive any announcements from the Mayor;

(5) Receive questions and any petitions from, and provide answers to, the public in relation to matters which are to be considered by the Council in accordance with the Petition Scheme (see Appendix 1);

(6) To answer any questions asked by Members in accordance with Council Procedure Rule No. 3.1.14;

(7) Receive reports from officers (Head of Paid Service, Chief Financial Officer and Monitoring Officer and Statutory Officers who have a statutory right to report);

(8) Receive reports about and receive questions and answers on the business of joint arrangements and external organisations;

(9) Consider any other business specified in the summons to the meeting;

(10) Consider motions received in accordance with Council Procedure Rule No. 15;

The Order of Business can be altered by the Mayor/Chair at their discretion, or by resolution of the Council moved and seconded and put without discussion, with the exception of (1), (2) and (3) above. Under Section 100B of the Local Government Act 1972 the Mayor may agree to late items being added to the agenda where they are of the opinion that they are urgent.

3.1.4 Extraordinary Meetings

An extraordinary Meeting may be called by the Mayor.

Any five Members of the Council may request the Mayor to convene a meeting if they have signed a requisition presented to the Mayor which shall specify the business to be transacted at the meeting; if the Mayor refuses to call a meeting or has failed to call a meeting within seven days of the presentation of the requisition, those Members may call the extraordinary meeting themselves.

Extraordinary meetings will be restricted to the business that the meeting was convened to consider. There is no requirement for the Minutes of the previous meeting to be considered.

In respect of other Committees/Panels, an extraordinary meeting may be called by either the Chair; or on requisition of a quarter of the whole number of the Committee/Panel delivered in writing to the Proper Officer, but in no case shall less than three members requisition an extraordinary meeting.

3.1.5 Urgent Items

The Mayor may accept an item for consideration which has not been included on the agenda for the meeting, if they are satisfied that it needs to be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency. The reason for the urgency shall be recorded in the Minutes of the meeting.

3.1.6 Substitute Members

A Member can act as a substitute for another member at all meetings of the Council except for the full Council. If acting as a substitute on the Planning or Licensing Committee the substitute member must have undertaken appropriate training.

Names of substitute Members must be declared at the start of each meeting. Each political group must name the substitute even if that Councillor is not present at that time, as the membership at the beginning of the meeting lasts for the duration of the meeting (i.e. a Member cannot be substituted by a reserve, or vice-versa, part way through proceedings).

A Councillor who attends a meeting, as a substitute, speaks and votes in their own capacity. They do not relinquish their own personal responsibilities or, as it were, take on the mantle of their nominator. The substitute is personally under the same obligations as other Members to disclose an interest.

A substitute nominated to attend in place of the Chair or Vice-Chair shall not exercise the powers and duties of the Chair or Vice-Chair as the case may be. The meeting will need to elect a Chair as necessary.

In the event of the death or resignation of a Councillor, a substitute may be allocated to each Committee, Sub-Committee or Working Group, until any vacancy is filled by the Council.

3.1.7 Attendance at meetings

Any Member may attend any Meeting of the Council of which they are not a member (with the exception of the Standards Hearing Sub-Committee) and shall be allowed to speak subject to having given prior notification to the Chair.

A Member who has moved a Motion which has been referred to another meeting has the right to attend the meeting and speak to the Motion to explain it.

When minutes/recommendations from one Committee are being considered by a second Committee, the Chair of the first Committee has the right to attend and take part in the discussion on the minutes/recommendations, but will not have any voting rights unless they are a member of the second Committee.

3.1.8 Time and Place of Meetings

Meetings will usually commence at 7pm and take place at the Council Offices, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, ME10 3HT. This will be displayed on the agenda for each meeting.

3.1.9 Notice and Summons to Meetings

The Proper Officer will give public notice of the time and place of any meeting in accordance with the Access to Information Procedure Rules. At least five clear working days before a meeting, the Proper Officer will send a summons to every Member, giving the date, time, venue and business to be transacted, including reports as available.

3.1.10 Chairing the Meeting

The Mayor or, in their absence, the Deputy Mayor will chair meetings of the Council. If both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are not present, the Members at the meeting will elect a Chair for the meeting. The person presiding at the meeting may exercise any power or duty of the Mayor when conducting the meeting. The same principle applies to all other meetings of the Council (i.e. where the Chair is not present, the Vice-Chair will chair the meeting; if neither are present then the meeting will elect a Chair for the meeting). The committees will elect a Chair and Vice-Chair for the year at the first meeting of the committee in that municipal year. The Chair and Vice-Chair may be removed on a motion passed by the committee.

3.1.11 Quorum

The quorum for full Council meetings shall be one quarter of the whole number of members.

The quorum for all committees and sub-committee shall be one third of the membership of the committee or sub-committee subject to a minimum requirement of three Members for Committees.

There are different rules which apply to the Standards Committee Hearings which are set out at Appendix 2 to these Rules and the Swale Joint Transportation Board which are explained in Appendix 3 to these Rules.

If there is not a quorum 20 minutes after the time the meeting was due to start, no business shall be transacted, and the Democratic Services representative shall record that there was no quorum and the meeting will not take place.

During the meeting, if the Mayor or Chair (references to the Mayor throughout these rules shall include Chair wherever a rule applies to committees) counts the number of Members present and declares that there is not a quorum present, then the business shall be adjourned immediately. If after five minutes a quorum is still not present at the meeting, the remaining business will be considered at a date and time fixed by the Mayor, or the next ordinary meeting. The Democratic Services representative shall record in the minutes, the names of those present and absent and the time of adjournment.

3.1.12 Duration of Meeting

Meetings will finish by 10pm at the latest unless Members present vote for the meeting to continue for another half an hour. If at the end of that time there is still business to transact, Members can vote for further time (in periods of half an hour), or the remaining business will be considered either at the next ordinary meeting or at a time and date fixed by the Chair. This will not be later than seven clear days after the date of the adjournment.

3.1.13 Questions by Members

A Member may give notice that they wish to ask the Mayor, Leader or the Chair of any Committee a question at full Council subject to the following rules:

- (i) The question must be in relation to a matter in which the Council has powers or duties, or which affects the Borough.
- (ii) Notice in writing of any question must be given to the Proper Officer no later than 4.30pm on the Monday of the week before the meeting.
- (iii) There shall be a limit of two questions per member at any one meeting;
- (iv) With the permission of the Mayor, a member may put to the Leader or the Chair of any Committee any question relating to urgent business, of which the notice in (i) above has not been given, but a copy of any such question

shall be delivered to the Proper Officer not later than 11am on the day of the meeting;

- (v) Questions will be placed on the agenda in order of receipt by the Proper Officer and will be dealt with on that chronological basis at the meeting.

Every question shall be put orally and answered orally without discussion and this agenda item will be limited to a maximum of 30 minutes.

Supplementary questions may be allowed at the Mayor's discretion but must be short and succinct and relate to the original question.

An answer may take the form of:-

- (a) a direct oral answer; or
- (b) where the desired information is in a publication of the Council, or other published work, a reference to that publication; or
- (c) where the reply to the question cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer circulated to Members of the Council.

If a Member who has given notice of a question is not present at the Meeting at the appropriate time, the question shall not be asked. The Member can re-submit notice of the question at the appropriate time for the next meeting.

3.1.14 Motions with notice *

3.1.14.1 Notice of motions

With the exception of motions which can be moved without notice, written notice of every motion, signed or forwarded by email by a proposer and seconder (or appropriate number of Members if the motion is submitted pursuant to Council procedure rule 3.1.20), must be given to the proper officer not later than 4.30pm on the Friday before the agenda is dispatched. These will be recorded and open to public inspection.

No more than two motions submitted by Members will be listed on the agenda for debate per meeting. Motions will be listed on the agenda in order of receipt. Once two motions have been received by the proper officer for a meeting, no further motions may be submitted until the close of that meeting. Motions will remain on agendas unless the Member giving notice states in writing that they wish to withdraw the motion or move it to a later meeting.

The Mayor may agree to late motions being added to the agenda, in addition to the maximum of two that have been accepted for debate, where they are of the opinion they are urgent.

No motions will be accepted, subject to the Mayor's discretion in respect of urgent matters, at key budget decision meetings. The latter are defined as the budget setting meeting and the meeting setting the Council's fees and charges.

3.1.14.2 Treatment of motions

Motions submitted by Members will be limited to a maximum of 30 minutes' debate for each motion.

If a motion set out on the agenda is not moved at the meeting, either by the Member that gave the notice or another Member, it shall, unless postponed by the consent of the Council, be treated as withdrawn and shall not be moved without fresh notice.

If the subject falls within the terms of reference of another meeting it may, upon being moved and seconded, be referred without discussion to the meeting as the Council determines, for consideration and report. Alternatively, the Mayor can decide that the motion can be considered at the Council meeting.

3.1.14.3 Subject of motions

Motions must be about matters which the Council has responsibility for or which affect the borough.

Motions may seek to set a tone or general direction for future more detailed policy development work by the appropriate Council committees, or to provide an initial stimulus to that work, but the wording of a motion or an amendment must not be such that it could be interpreted as circumventing or seeking to circumvent the Council's constitutional decision-making processes.

Motions with the potential for budgetary or significant policy implications should request the relevant Committee to undertake the work necessary for a properly evidenced decision to be taken.

The monitoring officer will review the wording of all motions submitted and, in consultation with the Mayor, may if necessary reject a motion on the basis that its wording is in breach of this rule or that it is otherwise out of order, illegal, irregular or improper.

The monitoring officer will work with the Member who wishes to propose the motion to bring the wording into compliance with this rule in a way which is acceptable both to the Member and to the Mayor and monitoring officer, provided this can be completed before the deadline for the submission of motions. Where the Mayor is of the view that it would be helpful, any of the Council's statutory chief officers may append a concise note to a motion or amendment setting out any budgetary or other significant implications.

In the event that no agreement on wording can be reached and the motion is formally rejected by the monitoring officer in consultation with the Mayor, the monitoring officer will advise the member in writing of the reasons for this

decision and submit a report of the decision to the next council meeting. This report will be noted without discussion.

In the event that a motion seeking to set a tone or general direction for, or to provide initial stimulus to, future policy development work is moved and seconded but not carried when put to the vote, this will in no way prevent the Policy and Resources Committee or any relevant committee from working to develop policy along the lines proposed in the motion. In general the rejection of a motion at full Council will have no bearing on the future work of the Council or any committee (but refer to Rule 3.1.20.2 for the bearing it can have on future motions).

3.1.14.4 Motion to Remove the Leader

The Leader may be removed from office by resolution of the Council on the basis of a motion signed by five Members of the Council and included on the agenda for a Council Meeting.

Such motion must be given in writing to the Proper Officer at least 14 days prior to the relevant meeting and shall indicate the reasons for the motion. The motion shall take precedence over any other item of business.

If the Council passes a resolution to remove the Leader, a new Leader is to be elected:-

- (a) at the meeting at which the Leader is removed from office, or
- (b) at a subsequent meeting.

In the interim, the Deputy Leader must act in the Leader's place unless the Deputy Leader is unable to act.

3.1.15 Motions without Notice

The following Motions and amendments may be moved without notice:-

- (1) Appointment of a Chair of the meeting at which the Motion is moved.
- (2) Motions relating to the accuracy of the Minutes.
- (3) To change the order of business on the Agenda.
- (4) To refer something to an appropriate body or individual.
- (5) To receive reports or adopt recommendations of Committees, Groups or officers and any resolutions following from them.
- (6) That a Motion be withdrawn.
- (7) That the Council proceed to the next business.

- (8) That the question be now put.
- (9) That the debate be now adjourned.
- (10) That the Council do now adjourn.
- (11) That the Council continue its business.
- (12) Suspending Standing Orders (Procedure Rules), in accordance with Council Procedure Rule No. 3.1.30.
- (13) Motion to exclude the press and public from Meetings.
- (14) That a Member named be not further heard or be able to leave the Meeting.
- (15) By the Mayor under Procedure Rule 3.1.23 that a Member leaves the meeting;
- (16) A Motion under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, to exclude the press and public;
- (17) A request by any for the Policy and Resources Committee to review an existing policy or suggest a new policy by way of a motion (note: A policy shall not be re-considered by the Policy and Resources Committee within two years or before its built in review period, unless by resolution of the Full Council or as required by a change in legislation or national guidance;
- (18) A member may move, without comment, the following motions at the conclusion of a speech of another Member:
 - (a) to proceed to the next business;
 - (b) that the question be now put;
 - (c) to adjourn a debate;
 - (d) to adjourn a meeting.
 - (i) if a Motion to proceed to the next business is seconded and the Mayor thinks the item has been sufficiently discussed, they will give the mover of the original Motion a right of reply, and then put the Motion to the vote and proceed to the next business;
 - (ii) if a Motion that the question be now put is seconded and the Mayor thinks the item has been sufficiently discussed, they will put the Motion that the question be now put to the vote and if it is passed, will then give the mover of the original Motion their right of reply under Rule 3.1.16.7 of these Procedure Rules before putting their Motion to the vote;
 - (iii) if a Motion to adjourn the debate or the meeting is seconded and the Mayor thinks that the item has not been sufficiently discussed and cannot reasonably be so discussed on that occasion, they shall put the adjournment Motion to the vote without giving the mover of the original Motion their right of reply.

When a Motion in any of the terms in Rule 3.1.15 (18) has been moved, no further Motion in any of those terms shall be allowed in the course of the debate on the same matter within fifteen minutes unless in the opinion of the Mayor the circumstances have materially altered.

(19) Request an item for noting is discussed.

3.1.16 Rules of Debate *

A Motion or amendment shall not be discussed unless it has been proposed and seconded, and unless Notice has already been given in accordance with Procedure Rule 3.1.15 it shall, if required by the Mayor, be put into writing and handed to the Mayor before it is further discussed or put to the meeting.

3.1.16.1 Seconders's Speech

When seconding a Motion or amendment, a Member may reserve their speech until later in the debate.

3.1.16.2 Content and length of speeches

Speeches must be directed to the question under discussion or to a personal explanation or point of order (see Rules 3.1.16.8 and 3.1.16.9). No speech may exceed three minutes without the consent of the Mayor, provided that in moving a Motion of which Notice in accordance has been given, a Member may speak for not exceeding five minutes.

3.1.16.3 When a Member may speak again

A Member who has spoken on any Motion may not speak again whilst it is the subject of debate, except:-

- (a) to speak once on an amendment moved by another Member;
- (b) if the Motion has been amended since they last spoke, to move a further amendment;
- (c) if their first speech was on an amendment moved by another Member, to speak on the main issue, whether or not the amendment on which they spoke was carried;
- (d) in exercise of a right of reply;
- (e) on a point of order;
- (f) by way of personal explanation.

3.1.16.4 Amendments to Motions

Written notice of every amendment to a motion which has been published in a Council agenda or to a recommendation in a report on a Council agenda, signed or forwarded by email by a proposer and seconder, must be given to the proper officer not later than 4.30pm on the Monday preceding the Council meeting. These will be recorded and open to public inspection.

The Mayor may waive this rule during a Council meeting where it appears to them that allowing an amendment to be proposed and seconded without notice having been given would be conducive to enabling the meeting to articulate a common position on the matter under debate.

An amendment shall be relevant to the motion and will either be:

- (a) to refer the matter to an appropriate body or individual for consideration or reconsideration,
- (b) to leave out words,
- (c) to leave out words and insert or add other words; or
- (d) to insert or add words.

as long as the effect of (b) to (d) is not to negate the motion. This paragraph applies only to amendments to motions, and not to amendments to recommendations contained in reports.

The wording of an amendment must not be such that it could be interpreted as circumventing or seeking to circumvent the Council's constitutional decision-making processes. This rule is described more fully in Rule 3.1.14.3.

Notice of amendments to the budget are to be given in the same way as notice of other amendments. The rules on the wording of amendments set out in Council procedure rule 3.1.14.3 do not apply to budget amendments, but in proposing any changes to the budget, any amendment must ensure that the proposal achieves a balanced budget.

Amendments will be debated and voted on in the order in which notice was received. The Mayor may waive this rule during the meeting if they believe there are good reasons to do so.

Only one amendment may be moved and debated at a time, and no further amendment shall be moved until the amendment under discussion has been disposed.

If an amendment is lost, other amendments may be moved on the original motion. If an amendment is carried, the motion as amended shall take the place of the original motion. This becomes the substantive motion upon which any further amendments are moved, except such as would have the effect of reviving the original motion.

Amendments to recommendations in reports to service committees are dealt with in section 3.1.17 below.

3.1.16.5 Alteration of Motion

A Member may alter a Motion of which they have given notice with the consent of the meeting. The meeting's consent will generally be signified without discussion. Where it appears to be the Mayor that there is significant dissent, they may allow the dissent to be voiced and hold a vote on whether to accept the alteration.

A Member may alter a Motion which they have moved without notice with the consent of both the meeting and seconder. The meeting's consent will generally be signified without discussion. Where it appears to the Mayor that there is significant dissent, they may allow the dissent to be voiced and hold a vote on whether to accept the alteration.

A Member may alter a motion which they have moved without notice with the consent of the meeting and the seconder. The meeting's consent will generally be signified without discussion. Where it appears to the Mayor that there is significant dissent, they may allow the dissent to be voiced and hold a vote on whether to accept the alteration.

Only alterations which could be made as an amendment may be made.

If requested by any Member, the Mayor shall call upon the Democratic Services Officer to read back any alterations to any Motion.

3.1.16.6 Withdrawal of Motion

A Member may withdraw a Motion or amendment which they have moved with the consent of both the meeting and their seconder. The meeting's consent will be signified without discussion. No Member may speak upon it after the mover has asked permission for its withdrawal, unless permission is refused.

3.1.16.7 Right of Reply

The mover of a Motion has a right to reply at the end of the debate on the Motion, immediately before it is put to the vote.

If an amendment is moved, the mover of the original Motion shall also have a right of reply at the close of the debate on the amendment and may not otherwise speak on the amendment.

The mover of the amendment shall have no right of reply to the debate on their amendment.

When an amendment has been carried and a debate ensues on a further amendment, the right of reply to that further amendment shall be exercisable by the mover of the successful amendment, and not by the mover of the original Motion which it has replaced.

A Member exercising a right of reply shall not introduce new matters.

3.1.16.8 Point of Order

A Member may raise a point of order at any time. A point of order shall relate only to an alleged breach of a Procedure Rule or the law and the Member must indicate the rule or law and the way in which they consider it has been broken. The ruling of the Mayor will be final and not open to discussion.

3.1.16.9 Personal Explanation

A Member may make a personal explanation at any time. A personal explanation may only be related to some material part of an earlier speech by the Member, which may appear to have been misunderstood in the present debate. The ruling of the Mayor will be final and not open to discussion.

3.1.17 Amendments to report recommendations at service committees including Policy and Resources Committee

Written notice of every proposed amendment to a recommendation in a report to a service committee, signed or forwarded by email by the proposer, must be given to the proper officer not later than 10.00 am on the day preceding the relevant service committee meeting. These will be recorded and open to public inspection. Committee chairs may waive this rule during meetings in cases in which it appears to them that a proposed amendment would have the committee's support and that any implications arising from the amendment would be de minimis and/or clearly understood prior to the amendment being agreed.

3.1.18 Leader's Statement *

At ordinary meetings of the Council (except the Annual Meeting) the Leader shall give an update report. The leader of any group which is not part of the administration may make a statement in response to the Leader's statement, following which any other member may also make a statement, subject to there being sufficient time. Any such statements must be a response to the subject matter raised in the leader's statement. The Leader will then be given an opportunity to respond to any such statements.

The Leader's statement will be a maximum of five minutes. Any opposition group leaders that wish to respond will have a maximum of three minutes. Any other member who wishes to speak will have a maximum of two minutes. The Leader will have a final right of reply at the end of the statement(s) of three minutes. The whole agenda item will have a time limit of 30 minutes.

3.1.19 Voting

(1) Unless this Constitution or the law provides otherwise, any matter will be decided by a simple majority of those present and voting at the meeting, by show of hands or electronic voting or, if no dissent, by affirmation of the meeting.

(2) If five councillors present at a Council meeting, three councillors present at a Committee/Panel or two Councillors present at a Sub-Committee meeting demand it, the names for and against the motion or amendment or abstaining from voting will be taken down in writing and entered into the minutes.

(3) Where immediately after a vote is taken at a meeting and any member so requires, there shall be recorded in the Minutes of the proceedings of that meeting whether that person cast their vote for the question or against the question or whether they abstained from voting. **(This rule cannot be suspended).**

(4) Voting on Appointments: Where there are more than two persons nominated for any position to be filled by the Council, and of the votes given there is not a majority in favour of one person, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote shall be taken and continue until there is a majority of votes for one person. (Please see Rule 3.1.2 regarding voting on nominations for Mayor and Deputy Mayor.)

(5) Voting on decisions relating to the budget or Council Tax: In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2010 (as amended) the minutes will record how each member present voted on any decision relating to the budget or Council Tax. **(This rule cannot be suspended).**

(6) If there are equal numbers of votes for and against, the Chair will have a second or casting vote, regardless of whether they have used their first vote. There will be no restriction on how the Chair chooses to exercise a casting vote.

(7) Members must be present in the room for the discussion in order to be able to vote at meetings of the Planning Committee, Licensing Sub-Committee and Standards Sub-Committee.

3.1.20 Previous Decisions and Motions

3.1.20.1 Motion to rescind a previous decision

A motion or amendment to rescind a decision made at a meeting of Council within the past six months cannot be moved unless the notice of Motion is signed by at least one third of the whole number of the Council.

3.1.20.2 Motion similar to one previously rejected

A Motion or amendment in similar terms to one that has been rejected at a meeting of Council in the past six months cannot be moved unless the notice of Motion or amendment is signed by at least one third of the whole number of the Council Members. Once the Motion or amendment is dealt with, no one can propose a similar Motion or amendment for six months.

3.1.21 Minutes

(i) The Mayor/Chair will ask the meeting if they agree that the minutes of the previous meeting of the Council are correct, and if agreed will sign them as a correct record. The only part of the Minutes that can be discussed is their accuracy.

(ii) There is no requirement to sign the minutes of the previous meeting as a correct record, at an extraordinary meeting, instead those minutes, together with the minutes of the extraordinary meeting, will be considered at the next ordinary meeting. **(This rule cannot be suspended).**

3.1.22 Record of Attendance

All Members present during the whole or part of a meeting must sign their names on the attendance sheets before the conclusion of every meeting to assist with the record of attendance.

3.1.23 Exclusion of the Public

Members of the public and the press may only be excluded from the meeting in accordance with the Access to Information Procedure Rules in Part 3.2 of this Constitution or Council Procedure Rule 3.1.25.

If any question arises at a meeting (to which Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, applies) as to the appointment, promotion, dismissal, salary, superannuation or conditions of service, or as to the conduct of any person employed by the Council, such question shall not be subject to discussion until the meeting has decided whether or not to exclude the press and public.

3.1.24 Members' Conduct

When a Member speaks at full Council, they must normally stand and address the meeting through the Chair. If more than one Member stands, the Mayor will ask one to speak and the others must sit. Other members must remain seated whilst a Member is speaking unless they wish to make a point of order or personal explanation. Whenever the Mayor rises during a debate, any Member speaking at the time must stop and sit down. The Council shall be silent.

If a Member persistently disregards the ruling of the Mayor by behaving improperly or offensively or deliberately obstructs business, the Mayor may move that the Member be not heard further. If seconded, the motion will be voted on without discussion.

If the Member continues to behave improperly after such a motion is carried, the Mayor may move either that the Member leaves the meeting, or that the meeting is adjourned for a specified period. If seconded, the motion will be voted on without discussion.

If there is a general disturbance making orderly business impossible, the Mayor may adjourn the meeting for as long as they think necessary.

3.1.25 Attendance by the Public

The Chair of a meeting will welcome any members of the public who are present in the public gallery, and remind them that the proceedings are a meeting in public, not a public meeting, and that they are able to observe but not to contribute to the debate.

If a member of the public interrupts the proceedings, the Chair will warn the person concerned. If they continue to interrupt the Chair will order their removal from the meeting room.

If there is a general disturbance in any part of the meeting room open to the public, the Chair may ask for that part to be cleared.

3.1.26 Form of Address for Members

Irrespective of gender, whenever a Member is addressed the title 'Councillor' shall be used, followed only by the relevant surname, unless another form of address is requested by the individual Member concerned.

3.1.27 Recording of Proceedings

In accordance with The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, any person attending a meeting of the Council is permitted to report on proceedings by way of filming, photographing, the making of an audio recording, or by any other means including social media which enables those persons not present to see or hear proceedings. No oral reporting or oral commentary on a meeting is permitted if the person reporting or providing the commentary is present at the meeting.

The reporting of proceedings must not be undertaken in a disruptive manner, and this could result in expulsion from the meeting room.

The reporting of proceedings is not permitted when the public are excluded from the meeting in accordance with Procedure Rule No. 3.1.23 – Exclusion of the Public.

3.1.28 Vacancies or Resignations from Committees/Panels

Appointments to Committees/Panels will be agreed by the Annual Council meeting. Any resignations by Members during the year should be given to the Proper Officer. The leader of any group may notify any changes of committee membership to the Proper Officer for approval at the next meeting of Council.

3.1.29 Ad-hoc Groups or Panels

The Council may set-up groups or panels which shall elect a Chair and Vice- Chair at their first meeting before proceeding to any other business. All business transacted shall be reported back to the appropriate body in accordance with their terms of reference. The group/panel will then be disbanded after it has discharged its terms of reference.

3.1.30 Joint Meetings

In every case in which a resolution of the Council refers any matter of business to two or more Committees/Panels, the Committee/Panel first named shall take the initiative in inviting the other Committee or Committees interested to a joint meeting, and the report shall be presented by the Chair of the Committee taking the initiative who shall preside at the Joint Meeting. Any Committees/Panels may confer together by mutual agreement on any matter of joint interest.

3.1.31 Suspension and Amendment of Council Procedure Rules

Except where proposed at a meeting of the Council any Motion to add to, vary or revoke these Standing Orders shall, when proposed and seconded, stand adjourned without discussion to the next Ordinary Meeting of the Council.

Subject to the paragraph below, any of the Procedure Rules other than those which are prescribed (as stated) may be suspended so far as regards any business at the meeting where its suspension is moved.

A Motion to suspend Procedure Rules/Standing Orders shall not be moved without Notice unless there shall be present at least one-half of the whole number of the Council.

3.1.32 Mayor and Chair's Ruling on Procedure Rules

(1) The interpretation by the Mayor or Chair of the meeting of any of these Procedure Rules shall be such as not to annul, reverse or substantially alter the intent of any Procedure Rules.

(2) All disputes relating to the correct interpretation of any of these Procedure Rules shall be resolved by a ruling from the Mayor or the Chair of the meeting after open consultation with the Monitoring Officer or their delegated representative. The Mayor's or Chair's ruling shall be final.

3.1.33 Deputations and Petitions

Every deputation wishing to be received by the Council, a Committee, Sub-committee Panel or Group shall give reasonable notice in writing (including email) to Democratic Services.

The Council or other specified body shall decide whether such deputation shall be received and, if so, whether at that or a subsequent meeting.

The notice of deputation shall state the nature and objects of the deputation which must relate to local government matters concerning the Borough.

No deputation shall exceed six in number and except with the express consent of the Mayor or Chair, no more than two Members may address the meeting, except in reply to questions put by Members. The total time allowed for a deputation to address the meeting, other than time allowed for questions, shall not exceed 15 minutes.

The Council has agreed a Petitions Scheme. This sets out procedures regarding petitions received by the Council, both paper petitions and those submitted electronically via the petition scheme. The Scheme is attached as Appendix 1 to these rules.

3.1.34 Public Questions at Council *

Members of the public may ask questions of Committee Chair at ordinary meetings of the Council, subject to the question being put in writing (including email) to Democratic Services no later than 4.30 pm on the Wednesday the week before the day of the meeting. Each question must give the name and address of the questioner and must name the Member to whom it is to be put.

Questions will be asked in the order of the notice of them being received, except that the Mayor may group together similar questions.

At any one meeting no person may submit more than two questions and no more than two questions may be asked on the same topic.

The Monitoring Officer may reject a question if it:

- (i) is not about a matter for which the Local Authority has a responsibility or which affects the Borough within the context of the power of “wellbeing”;
- (ii) is defamatory, frivolous or offensive;
- (iii) is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the past six months; or
- (iv) requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information.

Each question will be open to public inspection and Democratic Services will immediately send a copy of the question to the Member to whom it is to be put. Rejected questions will include reasons for rejection. Copies of all questions will be circulated to all Members and will be made available to the public attending the meeting.

The Mayor will invite the questioner to put the question to the Member named in the notice. If a questioner who has submitted a written question is unable to be present, they may ask the Mayor to put the question on their behalf. The Mayor may ask the question on the questioner’s behalf, indicating that a written reply will be given or decide, in the absence of the questioner, that the question will not be taken.

A questioner who has put a question in person may also put one supplementary question, without notice, with a three minute time limit for the question and answer, to the Member who has replied to their original question. A supplementary question must arise directly out of the original question or the reply. The Mayor may reject a supplementary question on any of the grounds that the Monitoring Officer can, as set out above.

Every question shall be put and answered without discussion and this agenda item will be limited to a maximum of 30 minutes.

Any question which cannot be answered during public session, either because of lack of time or because of the non-attendance of the Member to whom it was to be put, will be answered by a written reply.

Unless the Chair decides otherwise, no discussion will take place on any question, but any Member may move that a matter raised by a question be referred to any Committee, Sub-Committee, Forum, Group or Panel as appropriate. Once seconded, such a Motion will be voted on without discussion.

3.1.35 Application to Committees etc.

The rules apply to Council and/or Committee meetings except for Rules 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3, 3.1.14, 3.1.16, 3.1.18 and 3.1.34 which are marked *. Where they apply to Committees, references to the Mayor should be interpreted as references to the Chair. There are separate additional procedure rules which apply to certain Committees, as set out in the rules below and in the appendices to this part of the Constitution.

3.1.36 Licensing Committee

Members of the public will have the opportunity to speak at meetings of the Licensing Committee, in accordance with the procedure set out below:

Anyone wishing to present a petition (related to an item included on the agenda) or speak on an application or item which is due to be considered at a meeting of the Licensing Committee is required to register with the Democratic Services by noon on the day before the meeting.

Only one person will be allowed to speak in each of the following categories. The right to speak will be allocated within the categories on a “first come first served” basis: -

- (a) Applicant
- (b) Objector

At the meeting, applications on which the public have registered to speak, will usually be moved forward in Agenda item order and considered before applications which do not have any registered speakers.

Members of the public who have registered to speak will be invited to do so in the order set out above for each application, and will have a maximum of three minutes to make their statement.

The right to speak does not give the opportunity to ask questions or participate in the Committee’s decision and determination of a Licensing application.

In respect of meetings that consider matters regarding Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles, members of the public may speak for a maximum of three minutes in respect of an agenda item. (Members of the trade also get the opportunity to give their views at Liaison meetings which are facilitated by the Council).

3.1.37 Swale Joint Transportation Board

Members of the public will have the opportunity to speak at meetings of the Swale Joint Transportation Board in accordance with the procedure set out below.

Anyone wishing to present a petition (related to an item included on the agenda) or speak on an application or item which is due to be considered at a meeting of the Swale Joint Transportation Board is required to register with Democratic Services by noon on the day before the meeting.

In the case of the Swale Joint Transportation Board, only two people will be allowed to speak on each item and each person is limited to asking two questions. Questions that have not been submitted in accordance with the procedure above will not be accepted.

At the meeting, applications on which the public have registered to speak, will usually be moved forward in Agenda item order and considered before applications which do not have any registered speakers.

Members of the public who have registered to speak will be invited to do so by the Chair at the appropriate time and will have a maximum of three minutes to make their statement. The right to speak does not give the opportunity to ask questions or participate in the Board's decision and determination of an agenda item.

3.1.38 Area Committees

At the start of each area committee meeting there will be a 20-minute session (which may be extended or reduced as necessary at the chair's discretion) for members of the public to ask relevant questions and make relevant comments to the committee. Questions will be for the chair to answer, but the chair will have discretion to invite other Members to contribute.

The chair will have discretion to invite comments from members of the public on any items while they are being discussed at meetings of the area committee.

3.1.39 Planning Committee Procedure Opening the meeting

3.1.39.1. The Chair will introduce themselves and explain that this is a Planning Committee meeting to be conducted in accordance with the Council's Constitution (including the Procedure Rules) which is available on the Council's Website.

3.1.39.2. The Chair will remind those present that the meeting determines the rights and obligations of the applicant. They will remind Members that they should not vote according to party lines but must consider each application and everything that is said

in the meeting concerning the application, and then make their decision based solely on their planning judgment of the information available to them.

3.1.39.3. The Chair will also explain that following a decision by Members, delegated authority is given to the planning officer to issue the decision notice. Planning permission is not granted until the issue of the decision notice. All the application documents are published on the internet and the decision notice will be published in due course.

3.1.39.4. The Chair will explain the role of, and introduce, any visiting Members. Any Member who is not a Member of the Planning Committee may attend as a visiting Member and may speak, provided s/he gives prior notification to the Chair. Such visiting Members may include ward Members. The Chair will explain that these visiting Members can speak on an application but cannot vote.

3.1.39.5. The Chair will welcome any members of the public who are registered to speak on any item.

3.1.39.6. Any substitute Members will be introduced by name and it will be explained that when acting as a substitute on the Planning Committee the substitute Member must also have undertaken appropriate training.

3.1.39.7. The Chair will invite any declarations of disclosable pecuniary or disclosable non-pecuniary interests. The Chair will remind the meeting that where it is possible that a fair-minded and informed observer, having considered the facts, would conclude that there was a real possibility that a Member might be predetermined or biased on any agenda item, the Member should declare this possibility. The Member may speak on the item as a visiting member and then leave the room while that item is considered. The Chair will invite any such declarations.

3.1.39.8. The Chair will remind the meeting that, Members must remain in the meeting for the whole time from the announcement of the item by the Chair through to the resolution of the Planning Committee and should not vote on that item unless they have done so.

3.1.39.9. The Chair will explain that the meeting will follow the order set out in the agenda, except where there is good reason to do otherwise. In particular, the Chair will explain that the Committee will take any items where a member of the public has registered to speak first, before moving on to the remainder of the agenda, and where this is relevant they will verbally re-order the agenda as appropriate.

Pre-Meeting Questions

3.1.39.10. Planning Committee members are invited to put forward questions of clarification of the facts of the case or matters of law to officers in advance of the Planning Committee. It is requested that these questions should be presented to the Officers by Noon on the third working day before the actual meeting e.g. Noon on the Monday before the Thursday Planning Committee. Officer's will ensure responses are made available to those questions by Noon the day before the Planning

Committee and that the questions and responses will be circulated to all Members of the Planning Committee that afternoon and tabled at the meeting. Any urgent clarification questions to be put at the Planning Committee meeting will be at the Chair's discretion. Introducing and debating each agenda item.

Public Participation General

3.1.39.11. Members of the public will have the opportunity to speak at meetings of the Planning Committee in accordance with the procedure set out below:

Anyone wishing to present a petition (related to an item included on the agenda) or speak on an application or item which is due to be considered at a meeting of the Planning Committee, including deferred items, are required to register with Democratic Services by noon on the day before the meeting. In the case of the Planning Committee, only one person will be allowed to speak in each of the following categories. The right to speak will be allocated within the categories on a "first come first served" basis: -

- (a) Parish or Town Council representative of the parish in which the application is situated
- (b) Parish or Town Council representative of any other parish affected by the application
- (c) Supporter
- (d) Objector
- (e) Applicant or Agent

At the meeting, applications on which the public have registered to speak, will usually be moved forward in Agenda item order and considered before applications which do not have any registered speakers.

Members of the public who have registered to speak will be invited to do so in the order set out above for each application, and will have a maximum of three minutes to make their statement.

The right to speak does not give the opportunity to ask questions or participate in the Committee's decision and determination of an agenda item or Planning application.

Agenda Items

3.1.39.12. The Chair will introduce each item, setting out the agenda item number, the planning application number and the location.

3.1.39.13. The Chair will remind any Members who have disclosed a pecuniary interest or declared the possibility of predetermination or bias on the item at hand that they must leave the room while that item is considered and must not speak or vote on that item. Members who have disclosed a non-pecuniary interest in an item may remain in the room and may speak and vote.

3.1.39.14. The Chair will then invite the Planning Officer to summarise the item. If the Chair has not stated the agenda item number, the planning application number and the location then the Planning Officer will do so. The Planning Officer will provide a verbal summary of the application, outlining its main proposals. Where relevant the Planning Officer will also provide any necessary verbal updates to the Committee report and reference to any pre-Committee questions put forward by Planning Committee members and the responses from officers (See para 3.1.39.10).

3.1.39.15. The Chair will then invite any members of the public who have registered to speak to do so in accordance with the public participation rules.

3.1.39.16. The Chair will then move the officer recommendation, a seconder will be found and the debate will open.

3.1.39.17. The Chair will first invite the visiting member(s) and any Committee members acting as Ward Member(s) for this item, if present, to speak, reminding them that they will have a maximum of three minutes to make their representation.

3.1.39.18. The Chair will then open the debate to the Planning Committee members. The Chair will remind the meeting that any Member wishing to speak on the item should do so by presenting their views without repeating any questions already dealt with through pre-committee clarification questions and responses, ensuring that their views are presented concisely and without repetition of any points previously made by Members and ensuring their views focus on the material planning considerations involved.

3.1.39.19. The Chair can, at their discretion, refer technical or legal issues arising during the debate to relevant officers to respond as required during the discussion of the item.

Voting on each agenda item

3.1.39.20. When a vote is taken, the Democratic Services Officer will make a note of the number of votes for and against and the number of abstentions. If this is unclear, the meeting will wait until the Democratic Services Officer is satisfied that the vote is clear.

Where the vote is in accordance with the officer recommendation

3.1.39.21. If the vote follows the officer recommendation to approve the application for the reasons given in the report then planning permission will be granted subject to the issue of the decision notice.

3.1.39.22. If the vote follows the officer recommendation to refuse the application for the reasons given in the report then planning permission will be refused subject to the issue of the decision notice.

Where the vote does not follow the officer recommendation to approve

3.1.39.23. If the vote does not follow the officer recommendation to approve then:

- a. the Chair will invite the Head of Planning to request the Committee to consider if the application should be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee.
- b. If the decision is not deferred to a future meeting, a further motion must be made to refuse the application. Before voting on this new motion:
 - i. The Chair will give the planning officer the opportunity to explain the implications of any decision contrary to their recommendation.
 - ii. The Chair will remind the meeting that the courts have expressed the view that the Committee's reasons for refusal should be clear and convincing, capable of articulation and open to public scrutiny and be material planning reasons. The precise wording of the reasons for refusal must be clearly defined before the Committee votes on the motion. The Chair will propose a short adjournment of the meeting to allow officers to draft the framework wording rather than leaving the reasons to the officers to draft following the meeting, and to provide delegated authority to the Head of Planning to make any necessary detailed wording changes. A detailed minute of the Planning Committee's reasons (which should be full, clear and relate to material planning considerations) should be made by the Democratic Services Officer and a copy placed on the application file.

If the vote is passed then planning permission will be refused subject to the issue of the decision notice.

Where the vote does not follow the officer recommendation to refuse

3.1.39.24. If the vote does not follow the officer recommendation to refuse for the reasons given in the report, the Chair will invite the Head of Planning to request the Committee to consider if the application should be deferred. If the decision is not deferred to a future meeting:

- a. A further motion must be made to approve the application with delegated authority given to the Head of Planning to impose suitable conditions;
- b. If the vote is passed then planning permission will be approved subject to the issue of the decision notice.

Clarity on the outcome of the voting

3.1.39.25. The outcome of the voting will be announced by the Chair before moving on to the next item. If the Chair fails to do this then the Head of Planning will step in and announce the outcome.

Debating motions to undertake a site visit or defer the item

3.1.39.26. If during the debate on an item a motion is moved to undertake a site visit or to defer the item to a future meeting then a seconder for this motion will be sought and any further debate will be to this new proposal rather than the substantive motion. The new motion will be voted upon following the debate. If this motion is defeated, a further vote will be taken on the substantive motion.

PART 3.1 APPENDIX 1 – PETITIONS SCHEME

Introduction

The council welcomes petitions. We recognise that petitions are one way in which people can let us know their concerns.

Anyone who lives, works or studies in Swale may organise or sign a petition. This includes people under the age of 18.

You can either organise the petition yourself and submit a paper list of signatures to the council, or you can request the council to set up an e-petition, which collects signatures online.

All e-petitions normally remain open for new signatures for ten weeks from the go-live date, although this can be reduced in the event that the subject matter of the petition is urgent.

Before you submit your petition, please read our guidance in the next sections.

What should I include in my petition?

You must include a clear, concise statement covering the subject of the petition and what you want the council to do. The statement must relate to the functions, powers or duties of the council. Any action you request will only be considered if it would be lawful for the council to undertake.

The petition must also include the:

- name, address, telephone number and email address of the petition organiser; and
- name, address and signature of any person supporting the petition (these are collected automatically in the case of e-petitions).

We will not publish the petition organiser's or any signatories' contact details on the council's website but we will publish the petition.

It is important that you follow this guidance. The council may choose to take no action on a petition if important details are missing. In this case, we will write to you to explain the reasons and give you the opportunity to amend the petition.

What types of petitions are excluded?

We will not take action on any petition or requested e-petition that is:

- vexatious;
- abusive;
- otherwise inappropriate; or

- does not relate directly to the council's functions, responsibility or powers.

The proper officer will decide if a petition fits these categories. If we reject your petition for any of the above reasons, we will notify you in our acknowledgement letter.

This scheme does not apply to:

- petitions relating to a planning or licensing application, which will be referred to the relevant decision making body;
- statutory petitions (for example requesting a referendum on having a directly elected mayor), which will be dealt with in accordance with the relevant statutory scheme;
- petitions submitted as part of a consultation process being carried out by the council, in which case the petition will be considered by the relevant decision making body as part of the consultation; or
- petitions relating to matters where other review or appeal procedures exist, e.g. a review of council tax banding.

This scheme does not apply to petitions on the same or similar topic as ones addressed by the council in the last six months. In this case we will acknowledge receipt of your petition and include details of our response to similar petitions.

Where we are still considering a petition on the same or similar topic, we will amalgamate the petitions.

We will send details of excluded petitions that directly affect wards to the councillors representing those wards.

What the council will do with your petition

We will write to you to acknowledge your petition within 10 working days of receiving it. We will let you know what we plan to do with the petition and when you can expect to hear from us again. If the petition needs further investigation, we will tell you the steps we plan to take.

Your petition will be published on our website, except in cases where this would be inappropriate.

Where the subject matter of the petition affects particular wards, the councillors representing those wards will be notified.

The way in which your petition is considered by the council will depend on the number of signatories to the petition, as follows:

- Fewer than 200 signatories: Response from the relevant director.
- Between 200 and 1,499 signatories: Referred to a meeting of the most relevant service committee.

- More than 1,500 signatories: Referred to a meeting of the full council.

Our response to the petition will depend on what the petition asks and how many people have signed it. It may include one or more of the following:

- taking the action requested in the petition;
- considering the matter at a meeting of the council or a committee;
- holding a public meeting;
- holding a meeting with petitioners or the petition organiser;
- writing to the petition organiser setting out the council's views about the request in the petition;
- considering the matter as part of a consultation process; or
- taking no further action on the matter.

Considering a petition at a meeting

Where the petition is referred to the full council or to a service committee, the petition organiser (or any person authorised by them) will, if they so wish, be given a period not exceeding three minutes to present the petition at the meeting. The petition will then be discussed by councillors.

We will contact the petition organiser before the meeting to establish whether they wish to present the petition at the meeting in the manner described above.

In addition to these steps, the council will consider all the specific actions it can potentially take on the issues highlighted in a petition.

If a petition falling within the scheme contains 1,500 signatures or more, it will automatically be referred to the full council for debate. The council will endeavour to consider the petition at its next meeting, although on some occasions this may not be possible, and consideration will then take place at the next available meeting.

When a petition is to be considered by a committee or the full council, it will generally be accompanied by an officer report setting out any financial and non-financial implications arising from decisions which could be taken in the light of it. This report will not recommend a particular course of action.

Councillors will decide how to respond to the petition at the meeting. They may decide to support the action the petition requests, or not. A motion suggesting a formal response to the petition shall be proposed and seconded at the meeting and dealt with under the normal rules of debate, except that notice of motions and amendments will not be required. Any such motion must respond explicitly to the request in the petition i.e. that part of the petition which asks the council to take some form of action.

Alternatively, councillors may refer the matter to a different committee or an officer for further consideration. The petition organiser will receive written confirmation of this decision.

How to submit a petition

E-petitions

You can create, sign and submit petitions online.

If you would like to set up an online petition, please use our [e-Petition facility](#). This will ensure that your petition meets the requirements of our petition scheme, which can be found in [Part 3.1 Appendix 1](#) of the Council's Constitution.

We cannot accept e-Petitions hosted on external websites unless the following information for all signatories is supplied:

- name
- valid email address
- postal address and postcode.

When you create an e-Petition on our website, it may take 5 clear working days before it is published online. This is because we have to check the content is suitable before it is made available.

When an e-Petition has reached its deadline and has been closed, it will automatically be sent to Democratic Services.

Paper petitions

Paper petitions can be submitted to: The Petitions Officer, Swale Borough Council, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT, or to petitions@swale.gov.uk.

The Petitions Officer will ensure that your petition is acknowledged to the petition organiser and entered on the authority's petitions website ([Swale Petitions website](#)), and that the website is regularly up-dated with information on the progress of your petition. The Petitions Officer can also provide you with advice about how to petition the authority or the progress of your petition, at either of the above addresses or by telephone at 01795 417328.

PART 3.1 Appendix 2 - SWALE JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

Member Arrangements as set out in the Agreement on Joint Transportation Boards

1.1 A Joint Transportation Board (JTB) will be established by the Kent County Council (KCC) and the District Council.

1.2 Each party shall be responsible for their own costs incurred in the operation of the JTB.

1.3 The JTB shall be a non-statutory forum.

Membership

2.1 JTB Membership will comprise all KCC Members for divisions in the District Council's area, an equal number of members appointed by the District Council and three representatives of the Parish and Town Councils within the District. The Council may appoint substitutes for its Members.

2.2 The Parish and Town Council representative will be nominated by the Area Committee of the Kent Association of Local Councils or other representative body for Parish Councils if this provides a more complete representation. A substitute member may also be nominated. The Parish or Town representative may speak, vote, propose a motion or an amendment.

2.3 Any KCC Cabinet Member responsible for transportation functions, Council Member, the Chairman of the KCC Highways Advisory Board or KCC local member may place a relevant item on the agenda and/or attend and speak at any meeting of the JTB but may not vote nor propose a motion nor an amendment (unless voting members of the JTB).

2.4 The Chairman of any Parish or Town Council (or a Member nominated by him/her) may attend any meeting to speak with the permission of the Chairman on any item on the agenda of particular relevance to that Parish.

Chairman

3.1 In alternate years a Member of KCC (who is a member of the JTB) will chair the JTB and a District Council Member (who is a member of the JTB) will be Vice-Chairman of the JTB and then a Member of the District Council will chair the JTB and a KCC Member will be Vice-Chairman of the JTB and so on.

3.2 The Chairman and Vice-Chairman will be appointed by the respective Councils as they may determine within their constitutional arrangements. The Chairman and

Vice-Chairman of the JTB will take office at the first meeting of the JTB following the Annual Meetings of both Councils each year.

Meetings

- 4.1 The JTB will generally meet four times a year on dates and at times and venues to be specified by the District Council in accordance with its normal arrangements in consultation with KCC.
- 4.2 The quorum for a meeting shall be five comprising at least two voting members present from each of KCC and the District Council and 1 Parish representative.
- 4.3 Subject to 2, 3 and 4.2 above taking precedence, the District Council's procedural rules shall apply to JTB Meetings as if they were Council Committees.
- 4.4 The JTB will be clerked by an Officer of the District Council. Copies of all papers shall be sent to the Monitoring Officers of both Councils who may attend and speak at any meeting (or instead each Monitoring Officer may arrange for a substitute officer to speak on his/her behalf).
- 4.5 The Access to Information principles shall be applied to the JTB as if it were a Council Committee.

Terms of Reference

- 5.1 The JTB will consider:-
 - (i) capital and revenue funded works programmes
 - (ii) traffic regulation orders
 - (iii) street management proposalsand will provide advice on these matters to the relevant Executive and/or Policy and Resources Committee as appropriate.
- 5.2 Be a forum for consultation between KCC and the District Council on policies, plans and strategies related to highways, road traffic and public transport.
- 5.3 Review the progress and out-turn of works and business performance indicators.
- 5.4 Recommend and advise on the prioritisation of bids for future programmes of work.
- 5.5 Receive reports on highways and transportation needs within the District.

Overview and Scrutiny

- 6.1 An Overview and/or Scrutiny Committee or other relevant Committee if there is no Overview and Scrutiny Committee of either Council can require the Member of that Council holding the office of Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the JTB to attend and be asked questions subject to the provisions of that Council's constitution.
- 6.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee or other relevant Committee if there is no Overview and Scrutiny Committee of either Council can request (but not compel) Members of the other Council who serve on the JTB and Officers employed by the other Council who report to the JTB to attend and be asked questions.
- 6.3 Overview and Scrutiny Committees or other relevant Committee if there is no Overview and Scrutiny Committee of both Councils will abide by the protocol on inter-authority co-operation on Overview and Scrutiny agreed by the former Kent Association of Local Authorities and as set-out below.

Local Member and Parish Consultation

- 7.1 The local Members of both the KCC and the District Council and the Parish or Town Council(s) will be consulted on any relevant scheme proposals (other than routine operational maintenance of the highway) within the scope of this agreement.

Executive/Committee Action

- 8.1 The KCC Executive will normally act in accordance with the advice or views of the JTB. If the Executive is minded to act otherwise, no decision will be taken until after a discussion at the KCC Highways Advisory Board at which the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the JTB may attend and speak.
- 8.2 The relevant Service Committee of Swale Borough Council will normally act in accordance with the advice or views of the JTB. If a Service Committee is minded to act otherwise, no decision will be taken until after a discussion between the Service Committee Chairman and the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the JTB.

Overview and Scrutiny - Inter-Authority Co-operation (Protocol as agreed by the former KALA during November 2001)

Aim of Protocol

- 1. To ensure that the Overview and Scrutiny Committees or other relevant Committee if there is no Overview and Scrutiny Committee of all Kent Local Authorities can review issues of community interest effectively and with efficient use of all local authority staff resources.

Principles

2. All authorities should be supported in considering issues of community well-being wider than the responsibilities of their Councils.
3. Authorities should work together to maximise the exchange of information and views, minimise bureaucracy and make best use of the time of Members and Officers of local and other Authorities.

Procedures

4. Authorities should seek to exchange information of programmes and results of reviews.
5. If an Overview and Scrutiny Committee or other relevant Committee if there is no Overview and Scrutiny Committee wishes to review an issue in which another Authority has a statutory role or in which evidence from the Officers of another Authority would be helpful, it should consult with that Authority about:-
 - (a) the purpose of the review;
 - (b) the areas of interest to the other Authority;
 - (c) the input that can be given by Members or Officers of the other Authority.
6. Consideration should be given to whether the issue is more appropriately discussed in another forum, for example a joint committee, or whether there is scope for joint action including the co-opting of Members of the other Authority onto the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or other relevant Committee if there is no Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the purpose of the review.
7. Where a proposal is subject to a public consultation process, scrutiny is most helpful if conducted as part of that process e.g. allowing any findings and recommendations to be available in time to influence the final decision.
8. Subject to prior consultation, Authorities will seek to respond positively to requests for information or for a Member or Officer to attend meetings of Overview and Scrutiny Committees or other relevant Committee if there is no Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
9. While it is ultimately for each Authority to decide who it considers the most appropriate person(s) to speak on its behalf to an Overview and Scrutiny Committee or other relevant Committee if there is no Overview and Scrutiny Committee, consideration will be given at the meeting to specific requests.
10. Dates and times of Member and Officer attendance at Overview and Scrutiny Meetings should be agreed with them.
11. Each Authority will nominate a contact officer for the operation of these procedures.

PART 4.6 - STANDARDS COMMITTEE PROCEDURE RULES

The Pre-Hearing Process

Procedure for Local Standards Hearings

Pre-Hearing Process

Upon receipt of the final report of the Investigating Officer, including a finding that the Subject Member failed to comply with the Code of Conduct for Members, or where the Standards Committee determines that the matter should be considered at a formal hearing, the Monitoring Officer shall:

- (a) Arrange a date for the Standards Committee's hearing;
- (b) Constitute a Hearings Panel comprising of three Members, the Chairman of which is to be appointed by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chairman/Vice Chairman of the Standards Committee;
- (c) Send a copy of the report to the Subject Member and advise him/her of the date, time and place of the hearing;
- (d) Send a copy of the report to the Complainant and advise him/her of the date, time and place of the hearing;
- (e) Where the complaint relates to a Parish/Town Councillor, notify that Parish or Town Council of the date, time and place of the hearing;
- (f) Request the Subject Member to complete and return the Pre-Hearing Forms within 14 days of receipt;
- (g) In the light of any Pre-Hearing Forms returned by the Subject Member, determine whether the Standards Committee will require the attendance of the Investigating Officer and any additional witnesses at the hearing to enable it to come to a properly considered conclusion at the hearing, and arrange for their attendance;
- (h) Prepare a Pre-Hearing Summary Report setting out the course of the allegation, investigation and Pre-Hearing Process and high-lighting the issues which the Standards Committee will need to address, and
- (i) Arrange that the agenda for the hearing, together with the Pre-Hearing Summary Report and copies of any relevant documents are sent to:
 - (i) All Members of the Standards Sub-Committee who will conduct the hearing;
 - (ii) The Subject Member;
 - (iii) The Complainant; and
 - (iv) The Investigating Officer.

The Hearing Procedure

Standards Committee or any constituted Sub Committee

Procedure for Local Standards Hearings

1. Interpretation

- 1.1 “Subject Member” means the Member of the Authority who is the subject of the allegation being considered by the Hearings Panel, unless stated otherwise. It also includes the nominated representative of the Subject Member(s).
- 1.2 “Complainant” means the person who has submitted the complaint in respect of the Member’s alleged breach of the Code.
- 1.3 “Investigating Officer” references to the Investigating Officer mean the person appointed by the Monitoring Officer to undertake that investigation which may include the Monitoring Officer, and his or her nominated representative.
- 1.4 “The Matter” is the subject matter of the Investigating Officer’s report.
- 1.5 “The Hearings Panel” refers to a Sub-Committee of the Standards Committee which it has delegated the conduct of the hearing.
- 1.6 “Chairman” refers to the person appointed to preside at the meeting.
- 1.7 “Independent Person” refers to a non-voting person who has been appointed, following advertisement, by a positive vote from a majority of all the Members of Council and who’s views must be sought and taken into account.
- 1.8 “The Committee Support Officer” means an officer of the Authority responsible for supporting the Hearings Panel’s discharge of its functions and recording the decisions of the Hearings Panel.
- 1.9 “Legal Advisor” means the officer responsible for providing legal advice to the Hearings Panel. This may be the Monitoring Officer, another legally qualified officer of the Authority, or someone appointed for this purpose from outside the Authority.

2. Rules of Procedure

- 2.1 The Hearings Panel consists of three voting elected Members drawn from the Standards Committee, one of whom will be appointed as Chairman by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chairman/Vice-Chairman of the Standards Committee.
- 2.2 The quorum for a meeting of the Hearings Panel is three elected Members.
- 2.3 If the Subject Member is not present at the start of the hearing the Chairman shall ask the Legal Advisor whether the Subject Member has indicated his/her intention

not to attend the hearing. The Hearing Panel shall then consider any reasons which the Subject Member has provided for not attending the hearing and shall decide whether it is satisfied that there is sufficient reason for such failure to attend. If the Hearings Panel is satisfied with such reasons, it shall adjourn the hearing to another date; however if they are not satisfied with such reasons, or if the Subject Member has not given any such reasons, the Hearings Panel shall decide whether to consider the matter and make a determination in the absence of the Subject Member or to adjourn the hearing to another date.

- 2.4 If the Investigating Officer is not present, the Standards Committee shall only conduct a hearing if they are satisfied that there are no substantial points of difference or that any points of difference can be satisfactorily resolved in the absence of the Investigating Officer.
- 2.5 The Hearings Panel may exclude the press and public from the meeting where it appears likely that confidential or exempt information will be disclosed. At the start of the meeting the Chairman shall ask the Subject Member, Investigating Officer and the Legal Adviser whether they wish to make any representations that the Hearings Panel exclude the press and public from all or any part of the hearing. Full reasons for the request must be given and the other parties will be given the opportunity to respond.

On hearing the arguments of all parties the Standards Committee shall determine whether to exclude the press and public from all or any part of the hearing. Where no resolution to exclude press and public is made the agenda and any documents which have been withheld from the press and public in advance of the meeting shall then be made available.

- 2.6 The Independent Person's views must be sought and taken into consideration before the Hearing Panel takes any decision on whether the Subject Member's conduct constitutes a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct and as to any sanction to be taken following a finding of failure to comply with the Code of Conduct. The Independent Person should normally be present throughout the hearing (but not during the deliberations of the Hearing Panel in private) but in the event that this is not possible, may instead submit their views on the complaint to the Hearing Panel in writing.
- 2.7 All matters/issues before the Hearing Panel will be decided by a simple majority of votes cast, with the Chairman having a second or casting vote.

3. Representation

- 3.1 The Subject Member may be represented or accompanied during the meeting by a solicitor, counsel or another person agreed in advance with the Monitoring Officer.

4. Conduct of the Hearing

- 4.1 Subject to paragraph 4.2 below, the order of business will be as follows:
 - (a) apologies for absence;
 - (b) declarations of interest

- (c) in the absence of the Subject Member, consideration as to whether to adjourn or to proceed with the hearing (see paragraph 2.3 above);
- (d) introduction by the Chairman of all persons present;
- (e) receive representations as to whether the hearing should be held in private and/or whether any documents (or parts thereof) should be withheld from the press and public;
- (f) determine whether the press and public are to be excluded from any part of the hearing and/or whether any documents (or parts thereof) should be withheld from the press and public.

4.2 The Chairman may agree to vary this procedure in any particular instance where he/she is of the opinion that, upon taking legal advice, such a variation is necessary in the interests of fairness.

4.3 The Hearings Panel may adjourn the hearing at any time.

4.4 The Hearings Panel may take legal advice from its Legal Advisor at any time during the hearing or while they are considering the outcome. The substance of any legal advice given to the Hearings Panel should be shared with the Subject Member and the Investigating Officer if they are present.

4.5 At the start of the hearing the Chairman will confirm that all present know the procedure which will be followed by the Hearings Panel in determining the matter.

4.6 Presentation of the Pre-Hearing Summary Report

4.6.1 The Monitoring Officer, or his representative, will present the pre-hearing summary report highlighting any points of difference in respect of which the Subject Member has stated that he/she disagrees with any finding of fact in the Investigating Officer's report.

4.6.2 The Chairman will then ask the Subject Member to confirm that this is an accurate summary of the issues and that he/she maintains the position as set-out in the pre-hearing summary report.

4.6.3 The Chairman will then give the Subject Member the opportunity to identify any additional points upon which he/she disagrees with any finding of fact in the Investigating Officer's report. In such cases the Subject Member will need to explain, to the satisfaction of the Hearings Panel; why these points were not identified during the pre-hearing process.

4.6.4 Where the Subject Member fails to explain, to the satisfaction of the Hearings Panel, reasons for failing to identify each additional point of difference as part of the pre-hearing process, the Hearings Panel may decide to continue with the hearing without allowing the Subject Member to challenge the veracity of those findings of fact which are set out in the Investigating Officer's report, but in respect of which they failed to identify a point of difference as part of the pre-hearing process.

- 4.6.5 If the Hearings Panel is satisfied with the Subject Member's reasons, the Chairman shall then ask the Investigating Officer (if present) whether he/she is in a position to deal with those additional points of difference directly or through any witnesses who are in attendance, or whose attendance at the hearing can conveniently be arranged. Alternatively, the Hearings Panel may decide to adjourn the hearing to allow the Investigating Officer and/or any additional witnesses to attend the hearing.

4.7 Presentation of the Investigating Officer's Report

- 4.7.1 The Investigating Officer presents their report; including any documentary evidence or other material; having particular regard to any points of difference identified by the Subject Member and explain their reasoning, on the basis of their findings of fact, why they concluded that the Subject Member had failed to comply with the Code of Conduct.
- 4.7.2 Where the Subject Member admits that they failed to comply with the Code of Conduct in the manner described in the Investigating Officer's report, the Hearings Panel may then make a determination that the Councillor has failed to comply with the Code of Conduct in the manner described in the Investigating Officer's report and proceed directly to consider whether any action should be taken (see paragraph 4.16 below).
- 4.7.3 Where no admission is made by the Subject Member, the Investigating Officer may call witnesses as necessary to address any points of difference.
No new points will be permitted.
- 4.7.4 In the absence of the Investigating Officer, the Hearings Panel shall determine on the advice of the Legal Advisor which witnesses, if any, to call. Where such witnesses are called, the Chairman shall draw the witnesses' attention to any relevant section of the Investigating Officer's report and ask the witness to confirm or correct the report and to provide any relevant evidence.
- 4.7.5 No cross-examination shall be permitted however, at the conclusion of the Investigating Officer's report and/or of the evidence of each witness. The Chairman shall ask the Subject Member if there are any matters upon which the Standards Committee should seek the advice of the Investigating Officer or the witness.
- 4.7.6 The Hearings Panel may question the Investigating Officer upon the content of their report and any witness called.

4.8 Presentation of the Subject Member's case

- 4.8.1 The Chairman shall then invite the Subject Member to respond to the Investigating Officer's report and to call any witnesses as necessary to address any points of difference.
- 4.8.2 No cross-examination shall be permitted but, at the conclusion of the Subject Member's evidence and/or of the evidence of each witness, the Chairman

shall ask the Investigating Officer if there are any matters upon which the Hearings Panel should seek the advice of the Councillor or the witness.

- 4.8.3 The Hearings Panel may question the Subject Member and any witness called.

4.9 Witnesses

The Hearings Panel shall be entitled to refuse to hear evidence from the Investigating Officer, the Councillor or a witness unless they are satisfied that the witness is likely to give evidence which they need to hear in order to be able to determine whether there has been a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct.

4.10 Summing-up

The Chairman will invite the Investigating Officer to sum-up the complaint, followed by the Subject Member who will sum-up their case.

4.11 Views/Submissions of the Independent Person

The Chairman will invite the Independent Person to express their view on whether or not they consider that, on the facts presented to the Hearing Panel, there has been a breach of the Code of Conduct.

4.12 Additional Evidence

- 4.12.1 At the conclusion of the evidence, the Chairman shall check with the Members of the Hearings Panel that they are satisfied that they have sufficient evidence to come to a considered conclusion on the matter.
- 4.12.2 If the Hearings Panel at any stage prior to determining whether there was a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct are of the opinion that they require additional evidence on any point, in order to be able to come to a considered conclusion on the matter, they may; on not more than one occasion; adjourn the hearing and make a request to the Investigating Officer to seek and provide such additional evidence and/or to undertake further investigation on any point specified by the Hearings Panel.

4.13 Deliberations of the Hearings Panel

- 4.13.1 The Hearing Panel will adjourn the hearing and deliberate in private; assisted on matters of law by the legal advisor; to consider whether or not, on the facts found, the Subject Member has failed to comply with the Code of Conduct.
- 4.13.2 The Hearings Panel shall take its decision on the balance of probability based on the evidence which it has received at the hearing.
- 4.13.3 The Hearing Panel may at any time come out of private session and reconvene the hearing in public in order to seek additional evidence from the Investigating Officer, the Subject Member or the witnesses. If further information to assist the Panel cannot be presented, then the Panel may

adjourn the hearing and issue directions as to the additional evidence required and by whom.

- 4.13.4 At the conclusion of their consideration, the Hearings Panel shall consider whether it is minded to make any recommendations to the Authority with a view to promoting high standards of conduct among Councillors.

4.14 Announcing the decision

The Hearing Panel will reconvene the hearing in public and the Chairman will announce whether or not on the facts found, the Panel considers that there has been a breach of the Code of Conduct as set out in the Investigating Officers report.

4.15 Determination of No Breach of the Code of Conduct

- 4.15.1 Where the Hearings Panel determines that the Councillor has not failed to follow the Code of Conduct in the manner set out in the Investigating Officer's report, the Chairman will set-out any recommendations which the Hearings Panel is minded to make to the Authority with a view to promoting high standards of conduct among Councillors and seek the views of the Subject Member, the Investigating Officer and the Legal Advisor before the Hearings Panel finalises any such recommendations.

- 4.15.2 The Chairman will then ask the Subject Member whether they have any objection to publication by the authority of a statement of its findings.

4.16 Determination that there was a Breach of the Code of Conduct

- 4.16.1 Where the Hearings Panel determines that the Subject Member has failed to follow the Code of Conduct in the manner set-out in the Investigating Officer's report the Chairman will invite the Independent Person, the Investigating Officer (or in their absence, the Legal Advisor) and the Subject Member to make their representations as to whether or not any sanctions should be applied and, if so, what form they should take. Possible sanctions include:

- (a) Reporting its findings to Council *[or to the Parish Council]* for information;
- (b) Recommending to the Subject Member's Group Leader (or in the case of un-grouped Members, recommend to Council or to Committees) that they be removed from any or all Committees or Sub-Committees of the Council's;
- (c) Recommending to the Leader of the Council that the Subject Member be removed from the Cabinet, or removed from particular Portfolio responsibilities;
- (d) Instructing the Monitoring Officer to *[or recommend that the Parish Council]* arrange training for the Subject Member;
- (e) Removing the Subject Member *[or recommend to the Parish Council that the Member be removed]* from all outside appointments to which they have been appointed or nominated by the authority *[or by the Parish Council]*;

- (f) *Withdrawing [or recommend to the Parish Council that it withdraws]* facilities provided to the Subject Member by the Council, such as a computer, website and/or email and Internet access; or
- (g) *Excluding [or recommend that the Parish Council exclude]* the Subject Member from the Council's offices or other premises, with the exception of meeting rooms as necessary for attending Council, Committee and Sub-Committee meetings.

4.16.2 When deciding whether to apply one or more sanctions, the Hearing Panel will ensure that the application of any sanction is reasonable and proportionate to the Subject Member's behaviour. The Hearing Panel will consider the following questions along with any other relevant circumstances or other factors specific to the local environment:

- (a) What was the Subject Member's intention and did they know that they were failing to follow the District or Parish Council's Code of Conduct?
- (b) Did the Subject Member receive advice from officers before the incident and was that advice acted on in good faith?
- (c) Has there been a breach of trust?
- (d) Has there been financial impropriety, e.g. improper expense claims or procedural irregularities?
- (e) What was the result/impact of failing to follow the District or Parish Council's Code of Conduct?
- (f) How serious was the incident?
- (g) Does the Subject Member accept that they were at fault?
- (h) Did the Subject Member apologise to the relevant person?
- (i) Has the Subject Member previously been reprimanded or warned for similar misconduct?
- (j) Has the Subject Member previously breached the District or Parish Council's Code of Conduct?
- (k) Is there likely to be a repetition of the incident?

4.16.3 Having heard the representations, the Chairman will ensure that each Member of the Hearings Panel is satisfied that they have sufficient information to enable them to take an informed decision as to whether to impose a sanction and (if appropriate) as to the form of the sanction.

4.16.4 The Chairman should then set-out any recommendations which the Standards Committee is minded to make to the Authority with a view to promoting high standards of conduct among Councillors and seek the views of the Independent Person, the Investigating Officer (or in their absence, the Legal Advisor) and the Subject Member.

4.16.5 The Hearing Panel will adjourn and deliberate in private to consider whether to impose a sanction, and where appropriate what sanction to impose and when that sanction should take effect. In addition, they will consider any recommendations to be made to the Authority.

- 4.16.6 At the completion of their consideration, the Hearings Panel will reconvene the hearing in public and the Chairman will announce the Hearings Panel's decision as to whether a sanction is to be imposed, the nature of such a sanction, and when it should take effect, together with the principal reasons for those decisions. They will then give details of any recommendations to be made to the Authority.

4.17 Closing the hearing

The Hearings Panel will announce its decision on the day of the hearing and provide the Legal Advisor with a short written statement of their decision, which the Legal Advisor will use as the basis of the formal decision notice. The Chairman will then formally close the meeting.

5. Publication and notification of the decision and recommendations

- 5.1 Following the closing of the hearing, the Legal Advisor will agree with the Chairman of the Hearings Panel a formal written decision notice of the Hearings Panel's determination.
- 5.2 Within 20 working days of the hearing, the Monitoring Officer will provide a copy of the full written decision and the reasons for that decision, including any recommendations, to:
- (a) the Subject Member;
 - (b) the Complainant;
 - (c) in the case of a Parish Council Member; the Clerk to that Member's Parish Council.
- 5.3 Within 20 working days of the Hearing Panel's announcement of its decision and recommendations, the Monitoring Officer will publish a summary of the Hearing Panel's decision and recommendations and reasons for the decision and recommendations on the Council's website.

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PART 3.2 – ACCESS TO INFORMATION PROCEDURE RULES

3.2.1 Scope

These rules apply to all meetings of the Council, Committees, Forums and Panels but do not apply to Working Groups. The rules for Working Groups will be determined by the Committee which creates such Groups.

3.2.2 Additional Rights to Information

These rules do not affect any more specific rights to information contained elsewhere in this Constitution or by the law.

3.2.3 Rights to Attend Meetings

Members of the Public may attend meetings, subject to the exceptions outlined in these rules. There is public seating for 36 people in the Council Chamber and 22 people in the Committee Room. For numbers exceeding this it may be necessary to wait in the foyer/adjoining room.

3.2.4 Notice of Meetings

The Council will give at least five clear days' notice by posting details of the meeting at the Council's Offices in Sittingbourne, at the District Offices in Faversham and the Gateway at Sheerness. Clear days are defined as working days excluding the day of publication of the agenda and the day of the meeting, weekends and bank holidays. Details will also be posted on the website <http://services.swale.gov.uk/meetings/uucoverpage.aspx?bcr=1> If the meeting is called at shorter notice then details will be made available at the time the meeting is convened.

3.2.5 Access to Agenda and Reports before Meetings

The Council will make copies of the agenda and reports available (except where they contain confidential or exempt information) for inspection at least five clear days before the meeting, and on the website <http://services.swale.gov.uk/meetings/uucoverpage.aspx?bcr=1> Where a meeting is called at shorter notice, this information will be made available for inspection from the time the meeting is convened. Where reports are prepared after the summons has been sent out, the designated officer shall make the report available to the public as soon as it is completed and sent to Members.

3.2.6 Supply of Copies

The Council will supply copies of any agenda, reports (unless they contain confidential or exempt information), any further statements of particulars necessary to indicate the nature of the items in the agenda, and if the Proper Officer thinks fit, copies of any other documents

supplied to Members in connection with an item. This will be subject to payment of a charge for postage and any other costs. The agenda and reports can be viewed online:

<http://services.swale.gov.uk/meetings/uucoverpage.aspx?bcr=1> A reasonable number of copies of agenda, reports and minutes will be made available at meetings (free of charge).

3.2.7 Access to Minutes etc. after the meeting

The Council will make available copies of the following, for six years after the meeting:

- (a) The minutes of the meeting or records of decisions taken, excluding any part of the meeting which was not open to the public or which disclosed confidential or exempt information.
- (b) A summary of the proceedings not open to the public, where the minutes open to inspection would not provide a reasonably fair and coherent record.
- (c) The agenda for the meeting.
- (d) Reports relating to items when the meeting was open to the public.

3.2.8 Background Papers

3.2.8.1 List of background papers

The author of each report will include a list of documents (called background papers) in their report, relating to the subject matter of the report, and where they can be inspected, which in his/her opinion:

- (a) Disclose any facts or matters on which the report, or an important part of the report, is based;
- (b) Were relied on to a material extent in preparing the report;

but does not include published works or those that contain exempt or confidential information (as defined in Rule 3.2.10 of these rules).

3.2.8.2 Public inspection of background papers

The Council will make available for public inspection for four years after the date of the meeting a copy of each of the documents on the list of background papers. The background papers can be viewed at the Council offices during normal business hours for printing by members of the public or for supply by post as requested on payment of copying and postage.

3.2.9 Summary of Public's Rights

A written summary of the public's rights to attend meetings and to inspect and copy documents must be kept and be made available to the public, at the Council's offices. As this Constitution must be made available to the public, these rules constitute that written summary.

3.2.10 Exclusion of Access by the Public to Meetings

3.2.10.1 Confidential Information - Requirement to Exclude the Public

The public must be excluded from meetings whenever it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that confidential information would be disclosed.

3.2.10.2 Meaning of Confidential Information

Confidential information means:

- (i) information given to the Council by a Government department on terms (however expressed) which forbid the disclosure of the information to the public; or
- (ii) information, the disclosure of which, to the public is prohibited by or under any enactment or by the order of a Court, and in either case, a reference to the obligations of confidence to be construed accordingly.

3.2.10.3 Exempt Information - Discretion to Exclude the Public

Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 provides that a meeting may only exclude press and public by reason of exempt information where it is of the opinion that the public interest in maintaining confidentiality over-rides the public interest in disclosure.

Where the meeting will determine any person's civil rights or obligations, or adversely affect their positions, Article 6 of the Human Rights Act establishes a presumption that the meeting will be held in public unless a private hearing is necessary for one of the reasons specified in Article 6.

3.2.10.4 Meaning of Exempt Information

Exempt information means information falling within the following categories:

Category
1. Information relating to any individual.
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). See note below.
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and any employees of, or office holders under, the authority.
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
6. Information which reveals that the authority proposes

- (a) to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
 (b) to make an order or direction under any enactment.
7. Information relating to any action taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

Relevant to No. 3 - Information falling within No. 3 is not exempt information if it is required to be registered under:

- (a) the Companies Act 1985
- (b) the Friendly Societies Act 1974
- (c) the Friendly Societies Act 1992
- (d) the Industrial and Provident Societies Acts 1965 - 1978
- (e) the Building Societies Act 1986; or
- (f) the Charities Act 1993.

Information is not exempt if it relates to a proposed development for which the local planning authority may grant itself planning permission pursuant to Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992.

Relevant to all: Information is exempt information if and so long, as in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

3.2.11 Exclusion of Access by the Public to Reports

If the Proper Officer thinks fit, the Council may exclude access by the public to reports which, in his or her opinion, relate to items during which, in accordance with Rule 10 above, the meeting is likely not to be open to the public. Such reports will be marked, 'not for publication', together with the category of information which is likely to be disclosed.

3.2.12 Member and Officer Access to Exempt Reports

All Members will be served notice of all meetings of the Council and other committees and will therefore generally be in receipt of exempt reports. In exceptional circumstances, to be decided by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Council Leader and the Chair of the relevant Committee, the exempt report will not be published as part of the full agenda and will instead be tabled at the meeting whereby members and officers will have to sign for a numbered copy of the report which is to be returned at the end of the meeting before leaving the meeting room.

Exceptional circumstances are defined as, and limited to:

- (i) Where the business to be conducted involves commercially sensitive information, the disclosure of which could prejudice the Council's negotiating position; or
- (ii) Where there is a need to preserve legal professional privilege, the disclosure of which could prejudice any action contemplated by the Council.

3.2.13 Freedom of Information Act 2000

Members also share the same rights of access to information as members of the public under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. A request for information under the Act must:

- Be in writing (electronic requests are acceptable);
- Contain a name and address for correspondence;
- Describe the information requested.

The Council will comply with all requests for information under the Act, unless one or more of the statutory exemptions apply.

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PART 3.3 – BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK PROCEDURE RULES

3.3.1 The framework for decisions

The Council will be responsible for the adoption of its budget and policy framework. Once a budget or a policy framework is in place, it will be the responsibility of the Committees to implement it within the Financial Regulations.

3.3.2 The policy framework

The policy framework means the relevant plans and strategies which Full Council has determined must be approved by it. Some plans and strategies are required by law to be part of the policy framework, where others are for the Council to decide whether they should form part of the policy framework.

The Council has resolved to include the following policies in the authority's policy framework:

- i. Community Safety Strategy (Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy)
- ii. Licensing Authority Policy Statement
- iii. Approval of the Authority's budget strategy and supporting documents
- iv. Any plan or strategy relating to borrowing, investment or capital expenditure
- v. Plans and strategies which together comprise the Development Plan Documents (LDF)
- vi. Corporate Plan and supporting strategies
- vii. Equalities Strategy or Scheme

3.3.3 Process for developing the budget and policy framework

The Policy and Resources Committee will oversee the process of developing the framework for recommendation to Council. Relevant Service Committees will be involved within the development process, and the Policy and Resources Committee will conduct appropriate public consultation. In reaching a decision, the Council may adopt the Policy and Resources Committee's proposals, amend them, refer them back to the Policy and Resources Committee for further consideration, or substitute its own proposals in their place. In approving the policy framework, the Council may also specify the degree of in-year changes to the framework which may be undertaken by Committees. Any other changes to the budget and policy framework are reserved to the Council.

3.3.4 Decisions outside the budget or policy framework

(a) Subject to the financial procedure rules (Part 3.5 of this constitution, and particularly Section A3 on virements,) any committees and any officers, or Joint Arrangements discharging Council functions cannot take decisions which are contrary to the policy framework, or contrary to or not in accordance with the Budget. If any of these bodies or persons wishes to make a decision which is contrary to the policy framework, or contrary to or not wholly in accordance

with the budget approved by Full Council, then that decision may only be taken by the Council, subject to paragraph 3.3.5 below (urgent decisions outside of the budget and policy framework).

(b) If the Policy and Resources Committee or any Service Committee and any officers, or Joint Arrangements discharging Council functions want to make such a decision, they shall take advice from the Monitoring Officer and/or the Director of Resources as to whether the decision they want to make would be contrary to the policy framework, or contrary to or not wholly in accordance with the budget. If the advice of either of those officers is that the decision would not be in line with the existing budget and/or policy framework, then the decision must be referred by that body or person to the Council for decision, unless the decision is a matter of urgency, in which case the provisions in paragraph 3.3.5 (urgent decisions outside the budget and policy framework) shall apply.

3.3.5 Urgent decisions outside the budget or policy framework

(a) The Policy and Resources Committee, or the Chief Executive if that Committee is unable to meet, may take a decision which is contrary to the Council's policy framework or contrary to or not wholly in accordance with the budget approved by Full Council if the decision is a matter of urgency. However, the decision may only be taken:

(i) If it is not practical to convene a quorate meeting of the Full Council or the Urgent Decisions Committee; and

(ii) In the case of a decision by the Chief Executive, if it is not practical to convene a meeting of the Full Council, the Urgent Decisions Committee or the Policy and Resources Committee, and the Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee (or in their absence the Vice-Chair) agrees that the decision is a matter of urgency.

The record of the decision must include the reasons it is not practical to convene a quorate meeting of the Full Council, the Urgent Decisions Committee or the Policy and Resources Committee, and in the case of an urgent decision by the Chief Executive, the consent of the Chair (or Vice-Chair) of the Policy and Resources Committee to the decision being taken as a matter of urgency.

(b) Following the decision, the decision taker will provide a full report to the next available Council meeting explaining the decision, the reasons for it and why the decision was treated as a matter of urgency.

3.3.6 In-year changes to the budget and policy framework

The responsibility for agreeing the budget and policy framework lies with the Council, and decisions by the Committees or officers discharging functions must be in line with it. No changes to any policy and strategy which forms part of the policy framework may be made by those bodies or individuals except changes which:

- (i) will result in the closure or discontinuance of a service or part of service to meet a budgetary constraint;
- (ii) are necessary to ensure compliance with the law, ministerial direction or government guidance;
- (iii) would normally be agreed annually by the Council following consultation, but where the existing policy document is silent on the matter under consideration.

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PART 3.4 – OFFICER EMPLOYMENT PROCEDURE RULES

3.4.1 Recruitment and appointment – general provisions

(a) Declarations

(i) The Council will draw up a statement requiring any candidate for appointment as an officer to state in writing whether they are the parent, grandparent, partner, child, stepchild, adopted child, grandchild, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, nephew or niece of an existing councillor or officer of the Council; or of the partner of such persons. (This will be included in application forms).

(ii) No candidate so related to a councillor or an officer will be appointed without the authority of the relevant Head of Paid Service or Director or an officer nominated by them.

(b) Seeking support for appointment

(i) The Council will disqualify any applicant who directly or indirectly seeks the support of any councillor for any appointment with the Council. The content of this paragraph will be included in any recruitment information.

(ii) A Councillor shall not solicit for any person any Council appointment or give a written testimonial of a candidate's ability, experience or character for an application for appointment with the Council.

3.4.2 Recruitment of senior officers

Where the authority proposes to appoint a Head of Paid Service, Director or Head of Service, it shall :

(a) Draw-up a statement specifying

(i) the duties of the officer concerned; and

(ii) any qualifications or qualities to be sought in the person to be appointed;

(b) Make arrangements for the post to be advertised in such a way as is likely to bring it to the attention of persons who are qualified to apply for it; and

(c) Make arrangements for a copy of the statement mentioned in paragraph (a) to be sent to any person on request.

3.4.3 Appointment to senior posts

3.4.3.1 Appointment of Head of Paid Service

The Full Council will approve the appointment of the Head of Paid Service following the recommendation of such an appointment by the Appointments Sub-

Committee. The Full Council must approve the appointment before an offer of appointment is made to that person.

3.4.3.2 Appointment of Directors, Chief Financial Officer and Monitoring Officer

The Appointments Sub-Committee will appoint Directors and will make a recommendation to Council regarding the appointment of the Head of Paid Service, Chief Financial Officer and the Monitoring Officer.

3.4.3.3 Other Appointments

- (a) Officers below Directors – Appointment of officers below Directors (other than assistants to political groups) is the responsibility of the Head of Paid Service or his/her nominee, and may not be made by Councillors. This is subject to the provisions of the Chief Executive's general delegation number two which states that for Heads of Service appointments, a joint member officer consultation panel will be constituted, the membership of which will be agreed between the Chair of Policy and Resources and Chief Executive. The Chief Executive will make the decision on appointment in consultation with the other members of the panel.
- (b) Other Statutory Appointments – In relation to the Data Protection Officer a joint member officer consultation panel will be constituted, the membership of which will be agreed between the Chair of Policy and Resources and Chief Executive. The Chief Executive will make the decision on appointment in consultation with the other members of the Panel.
- (c) On occasions where it is appropriate in the business interests of the Council to appoint from among existing officers on an interim basis to cover roles at Head of Service level and above, then the same arrangements as set out in 3.6.2 will apply but with solely internal advertisement. In the event of these interim arrangements continuing in place for a period of six months (or such other shorter period agreed between the Head of Paid Service and the Chair of Policy and Resources Committee), then any proposal to make arrangements permanent will be subject to a competitive process as set out in 3.6.2. Where the role involved is a shared service role then regard should be had to any comments received from the chief executives and leaders of the partner authorities.

3.4.4 Disciplinary Action against Designated Statutory Officers (“DSOs”)

If a complaint of misconduct is received about the Chief Executive, Chief Financial Officer or Monitoring Officer, the complaint will be dealt with in accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010 (as amended).

- (a) The dismissal of any of the Head of Paid Service, the Chief Finance Officer or Monitoring Officer, the DSOs, may only be made by the Council following consideration and recommendation by the Investigation and Disciplinary Committee and consideration by the Independent Persons Panel, to include at least two, Independent Persons appointed under section 28(7) of the Localism Act 2011. (Note: At least two Independent Persons must be invited to the Panel and if the Council does not have more than one Independent Person, the Panel should invite such Independent Persons who may have been appointed to other authorities as they consider appropriate.) The Council must appoint to the Panel such relevant independent persons who have accepted an invitation, in accordance with the following priority order:
 - a. an independent person who has been appointed by the authority and who is a local government elector;
 - b. any other independent person who has been appointed by the authority;
 - c. an independent person who has been appointed by another authority or authorities.
- (b) Before taking a vote at a Council meeting on whether or not to approve such a dismissal, the authority must take into account, in particular:
 - a. any advice, views or recommendations of the Sub-committee;
 - b. the conclusions of any investigation into the proposed dismissal; and
 - c. any representations from the relevant Officer.
- (c) The authority must approve the dismissal before notice of dismissal is given to that person.

Procedure: Investigation

- (d) It is in the interests of all parties that the proceedings be conducted expeditiously and fairly.
- (e) In respect of any complaints alleging misconduct by a DSO these will initially be considered by the Head of Paid Service (or if the allegation relates to the Head of Paid Service, the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chair of Policy and Resources Committee. At this stage the available decisions to the officer will be to:
 - a. Take no action; or

- b. Refer the matter to the Investigation and Disciplinary Sub-committee;
- (f) If the matter is referred to the Sub-committee the officer making the decision may in consultation with the Chair of Policy and Resources Committee suspend the DSO until the matter is considered by the Sub-committee;
- (g) In the exercise of its function, the Investigation and Disciplinary Sub-committee is to receive and consider any complaint/allegations referred to it. It may:
 - a. make such enquiries of the relevant officer or any other person as it considers appropriate;
 - b. request additional information, explanations or documents from any person;
 - c. invite or receive representations from any person.
- (h) The Sub-committee having carried out such steps as it considers appropriate and having heard representations from the DSO or their adviser shall decide whether the issues:
 - a. require no further formal action, or
 - b. should be referred to an Independent Investigator ("II").
- (i) In considering whether the threshold in deciding to appoint an II has been met the Sub-committee will assess whether:
 - a. if the allegations are proved it would be such as to lead to the dismissal or other action which would be recorded on the officer's personal file;
 - b. there is evidence in support of the allegation/issue sufficient to require further investigation.
 - c. In deciding whether the threshold for the appointment of an II has been reached the Sub-committee may carry out such preliminary investigations as it considers appropriate or necessary or authorise officers to do so. This shall be solely for the purpose of establishing whether or not the threshold for appointing an II to carry out an investigation has been met.
- (j) Before deciding to appoint an II or suspend a DSO the Investigation and Disciplinary Sub-committee shall invite the representations of the DSO unless it is impracticable to do so. The DSO shall have the right to be accompanied at the Sub-committee Meeting.
- (k) Any matters of discipline referred to the Sub-committee shall be dealt with under the JNC Scheme of Conditions of Service for Chief Officers.

- (l) The Sub-committee may determine on behalf of the Council to either exonerate the employee or, if they find misconduct to determine the form of disciplinary action that may be appropriate.

Procedure: Receiving the II's Report/ Hearing

- (m) The Sub-committee should receive any report produced by an II in relation to a DSO within one month of the receipt of the report by the Council.
- (n) The DSO shall have the right to attend and be accompanied at the Sub-committee Meeting which considers the II's report.
- (o) The Sub-committee shall consider the II's report and shall invite representations from the officer and/or their representative. The Sub-committee may impose disciplinary sanctions as set out in the Council's disciplinary procedures, the JNC Terms and Conditions Handbook for Chief Officers and the JNC Terms and Conditions Handbook for Chief Executives. In conducting any hearing the Committee shall have regard to the model disciplinary procedure in the JNC handbook for Chief Executives and the ACAS Code of Practice.
- (p) If the sub-committee determines that disciplinary action short of dismissal should be taken then the DS may appeal against that decision to the Statutory Officers Appeals Disciplinary Appeals Sub-committee
- (q) Any decision by the Investigation and Disciplinary Sub-committee that a DSO shall be dismissed shall be subject to referral to Full Council. The consideration by Full Council shall be an appeal against the decision to dismiss and Full Council may confirm the decision to dismiss or reach a different conclusion.

3.4.5 Disciplinary Action

Councillors will not be involved in any disciplinary action nor dismissal against any officer (other than the Statutory Officers mentioned in paragraph 3.6.4 above) except where such involvement is necessary for any investigation or inquiry into alleged misconduct. However, the Council's disciplinary, capability and related procedures, as adopted from time to time may allow a right of appeal to Councillors in respect of disciplinary action or capability from decisions made by the Chief Executive or the involvement of Councillors in consultation with the Chief Executive in relation to disciplinary matters.

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PART 3.5 – FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

STATUS OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

In order to comply with statutory provisions it is necessary to compile a set of Regulations as a means of guidance and assistance to both Members and officers. The Financial Regulations are intended to operate within the context of senior management's (Chief Executive/Directors/Heads of Service) responsibility for corporate management and their responsibility to give advice to the Council and Committees and cover the main principles of financial control.

Whilst the terms 'Chief Executive' and 'Head of Service' are used within this document for defining overall responsibility, all employees have a duty to comply with Financial Standing Regulations.

FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

3.5.1 Financial Management

3.5.1.1 Council

3.5.1.1.1 The Full Council is responsible for adopting the authority's constitution, the Members' code of conduct and for approving the policy framework and budget within which the authority operates. The Full Council is also responsible for approving procedures for recording and reporting decisions taken. This includes key decisions delegated by and decisions taken by the council and its committees.

3.5.1.2 Policy and Resources Committee

3.5.1.2.1 The Policy & Resources Committee is responsible for proposing the policy framework and budget to the Full Council, regulating and controlling the finances of the Council.

3.5.1.2.2 A Committee can delegate its decision making powers to a Director. In doing so the Director must take account of legal and financial liabilities and risk management issues that may arise from the decision.

3.5.1.3 The Statutory Officers

3.5.1.3.1 The Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive) is responsible for the corporate and overall strategic management of the authority as a whole. The Head of Paid

Service is also responsible, together with the Monitoring Officer, for the system of record keeping in relation to all the Full Council's decisions.

3.5.1.3.2 The Monitoring Officer is responsible for promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct. The Monitoring Officer is also responsible for reporting any actual or potential breaches of the law or maladministration to the Full council and/or to the Policy and Resources Committee, and for ensuring that procedures for recording and reporting key decisions are operating effectively.

3.5.1.3.3 The Monitoring Officer (together with the Director of Resources) is responsible for advising the Committees or Full Council about whether a decision is likely to be considered contrary or not wholly in accordance with the budget.

3.5.1.3.4 The Director of Resources has statutory duties in relation to the financial administration and stewardship of the authority. This statutory responsibility cannot be overridden. The statutory duties arise from:

- Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972
- The Local Government Finance Act 1988
- The Local Government and Housing Act 1989
- The Local Government Acts 2000
- The Local Government Act 2003
- The Accounts and Audit Regulations

3.5.1.3.5 The Director of Resources is responsible for:

- the proper administration of the authority's financial affairs
- setting and monitoring compliance with financial management standards
- advising on the corporate financial position and on the key financial controls necessary to secure sound financial management
- providing financial information
- preparing the revenue budget and capital programme
- treasury management.

3.5.1.3.6 Section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 requires the Director of Resources to report to the Full Council and the external auditor if the authority or one of its officers:

- has made, or is about to make, a decision which involves incurring unlawful expenditure
- has taken, or is about to take, an unlawful action which has resulted or would result in a loss or deficiency to the authority
- is about to make an unlawful entry in the authority's accounts.

3.5.1.3.7 Section 114 of the 1988 Act also requires:

- the Director of Resources to nominate a properly qualified member of staff to deputise should they be unable to perform the duties under section 114 personally
- the authority to provide the Chief Financial Officer with sufficient staff, accommodation and other resources – including legal advice where this is necessary – to carry out the duties under section 114.

3.5.1.3.8 Senior Management are responsible for:

- ensuring that Members are advised of the financial implications of all proposals and that the financial implications have been agreed by the Director of Resources
- signing contracts on behalf of the authority.

3.5.1.3.9 It is the responsibility of Senior Management to consult with the Director of Resources and seek approval on any matter liable to affect the authority's finances materially, before any commitments are incurred.

3.5.1.3.10 The Strategic Management Team shall report to the Policy and Resources Committee with respect to the level of resources proposed to be utilised in each financial year and shall keep the Policy and Resources Committee informed with respect to the Council's finances and financial performance and other Committees informed with respect to the financial implications of their activities.

3.5.1.3.11 Full Council is responsible for making, and amending, such financial regulations as it considers necessary for the supervision and control of the finances and assets of the Council. The Policy and Resources Committee is to be responsible for proposals to make or amend such financial regulations.

3.5.1.3.12 The Committees, Forums and Panels shall observe the Council's Financial Standing Orders and Financial Regulations in all aspects of their work.

3.5.1.3.13 The Strategic Management Team and each Head of Service are responsible for the observance of the Council's Financial Regulations, and for the accountability and control of staff and the security, custody and control of all resources including plant, materials, cash and stores appertaining to their area of activity.

3.5.1.4 Other Financial Accountabilities

3.5.1.4.1 The Council is responsible for agreeing procedures for virement of expenditure between budget headings. The Strategic Management Team is

responsible for agreeing in-year virements within delegated limits, in consultation with the Director of Resources where required.

3.5.1.4.2 The Policy and Resources Committee is responsible for agreeing procedures for carrying forward under and overspendings on budget headings.

3.5.1.4.3 The Director of Resources is responsible for selecting accounting policies and ensuring that they are applied consistently.

3.5.1.4.4 The Director of Resources is responsible for determining the accounting procedures and records for the authority, and for ensuring statutory accounting returns are made to the relevant body.

3.5.1.4.5 The Director of Resources is responsible for ensuring that the annual statement of accounts is prepared in accordance with the *Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom* (CIPFA/LASAAC). The Audit Committee is responsible for approving the annual statement of accounts.

3.5.2 Financial Planning

3.5.2.1 Budgeting

3.5.2.1.1 The detailed form of capital and revenue estimates shall be determined by the Director of Resources consistent with the general directions of the Policy and Resources Committee and in accordance with the budget policies, in particular the Medium Term Financial Plan and Corporate Plan and its priorities. The Medium Term Financial Plan should be reviewed annually by the Policy and Resources Committee and recommend any changes in budget policy to the Council.

3.5.2.1.2 Revenue and capital estimates shall be prepared by the Heads of Finance in consultation with the senior management who shall collate the approved estimates and report to the Policy and Resources Committee thereon, such report to include compliance with the financial plan(s) approved by the Council and other financial implications. Opportunities to improve economy, efficiency and effectiveness; by encouraging the best use of resources and value for money should be reflected in service planning.

3.5.2.1.3 The Director of Resources and the Chair of Policy and Resources Committee shall prepare the annual budget report to the Policy and Resources Committee. Following receipt of any comments from the Policy and Resources Committee and taking into account the views of the Service Committees and making any amendments that as a result seem appropriate, the Policy and Resources Committee shall make recommendations to the Full Council for approval.

3.5.2.1.4 By 11 March each year the Full Council shall consider the proposals on the budget and policy framework and the recommendation as to the amount of the Council Tax to be levied for the ensuing financial year. The Council shall set the amount of Council Tax to be levied after taking into account the precepts issued by the County Council, Police and Fire and Rescue Services and Town/Parish Councils.

3.5.2.2 Maintenance of Reserves

3.5.2.2.1 It is the responsibility of the Director of Resources to advise the Policy and Resources Committee and Council on prudent levels of reserves for the authority.

3.5.2.2.2 The use of reserves during the year to cover operational expenditure will be handled through the virement rules.

3.5.3 Risk Management and Control of Resources

3.5.3.1 Risk Management

3.5.3.1.1 The Council is responsible for approving the Council's risk management strategy. The Audit Committee is responsible for the review and monitoring of the Council's arrangements for managing risk.

3.5.3.1.2 The Head of Audit Partnership is responsible for preparing the Council's risk management strategy and for promoting it throughout the Council.

3.5.3.2 Internal Control

3.5.3.2.1. Internal Control refers to the systems of control devised by management to help ensure the Council's objectives are achieved in a manner that promotes economical, efficient and effective use of resources and that the Council's assets and interests are safeguarded.

3.5.3.2.2 The Director of Resources is responsible for advising on effective systems of internal control. These arrangements need to ensure compliance with all applicable statutes and regulations, and other relevant statements of best practice. They should ensure that public funds are properly safeguarded and used economically, efficiently, and in accordance with the statutory and other authorities that govern their use.

3.5.3.2.3 It is the responsibility of the Strategic Management Team to establish sound arrangements for planning, appraising, authorising and controlling their operations in order to achieve continuous improvement, economy, efficiency, and effectiveness and for achieving their financial performance targets.

3.5.3.3 Audit Requirements

3.5.3.3.1 The Accounts and Audit Regulations require every local authority to maintain an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and of its system of internal control.

3.5.3.3.2 The Council shall be responsible for ensuring that there are continuous arrangements to measure, evaluate and report upon the effectiveness of internal control and efficient use of resources, by the establishment of an adequate internal audit function.

3.5.3.3.3 The Council has the option to opt into the “appointing person” national auditor appointment arrangements established by the Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA). The Audit Committee will make a recommendation to Council on whether to opt in to this arrangement. The basic duties of the external auditor are governed by Section 5 of the Audit Commission Act 1998. The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 requires a relevant Council/Authority to appoint a local auditor to audit its accounts for a financial year not later than 31 December in the preceding year.

3.5.3.4 Preventing Fraud and Corruption

3.5.3.4.1 The Head of Audit Partnership is responsible for the development and maintenance of an anti-fraud and anti-corruption policy.

3.5.3.5 Non-property Assets

3.5.3.5.1 Officers should ensure that records and assets are properly maintained and securely held. They should ensure that contingency plans for the security of assets and continuity of service in the event of disaster or system failure are in place.

3.5.3.6 Treasury Management

3.5.3.6.1 This Council has adopted CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management in Local Authorities.

3.5.3.6.2 This Council:

- will create and maintain a treasury management policy statement, stating the policies, objectives and approach to risk management of its treasury management activities;
- will create and maintain suitable treasury management practices (TMP's), setting out how those policies and objectives will be achieved;
- will receive an annual strategy and plan in advance of the year, a mid-year review and an annual report after its close;

- has nominated the Audit Committee to be responsible for ensuring effective scrutiny of the treasury management strategy and policies;
- has delegated responsibility for the implementation and regular monitoring to Audit Committee and
- has delegated responsibility for the execution and administration of treasury management decisions to the Director of Resources or, through them, to their staff, who shall all be required to act in accordance with CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management in Local Authorities.

3.5.3.6.3 Unless statutory or regulatory requirement demand otherwise, all monies in the hands of the Council will be aggregated for cashflow and investment management purposes and will be under the control of the Director of Resources being the officer designated for the purposes of Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972.

3.5.3.6.4 The Council shall invest only with institutions approved, and within criteria set by the Council on recommendation by the Policy and Resources Committee within the terms of the Treasury Management Policy Statement and Investment Strategy.

3.5.3.6.5 All investments and borrowing of money under its control shall be made in the name of the Council or in the name of nominees approved by the Council; bearer securities shall be excluded from this rule but any purchase of such securities shall be reported to the Council.

3.5.3.6.6 All securities held in the name of the Council or its nominees shall be held by the Director of Resources under secure arrangement.

3.5.3.6.7 The Director of Resources shall be the Council's registrar of stocks, bonds and mortgages and shall maintain records of all borrowing of money by the Council.

3.5.3.6.8 All officers acting as trustees by virtue of their official position shall deposit all securities etc. relating to the trust with the Chief Executive, unless the deed otherwise provides.

3.5.3.7 Staffing

3.5.3.7.1 The Head of Paid Service is responsible for the terms and conditions of all staff and for providing overall management to staff. They are also responsible for ensuring that there is proper use of the evaluation or other agreed systems for determining the remuneration of a job.

3.5.4 Systems and Procedures

3.5.4.1 Income & Expenditure

3.5.4.1.1 The collection, recording and banking of money due to the Council shall be under the supervision of or under arrangements approved by the Director of Resources.

3.5.4.1.2 All payments must be made in accordance with the internal controls and authorisations approved by the Director of Resources.

3.5.4.1.3 All arrangements with the Council's Bankers shall be made by or under arrangements approved by the Director of Resources, who shall be authorised to operate such banking accounts.

3.5.4.2 Payments to Employees and Members

3.5.4.2.1 The payment of all salaries, Member's allowances, compensations, gifts and other emoluments to all employees or former employees of the Council shall be made by the Head of Human Resources.

3.5.4.3 Taxation

3.5.4.3.1 The Director of Resources is responsible for advising senior management, in light of guidance issued by appropriate bodies and relevant legislation as it applies, on all taxation issues that affect the authority.

3.5.4.3.2 The Director of Resources is responsible for maintaining the authority's tax records, making all tax payments, receiving tax credits and submitting tax returns by their due date as appropriate.

3.5.4.4 Trading Accounts

3.5.4.4.1 It is the responsibility of the Director of Resources to advise on the establishment and operation of trading accounts and business units.

3.5.5. External Arrangements

3.5.5.1 Partnerships

3.5.5.1.1 Financial matters relating to arrangements whereby one Council administers funds jointly on behalf of itself and others shall be subject to the Financial Regulations of the administering Council, unless these Rules are more stringent.

3.5.5.1.2 The Director of Resources must ensure the accounting arrangements to be adopted relating to partnerships are satisfactory.

3.5.5.2 External Funding

3.5.5.2.1 The Director of Resources is responsible for ensuring that all funding notified by external bodies is received and properly recorded in the authority's accounts.

3.5.5.3 Work for Third Parties

3.5.5.3.1 The relevant Committee is responsible for approving the contractual arrangements for any work for third parties or external bodies.

FINANCIAL REGULATIONS APPENDICES

This section expands upon the core principles outlined in the financial regulations, and provides a more detailed list of responsibilities, agreed procedure and guidance.

A. Financial Management

Why is this important?

All staff and Members have a duty to abide by the highest standards of probity in dealing with financial issues. This is facilitated by ensuring everyone is clear about the standards to which they are working and the controls that are in place to ensure that these standards are met. This set of Financial Standing Orders and Financial Regulations prescribe the main standards and controls. Each Head of Service shall ensure that their staff are fully aware of these standards and controls and comply with them whilst carrying out their duties

1.1 Senior management shall consult the Director of Resources with respect to any matter within their remit which is liable to affect the finances, other than provided in estimates, of the Council before any provisional or other commitment is incurred or before reporting thereon to the relevant Committee.

1.2 The Director of Resources is responsible for ensuring the proper administration of the financial affairs of the Council and that financial management standards and controls are in place and are effectively monitored for compliance.

A1. Accounting

Why is this important?

Maintaining proper accounting records is one of the ways in which the Council discharges its responsibilities for stewardship of public resources. The Council has a statutory responsibility in preparing its annual accounts to present fairly its operations during the year. These accounting records are subject to external audit. This audit provides assurance that the accounts are prepared properly, that approved accounting practices have been followed and that quality arrangements have been made for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of the Council's resources.

A1.1 All accounting procedures, accounting policies, and financial records of the Council and its officers shall be as determined by the Director of Resources. The financial procedures and records maintained in other Service Units are the responsibility of

Senior Management and shall be subject to the approval of the Director of Resources.

A1.2 The Director of Resources shall make proper arrangements for the external audit of the Council's accounts in accordance with the most recent Accounts and Audit Regulations.

A1.3 Senior Management are required to maintain adequate records to provide an audit trail leading from the source of income/expenditure through to the accounting statements and to provide such information as required to enable the Statement of Accounts to be completed in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Director of Resources.

A1.4 Senior Management are to consult and obtain approval from the Chief Financial Officer before making changes to accounting records and procedures.

A1.5 The following principles shall be observed in the allocation of accounting duties:-

- The duties of providing information regarding sums due to or from the Council and of calculating, checking and recording these sums, shall be separated as completely as possible from the duty of collecting or disbursing them;
- Officers charged with the duty of examining and checking the accounts of each transaction shall not themselves be engaged in any of those transactions.

A1.6 Schedules of authorised signatories are held within the Finance Unit, which should be updated at least on an annual basis and where necessary senior management should inform Finance of any intervening changes such as the appointment of new staff.

A2. Budgetary Control

Why is this important?

Budget management ensures that once the budget has been approved by the Full Council, allocated resources are used for their intended purposes and are properly accounted for. Budgetary control is a continuous process, enabling the Council to review and adjust its budget targets during the financial year. It also provides the mechanism that calls to account managers responsible for defined elements of the budget.

By continuously identifying and explaining variances against budgetary targets, the Council can identify changes in trends and resource requirements at the earliest opportunity. The Council itself operates within an annual revenue limit, approved when setting the overall annual budget. To ensure that the Council in total does not overspend, each service is required to manage its own expenditure within the budget allocated to it. For the purposes of budgetary control by managers, a budget will normally be the planned income and expenditure excluding support and capital charges, for the service area or cost centre.

A2.1 Where it appears that the amount of any budget estimate of approved expenditure may be exceeded or the amount of any head of approved income may not be reached by a significant amount, it shall be the duty of the Senior Management concerned after consultation with the Director of Resources, to inform the Strategic Management Team and the Policy and Resources Committee.

A2.2 A summary of such variations from budgeted amounts, whether or not previously reported, shall be included within the monthly reports to Management Team and twice yearly reports to Policy and Resources Committee. This summary would include income and expenditure programmed for the remainder of the financial year, effectively presenting an updated outturn for the financial year. The Management Team would advise of any remedial action required to adjust the overall budget to bring it back in line with the original budget, subject to any Policy and Resources Committee approval to vary the original budget.

A2.3 The Director of Resources shall provide each Head of Service with periodic statements of receipts and payments under each head of approved budget. It is the responsibility of senior management to control income and expenditure within their area and to monitor performance, taking account of financial information provided by the Director of Resources. They should report on variances within their own areas. They should also take any action necessary to avoid exceeding their budget allocation and alert the Director of Resources to any problems.

A3. Budget Virement

Why is this important?

The scheme of virement is intended to enable the Policy and Resources Committee, senior management and their staff to manage budgets with a degree of flexibility within the overall policy framework determined by the Full Council, and therefore to optimise the use of resources.

A3.1 Under virement a Head of Service may propose to spend more than originally planned on one budget head provided that this is matched by a corresponding reduction on some other budget head within their control. Within the Council scheme of virement there are other rules to be applied as detailed in the following table.

Virement Limits

Level of authority	Value of virement (including any partnership funding)	Notes
Budget holders	Up to £5,000 for any single virement within the approved budget framework coming under the budget holder's individual responsibility	Must be approved by service accountant.
Heads of Service	Up to £20,000 for any single virement within the approved budget framework coming under the Head of Service's individual responsibility	Must be approved by the Director of Resources and Chief Executive
Chief Executive	Up to £100,000 for any single virement within the approved budget framework	Must be approved by the Director of Resources
Policy and Resources Committee	£100,000 and above for any single virement within the approved budget framework	Requires a joint report from the Head of Service and Director of Resources and endorsed by the Chief Executive

Full Council	Any amount outside of the approved budget framework or which would significantly affect service standards	Requires a joint report from the Head of Service and Director of Resources and endorsed by the Chief Executive
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Services not within the control of a Head of Service, (eg depreciation, recharges from central services such as Finance, Legal, etc.) are not available for virement except at the discretion of the Executive Management Team.

Any virement that is likely to impact on the level of service of another Head of Service should only be implemented after the agreement with the relevant Head of Service. Where in setting the annual budget there is an approved lump-sum budget intended for allocation during the year, its allocation will not be treated as a virement, provided that the amount is used in accordance with the purposes for which it was established.

B. Financial Planning

B1. Budget Preparation

Why is this important?

The budget determines the level of activity which can be delivered in each service area.

B1.1 The revenue and capital budget proposals for the year ahead and the Medium Term Financial Strategy will be submitted to the Policy and Resources Committee. Any submission should take into account the Corporate Plan and the associated corporate priorities.

B1.2 The Policy and Resources Committee shall consider the aggregate effect of these proposals upon the Council's financial resources and shall submit them to the Council for approval with a recommendation of the council tax to be levied for the ensuing financial year.

B1.3 Each Member of the Council shall be provided with a copy of the Revenue and Capital Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan together with a statement and report by the Director of Resources of their effect on the Council's finances including reserves and the council tax to be levied before any meeting of the Council at which such matters will be considered.

B1.4 The Policy and Resources Committee shall review fees and charges as part of the annual budget setting process.

B1.5 The Director of Resources is responsible for ensuring that a revenue budget is prepared on an annual basis and a Medium Term Financial Plan on a three-yearly basis for consideration by Policy and Resources Committee, before submission to the Full Council. The Full Council may amend the budget.

B1.6 The Director of Resources is responsible for issuing guidance on the general content of the budget as soon as possible following approval by the Full Council.

B1.7 It is the responsibility of senior management to ensure that budget estimates reflecting agreed service plans are submitted to the Policy and Resources Committee and that these estimates are prepared in line with guidance issued by the Director of Resources.

B1.8 The Director of Resources is responsible for providing appropriate financial information to enable budgets to be monitored effectively. They must ensure processes are in place for monitoring and controlling expenditure and income against budget allocations and report to the Policy and Resources Committee on the overall position on a regular basis.

B1.9 It is the responsibility of senior management to control income and expenditure within their area and to monitor performance, taking account of financial information provided by the Director of Resources. They should report on variances within their own areas. They should also take any action necessary to avoid exceeding their budget allocation and alert the Director of Resources to any problems as early in the financial year as possible.

B1.10 The Director of Resources is responsible for developing and maintaining a resource allocation process that ensures due consideration of the Full Council's policy framework.

B1.11 The Director of Resources is responsible for ensuring that a capital programme is prepared on an annual basis for consideration by the Policy and Resources Committee before submission to the Full Council.

B1.12 Guidelines on budget preparation are issued to senior management by the Director of Resources following agreement with the Strategic Management Team. The guidelines will take account of:

- legal requirements
- medium-term planning prospects

- the corporate plan
- available resources
- spending pressures
- best value and other relevant government guidelines
- other internal policy documents
- cross-cutting issues (where relevant).

B1.13 Senior management shall prepare schemes and estimates for new capital schemes, including associated revenue expenditure, for consideration by the Strategic Management Team. The Director of Resources will co-ordinate these capital bids and following ranking according to the Council's priority matrix, present the draft capital programme to the Strategic Management Team.

B1.14 Those new schemes that are approved by the Strategic Management Team together with an updated position of the existing capital schemes forming the new three year Capital Programme shall be presented to the Policy and Resources Committee for consideration. The Policy and Resources Committee submits its recommendations on the capital programme to the Council. Upon the approval by the Council of a programme of capital expenditure senior management shall be authorised:-

- To take steps to enable land required for the purposes of the programme to be acquired in due time;
- To submit to tender in accordance with the accompanying contract standing orders those works and/or services approved in the capital programme;
- Secure the partnership funding including taking into account any governance arrangements necessary to pursue a joint funded capital scheme.

B1.15 It is the responsibility of the Director of Resources to advise the Policy and Resources Committee and/or the Full council on prudent levels of reserves for the authority.

B2. Reserves

Why is this important?

The Council needs to maintain Reserves to enable it to deal with unexpected events and thereby protect it from overspending should such an event occur.

Reserves for specific purposes may also be maintained, such as the purchase or renewal of capital items

B2.1 Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the Director of Resources to report on the robustness of the estimates and the adequacy of financial reserves held by the Council. As part of the setting of the annual budget and the level of the council tax the Director of Resources shall report to the Council on the robustness of the estimates and the adequacy of financial reserves. The report will include an evaluation of the risk to the General Fund and the General Reserve, the two principal reserves. A full schedule of all the reserves will be part of the report to Council.

B2.2 The Director of Resources shall approve the setting up and the purpose of any reserves and funds where they are within the approved budget framework. The Director of Resources has authority to rationalise reserves that are no longer required.

B2.3 The Director of Resources will be responsible for the authorisation and expenditure from reserves in consultation with the senior management. For some, reserves authorisation by the Policy and Resources Committee is required.

C. Risk Management and Control of Resources

C1. Audit Requirements

Internal Audit

Why is this important?

The requirement for an internal audit function for local authorities is implied by Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, which requires that authorities “make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs”. The Accounts and Audit Regulations more specifically require that a “relevant body must undertake an adequate and effective internal audit of its accounting records and of its system of internal control in accordance with the proper practices in relation to internal control.

The role of Internal Audit shall be based upon the principles contained within the most recent Code of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government. Accordingly, internal audit is an independent and objective appraisal function established by the Council for reviewing the system of internal control. It examines, evaluates and reports on the adequacy of internal control as a contribution to the proper, economic, efficient and effective use of resources.

C1.1 The Council shall be responsible for ensuring that there are continuous arrangements to measure, evaluate and report upon the effectiveness of internal control and efficient use of resources. These aspects will be subject to evaluation and review by Internal Audit which shall be headed by the Head of Audit Partnership normally reporting

directly to the Chief Executive, but who also has rights of unrestricted access to Members. The Head of Audit Partnership shall report regularly to the Audit Committee.

C1.2 The Head of Audit Partnership will consult with the Director of Resources, the Council's Section 151 officer, and the external auditors in drafting the annual Internal Audit Plan to be approved by the Audit Committee.

C1.3 The Council will once a year conduct a review of the effectiveness of its internal audit. The findings of the review must be considered as part of the consideration of the system of internal control by the Audit Committee.

C1.4 The Head of Audit Partnership has authority to:-

- Enter at all reasonable times on any Council premises or land;
- Have access to all records, documents and information relating to the business of the Council;
- Require and receive such explanations as are necessary concerning any matter under examination, and,
- Require any employee of the Council to produce cash, stores or any other Council property under their control.

C1.5 The Internal Audit Section shall be sufficiently independent to enable its auditors to perform their duties in a manner which will allow their professional judgements and recommendations to be effective and impartial.

C1.6 It is a management responsibility to apply sound internal controls in the Authority's systems and to maintain those controls. This includes responsibility for the prevention and detection of fraud and other illegal acts. However, the Head of Audit Partnership should be consulted about any significant proposed changes to existing systems and implementation of new systems, and make recommendations on the standard of control to be applied.

C1.7 Whenever any matter arises which involves, or is thought to involve, irregularities concerning cash, stores or other property of the Council, or any suspected irregularity in the exercise of the functions of the authority, the Head of Service concerned shall forthwith notify the Director of Resources and the Head of Audit Partnership. The Director of Resources and the Head of Audit Partnership and, as necessary, the Council's Monitoring Officer, shall also be informed of the steps that the senior management has taken/intends to take by way of investigation or other action.

C1.8 The Accounts and Audit Regulations require that any officer or Member must;

- Make available such documents and records as appear to be necessary for the purposes of the audit; and
- supply such information and explanation as the Head of Audit considers necessary for that purpose.

External Audit

Why is this important?

Public audit allows authorities to be held accountable for the public money at their disposal.

Auditors are to satisfy themselves that the authority's accounts have been prepared in accordance with the necessary directions; proper practices have been observed in the compilation of accounts; and proper arrangements are in place for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness of use of resources.

C1.9 The external auditors shall be given access at all reasonable times to premises, personnel, documents and assets that they consider necessary for the purposes of their work.

C1.10 There should be effective liaison between the external and internal auditors.

C1.11 The external auditors will present their Audit Plan, Annual Governance Report and other findings to the Audit Committee and/or Full Council as deemed necessary.

C2. Internal Control

Why is this important?

The authority is complex and beyond the direct control of individuals. It therefore requires internal controls to manage and monitor progress towards strategic objectives. The authority faces a wide range of financial, administrative and commercial risks, both from internal and external factors, which threaten the achievement of its objectives. Internal controls are necessary to manage these risks.

Authorised Signatories

C2.1 The Senior Management shall determine who is authorised to sign official documents on their behalf.

C2.2 The Senior Management shall provide the Director of Resources with up-to-date lists of specimen signatures of authorised officers.

C2.3 The Director of Resources shall maintain a register of all officers authorised to sign official documents.

C2.4 The Head of Legal Partnership, and any other officer authorised by them, are authorised to seal any document.

C3. Preventing Fraud and Corruption

Why is this important?

The Council will not tolerate fraud and corruption in the administration of its responsibilities, whether from inside or outside the Council. The Council's expectation of propriety and accountability is that Members and officers at all levels will lead by example in ensuring adherence to legal requirements, rules, procedures and practices. The Council also expects that individuals and organisations (e.g. suppliers, contractors, service providers) with whom it comes into contact will act towards the Council with integrity and without thought or actions involving fraud and corruption.

C3.1 The Head of Audit Partnership will maintain an anti-fraud and anti-corruption policy.

C3.2 All Heads of Service are expected to maintain adequate and effective internal control arrangements, with advice from the Head of Audit Partnership and/or Director of Resources.

C3.3 Where suspected irregularities are reported to the Head of Audit Partnership, Director of Resources or Chief Executive, the necessary investigations will be carried out expediently and any resulting actions will be reported as appropriate.

C3.4 The Council will comply with the requirements of the Bribery Act 2011.

C4. Assets

Why is this important?

The Council holds assets in the form of property, computers, equipment, vehicles, furniture and other items worth many millions of pounds. It is important that assets are safeguarded and used efficiently in service delivery, and that there are arrangements for the security of both assets and information required for service operations. An up-to-date asset register is a prerequisite for proper fixed asset accounting and sound asset management.

Inventories

C4.1 Senior Management shall be responsible for the security and safe keeping of all equipment, stores and other property under their control.

C4.2 Each senior manager shall be responsible for maintaining an inventory of assets under their control, for taking action in relation to surpluses or deficiencies and annotating the inventory accordingly.

C4.3 The Council's property shall not be removed otherwise than in accordance with the ordinary course of the Council's business or used otherwise than for the Council's purposes.

C4.4 Any acquisition, disposal or transfer of items of property must be recorded on the inventory at the time when the physical transaction takes place.

C4.5 None of the Council's property shall be sold, scrapped or otherwise disposed of without prior sanction of the responsible senior manager. All disposals shall be by competitive tender or by a method approved by the Director of Resources.

Land and Property

C4.6 The Head of Legal Partnership shall maintain a terrier of all properties owned by the Council (except dwellings provided under the Housing Acts), and a record of the Council's interests in land.

C4.7 The form of the record is as laid down by the Head of Legal Partnership, but should detail:-

- The purpose for which the property is held;
- Location and plan reference;

- Area/size of land/property;
- The Council's interest in the land/property (e.g. freehold/leasehold);
- Purchase details;
- Rents payable;
- Tenancies granted;
- The vesting body.

C4.8 The Head of Legal Partnership shall notify the Director of Resources and other appropriate senior managers of rights and liabilities in connection with land or property newly acquired or controlled by the Council and shall also advise of any disposal of land or property.

C4.9 The Head of Legal Partnership shall have the custody of all Title Deeds under secure arrangements.

C4.10 The Head of Property Services shall keep up-to-date records of maintenance, rent reviews and other related matters of all properties owned or controlled by the Council.

Security

C4.11 Maximum limits for cash holdings shall be agreed with the Director of Resources and shall not be exceeded without their express permission.

C4.12 Each Senior Manager shall be responsible for maintaining proper security at all times for stocks, stores, furniture, equipment, cash, etc under their control. Officers having responsibility for buildings or the sections of buildings will be designated.

C4.13 The specification of all safes and similar receptacles is to be checked for compliance with the Director of Resources to ensure its acceptability to the Council's insurers.

C4.14 Keys to safes and similar receptacles are to be kept securely by the person responsible at all times; the loss of any such keys must be reported to the Chief Financial Officer immediately. Combination for safes and receptacles are to be held by the person responsible, and by the Chief Financial Officer.

C4.15 The Head of ICT Partnership shall be responsible for maintaining proper security and privacy in respect of information held on the networked computer systems.

C4.16 Each Senior Manager shall be responsible for maintaining proper security and privacy of all information held within their Service Unit, including that held on PC and laptop based systems.

C4.17 Each Senior Manager shall ensure there are controls in place so that staff do not carry out private work in Council time and that staff are aware of an employer's rights with regard to intellectual property.

C4.18 Senior Managers shall immediately report all breaches of security (and associated damage) to the Police. The Senior Manager, in consultation with the Director of Resources and Head of Audit Partnership shall consider both insurance and internal control implications and take appropriate action.

Insurances

C4.19 The Director of Resources shall effect all insurance cover and negotiate all claims in consultation with other officers where necessary.

C4.20 Heads of Service shall give prompt notification to the Director of Resources of all new risks, properties, equipment (including portable equipment) or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.

C4.21 Senior managers will notify the Director of Resources in writing of any loss, liability or damage or any event likely to lead to a claim.

C4.22 All appropriate employees of the Council shall be included in a suitable fidelity guarantee insurance.

C4.23 The Director of Resources shall periodically review all insurance in consultation with other senior managers as appropriate.

C4.24 Senior managers shall consult the Director of Resources and the Head of Legal Partnership regarding the terms of any indemnity which the Council is requested to give.

C4.25 To comply with the Council's insurance policies, no admission of liability shall be made by any officer without the prior agreement of the insurers.

Intellectual Property and Management of Information (Financial and Non-Financial)

C4.26 Intellectual property is a generic term that includes inventions and writings if these are created by any employee during the course of their employment. As a general rule, they belong to the employer, not the employee.

C4.27 Certain activities undertaken within the Council may give rise to items that may be patentable, for example, software development. These items are collectively known as intellectual property.

D. Financial Systems and Procedures

Why is this important?

Public money should be spent with demonstrable probity and in accordance with the Council's policies. Authorities have a statutory duty to achieve best value. The Council's procedures should help to ensure that its services obtain value for money from their purchasing arrangements.

D1. Selective Tendering

(Please refer also to Standing Orders with Regard to Contracts).

D1.1 All Selective Tendering procedure shall comply with Standing Orders with Regard to Contracts.

D1.2 For work carried out on an agency basis for the Kent County Council, or other statutory authority, the Council shall adopt the use of such authorities' procedures for the appointment of contractors and other contractual processes. In the absence of any established agent procedures Swale Borough Council's own requirements, as outlined within these Financial Regulations and Contract Standing Orders, shall prevail.

D2. Contracts for Services, Building, Constructional or Engineering Work

D2.1 The responsible Senior Manager shall provide the Director of Resources with the details and conditions of any contracts/agreements in respect of Capital Works, Repairs and Maintenance where payment is to be made net of retention monies, and which require payment by instalments. This shall also apply to Professional Fees to be paid by instalments.

D2.2 The responsible Senior Manager shall provide the Director of Resources with the details and conditions of any contracts/agreements in respect of Goods and Services

which require payment by instalments. Included in this category would be the major service contracts for Refuse Collection, Street Sweeping, Public Conveniences, Leisure Management and Grounds Maintenance.

D2.3 Where a certificate is not available for a Services Contract, payment shall be made on an invoice or other documentation in a form acceptable to the Director of Resources, and certified by an authorised officer.

D2.4 All variations shall be authorised in writing by an authorised officer or consultant.

D2.5 Any variation or costs which are likely to have a significant effect on the approved tender sum shall be reported by the Head of Service to the relevant Committee and the Council as soon as is practicable. The report shall detail the cumulative effect on the original tender sum. Significance shall be determined by the Strategic Management Team and/or the appropriate Head of Service in consultation with the Director of Resources.

D2.6 The final certificate of completion of any contract shall not be issued until the contractor, private architect, engineer or consultant, has produced a detailed statement of account, and all relevant documents to the Council's officer responsible for the supervision of the contract as defined under the terms of the particular contract who shall examine final accounts for contracts and make all such enquiries and receive such information and explanations as they may require in order to satisfy themselves as to the accuracy of the accounts.

D2.7 Claims from contractors in respect of matters not clearly within the terms of any existing contract shall be referred to the Head of Legal Partnership for consideration of the authority's legal liability and, where necessary, to the Director of Resources for financial consideration before a settlement is reached.

D3. Orders for Work, Goods and Services

D3.1 Official orders and associated commitments are only to be raised and entered into the accounting system by officers authorised by the appropriate senior manager, who shall be responsible for official orders issued from their Service Unit. The estimated cost of the order should always be entered on the system.

D3.2 Official orders shall be issued for all work, goods or services to be supplied to the Council except for supplies of public utility services, for periodical payments such as rent or rates, for petty cash purchases or such other exceptions as the Director of Resources may approve. Verbal orders must be confirmed by the issue of an Official Order clearly marked "Confirmation Only".

D3.3 Each order shall conform with the directions of the Council with respect to central purchasing and the standardisation of supplies and materials. Quotations or tenders for all orders should be sought in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders with Regard to Contracts.

D3.4 A copy of each order shall be kept by the senior manager raising the order and be available for inspection by the Director of Resources and their nominated staff.

D3.5 The detailed rules and thresholds in relation to contracts and procurements are set out in the Contract Standing Orders in Part 3.9 of this Constitution.

D4. Payments

D4.1 The normal method of payment of money due from the Council shall be by BACS or other instrument drawn on the Council's banking account by the Director of Resources.

D4.2 All electronic payments such as CHAPS and BACS must be made in accordance with the internal controls and authorisations approved by the Director of Resources.

D4.3 All cheques, shall be ordered only on the authority of the Director of Resources who shall make proper arrangements for their safe custody.

D4.4 Cheques on the Council's banking accounts, shall bear the facsimile signature of the Director of Resources, signed by the Director of Resources or other officer authorised to do so. Two signatures are required on cheques in excess of £50,000.

D4.5 All payments made on purchase cards must be made in accordance with the internal controls and expenditure limits approved by the Director of Resources. Officers who are cardholders shall be responsible for maintaining a log of transactions and providing adequate documentation to support expenditure.

D4.6 The Head of Service, when issuing an order is responsible for examining, verifying and certifying the related invoice(s) and any other payment vouchers or accounts arising from sources in his Unit. Such certification shall be via the Agresso certification workflow system based on the scanned images of the related invoices or such other payment vouchers by or on behalf of the Head of Service.

D4.7 The Senior Manager must ensure that all invoices or other payment vouchers including internally generated proformas are sent to the Exchequer Section for scanning into the Agresso certification workflow system as soon as they are received or internally generated. This will help to make payment within the Performance Indicator target of 30 days from receipt of invoice.

D4.8 Certification of accounts should not be unduly delayed, BUT before certifying an account, the certifying officer shall be satisfied that:-

- The work, goods or services to which the account relates have been received, carried out, examined and approved;
- The prices, extensions, calculations, trade discount, other allowances, credits and tax are correct. With regard to VAT, VAT invoices may only be altered with the permission of the Customs and Excise Department. Otherwise adjustments must be made with the knowledge of the supplier, normally by issuing credit notes or supplementary invoices;
- The relevant expenditure has been properly incurred, and is within the relevant estimate provision;
- Appropriate entries have been made in inventories, stores' records or stock books as required, and,
- The account has not been previously passed for payment and is a proper liability of the Council.

D4.9 The payment of all salaries, Members' allowances, compensations, gifts and other emoluments to all employees or former employees of the Council shall be made by the Head of Human Resources.

D4.10 Each Senior Manager shall notify Human Resources as soon as possible of all matters affecting the payment of such emoluments, and in particular:-

- Appointments, resignations, dismissals, suspensions, secondments, transfers and casual employment;
- Absences from duty for sickness or other reason, apart from approved leave;
- Changes in remuneration, other than normal increments and pay awards and agreements of general application;
- Information necessary to maintain records of service for superannuation, income tax, national insurance and the like.

D4.11 All time records or other pay documents shall be in a form prescribed or approved by the Head of Human Resources and shall be certified in manuscript by or on behalf of the senior manager.

D4.12 Each Senior Manager shall, as soon as possible after 31st March notify the Director of Resources of all outstanding expenditure relating to the previous financial year, (i.e. Goods and services received by 31st March but not yet paid for, known as "Reserved Creditors").

D4.13 Claims for payment of car allowances, college expenses, travelling and subsistence allowances shall be made in a form approved by the Head of Human Resources.

D4.14 Claims shall be certified by another authorised officer or another elected Member in the case of their own claims.

D4.15 Claims shall normally be made monthly and passed to the Payroll Section within 5 calendar days of the end of the month.

D4.16 Certifying officers are responsible for ensuring, to the best of their knowledge, that the claims relate to journeys made and expenses properly incurred whilst carrying out official duties or training.

D5. Income

Why is this important?

Effective income collection systems are necessary to ensure that all income due is identified, collected, receipted and banked properly. It is preferable to obtain income in advance of supplying goods or services as this improves the Council's cashflow and also avoids the time and cost of administering debt.

D5.1 The collection, recording and banking of money due to the Council shall be under the supervision of or under arrangements approved by the Director of Resources.

D5.2 Each senior manager shall furnish the Director of Resources with such particulars in connection with work done, goods supplied or services rendered and of all other amounts due as may be required by them, to record correctly all sums due to the Council and to ensure the prompt rendering of accounts for the recovery of income due (i.e. the raising of sundry debtors). The accounts for Housing Benefit overpayments are dealt with separately within the Benefits Section.

D5.3 The Director of Resources shall be notified promptly of all money due to the Council and of contracts, leases and other agreements and arrangements entered into which involve the receipt of money by the Council.

D5.4 Receipt forms, tickets, official order forms and other such financial stationery (excluding cheques and other negotiable instruments) shall normally be ordered and held as controlled stationery by the appropriate Senior Manager, who shall be responsible for their adequate security and control. Such arrangements, together with the design and format of financial stationery, shall be approved by the Director of Resources. Certain multi-user items shall be ordered and controlled by the Director of Resources who shall also periodically review the Authority's overall controlled stationery arrangements.

D5.5 All money received by an officer on behalf of the Council shall without delay be paid to the Director of Resources or, as they may direct, to the Council's banking account or PayPoint account; no deduction may be made from such money.

D5.6 Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of the money held on behalf of the Council.

D5.7 Payments to staff or for goods and services shall not be paid from monies received.

D5.8 Once raised, no bona fide debt may be cancelled, except by full payment or by its formal writing off, unless the debt has a factual inaccuracy or administrative error in the calculation or other administrative error. In all cases the reason for cancellation shall be documented.

D5.9 Once raised, no bona fide debt or part of the debt may be written off, unless the reason for write off is fully documented and approved by the Director of Resources.

- (a) all debts arising from bankruptcies and liquidations, which are not covered by distributions from liquidators, receivers or administrators; and
- (b) any other single amount due to the Council up to £5,000 or with Strategic Management Team approval £10,000. Any outstanding debt in excess of this amount can only be written off with the consent of the Policy and Resources Committee.

D5.10 It is the responsibility of all senior managers to assist with appropriate recovery action in conjunction with the Director of Resources, including legal action where necessary, for debts not paid promptly, by providing any further information requested by the debtor, and in pursuing the matter on the Council's behalf.

D5.11 Each senior manager shall as soon as possible after 31 March notify the Director of Resources of all uncollected income on accounts not rendered relating to the previous financial year (i.e. Goods and services delivered by 31st March but not yet paid for, known as "Reserved Debtors").

E. External Arrangements

E1. Partnerships

Why is this important?

Increasingly local authorities are working in partnership to deliver services. It is important that the financial arrangements around partnerships are clearly defined and liabilities and risks are made explicit.

E1.1 Financial matters relating to arrangements whereby one Council administers funds jointly on behalf of itself and others shall be subject to the Financial Standing Orders and Regulations of the administering Council, unless the other parties rules are more stringent.

E1.2 The Director of Resources will ensure that the accounting arrangements are satisfactory.

E1.3 Senior Managers will maintain a record of all contracts entered into with external bodies in accordance with procedures specified by the Chief Financial Officer.

E1.4 Senior Managers will ensure that, before entering into agreements with external bodies, a risk management appraisal has been prepared for the Strategic Management Team and Policy and Resources Committee.

E1.5 Senior Managers will ensure that such agreements and arrangements do not impact adversely upon the services provided by the Council.

E1.6 Senior Managers will ensure that all agreements and arrangements are properly documented and that the appropriate governance arrangements have been approved by the Director of Resources.

E1.7 Senior Managers will provide appropriate information to the Director of Resources to enable a note to be entered into the Council's Statement of Accounts concerning material items.

E2. External Funding

Why is this important?

Funding from external agencies will remain an important potential source of funding for the Council. Such opportunities need to be maximised whilst ensuring that the Council can meet any financial obligations which may be placed on it.

E2.1 The appropriate senior manager will ensure that any decisions are made by Strategic Management Team and Policy and Resources Committee within the appropriate governance framework.

E2.2 The Director of Resources to ensure that all funding notified by external bodies is received and properly recorded in the Council's accounts.

E2.3 The Director of Resources to ensure that the match-funding requirements are considered prior to entering into the agreements and that future revenue budgets reflect these requirements.

E2.4 The Director of Resources to ensure that all specified audit requirements are met.

E2.5 The appropriate Senior Manager to ensure that all claims for funds are made by the due date.

E2.6 The appropriate Senior Manager to ensure that the project progresses in accordance with the agreed project and that all expenditure is properly incurred and recorded.

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PART 3.6 – CONTRACT STANDING ORDERS (CSOs)

3.6.1 Introduction – Purpose of the Contract Standing Orders

3.6.1.1 Purchasing decisions and processes are important because the money involved is public money. The purpose of these Contract Standing Orders is to provide a structure within which purchasing decisions are made and implemented and which ensure that the Council:

- 3.6.1.1.1 Furthers its corporate objectives.
- 3.6.1.1.2 Uses its resources efficiently.
- 3.6.1.1.3 Purchases quality goods, services and works.
- 3.6.1.1.4 Safeguards its reputation from any implication of dishonesty or corruption.

3.6.1.2 Purchasing by the Council, from planning to delivery, shall incorporate (where appropriate) principles of sustainability, efficiency, whole life costings and cost savings.

3.6.1.3 These Contract Standing Orders are made in accordance with the requirements of Section 135 of the Local Government Act 1972.

3.6.1.4 These Contract Standing Orders do not provide guidelines on the best way to purchase works, supplies (goods) and services but set out minimum requirements to be followed. Further information and guidelines are set out in the Council's Purchasing Guide, Procurement Strategy, Code of Conduct, Safety Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy, Local First Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Commissioning Framework, Protected Disclosure Policy (Whistleblowing) and Data Quality Standard.

3.6.2 General Principles – Application and Compliance with Contract Standing Orders

3.6.2.1 These Contract Standing Orders apply to the purchase by or on behalf of the Council of works, supplies (goods) and services.

3.6.2.2 These Contract Standing Orders apply to all contracts including all purchase orders, concessions and contractual arrangements entered into by or on behalf of the Council, except for the specific types of contracts and purchasing methods which are listed in 2.3.

3.6.2.3 These Contract Standing Orders do not apply to:

- 3.6.2.3.1 Employment contracts;
- 3.6.2.3.2 Contracts relating solely to the purchase or sale of interests in land;
- 3.6.2.3.3 Contracts for retention of legal counsel and the appointment of expert witnesses in legal proceedings;

- 3.6.2.3.4 Service level agreements setting out the conditions which the Council applies to its funding of particular voluntary sector bodies;
- 3.6.2.3.5 Contractual arrangements with other local authorities or similar bodies where the Council is not the lead authority in which case the lead authority's Standing Orders shall prevail. For contracts involving shared services, the CSO of the lead authority in the partnership shall apply even if different from the Council's;
- 3.6.2.3.6 Framework Agreements providing that the Head of Mid Kent Legal Services and Finance has agreed the terms of the Framework Agreement.
- 3.6.2.3.7 Election expenditure under the UK threshold.

3.6.3 General Principles Applying to All Contracts

- 3.6.3.1 All orders used in connection with Contracts shall be on the Council's official order template;
- 3.6.3.2 The Council's standard contract clauses or other terms and conditions approved in advance by Legal and Finance, shall be used in all contracts of a value of £30,000 (including VAT) or more. The standard contract clauses are issued by Legal Services and can be found on the intranet;
- 3.6.3.3 As a minimum, all contracts of a value of £30,000 (including VAT) or more shall include clauses which set out:
 - 3.6.3.3.1 The works, supplies (goods), services, material, matters or things to be carried out or supplied;
 - 3.6.3.3.2 The time within which the contract is to be performed;
 - 3.6.3.3.3 Quality requirements and / or standards which must be met. Including arrangements for securing good data quality;
 - 3.6.3.3.4 Requirements on the contractor to hold and maintain appropriate insurance/s / licences;
 - 3.6.3.3.5 What happens in the event that the contractor fails to comply with its contractual obligations (in whole or in part);
 - 3.6.3.3.6 Requirements on the contractor and sub-contractors to comply with all relevant equalities and health and safety legislation;
 - 3.6.3.3.7 That the Council shall be entitled to cancel the contract and recover losses in the event that the contractor does anything improper to influence the Council to give the contractor any contract or commits an offence under the Prevention of Corruption Acts 1889 to 1916 or s117(2) Local Government Act 1972;
 - 3.6.3.3.8 Arrangements required to address Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) issues that arise;

- 3.6.3.3.9 Reference to the Bribery Act 2010;
 - 3.6.3.3.10 All contracts above the relevant UK threshold must contain reference to the Social Value Act, consideration of the Act should also be made in relation to contracts below the relevant UK threshold.
 - 3.6.3.3.11 Reference to the Data Protection Act 2018.
 - 3.6.3.3.12 All contracts with a bronze, silver or gold level of safeguarding assurance must have adequate provision to ensure that appropriate safeguarding measures are in place throughout the life of the contract.
 - 3.6.3.3.13 Reference to the Freedom of Information Act 2000
 - 3.6.3.3.14 Reference to the Modern Slavery Act 2015
 - 3.6.3.3.15 Reference to the Government's Prevent requirements.
- 3.6.3.4 Written contracts shall not include non-commercial terms unless these are necessary to achieve best value for the Council. In this context, "non-commercial" means requirements unrelated to the actual performance of the contract.
- 3.6.3.5 All contracts shall include relevant specifications and / or briefs / technical requirements which are prepared taking into account the need for effectiveness of delivery, quality, sustainability and efficiency (as appropriate) and the information set out in the Council's Purchasing Guide. All procurement documentation including specifications and / or briefs / technical requirements and relevant contractual documentation need to be advertised all at the same time regardless of the procurement procedure.
- 3.6.3.6 All contracts of a value of £120,000 (including VAT) or more or which involve a substantial risk to the Council are subject to a written risk assessment, which should be kept on the contract file and updated when required.

3.6.4 Regulatory Context

- 3.6.4.1 All purchasing shall be conducted in accordance with Regulatory Provisions which are:
- 3.6.4.1.1 All relevant statutory provisions;
 - 3.6.4.1.2 The Council's Constitution including these Contract Standing Orders, the Council's Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation;
 - 3.6.4.1.3 The Council's Purchasing Guide and other policies and procedures of the Council as appropriate;
- 3.6.4.2 In the event of conflict, UK legislation will take precedence followed by the Council's Constitution, the Council's Purchasing Guide, guidelines, policies and procedures.

3.6.5 Responsibilities of Directors and Responsible Officers

3.6.5.1 Each Director / Head of Service shall:

- 3.6.5.1.1 be responsible for the purchasing undertaken by their Directorate or Service;
- 3.6.5.1.2 be accountable to the relevant committee for the performance of their duties in relation to purchasing;
- 3.6.5.1.3 comply with the Council's decision-making processes including, where appropriate, implementing and operating a Scheme of Delegation;
- 3.6.5.1.4 take immediate action in the event of breach of these Contract Standing Orders.

3.6.5.2 A Responsible / Lead Officer is an officer with responsibility for conducting purchasing processes for the purchase of works, supplies (goods) or services on behalf of the Council.

3.6.5.3 A Responsible / Lead Officer's duties in respect of purchasing are to ensure:

- 3.6.5.3.1 compliance with all Regulatory Provisions and integrity of the tender process;
- 3.6.5.3.2 compliance with the relevant statutory provisions and the Council's requirements relating to declarations of interest affecting any purchasing process;
- 3.6.5.3.3 that there is an appropriate analysis of the requirement, timescales, procedure and documentation to be used;
- 3.6.5.3.4 the purchasing process, from planning to delivery incorporates (where appropriate) principles of sustainability, efficiency, whole life costings and cost savings;
- 3.6.5.3.5 compliance with the Council's decision-making processes;
- 3.6.5.3.6 that all contracts of a value of £5999 (including VAT) or more are included on the Council's Contract Register;
- 3.6.5.3.7 that proper records of all contract award procedures, waivers, exemptions and extensions are maintained, with separate files for each purchase of a value of £30,000 (including VAT) or more;
- 3.6.5.3.8 All Contracts over £30,000 (including VAT) will be:
 - 1. In the form approved by Legal Services;
 - 2. executed;
 - 3. a minimum of three copies of this contract are required; one to be stored in the Council's strong room; the second to be sent to the winning bidder/s and the third to be sent to the lead officer or their

staff. An electronic copy of the signed / sealed contract is to be emailed to Procurement.

3.6.5.3.9 that value for money is achieved;

3.6.5.3.10 that a risk assessment is carried out to ascertain whether a bond or guarantee is required to protect the Council in the event of non-performance.

3.6.5.4 In considering how best to procure works, supplies and services, Directors / Heads of Service and / or Responsible Officers (as appropriate in the context), shall take into account wider contractual delivery opportunities and purchasing methods including the use of Purchasing Schemes and e-procurement / purchasing methods, and the availability of local authority charging and trading powers under the Local Government Act 2003.

3.6.5.5 It is a disciplinary offence to fail to comply with these Contract Standing Orders and the Council's Purchasing Guide. All employees have a duty to report breaches of Contract Standing Orders to the Director of Resources.

3.6.5.6 Any officer or Member who suspects any misconduct or corruption in relation to the purchase by or on behalf of the Council of works, supplies (goods) and services must immediately report that suspicion to the Head of Internal Audit.

3.6.6 Scheme of Delegation

3.6.6.1 Council purchasing may only be undertaken by officers with the appropriate delegated authority to carry out such tasks as set out in the Council's Scheme(s) of Delegation. Officers with delegated authority may only delegate to other officers who have the appropriate skills and knowledge for the task and such delegation shall be recorded in writing by the officer delegating the task and notified to the relevant Director or Head of Service.

3.6.6.2 Officers shall, where appropriate, be informed by their Director or Head of Service of the extent of any delegated authority and applicable financial thresholds.

3.6.7 Financial Thresholds and Procedures

3.6.7.1 The table below sets out the general rules applying to the choice of purchasing procedure for contracts at the stated threshold values. All figures quoted in this document are inclusive of VAT.

3.6.7.2 There is a general presumption in favour of competition. Wherever possible, contract opportunities should be advertised by way of a public notice. At the time of writing, the Council must consider the potential effect of a contract on interstate trade. If a contract may be of interest to contractors from other member states then this may result in a need to advertise in a manner which ensures that potential contractors from other member states are aware of the opportunity, even for small value contracts or contracts under the UK Threshold levels outlined below.

3.6.7.3 The public notice referred to at 7.2 may take the form of a notice or advertisement on an easily accessible website, in the press, trade journals or other electronic media and must be published on the Central Digital Platform . The

Responsible / Lead Officer may choose to place one or more public notices in different media. As a minimum any Request for Quotation or tender valued at £30,000 (including VAT) or above will be advertised on www.swale.gov.uk, the Council's E-procurement System and the Central Digital Platform.

3.6.7.4 Table setting out financial thresholds and procedures

Total value (including VAT)	Type of contract	Procedure to be used
£0 - £5999	works, supplies and services	<p>a) At least one quotation in advance</p> <p>b) All purchases however small to be in writing, on an official order;</p> <p>c) Approved by the relevant Head of Service or authorised officer;</p> <p>d) Officer should be able to provide a rationale for why they selected the provider used.</p> <p>e) All consultancy spend should be in agreement with the relevant Committee Chair</p>
£6000 - £29,999	works, supplies and services	<p>a) At least one quotation in advance</p> <p>b) One off, non-routine spend should be agreed by relevant Committee Chair</p> <p>c) Commissioning & Procurement need to be made aware of any procurement where the whole life value is >£6,000.</p> <p>d) All purchases however small to be in writing, on an official order;</p> <p>e) Approved by the relevant Head of Service or authorised officer;</p> <p>f) Officer should be able to provide a rationale for why they selected the provider used;</p> <p>g) Contract award details provided to procurement for publication on the contract register for transparency purposes at award stage.</p>
Procedure to be used £30,000 to £119,999	works, supplies and services	<p>a) Request for quotation advertised on www.swale.gov.uk, the Council's E-procurement System and the Central Digital Platform</p> <p>b) Spend should be agreed by relevant Committee Chair;</p> <p>c) Consideration given to Purchasing Scheme's e.g. to provide better V.F.M.;</p> <p>d) Financial appraisals shall be carried out by Financial Services prior to award;</p> <p>e) Approved by the relevant Head of Service or authorised officer;</p> <p>f) Contracts in writing using the standard clauses and to include the core clauses as set out within the CSOs document or other terms and conditions approved in advance by Legal and Finance;</p> <p>g) Records maintained to demonstrate probity and V.F.M. obtained.</p> <p>h) Contract award details provided to procurement for publication on the contract register for transparency purposes at award stage.</p>

Procedure to be used £120,000 to £214,904**	works, supplies and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) At least three electronic tenders; b) Spend should be agreed by relevant Committee Chair; c) Risk assessment conducted (in writing) and kept on the file. d) As a minimum to be advertised on www.swale.gov.uk, the Council's E-procurement System plus the Central Digital Platform; e) Tenders opened at the same time by the Democratic and Electoral Services Manager (or nominee), in the presence of the Responsible Officer (or nominee) and a suitable person from Legal Services (or Nominee); f) Financial appraisals shall be carried out by Financial Services prior to award; g) Approval required from the relevant committee for award of contract, waiver from CSOs and extensions to contracts h) Contracts in writing using the standard clauses and to include the core clauses as set out within the CSOs document or other terms and conditions approved in advance by Legal and Finance; i) Record to be entered on the Council's Contract Register at award stage.
Procedure to be used £214,904 ** plus	Supplies and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The Procurement Act 2023 and The Procurement Regulations 2024 apply – full competitive process with tenders following advertisement on the Central Digital Platform for supplies and services, there is a presumption in favour of advertising and a competitive process. This will also be advertised on the Swale website and the Council's e-procurement system ; b) Points a; b; c; d; e; f; g; h and i as above for works, supplies and services for £120,000 to £214,904**
Procedure to be used £214,904 to £5,372,609**	Works and Concession Works and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Points a – i as above for works, supplies and services for £120,000 to £214,904**
Procedure to be used £5,372,609** plus	Works and Concession Works and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The Procurement Act 2023 and The Procurement Regulations 2024 apply – full competitive process with tenders following advertisement in Find a Tender Service. b) Points a; b; c; d; e; f; g; h; and i as above for supplies and services for £214,904 plus**

** or relevant threshold in force at the time under the Procurement Act 2023.

3.6.7.5 Where contracts are of a type and value which means that they are subject to the The Procurement Act 2023 and The Procurement Regulations 2024 then there are two main types of procedures available. These are the open and competitive flexible procedures. Care must be taken to ensure that the correct and most appropriate procedure is used and assistance on the choice and use of procedure should be sought from Legal Services or the Procurement team.

3.6.7.6 Financial appraisals shall be carried out by Financial and Procurement on all contracts over £30,000 (including VAT) prior to award. Contracts over £120,000 (including VAT) shall also have a financial appraisal undertaken by Finance and Procurement annually on or near the anniversary date of the contract award date.

3.6.7.7 Contracts with a high degree of complexity or where there is a lack of knowledge in house may require the assistance of a consultant with Director or Head of Service approval.

3.6.8 Financial Thresholds and Processes Applying to Approval and Execution of Contracts

3.6.8.1 For contracts over the relevant UK Threshold (in force at the time), the choice of purchasing procedure to be used and the decision to proceed to advertisement must be authorised in writing by the relevant Director or Head of Service in advance.

3.6.8.2 When a decision is made to award a contract then the Responsible Officer must, in addition to complying with their general obligations under these Contract Standing Orders ensure, in particular that:

3.6.8.2.1 the appropriate approvals have been obtained to authorise that decision; and;

3.6.8.2.2 where appropriate, a standstill period complying with the Procurement Act is incorporated into the final award process.

3.6.8.3 All contracts valued at £120,000 or above (including VAT) must be reported to the relevant committee for approval and shall be executed as a deed by Legal Services. All other contracts may be signed by officers with appropriate delegated authority.

3.6.8.4 Electronic signatures may be used by both the Council and the supplier in accordance with the Electronic Signature Regulations 2002. provided the sufficiency of security arrangements has been approved by the Director of Corporate Services. The Council shall use suitable, free software, such as Adobe, to create electronic signatures.

3.6.9 Calculating the Contract Value

3.6.9.1 The starting point for calculating the contract value for the purposes of these Contract Standing Orders is that it shall be the genuine pre- estimate of the value of the entire contract (whole life value) including Value Added Tax. This includes all payments to be made, or potentially to be made, under the entirety of the contract and for the whole of the predicted contract period (including proposed extensions and options).

3.6.9.2 Contracts may be split into lots where it is practical to do so. However, the aggregated cost of the lots shall determine the contract's whole of life value and the procurement process to be followed. Artificial splitting of a contract to avoid the application of the procurement rules or these CSOs is not permitted For tenders over the UK threshold, s18 of the Procurement Act 2023 requires contracting authorities to consider whether the goods, works or services could reasonably be supplied under more than one contract and if these contracts could appropriately be awarded by reference to lots.

3.6.9.3 The Procurement Act covers contracts which are below the stated UK threshold where they constitute repeat purchases and / or purchases of a similar type in a specified period. Responsible Officers should therefore seek advice on the application of the rules where they envisage that they may require repeat purchases and / or purchases of a similar type.

3.6.10 Principles Underlying Tendering Processes and Tender Evaluation

3.6.10.1 All tendering procedures (including obtaining quotes), from planning to contract award and signature, shall be undertaken in a manner so as to ensure:

- 3.6.10.1.1 Sufficient time is given to plan and run the process;
- 3.6.10.1.2 Equal opportunity and equal treatment;
- 3.6.10.1.3 Openness and transparency;
- 3.6.10.1.4 Probity;
- 3.6.10.1.5 Outcomes which deliver sustainability, efficiency and cost savings (where appropriate).

3.6.11 Submission and Opening of tenders

3.6.11.1 An Invitation to Tender shall be issued by the Council for all contracts over £120,000 (including VAT) using the Council's e-procurement system and tenders shall be submitted in accordance with the requirements of the Invitation to Tender.

3.6.11.2 Any tenders received (other than those received electronically, to which 11.3 shall apply) shall be:

- 3.6.11.2.1 addressed to the Democratic and Electoral Services Manager;
- 3.6.11.2.2 in a sealed envelope marked "Tender" followed by the subject matter to which it relates and not displaying the name of the tenderer;
- 3.6.11.2.3 kept in a safe place by the Democratic and Electoral Services Manager;
- 3.6.11.2.4 retained unopened until the date and time specified for its opening.

3.6.11.3 Where the Council has indicated in the Invitation to Tender that a tender can or must be submitted electronically, then those tenders shall be submitted via the Council's [E-procurement System](#) or:

- 3.6.11.3.1 addressed to the e-mail address as notified in the Invitation to Tender;
- 3.6.11.3.2 in the format specified in the Invitation to Tender;
- 3.6.11.3.3 stored in a secure mailbox, which requires a code or other appropriate security measure, to open it;

3.6.11.3.4 retained unopened until the date and time specified for its opening;

3.6.11.4 No tender received after the time and date specified for its opening shall be accepted or considered by the Council unless the relevant Director or Head of Service, having consulted Procurement and Legal Services, is satisfied that there is sufficient evidence of the tender having been dispatched in time for it to have arrived before the closing date and time, or other exceptional circumstances apply and the other tenders have not been opened.

3.6.11.5 All tenders of £120,000 (including VAT) and above are to be opened in the presence of the Democratic and Electoral Services Manager (or nominee), and a suitable person from Legal Services (or Nominee).

3.6.11.6 An immediate record shall be made of the tenders received including names and addresses and the date and time of opening, this record to be retained by the Democratic and Electoral Services Manager and Procurement.

3.6.12 Evaluation of Quotes and Tenders

3.6.12.1 All quotes and tenders shall be evaluated in accordance with evaluation criteria notified in advance to those submitting quotes / tenderers. Evaluations shall be undertaken in accordance with the Council's evaluation procedure, P.16.

3.6.12.2 Tenders subject to the Procurement Act shall be evaluated in accordance with the Procurement Act.

3.6.12.3 Save in exceptional circumstances approved in advance by the relevant Director, all contracts shall be awarded on the basis of the quote or tender which represents the Most Advantageous Tender to the Council and not on the basis of lowest price.

3.6.12.4 Post tender negotiations will only be used in special circumstances and after approval from the relevant Director or Head of Service, having consulted Procurement and Legal Services.

3.6.13 Waivers

3.6.13.1 The requirement for the Council to conduct a competitive purchasing process for contracts in excess of £30,000 (including VAT) may only be waived in the following circumstances.

3.6.13.1.1 For contracts which are not subject to the Procurement Act, the work, supply or service is required as a matter of urgency and a delay would be likely to lead to financial loss, personal injury or damage to property; or

3.6.13.1.2 the circumstances set out in Schedule 2 of the Procurement Act apply (exempted contracts); or

3.6.13.1.3 the contract is awarded under a Purchasing Scheme of a type where a competition has already been undertaken on behalf of the Council; or

- 3.6.13.1.4 at the discretion of the relevant Head of Service who may, for contracts exceeding £30,000 (including VAT) but not exceeding £119,999, proceed in a manner most expedient to the efficient management of the service / Council with reasons recorded in writing.
- 3.6.13.2 A Responsible / Lead Officer who seeks a waiver of Contract Standing Orders, shall do so only in advance and only in exceptional circumstances. Further guidance on what may constitute exceptional circumstances permitting waiver of these Contract Standing Orders is set out in the Council's Purchasing Guide.
- 3.6.13.3 All waivers from these Contract Standing Orders must be:
 - 3.6.13.3.1 Fully documented;
 - 3.6.13.3.2 Subject to a written report in an approved format. For contracts not exceeding £119,999 the report shall be submitted in advance to Procurement and include the reasons why the waiver is genuinely required. For contracts of £120,000 (including VAT) and above the report shall be submitted to the relevant committee;
 - 3.6.13.3.3 Subject to agreement in advance by the Head of Finance and Procurement in consultation with the Head of Mid Kent Legal Services and the Director of Resources as appropriate, who shall, for contracts exceeding £30,000 (including VAT) but not exceeding £119,999 (including VAT), record that they have considered the reasons for the waiver and that they are satisfied with the circumstances justifying the waiver. Waivers from competitive purchasing processes for contracts of £120,000 (including VAT) and above must be approved in advance by the relevant committee. In the report to the committee a recommendation; "The committee agree to the waiver requested in relation to the [works, goods / services] contract and that the Head of Finance and Procurement be authorised to complete the necessary documentation". Prior to the committee meeting, the waiver should still be considered by the Head of Mid Kent Legal Services and the Director of Resources. In the absence of the Head of Finance and Procurement, the Commissioning Manager has the delegated authority to record that they have considered the reasons for the waiver and that they are satisfied that the circumstances justifying the waiver and sign off waivers over £30,000 (including VAT) in consultation with the Head of Mid-Kent Legal Services and the Director of Resources, waivers above £120,000 (including VAT) are subject to committee approval;
- 3.6.13.4 All decisions on waivers must take into account:
 - 3.6.13.4.1 Probity;
 - 3.6.13.4.2 Best value / value for money principles.
- 3.6.13.5 For contracts subject to the Public Contracts Regs, any waiver from the requirement for competition must meet the conditions set out in the Public Contracts Regs in addition to the general requirements above.

3.6.13.6 A waiver shall not be applied for reasons of poor contract planning.

3.6.13.7 A wavier may only apply to the omission/s of certain item/s therefore, the Responsible / Lead Officer will be required to follow all other criteria in these Contract Standing Orders other than what has been approved and agreed in the submitted waiver.

3.6.14 Extensions to Existing Contracts

3.6.14.1 Where extensions to existing contracts are made the extensions must be determined in accordance with the advertisement / contract terms, for a specified period and made in accordance with the principles set out in the Council's Purchasing Guide.

3.6.14.2 Any extension must be:

3.6.14.2.1 Fully documented;

3.6.14.2.2 Subject to a written report in an approved format, form P.24. For contracts where the extension value is not exceeding £119,999 (including VAT) , the report shall be submitted in advance to the relevant Director or Head of Service and include the reasons why the extension is required. For contracts where the extension value is £120,000 (including VAT) and above the report shall be submitted to the relevant committee;

3.6.14.2.3 Subject to approval in advance by the relevant Director or Head of Service who shall, for contracts where the extension value is not exceeding £119,999 (including VAT), record that they have considered the reasons for the extension, there is an extension option on the contract and that they are satisfied with the performance of the contract. Extensions for contracts where the extension value is £120,000 (including VAT) and above must be approved in advance by the relevant committee.

3.6.14.3 Any extension must take into account:

3.6.14.3.1 Probity;

3.6.14.3.2 Best value / value for money principles.

3.6.14.4 For contracts subject to the Procurmeent Act, any extension must meet the conditions set out in the Procurement Act in addition to the more general requirements set out above.

3.6.15 Purchasing Schemes

3.6.15.1 A Responsible Officer may use Purchasing Schemes subject to the following conditions and the Council's Purchasing Guide.

3.6.15.2 Responsible Officers must check in advance that

- 3.6.15.2.1 The Council is legally entitled to use the Purchasing Scheme;
- 3.6.15.2.2 The purchases to be made do properly fall within the coverage of the Purchasing Scheme;
- 3.6.15.2.3 The establishment and operation of each Purchasing Scheme is in compliance with the Public Contracts Regs (where they apply) and meets the Council's own requirements.
- 3.6.15.3 A "Purchasing Scheme" may include:
 - 3.6.15.3.1 Framework arrangements (including those set up by the Cabinet Office);
 - 3.6.15.3.2 Purchasing arrangements set up by contracting authorities such as a centralized procurement authority of another local authority;
 - 3.6.15.3.3 Consortium purchasing;
 - 3.6.15.3.4 Collaborative working arrangements;
 - 3.6.15.3.5 Formal agency arrangements;
 - 3.6.15.3.6 E-procurement / purchasing schemes and methods;
 - 3.6.15.3.7 Other similar arrangements such as the IDEA Marketplace
- 3.6.15.4 Where a Purchasing Scheme is used then there shall be a whole or partial exemption from the obligations under these Contract Standing Orders in respect of the choice and conduct of procedures to the extent permitted and indicated in the Council's Purchasing Guide.
- 3.6.15.5 Prior to using any purchasing scheme / framework, the Responsible Officer / Lead Officer should consider whether the works, goods or services required can be procured locally.

3.6.16 Review and Changes to these Contract Standing Orders

- 3.6.16.1 These Contract Standing Orders shall be reviewed and updated on a regular basis. Save in the case of revisions to the UK Thresholds amended Contract Standing Orders shall be agreed and adopted by the Council. Revisions to the UK Thresholds shall be dealt with in accordance with the Constitution - Scheme of Delegation to the Head of Legal Partnership. Any other modifications to these Contract Standing Orders outside of the scope above will need to be presented to SMT, Policy and Resources Committee and then to Full Council for approval. These Contract Standing Orders will be updated automatically where there are any changes to legislation affecting them. They will be reviewed at least every three years to ensure that they continue to meet the Council's requirements.

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MEMBERSHIP OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Service Committees

Policy and Resources Committee

Membership = 15 Quorum = 5

Labour (5)	Tim Gibson Angela Harrison Mark Last Ashley Wise Dolley Wooster
Conservative (3)	Lloyd Bowen James Hunt Julien Speed
The Swale Independents Alliance (2)	Mike Baldock Elliott Jayes
Liberal Democrats (2)	Charles Gibson Ben J Martin
Reform UK (2)	Kieran Mishchuk Richard Palmer
Green Party (1)	Rich Lehmann
Independent (0)	

Economy & Property Committee

Membership = 15 Quorum = 5

Labour (5)	Hayden Brawn Ann Cavanagh Simon Clark Shelley Cheesman Ashley Wise (VC)
Conservative (3)	Peter Marchington Lee-Anne Moore Mark Tucker
The Swale Independents Alliance (3)	Monique Bonney (C) Carrie Pollard Sarah Stephen
Reform UK (2)	Kieran Mishchuk Richard Palmer
Liberal Democrats (1)	Alex Eyre
Green Party (1)	Terry Thompson
Independent (0)	

Environmental Services & Climate Change Committee

Membership = 15 Quorum = 5

Labour (5)	Shelley Cheesman
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	Carole Jackson Charlie Miller Ashley Shiel Dolley Wooster (C)
Conservative (3)	Peter Marchington Pete Neal Julien Speed
The Swale Independents Alliance (3)	Elliott Jayes (VC) Paul Stephen Sarah Stephen
Liberal Democrats (2)	Alex Eyre Claire Martin
Reform UK (1)	Chris Palmer
Green Party (1)	Rich Lehmann
Independent (0)	

Housing, Health and Communities Committee

The Swale Rainbow Homes Shareholder Representation Sub-Committee to be formed from within the Housing and Health Committee membership.

Membership = 15 Quorum = 5

Labour (5)	Hayden Brawn Ann Cavanagh Angela Harrison (VC) Kieran Golding Karen Watson
Conservative (3)	Lloyd Bowen Peter Marchington Pete Neal
The Swale Independents Alliance (3)	Derek Carnell Tom Nundy Carrie Pollard
Liberal Democrats (2)	Ben J Martin Hannah Perkin (C)
Reform UK (1)	Peter MacDonald
Green Party (1)	Alastair Gould
Independent (0)	

Subcommittees and Working Groups

Planning and Transportation Policy

Membership = 11 Quorum = 3

Membership to be agreed at Policy and Resources Committee meeting in June 2025.

Regulatory Committees

Licensing Committee

Membership = 15 Quorum = 5

Licensing Act Sub-Committee and General Licensing Sub-Committee membership to be formed from within the Licensing Committee membership.

Labour (5)	Simon Clark Carole Jackson Mark Last Charlie Miller Tony Winckless (VC)
Conservative (4)	Peter Marchington Lee-Anne Moore Tara Noe Mark Tucker
The Swale Independents Alliance (2)	Derek Carnell (C) Paul Stephen
Liberal Democrats (1)	Alex Eyre
Reform UK (2)	Lloyd Chapman Chris Palmer
Green Party (1)	Rich Lehmann
Independent (0)	

Planning Committee

Membership = 17 Quorum = 6

Labour (5)	Hayden Brawn Ann Cavanagh Simon Clark (VC) Kieran Golding Tony Winckless
Conservative (4)	Andy Booth (C) James Hunt Peter Marchington Julien Speed
The Swale Independents Alliance (3)	Monique Bonney Elliott Jayes Paul Stephen
Liberal Democrats (2)	Ben J Martin Claire Martin
Reform UK (2)	Lloyd Chapman Peter MacDonald
Green Party (1)	Terry Thompson
Independent (0)	

Other Committees

Audit Committee

Membership = 9 Quorum = 3

Labour (3)	Simon Clark (VC) Angela Harrison Dolley Wooster
Conservative (2)	Andy Booth Tara Noe
The Swale Independents Alliance (1)	Derek Carnell
Liberal Democrats (1)	Charles Gibson (C)
Reform UK (1)	Kieran Mishchuk
Green Party (1)	Terry Thompson
Independent (0)	

Standards Committee

Membership = 11 Quorum = 3

Kent Association of Local Councils non-voting/co-opted representatives TBC after KALC annual meeting.

Standards Hearing Panel 3 members to be formed from within Standards Committee membership.

Labour(4)	Angela Harrison (C) Mark Last Charlie Miller Ashley Wise
Conservative (2)	James Hunt (VC) Pete Neal
The Swale Independents Alliance (2)	Monique Bonney Tom Nundy
Liberal Democrats (1)	Hannah Perkin
Reform UK (1)	Richard Palmer
Green Party (1)	Rich Lehmann
Independent (0)	

Urgent Decisions Committee

Membership = 7 Quorum = 3

To include the Group Leaders subject to political balance rules.

Labour (2)	Tim Gibson (C) Ashley Wise
Conservative (2)	Lloyd Bowen (VC) James Hunt
The Swale Independents Alliance (1)	Mike Baldock
Liberal Democrats (1)	Hannah Perkin
Reform UK (1)	Richard Palmer
Green Party (0)	
Independent (0)	

Area Committees

Eastern Area Committee

Membership = 12 Quorum = 4

Abbey	Charles Gibson (VC) Hannah Perkin
Boughton and Courtenay	Alastair Gould Richard Lehmann
East Downs	Terry Thompson
Priory	Alex Eyre
St Ann's	Kieran Golding Carole Jackson
Teynham and Lynsted	Lloyd Bowen Julien Speed
Watling	Ben J Martin (C) Claire Martin

Sheppey Area Committee

Membership = 14 Quorum = 5

Minster Cliffs	Andy Booth Peter MacDonald Tom Nundy
Queenborough and Halfway	Peter Marchington Ashley Shiel Mike Whiting
Sheerness	Hayden Brawn Angela Harrison Dolley Wooster (VC)
Sheppey Central	Elliott Jayes (C) Peter Neal Mark Tucker
Sheppey East	Lee-Anne Moore Tara Noe

Sittingbourne Area Committee

Membership = 11 Quorum = 3

Chalkwell	Charlie Miller
Homewood	Shelley Cheesman Simon Clark
Kemsley	Derek Carnell Ashley Wise (C)
Milton Regis	Kieran Mishchuk Tony Winckless
Murston	Mark Last (VC) Carrie Pollard

Roman	Tim Gibson Karen Watson

Western Area Committee

Membership = 10

Quorum = 3

Bobbing, Iwade and Lower Halstow	Lloyd Chapman Roger Clark
Borden and Grove Park	Mike Baldock Ann Cavanagh
Hartlip, Newington and Upchurch	Chris Palmer Richard Palmer
The Meads	James Hunt
Woodstock	Paul Stephen (C) Sarah Stephen (VC)
West Downs	Monique Bonney

Updated 23.05.2025

Local Government Association

Model Councillor Code of Conduct 2020

Joint statement

The role of councillor across all tiers of local government is a vital part of our country's system of democracy. It is important that as councillors we can be held accountable and all adopt the behaviors and responsibilities associated with the role. Our conduct as an individual councillor affects the reputation of all councillors. We want the role of councillor to be one that people aspire to. We also want individuals from a range of backgrounds and circumstances to be putting themselves forward to become councillors.

As councillors, we represent local residents, work to develop better services and deliver local change. The public have high expectations of us and entrust us to represent our local area, taking decisions fairly, openly, and transparently. We have both an individual and collective responsibility to meet these expectations by maintaining high standards and demonstrating good conduct, and by challenging behaviour which falls below expectations.

Importantly, we should be able to undertake our role as a councillor without being intimidated, abused, bullied, or threatened by anyone, including the general public.

This Code has been designed to protect our democratic role, encourage good conduct and safeguard the public's trust in local government.

Introduction

The Local Government Association (LGA) has developed this Model Councillor Code of Conduct, in association with key partners and after extensive consultation with the sector, as part of its work on supporting all tiers of local government to continue to aspire to high standards of leadership and performance. It is a template for councils to adopt in whole and/or with local amendments.

All councils are required to have a local Councillor Code of Conduct.

The LGA will undertake an annual review of this Code to ensure it continues to be fit-for-purpose, incorporating advances in technology, social media and changes in legislation. The LGA can also offer support, training and mediation to councils and councillors on the application of the Code and the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and the county associations of local councils can offer advice and support to town and parish councils.

Definitions

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, a “councillor” means a member or co-opted member of a local authority or a directly elected mayor. A “co-opted member” is defined in the Localism Act 2011 Section 27(4) as “a person who is not a member of the authority but who

- a) is a member of any committee or sub-committee of the authority, or;
- b) is a member of, and represents the authority on, any joint committee or joint sub-committee of the authority;

and who is entitled to vote on any question that falls to be decided at any meeting of that committee or sub-committee”.

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, “local authority” includes county councils, district councils, London borough councils, parish councils, town councils, fire and rescue authorities, police authorities, joint authorities, economic prosperity boards, combined authorities and National Park authorities.

Purpose of the Code of Conduct

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to assist you, as a councillor, in modelling the behaviour that is expected of you, to provide a personal check and balance, and to set out the type of conduct that could lead to action being taken against you. It is also to protect you, the public, fellow councillors, local authority officers and the reputation of local government. It sets out general principles of conduct expected of all councillors and your specific obligations in relation to standards of conduct. The LGA encourages the use of support, training and mediation prior to action being taken using the Code. The fundamental aim of the Code is to create and maintain public confidence in the role of councillor and local government.

General principles of councillor conduct

Everyone in public office at all levels; all who serve the public or deliver public services, including ministers, civil servants, councillors and local authority officers; should uphold the [Seven Principles of Public Life](#), also known as the Nolan Principles.

Building on these principles, the following general principles have been developed specifically for the role of councillor.

In accordance with the public trust placed in me, on all occasions:

- I act with integrity and honesty
- I act lawfully
- I treat all persons fairly and with respect; and
- I lead by example and act in a way that secures public confidence in the role of councillor.

In undertaking my role:

- I impartially exercise my responsibilities in the interests of the local community
- I do not improperly seek to confer an advantage, or disadvantage, on any person
- I avoid conflicts of interest
- I exercise reasonable care and diligence; and
- I ensure that public resources are used prudently in accordance with my local authority's requirements and in the public interest.

Application of the Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct applies to you as soon as you sign your declaration of acceptance of the office of councillor or attend your first meeting as a co-opted member and continues to apply to you until you cease to be a councillor.

This Code of Conduct applies to you when you are acting in your capacity as a councillor which may include when:

- you misuse your position as a councillor
- Your actions would give the impression to a reasonable member of the public with knowledge of all the facts that you are acting as a councillor;

The Code applies to all forms of communication and interaction, including:

- at face-to-face meetings
- at online or telephone meetings
- in written communication
- in verbal communication
- in non-verbal communication
- in electronic and social media communication, posts, statements and comments.

You are also expected to uphold high standards of conduct and show leadership at all times when acting as a councillor.

Your Monitoring Officer has statutory responsibility for the implementation of the Code of Conduct, and you are encouraged to seek advice from your Monitoring Officer on any matters that may relate to the Code of Conduct. Town and parish councillors are encouraged to seek advice from their Clerk, who may refer matters to the Monitoring

Standards of councillor conduct

This section sets out your obligations, which are the minimum standards of conduct required of you as a councillor. Should your conduct fall short of these standards, a complaint may be made against you, which may result in action being taken.

Guidance is included to help explain the reasons for the obligations and how they should be followed.

General Conduct

1. Respect

As a councillor:

1.1 I treat other councillors and members of the public with respect.

1.2 I treat local authority employees, employees and representatives of partner organisations and those volunteering for the local authority with respect and respect the role they play.

Respect means politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech, and in the written word. Debate and having different views are all part of a healthy democracy. As a councillor, you can express, challenge, criticise and disagree with views, ideas, opinions and policies in a robust but civil manner. You should not, however, subject individuals, groups of people or organisations to personal attack.

In your contact with the public, you should treat them politely and courteously. Rude and offensive behaviour lowers the public's expectations and confidence in councillors.

In return, you have a right to expect respectful behaviour from the public. If members of the public are being abusive, intimidatory or threatening you are entitled to stop any conversation or interaction in person or online and report them to the local authority, the relevant social media provider or the police. This also applies to fellow councillors, where action could then be taken under the Councillor Code of Conduct, and local authority employees, where concerns should be raised in line with the local authority's councillor-officer protocol.

2. Bullying, harassment and discrimination

As a councillor:

2.1 I do not bully any person.

2.2 I do not harass any person.

2.3 I do not intimidate any person.

2.4 I promote equalities and do not discriminate unlawfully against any person.

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) characterises bullying as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Bullying might be a regular pattern of behaviour or a one-off incident, happen face-to-face, on social media, in emails or phone calls, happen in the workplace or at work social events and may not always be obvious or noticed by others.

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 defines harassment as conduct that causes

alarm or distress or puts people in fear of violence and must involve such conduct on at least two occasions. It can include repeated attempts to impose unwanted communications and contact upon a person in a manner that could be expected to cause distress or fear in any reasonable person.

Unlawful discrimination is where someone is treated unfairly because of a protected characteristic. Protected characteristics are specific aspects of a person's identity defined by the Equality Act 2010. They are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The Equality Act 2010 places specific duties on local authorities. Councillors have a central role to play in ensuring that equality issues are integral to the local authority's performance and strategic aims, and that there is a strong vision and public commitment to equality across public services.

3. Impartiality of officers of the council

As a councillor:

3.1 I do not compromise, or attempt to compromise, the impartiality of anyone who works for, or on behalf of, the local authority.

Officers work for the local authority as a whole and must be politically neutral (unless they are political assistants). They should not be coerced or persuaded to act in a way that would undermine their neutrality. You can question officers in order to understand, for example, their reasons for proposing to act in a particular way, or the content of a report that they have written. However, you must not try and force them to act differently, change their advice, or alter the content of that report, if doing so would prejudice their professional integrity.

4. Confidentiality and access to information

As a councillor:

4.1 I do not disclose information:

- a. given to me in confidence by anyone**
- b. acquired by me which I believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature, unless**
 - i. I have received the consent of a person authorised to give it;**
 - ii. I am required by law to do so;**
 - iii. the disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional legal advice provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person; or**
 - iv. the disclosure is:**
 - 1. reasonable and in the public interest; and**
 - 2. made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the local authority; and**
 - 3. I have consulted the Monitoring Officer prior to its release.**

4.2 I do not improperly use knowledge gained solely as a result of my role as a councillor for the advancement of myself, my friends, my family members, my employer or my business interests.

4.3 I do not prevent anyone from getting information that they are entitled to by law.

Local authorities must work openly and transparently, and their proceedings and printed materials are open to the public, except in certain legally defined circumstances. You should work on this basis, but there will be times when it is required by law that discussions, documents and other information relating to or held by the local authority must be treated in a confidential manner. Examples include personal data relating to individuals or information relating to ongoing negotiations.

5. Disrepute

As a councillor:

5.1 I do not bring my role or local authority into disrepute.

As a Councillor, you are trusted to make decisions on behalf of your community and your actions and behaviour are subject to greater scrutiny than that of ordinary members of the public. You should be aware that your actions might have an adverse impact on you, other councillors and/or your local authority and may lower the public's confidence in you or your local authority's ability to discharge your/its functions. For example, behaviour that is considered dishonest and/or deceitful can bring your local authority into disrepute.

You are able to hold the local authority and fellow councillors to account and are able to constructively challenge and express concern about decisions and processes undertaken by the council whilst continuing to adhere to other aspects of this Code of Conduct.

6. Use of position

As a councillor:

6.1 I do not use, or attempt to use, my position improperly to the advantage or disadvantage of myself or anyone else.

Your position as a member of the local authority provides you with certain opportunities, responsibilities, and privileges, and you make choices all the time that will impact others. However, you should not take advantage of these opportunities to further your own or others' private interests or to disadvantage anyone unfairly.

7. Use of local authority resources and facilities

As a councillor:

7.1 I do not misuse council resources.

7.2 I will, when using the resources of the local authority or authorising their use by others:

- a. act in accordance with the local authority's requirements; and**
- b. ensure that such resources are not used for political purposes unless that use could reasonably be regarded as likely to facilitate, or be conducive to, the discharge of the functions of the local authority or of the office to which I have been elected or appointed.**

You may be provided with resources and facilities by the local authority to assist you in carrying out your duties as a councillor.

Examples include:

- office support
- stationery
- equipment such as phones, and computers
- transport

- access and use of local authority buildings and rooms.

These are given to you to help you carry out your role as a councillor more effectively and are not to be used for business or personal gain. They should be used in accordance with the purpose for which they have been provided and the local authority's own policies regarding their use.

8. Complying with the Code of Conduct

As a Councillor:

8.1 I undertake Code of Conduct training provided by my local authority.

8.2 I cooperate with any Code of Conduct investigation and/or determination.

8.3 I do not intimidate or attempt to intimidate any person who is likely to be involved with the administration of any investigation or proceedings.

8.4 I comply with any sanction imposed on me following a finding that I have breached the Code of Conduct.

It is extremely important for you as a councillor to demonstrate high standards, for you to have your actions open to scrutiny and for you not to undermine public trust in the local authority or its governance. If you do not understand or are concerned about the local authority's processes in handling a complaint you should raise this with your Monitoring Officer.

Protecting your reputation and the reputation of the local authority

9. Interests

As a councillor:

9.1 I register and disclose my interests.

Section 29 of the Localism Act 2011 requires the Monitoring Officer to establish and maintain a register of interests of members of the authority .

You need to register your interests so that the public, local authority employees and fellow councillors know which of your interests might give rise to a conflict of interest. The register is a public document that can be consulted when (or before) an issue arises. The register also protects you by allowing you to demonstrate openness and a willingness to be held accountable. You are personally responsible for deciding whether or not you should disclose an interest in a meeting, but it can be helpful for you to know early on if others think that a potential conflict might arise. It is also important that the public know about any interest that might have to be disclosed by you or other councillors when making or taking part in decisions, so that decision making is seen by the public as open and honest. This helps to ensure that public confidence in the integrity of local governance is maintained.

You should note that failure to register or disclose a disclosable pecuniary interest as set out in **Table 1**, is a criminal offence under the Localism Act 2011.

Appendix B sets out the detailed provisions on registering and disclosing interests. If in doubt, you should always seek advice from your Monitoring Officer.

10. Gifts and hospitality

As a councillor:

- 10.1 I do not accept gifts or hospitality, irrespective of estimated value, which could give rise to real or substantive personal gain or a reasonable suspicion of influence on my part to show favour from persons seeking to acquire, develop or do business with the local authority or from persons who may apply to the local authority for any permission, licence or other significant advantage.**
- 10.2 I register with the Monitoring Officer any gift or hospitality with an estimated value of more than £50 within 28 days of its receipt.**
- 10.3 I register with the Monitoring Officer any significant gift or hospitality that I have been offered but have refused to accept.**

In order to protect your position and the reputation of the local authority, you should exercise caution in accepting any gifts or hospitality which are (or which you reasonably believe to be) offered to you because you are a councillor. The presumption should always be not to accept significant gifts or hospitality. However, there may be times when such a refusal may be difficult if it is seen as rudeness in which case you could accept it but must ensure it is publicly registered. However, you do not need to register gifts and hospitality which are not related to your role as a councillor, such as Christmas gifts from your friends and family. It is also important to note that it is appropriate to accept normal expenses and hospitality associated with your duties as a councillor. If you are unsure, do contact your Monitoring Officer for guidance.

Appendices

Appendix A – The Seven Principles of Public Life

The principles are:

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must disclose and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Appendix B Registering interests

Within 28 days of becoming a member or your re-election or re-appointment to office you must register with the Monitoring Officer the interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 1 (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests)** which are as described in “The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012”. You should also register details of your other personal interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 2 (Other Registerable Interests)**.

“Disclosable Pecuniary Interest” means an interest of yourself, or of your partner if you are aware of your partner's interest, within the descriptions set out in Table 1 below.

"Partner" means a spouse or civil partner, or a person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom you are living as if you are civil partners.

1. You must ensure that your register of interests is kept up-to-date and within 28 days of becoming aware of any new interest, or of any change to a registered interest, notify the Monitoring Officer.
2. A ‘sensitive interest’ is as an interest which, if disclosed, could lead to the councillor, or a person connected with the councillor, being subject to violence or intimidation.
3. Where you have a ‘sensitive interest’ you must notify the Monitoring Officer with the reasons why you believe it is a sensitive interest. If the Monitoring Officer agrees they will withhold the interest from the public register.

Non participation in case of disclosable pecuniary interest

4. Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to one of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in **Table 1**, you must disclose the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a ‘sensitive interest’, you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest. Dispensation may be granted in limited circumstances, to enable you to participate and vote on a matter in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest.
5. [Where you have a disclosable pecuniary interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it]

Disclosure of Other Registerable Interests

6. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to the financial interest or wellbeing of one of your Other Registerable Interests (as set out in **Table 2**), you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a ‘sensitive interest’, you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Disclosure of Non-Registerable Interests

7. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to your financial interest or well-being (and is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest set out in Table 1) or a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate, you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.
8. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **affects** –
 - a. your own financial interest or well-being;
 - b. a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate; or
 - c. a financial interest or wellbeing of a body included under Other Registrable Interests as set out in **Table 2**

you must disclose the interest. In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied

9. Where a matter (referred to in paragraph 8 above) **affects** the financial interest or well-being:
 - a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
 - b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

10. [Where you have an Other Registrable Interest or Non-Registrable Interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it]

Table 1: Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

This table sets out the explanation of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in the [Relevant Authorities \(Disclosable Pecuniary Interests\) Regulations 2012](#).

Subject	Description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the

	<p>councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the council —</p> <p>(a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and</p> <p>(b) which has not been fully discharged.</p>
Land and Property	<p>Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council.</p> <p>‘Land’ excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.</p>
Licenses	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer
Corporate tenancies	<p>Any tenancy where (to the councillor’s knowledge)—</p> <p>(a) the landlord is the council; and</p> <p>(b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.</p>
Securities	<p>Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where—</p> <p>(a) that body (to the councillor’s knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and</p> <p>(b) either—</p> <p>(i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or</p> <p>(ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/ her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were</p>

	spouses/civil partners have a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.
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* 'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

* 'securities' means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

Table 2: Other Registrable Interests

You must register as an Other Registerable Interest :

- a) any unpaid directorships
 - b) any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority
 - c) any body
 - (i) exercising functions of a public nature
 - (ii) directed to charitable purposes or
 - (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)
- of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management

Appendix C – the Committee on Standards in Public Life

The LGA has undertaken this review whilst the Government continues to consider the recommendations made by the Committee on Standards in Public Life in their report on [Local Government Ethical Standards](#). If the Government chooses to implement any of the recommendations, this could require a change to this Code.

The recommendations cover:

- Recommendations for changes to the Localism Act 2011 to clarify in law when the Code of Conduct applies
- The introduction of sanctions
- An appeals process through the Local Government Ombudsman
- Changes to the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012
- Updates to the Local Government Transparency Code
- Changes to the role and responsibilities of the Independent Person
- That the criminal offences in the Localism Act 2011 relating to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests should be abolished

The Local Government Ethical Standards report also includes Best Practice recommendations. These are:

Best practice 1: Local authorities should include prohibitions on bullying and harassment in codes of conduct. These should include a definition of bullying and harassment, supplemented with a list of examples of the sort of behaviour covered by such a definition.

Best practice 2: Councils should include provisions in their code of conduct requiring councillors to comply with any formal standards investigation and prohibiting trivial or malicious allegations by councillors.

Best practice 3: Principal authorities should review their code of conduct each year and regularly seek, where possible, the views of the public, community organisations and neighbouring authorities.

Best practice 4: An authority's code should be readily accessible to both councillors and the public, in a prominent position on a council's website and available in council premises.

Best practice 5: Local authorities should update their gifts and hospitality register at least once per quarter, and publish it in an accessible format, such as CSV.

Best practice 6: Councils should publish a clear and straightforward public interest test against which allegations are filtered.

Best practice 7: Local authorities should have access to at least two Independent Persons.

Best practice 8: An Independent Person should be consulted as to whether to undertake a formal investigation on an allegation, and should be given the option to

review and comment on allegations which the responsible officer is minded to dismiss as being without merit, vexatious, or trivial.

Best practice 9: Where a local authority makes a decision on an allegation of misconduct following a formal investigation, a decision notice should be published as soon as possible on its website, including a brief statement of facts, the provisions of the code engaged by the allegations, the view of the Independent Person, the reasoning of the decision-maker, and any sanction applied.

Best practice 10: A local authority should have straightforward and accessible guidance on its website on how to make a complaint under the code of conduct, the process for handling complaints, and estimated timescales for investigations and outcomes.

Best practice 11: Formal standards complaints about the conduct of a parish councillor towards a clerk should be made by the chair or by the parish council, rather than the clerk in all but exceptional circumstances.

Best practice 12: Monitoring Officers' roles should include providing advice, support and management of investigations and adjudications on alleged breaches to parish councils within the remit of the principal authority. They should be provided with adequate training, corporate support and resources to undertake this work.

Best practice 13: A local authority should have procedures in place to address any conflicts of interest when undertaking a standards investigation. Possible steps should include asking the Monitoring Officer from a different authority to undertake the investigation.

Best practice 14: Councils should report on separate bodies they have set up or which they own as part of their annual governance statement and give a full picture of their relationship with those bodies. Separate bodies created by local authorities should abide by the Nolan principle of openness and publish their board agendas and minutes and annual reports in an accessible place.

Best practice 15: Senior officers should meet regularly with political group leaders or group whips to discuss standards issues.

The LGA has committed to reviewing the Code on an annual basis to ensure it is still fit for purpose.

Part 4.1 Members' Code of Conduct

Code of Conduct Complaint Assessment Criteria

Before any assessment is made the Monitoring Officer must be satisfied that the complaint meets the following tests:

- it is a complaint against one or more named Members of the Authority or an authority covered by the Standards Committee;
- the named Member was in office at the time of the alleged conduct and the Code of Conduct was in force at the time;
- the complaint, if proven, would be a breach of the Code under which the Member was operating at the time of the alleged misconduct.

If the complaint fails one or more of these tests it cannot be investigated as a breach of the code and the complainant must be informed that no formal action will be taken in respect of the complaint.

As part of its consideration the Monitoring Officer will promote confidence in the system by demonstrating that the processes and procedures take complaints seriously and are dealt with appropriately, fairly and in a balanced way. However, as part of that consideration regard will be had to the fact that deciding to investigate a complaint or take other action will cost both public money and the officers' and Members' time. This will be an important consideration where the matter is relatively minor.

Submission of information

The Monitoring Officer will only consider cases where he/she is satisfied that there is sufficient information to ensure we can fulfil our role to treat complaints seriously and for them to be dealt with appropriately, fairly and in a balanced way. If the Monitoring Officer is not satisfied that there is enough information to make a decision as to whether the complaint should be referred for investigation or other action he/she will advise the complainant that no further action will be taken on the complaint.

Identity of person complained against

If the complaint is about someone who is no longer a Member of the Authority but is a Member of another authority the complaint will be referred to that authority to consider.

Nature of complaint

If the complaint has already been the subject of an investigation or other action relating to the Code of Conduct or been the subject of an investigation by other

regulatory authorities then the complainant will be advised that there is nothing to be gained by further action being taken.

Timing between alleged breach and receipt of complaint

If the complaint relates to something that happened so long ago that there would be little benefit in taking action now then the complainant will be advised accordingly. Any notification will make it clear that the period of time that has passed since the alleged conduct occurred was taken into account when deciding whether the matter should be referred for investigation or further action. In the light of this no further action would be warranted.

Trivial complaints

If the complaint is considered to be trivial then the complainant will be notified that it was not considered sufficiently serious to warrant further action.

Malicious, politically motivated or tit for tat complaints

If the matter is considered to fall within these categories then the complainant will be notified that it appears simply to fall into the relevant category and was not considered sufficiently serious to warrant further action.

Anonymous complaints

The Monitoring Officer will not entertain anonymous complaints.

Confidentiality of complainant in the public interest

To ensure that as many complaints as possible will be considered the Monitoring Officer is authorised to keep the identity of the complainant confidential where the Monitoring Officer is of the opinion that this is in the public interest.

Multiple complaints

It is not uncommon that one event gives rise to similar complaints from a number of different complainants. The regime is concerned with individual Member's potential breach of the Code of Conduct and so each separate complaint must be considered.

Initial assessment decisions

The purpose of such decisions is to reach a decision on what should happen with the complaint. In undertaking its function one of the following decisions will be reached:

- informal resolution of the complaint;
- referral of the complaint to the Monitoring Officer for further investigation;
- no action be taken.

In considering the decisions available we will have regard to the following:

- the public interest;
- any difficulty in dealing with the case fairly and speedily;
- the status of the Member;
- the status of the complainant;
- whether there is a potential conflict of interest of so many Members of the standards committee that it could not properly monitor the investigation;
- whether there is a potential conflict of interest of the Monitoring Officer or other officers and that suitable alternative arrangements cannot be put in place to address the conflict;
- the seriousness or complexity of the case;
- whether the complaint relates to long -term or systematic/officer bullying which could be more effectively investigated by someone outside the authority.

There is a presumption in favour of local informal resolution wherever possible. This course will be dependent upon the nature of the complaint and will take into account the needs of Swale Borough Council and the parish and town councils which they serve.

Certain complaints will lend themselves to being resolved in this way. For instance they may indicate a wider problem of lack of knowledge or understanding of the Code or where a training need amongst a group of councillors is identified.

A proactive approach can be a good way to resolve matters that are less serious.

The following are some examples of alternatives to investigation:

- arranging for the subject Member to attend a training course;
- arranging for that Member and the complainant to engage in a process of conciliation;
- instituting changes to the procedures of the Authority if they have given rise to the complaint.

If other action is proposed then all parties will be asked to confirm in writing that they will cooperate with the process.

Where a formal investigation finds evidence of failure to comply with the Code of Conduct there may well still be an opportunity for local resolution, avoiding the necessity of a local hearing. If this is an appropriate course of action and the complainant is satisfied with the outcome, then the Monitoring Officer will consult with the Independent Person before agreeing any local resolution.

Any decision to take no action will have regard to the assessment criteria set out. There has to be a potential breach of the Code for any action to be considered.

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GUIDANCE NOTE**Engaging in pre-planning application discussions****Monitoring Officer Advice to All Members****Issued: March 2014**

I have recently had to consider a potential complaint under the Code of Conduct which hinged on the role of members in pre-planning applications discussions.

Although no potential breach of the Code was found, it was suggested, following consultation with the Independent Person, that I remind Members of their role in this type of discussion. I wish to make it clear that in issuing this note it is not about preventing you from taking part in such discussions. Indeed your involvement as a councillor in the pre-application process is considered to be an important part of the applicant seeking to engage with the local community in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework. The note sets out matters that you should consider.

You will also appreciate that there is no obligation on an applicant to involve you in such discussions. Even where you are invited to be part of this process you need to be aware of the confidential nature of such discussions until a planning application is submitted.

As an active Councillor being involved with the community, there is a danger of joining in on a campaign with your constituents that you will later be called upon to take a decision on as a Member of the Council. This is called fettering your discretion. The Localism Act 2011 has sought to free-up a Member from many aspects of predetermination. You should still be aware, however, that that you should not fetter your discretion and therefore your ability to participate in planning decision making at this Council's Planning Committee.

You could fetter your discretion by:

- making up your mind, i.e. having a closed mind on the matter ; and
- clearly appearing to have made up your mind (particularly in relation to an external interest or lobby group), on how you will vote on any planning matter prior to formal consideration of the matter at the meeting and of your hearing the officer's presentation and evidence and arguments on both sides.

A fair-minded observer should not think that there was a real possibility that you were biased before the decision was taken.

If you have made up your mind and then take part in the decision making this will put the Council at risk of a finding of maladministration and of legal proceedings.

Your involvement as a Councillor in the pre-application process is considered to be an accepted part of the applicant seeking to engage with the local community in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, and you are not precluded from doing this.

If you do not sit regularly on Planning Committee but are called on as a substitute please be aware of the implications of participating in pre-application discussions and then sitting on the committee that determines the application.

The National Planning Policy Framework makes it clear that Local Planning Authorities:-

- should apply decision making in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development;
- look for solutions rather than problems;
- seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible; and
- work proactively with applicants to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.

Furthermore, it states that:-

- good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes to the community
- Local Planning Authorities have a key role in encouraging other parties to take maximum advantage of the pre-application stage;
- they should also, where they think it would be beneficial, encourage any applicants who are not already required to do so by law to engage with the local community before submitting their application.

There is also an opportunity for developers to receive pre-application advice from officers and it may be appropriate to encourage the applicant to direct technical or policy queries to the duty planner.

In addition, the Code of Conduct requires that Members deal with representations or enquiries from residents, members of our communities and visitors fairly, appropriately and impartially

In particular, when engaging in pre-application discussions all Members should;

- keep a careful note of the meetings or telephone calls including dates and times, attendees and what was discussed;
- always involve officers and consider how to structure discussions with developers;
- inform officers about any approaches made to you and seek advice;
- make it clear that the discussions are not binding on you or the Council and say that you can engage in discussions but you must be seen to have an open mind at the point of decision making; and
- if you are unsure about whether you have an open mind then you should not participate in the decision making.

If you are a Member of the Planning Committee (or attending as a substitute) and have made up your mind in advance of the planning committee meeting:

Don't speak and vote on a proposal where you have fettered your discretion. Whilst you do not have to withdraw from the meeting in these circumstances, I would advise that you do withdraw.

Do explain that you do not intend to speak and vote because you have or you could reasonably be perceived as having judged (or reserve the right to judge) the matter elsewhere, so that this may be recorded in the minutes.

Do take the opportunity to exercise your separate speaking rights as a Ward/Local Member where you have represented your views or those of local electors and fettered your discretion, but do not play any further part in the consideration of the item and do not vote.

If you are not on the Planning Committee but are attending the meeting solely as a Ward Councillor you may continue to represent those ward interests as a spokesperson for your local community, but I would recommend that you withdraw after having spoken to counter any suggestion of influencing Members' decision by your presence.

Larissa Reed
Chief Executive

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Gifts and Hospitality

As a member of Swale Borough Council I am required to register non-trivial gifts and hospitality received as a result of my being an elected representative.

1. I must, before the end of 28 days beginning with the day of receipt, notify the monitoring officer of any gift, benefit or hospitality with an estimated value of £100 or more which I receive and accept in the conduct of the business of the council or of the office to which I have been elected or appointed, or when I am acting as representative of the council. I must also register the source of the gift, benefit or hospitality.
2. Where a series of gifts, benefits, hospitality or a combination of these received from a single source within one calendar year has a total cumulative value of £100 or more, these must be registered in the same way.
3. Where any gift, benefit or hospitality I have received or accepted within the last three years relates to any matter scheduled for consideration or under consideration at a meeting, I must disclose the existence and nature of the gift, benefit or hospitality, the person or body who gave it to me and how the business under consideration relates to that person or body.
4. I must make this disclosure at the commencement of the meeting when invited to declare interests or as soon as the relevance of the gift, benefit or hospitality to the matter under consideration becomes apparent.
5. As with a disclosable non-pecuniary interest, a declaration of a relevant gift, benefit or hospitality will not preclude me from participating in the discussion of the matter or in any vote taken on the matter.
6. The duty to notify the monitoring officer does not apply where the gift, benefit or hospitality comes within any description approved by the council for this purpose. Light refreshments at meetings and meals which are incidental to training or other events for which the council has paid do not need to be disclosed.

Monitoring Officer Guidance Note:

Speaking at Meetings and in Public – Defamation and Qualified Privilege

Guidance Note

1. Speaking at Meetings and in Public - Defamation and Qualified Privilege

The Council conducts most of its meetings in public and as these are intended to be recorded, this guidance is issued to assist and remind Members of the key points when speaking at meetings. Members will appreciate that statements made at meetings of the Council, the Cabinet (Executive) and all other Committee meetings are subject to the laws of defamation.

2. What is Defamation?

A person is entitled to his/her reputation and good name. This is particularly if they hold public or professional office and their position and reputation depends on a large degree of public trust and confidence. Communication of a matter which is untrue and likely to criticise substantially a person's reputation is, on the face of it, defamation.

Legally, defamation is defined as the **publication** to another person of an oral or written statement which:-

- exposes a person to hatred, ridicule or contempt; or
- causes him/her to be shunned or avoided; or
- has the effect of lowering his/her reputation in the estimation of right-thinking members of the public generally; or
- injures him/her in their **office**, profession or trade.

3. Distinction between Libel and Slander

A defamatory spoken word or gesture will usually amount to a slander (verbal communication).

A libel may be contained in a written or printed statement, or in a painting, talking film, caricature, advertisement or any disparaging object.

Reading out a defamatory document in a Council or Committee meeting would be the publication of a libel. A defamatory statement broadcast on radio, television or the theatre is treated as the publication of a libel.

4. Consequences of a Defamatory Statement

Defamation may be tried by a Jury. The Jury can award general, actual or aggravated damages.

The level of damages may be reduced if any of the following can be shown:-

- **Lack of deliberate malice.**
- **Provocation** - i.e. if the defamatory statement is made as a direct response to provocative statements made by the person alleging defamation.
- **Mere repetition** - It is considered less malicious to repeat a defamatory statement.
- **Apology** - If the person accused of defamation can show that he/she made or offered an apology before the commencement of the action or as soon afterwards as he had an opportunity of so doing.

5. Defences to an Action for Defamation

It is a complete defence to an action for defamation to show that it was made on a privileged occasion. With regards to all Council meetings only qualified privilege applies.

(a) **Qualified Privilege** - Qualified Privilege will frequently attach to statements made in Council and Committee whether contained in a report or spoken. It exists where

- the person who makes a communication has an **interest or duty** (whether legal, social or moral) **to make it** to the person to whom it is made; and
- the person to whom it is made has a corresponding **interest or duty to receive it**; and
- the person who makes the communication is **not motivated by malice**.

So long as a person believes in the truth of what is said malice cannot normally be inferred. Malice may be inferred however, if it can be shown that he/she was motivated by a purpose **other than his/her interest or duty** to make the statement.

Examples of improper purposes or motives may include giving vent to personal spite or ill-will.

Other Defences include:-

(b) **Justification** - i.e. the defamatory statement is true and if so provides a complete defence.

(c) **'Fair Comment'** - This defence is intended to allow any person (but in particular the press) to express their views honestly and fearlessly on matters of public interest even though that may involve "strong" criticism of the conduct of persons in the public arena or who hold public office. In this connection the administration of local affairs by the Council is a matter of public interest.

(d) **Unintentional Defamation** - In cases of unintentional and non-negligent defamations, a defendant may avoid liability to pay damages if he is willing to publish a reasonable correction and apology and to pay the plaintiff's costs and expenses reasonably incurred as a consequence of the publication in question (e.g. costs of consulting a solicitor, obtaining Counsel's opinion etc.)

6. Summary and Check-List

Ask yourself the following questions before speaking in a Council or Committee meeting in a manner which could be construed as defamatory.

If the answer to any question is "no" - do not speak unless you are absolutely sure of your facts.

This will ensure that the defence of Qualified Privilege is not lost, or if it is lost or not available that the defences of justification or fair comment will be available.

- Do I have an interest or duty to make the statement?
- Is there a corresponding interest or duty on the part of other Members to receive it?
- Is there an interest or duty on the part of the press and public to receive it?
- Do I reasonably believe in the truth of what I am about to say?
- Am I motivated to make the statement only by my interest or duty to make it?

Remember - before speaking:-

- Check your facts.
- Examine your motives.
- Remain courteous - even under provocation.
- Take your own legal advice if in any doubt.

David Clifford,

Head of Policy, Governance and Customer Services and Monitoring Officer.

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4.4 Communications and Media Issues

4.4.1 Distinction between Council and Party/Group Communications

All the Council's communications are guided by the [code of recommended practice on local authority publicity](#), published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Publicity is defined as 'any communication, in whatever form, addressed to the public at large or to a section of the public'.

Local authorities are required to have regard to the underpinning principles of the codes of recommended practice, which require that publicity must:

- Be lawful.
- Be cost effective.
- Be objective.
- Be even-handed.
- Be appropriate.
- Have regard to equality and diversity.
- Be issued with care during periods of heightened sensitivity (pre-election period).

It is important to differentiate between Council publicity and party publicity. Under the Local Government Act 1986, local authorities may not publish material which appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party. This will be decided on the content and style of the materials, the timing and circumstances of the publication, and the likely effect on those to whom it is directed.

There are times when it is clear that as a Councillor you are speaking on behalf of the authority, are authorised to do so, and are commenting on approved Council policies and practices. On these occasions, always involve the communications team. Outside of the legally defined pre-election period, it is generally acceptable for the authority to publicise work done by individual Members and to present their views on local issues.

However, there will be times when you will be speaking as an individual or on behalf of your political party. In these circumstances any publicity should only be issued by or on behalf of the political party, and you should only use a personal or party email address or letterhead, not a swale.gov.uk email or council letterhead.

It is difficult for a Member to speak directly to the press without being perceived as speaking for the authority unless it is made clear that the Member is speaking as an individual or through party publicity/documents, etc. Where a Member wishes to

make a party political statement, any media release or interview must make it clear that they are issued by the individual/party.

It is a legal requirement that Members ensure that where such releases are made they come from their personal/group/party e-mail address, and/or be on individual or party/group letterhead.

Ensuring that the communications team is involved whenever you plan to talk to or issue documents to the press helps to ensure that council communication is consistent and in accordance with agreed policy decisions, and that information is presented in a non-party-political way.

This protects you by ensuring you are supported to:

- Avoid any breach of the rules on party political publicity.
- Avoid speaking out and potentially binding the council to a course of action which has not been properly agreed.
- Be aware of potential traps that may be around the corner in relation to particular issues.
- Take professional advice in dealing with the media through press releases and other engagement.

Separate guidance will continue to be issued to all Members about pre-election periods. If you have any questions please contact the communications team.

4.4.2 Social media issues

Social media is a great way for engaging with residents, with platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram being used daily by thousands of people across the borough. However, using them is not without risk, and councillors need to be mindful of the potential pitfalls of using them.

You are personally responsible for what you publish on social media, including when you share content produced by another user.

It is important that you think before you publish, as even if you delete a hastily fired-off post, it will probably already have been read and will be indexed or duplicated in places beyond your reach.

The council's social media policy contains more information about what is expected of members and officers using social media. Some of the points of most relevance to councillors are summarised below. In the main, councillors have the same legal

duties online as anyone else, but failures to comply with the law may have more serious consequences.

Libel

If you publish an untrue statement about a person which is damaging to their reputation, they may take a libel action against you. This will also apply if you allow someone else to publish something libellous on your website if you know about it and don't take prompt action to remove it. A successful libel claim against you will usually result in an award of financial damages against you.

Data Protection

You must avoid publishing personal information about individuals unless you have their express written permission to publish each item of information.

Bias and pre-determination

Members of regulatory committees should avoid publishing anything that might suggest you don't have an open mind about a matter you may be involved in determining. There are some options for dealing with situations where you have strong views about a matter and want to be able to publish those views, but it is best to discuss these with the monitoring officer before taking any action.

The code of conduct

Whether councillors are acting in that capacity or in a personal capacity is not always clear, but there are often tighter legal restrictions on what you can do as a councillor than as a private citizen. This can be problematic when councillors have social media accounts where they comment both as a councillor and as an individual, for example a Facebook account where you've posted about a great night out (personal) and another time explained the council position on pothole repair (councillor). It may be clear in your own mind whether you are posting in a private capacity or as a councillor, but it could be less clear to others, or indeed in law.

While this question is more about judgment than hard-and-fast rules, it is worth assuming that **any online activity can be linked to your official role**. Unless you've gone to significant effort to keep an online persona completely separate from your councillor identity, you are unlikely to be able to claim that you were acting in a completely private capacity.

This can be problematic, because people posting to the web in a capacity as a councillor can be held to higher standards than private citizens. With this in mind, you need to be aware that how you use your online identity will also determine how

online content will be treated in respect of the members' code of conduct. Councillors are expected to communicate politically, and it is accepted that this sometimes includes an element of 'trading blows' – but this only really applies when you are communicating politically with other councillors, not with constituents.

Aspects of the members' code of conduct will apply to your online activity in the same way it does to other written or verbal communication you undertake. Members should comply with the general principles of the code in what they publish and what they allow others to publish. You will need to be particularly aware of the provisions on treating others with respect, avoiding personal attacks, avoiding disrespectful, rude or offensive comments, and avoiding using discriminatory language or hate speech.

Bringing the council into disrepute

Councillors should be aware and recognise that there is a risk of damage being caused to the council by their personal use of social media when they can be identified as an elected councillor. You should:

- Expressly state (through a prominent disclaimer) on any profile or content that identifies you as a councillor (or otherwise refers to or implies a relationship with the council) that the stated views are your own personal views and are not those of the council.
- Ensure that readers are not misled into believing that any material published by you is on behalf of the council, authorised by the council, or official council policy if it is not in fact those things.
- Ensure all content that relates to the council or council business is accurate, fairly balanced, not misleading, and complies with any relevant council policy.

In addition you must not:

- Make any comment or post material that would give a reasonable person the impression that you have brought your office as councillor or the council into disrepute.
- Imply that you are authorised to speak as a representative of the council nor give the impression that the views you express are those of the council.
- Post or publish any material that is harassing or bullying. Harassment may include personal attacks on officers.
- Disclose confidential information, including matters considered under Part B of any council meeting. If you are in any doubt about this you should first speak to the monitoring officer.

PART 4.2 - OFFICERS' CODE OF CONDUCT AND GUIDE

This Code applies to all staff, employees, interims and those employed by Swale Borough Council working in partnership arrangements

INTRODUCTION – Why is it important?

1. Our community expects the highest standards of conduct from all of us who work for the Borough Council.
2. The Council expects high standards from its employees because we provide services that can affect the health, wealth and well being of local people. We are subject to democratic control and accountable to the electorate and it is local people who fund Council spending and take an interest in the way money is spent.
3. The Council expects you to comply with both the letter and the spirit of its Equalities Strategy not to discriminate, either in employment practices or in the provision of facilities and services to the public, by reference to Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation . All Members of the local community, users of service and other employees have a right to be treated with fairness and equity.

AIMS OF THE CODE – What does the Code do?

4. This Code sets out the minimum standards by which the Council and its staff work. It is not a complete list of what we can and cannot do, but its aim is to enable us to understand the ground rules.
5. However the Code cannot be exhaustive and you should seek guidance on any matter where you are unsure of the standards required.

SCOPE OF THE CODE

6. Following the Code is part of your conditions of employment with the Council. If you do not follow it, it may mean that the formal disciplinary procedure will apply. It also applies to persons under the Strategic Partnership Agreement and interims. Although the Code relates primarily to your working hours it can also apply where due to your role you might be on call. You should also be aware that the Code could apply to comments you make when using social media such as Facebook and Twitter.

WHAT DO ELECTED MEMBERS EXPECT?

7. We are responsible to the elected Members who represent the local community. The Council is looking continually to improve its responsiveness to the people of its district. It expects you to be courteous, efficient, helpful, as open as possible and impartial in your dealings with the public.

Working safely

8. The Council is committed to promoting good health, welfare and safe working. You have to take reasonable care for your own health and safety and for the safety of others who may be affected by what you do. Failure to do so may endanger you, the public and other staff.

Working honestly

9. It is a serious criminal offence for you corruptly to receive or give any gift, loan, fee, reward or advantage for doing, or not doing, anything or showing favour, or disfavour, to any person in your official capacity. If an allegation is made the matter will be investigated using procedures set out in the Council's grievance and disciplinary policies. You must not show favouritism or give preferential treatment to friends, partners or relations in the allocation of Council services or benefits.

10. You must report to the Head of Legal Services any dealings that you become aware of where you suspect that the money involved may have been acquired through illegal practices, whether or not that money relates to a client's funds or those of any contractor or third-party with whom the Council may be involved.

11. This is particularly important now that the Bribery Act 2010 has come into force. The Council has adopted a Policy Statement which makes it clear that it is committed to the highest standards of personal and professional conduct, including a policy of zero tolerance towards bribery. All staff should make themselves familiar with the contents of this Policy Statement.

12. The receipt of minor articles, often by way of trade advertisements, which will be used on the Council's business e.g. diaries calendars, office requisites and the like, which are customarily distributed at Christmas, and occasionally at other times, will not be regarded as the acceptance of a gift; but if there is any doubt the gift should be refused. Similar principles should be followed in connection with the acceptance of favours other than gifts, such as trading discounts.

DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION – What can I disclose?

13. Open government is best because it gives assurance to our communities that decisions are being taken in as open as transparent a way as possible. The law requires that certain types of information must be available to Members, auditors, government departments, service users and the public. You must be aware of which information the Council does make public and act accordingly. In particular liability under Data Protection legislation must be observed and safeguarded. Information gathered while working for the Council should not be used for commercial or personal gain or otherwise misused.

14. You are under a special obligation to further the interests of the Council. Ownership of any copyright, design right, database or invention you make during the course of your normal duties or any duties specifically assigned to you will be with the Council.

15. In your dealings with consultants and contractors you should, wherever appropriate, ensure that the Council acquires ownership of any database or intellectual property rights produced specifically in connection with work for the Council.

16. You should not knowingly use any information obtained in the course of your employment for personal gain or benefit, nor should you knowingly pass it on to others who might use it in such a way.

POLITICAL NEUTRALITY AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH COUNCILLORS

17. Mutual respect between staff and Councillors is essential to good Local Government. You serve the Council as a whole not just the controlling group. You are expected to contribute to proper and effective working relationships with Councillors. You must ensure that the individual rights of Councillors are respected and you must ensure that you maintain political neutrality and do nothing that might embarrass others or damage your relationship with Members. There are rules around political allegiances and if in any doubt raise the matter with your line manager.

18. Close personal familiarity between individual Councillors and Officers can damage this relationship and give rise to the appearance of improper conduct and prove embarrassing to other staff and Councillors and therefore should be avoided.

19. You must report to your Head of Service any occasions when a member asks or pressures you to deal with a matter outside of Council procedure or policy. You must take up any work problem or personal problems you have with managers, do not raise them directly with Members

20. The Local Government Officers (Political Restriction) Regulations 1990 and the Local Government (Politically Restricted Posts) (No.2) Regulations 1990 impose, as a result of the salary level or scope of duties, restrictions on the political activities of certain Officers. Full details will be provided to you if you are in such a post.

21. You must follow every lawful expressed policy of the Council and must not allow your own personal or political opinions to interfere with your work.

22. During the period between an election being called and polling day there are strict legal guidelines covering publicity and promotional material. This is because in the run up to local elections (and national elections were they to run at the same time) there is understandably heightened sensitivity around the Council's publicity.

23. The restrictions apply to a broad range of activities because the definition of publicity and promotional activities is so wide. In particular:

- the election guidelines reinforce the general requirement of the Local Government Act 1986, which says: "A local authority shall not publish any material which, in whole or in part, appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party."; and

- the 1986 Act makes it clear that the timing of the release of publicity or information will be a critical factor in deciding whether material is designed to affect public support for a political party. This means even greater care must be taken in issuing publicity following the calling of an election.

24. The guidelines are clear that it is very important that the Council's Officers are seen to be politically neutral, and that any launches or events are either held well in advance of, or delayed until after, the election so that they solely promote the Council's services rather than being construed in any way, shape or form as political vehicles.

RELATIONSHIPS – What are my responsibilities?

The Local Community and Service Users

25. You must always remember your responsibilities to the community you serve and ensure courteous, efficient and impartial service delivery to all groups and individuals within the community as defined by the policies of the Council.

Contractors

26. All relationships of a business or private nature with external contractors, or potential contractors, must be declared appropriately. Orders and contracts must be awarded on merit in accordance with the Council's Financial and Contracts Rules and the Best Value Regime. No special favour must be shown to businesses run by, for example, friends, partners or relatives in the tendering process. No part of the local community must be discriminated against.

With Other Employees

27. Close personal relationships between Council employees will sometimes occur. It is very important that any relationship is not seen to bring advantage to either party and close personal relationships between a senior manager and one of their staff should be avoided. If a close personal relationship develops between a manager and a member of their staff it may be necessary to relocate one of the individuals to alternative work.

Media

28. The Council has authorised the Chief Executive, Directors and their nominated representatives and the Communications and Marketing Section to communicate with the media. Other employees who are not authorised to deal with representatives of the press or media should immediately refer any enquiries they received to the Director or to the Communications and Marketing Section Manager. Employees who have specific authority to deal with such enquiries should only reply to requests for information or questions which relate to the facts of a situation. Where an expression of opinion or official statement of policy is required the Director must first be consulted. Employees should avoid being led by representatives of the media into making unguarded comments that might be construed as official policy. Every assistance should be given to Members who need information to deal

with comments by the press or media.

29. An employee, who speaks as a private individual direct to the press, or at a public meeting, or where their remarks may be reported to the press, should ensure that nothing they say might lead the public to think they are acting in their capacity as a Council employee. Where employees are speaking on behalf of a recognised trade union this must be made clear.

APPOINTMENT AND OTHER EMPLOYMENT MATTERS – When Can I be involved?

30. If you are involved in appointments you must ensure that these are made on the basis of merit. It would be unlawful for you to make an appointment which was based on anything other than the ability of the candidate to undertake the duties of the post. In order to avoid any possible accusation of bias, you must not be involved in an appointment where you are related to an applicant, or have a close personal relationship outside work with him or her. You must not let your political or personal preferences influence your judgement. You must not canvass the support of colleagues for any candidate and you must resist any attempt by others to canvass you.

31. Similarly, you must not be involved in decisions relating to discipline promotion or pay adjustments for any Officer with whom you have a close personal relationship.

OUTSIDE COMMITMENTS

32. What you do during your off duty hours is your personal concern but you should not put yourself in a position where your duties and private interests conflict. You should not undertake outside work if your official duties overlap in a way which would cause a conflict of interest or if the outside work is likely to affect adversely the performance of your contract with the Borough Council. No outside work of any sort should be undertaken on Borough Council premises. Correspondence and incoming phone calls related to outside work are not permissible. You may not engage in any other business or take up any other additional employment without the express consent, in writing, of your Director or as specified in your letter of appointment.

33. You must not use the Council's equipment, property or contacts in any authorised private work that you do and you must not do any private work during your working hours. You must seek the approval of your manager before publishing or making private gain from any work which may be associated with your official capacity.

34. Council facilities must not be used for private use.

35. Outside of your employment, you must not undertake any private commitments or activities that may bring the Council into disrepute or impair your performance or detrimentally conflict with the Council's interests. If you are absent ill you must not undertake activities that may be detrimental to or inhibit your return to fitness and work.

36. The Council encourages voluntary work, public duties and activities in support of local community groups and your involvement in these areas is welcomed.

37. When acting in a professional capacity you may publish books and articles, give lectures or speak on radio and television and may illustrate these by reference to the Council's activities or policies. You should, however, consult your Director before doing so and should make it clear that the views you express are your own and not those of the Borough Council.

38. Those employees holding supervisory or managerial positions are expected to give first priority to their employment with Swale Borough Council and prior permission to undertake other paid employment must be obtained from their Director.

PERSONAL INTERESTS

39. You must record in the Central Register the following interests:-

- i) All paid employment (other than by the Borough Council) and occupations, including Directorships, Partnerships and Consultancies.
- ii) Ownership of any land which is within the Borough.
- iii) Companies or other Corporate Bodies having a place of business within the Borough and in which the Officer has a beneficial interest in a class of securities of a nominal value of greater than £25,000 or 1/100th of the issued share capital, whichever is the less.
- iv) Any tenancy or licence of land or premises in the Borough.
- v) Membership of any organisation that falls within the following definition:

'Any lodge, chapter, society, trust or regular gathering or meeting, which:

- (a) is not open to Members of the public who are not Members of that lodge, chapter, society or trust; and*
 - (b) includes in the grant of Membership an obligation on the part of the member a requirement to make a commitment (whether by oath or otherwise) of allegiance to the lodge, chapter, society, gathering or meeting; and*
 - (c) includes, whether initially or subsequently, a commitment (whether by oath or otherwise) of secrecy about the rules, Membership or conduct of the lodge, chapter, society, trust, gathering, or meeting.'*
- "A lodge, chapter, society, trust, gathering or meeting as defined above, should not be regarded as a secret society if it forms part of the activity of a generally recognised religion."*

vi) Any other financial or non-financial interest which could conflict with the Council's interests.

40. Private and personal interests include those of your family and friends, as well as those arising through Membership of, or association with, clubs, societies and other organisations.

41. You must not process any claim or application to the Council from yourself, a relative or personal friend. You must disclose any such claim or application to your supervisor or manager who will arrange for it to be dealt with by another member of staff. You have a

personal interest in a matter if that matter affects the wellbeing or financial position of you, your relatives or your friends more than it would affect other people in the Council's area. Such an interest may be either non-financial or financial.

42. When you submit a planning application to the Council, you must notify the Council's Monitoring Officer at the same time. If you are present at any meeting of the Council, when an issue in which you have a personal interest is being discussed, you must declare the interest and its nature and leave the meeting.

43. You must provide written notification of your personal and financial interests that could bring you into conflict with the Council's interests to the Council's Monitoring Officer annually within 28 days of 1 April in any year and within 28 days of becoming aware of any new personal or financial interest or change to any personal or financial interest. The Monitoring Officer maintains a register for this purpose.

44. The same principles would apply to sponsorship of corporate activities, events and functions. The register should include details of the name of sponsors, descriptions of the sponsorship offered and whether it is accepted or declined.

SEPARATION OF ROLES DURING TENDERING

45. If you are involved in the tendering process and are dealing with contractors you must be clear on the separation of client and contractor roles within the Council. Senior Officers who have both a client and contractor responsibility must be aware of the need for accountability and openness. If you are employed in contractor or client units you must exercise fairness and impartiality when dealing with all customers, suppliers, other contractors and sub-contractors. If you are privy to confidential matters on tenders or costs for either internal or external contractors you must not disclose those matters to any unauthorised party or organisation.

46. If you are contemplating a management buyout you must, as soon as you have formed a definite intent, inform the appropriate manager and withdraw from the contract awarding processes.

47. You must ensure that no special favour is shown to current or recent former Officers or their partners, close relatives or associates in awarding contracts to businesses run by them or employing them in a senior or managerial capacity.

Hospitality

48. You must only accept offers of hospitality if there is a genuine need to impart information or represent the Council through the particular engagement. Offers to attend purely social or sporting functions should only be accepted when these are for the benefit of the Council or in connection with a civic or courtesy visit. All hospitality received must be

properly authorised in advance and recorded in the register of gifts and hospitality held by the Monitoring Officer.

49. When hospitality has to be declined, those making the offer must be courteously but firmly informed of the procedures and standards operating within the Council. Any firm or individual who wishes to make a gesture of goodwill to the Council or its Officers should be redirected to the Mayor's Charity Fund.

50. When receiving authorised gifts or hospitality you must be particularly sensitive as to its timing in relation to decisions which the Council may be taking affecting those providing the hospitality. You must decline hospitality which may compromise your impartiality or have the perception of doing so.

51. Acceptance by you of hospitality through attendance at relevant conferences and courses is acceptable where it is clear the hospitality is corporate rather than personal, where your manager gives consent in advance and where your manager is satisfied that any purchasing decisions are not compromised.

52. Hospitality, excluding light refreshments, can only be given in exceptional circumstances where there is an expected demonstrable benefit to the Council and with the prior approval of your Head of Service or Director.

Free Seminars/Conferences/Product Familiarisation Sessions

53. You may attend such relevant seminars, training sessions, conferences, courses or trips for product/service familiarisation but must be recorded in advance in the Directorate's Gifts and Hospitality Register. In all cases, the Director/Section Manager must give consent prior to attendance and be satisfied that no immediate or subsequent purchasing decisions are compromised by you attending. Where visits to inspect equipment etc. are required, you must ensure that the Council meets the costs of such visits to avoid jeopardising the integrity of any subsequent purchasing decision.

54. Where modest meals or refreshments are provided by the other party, and to refuse would give offence or be unreasonable, these may be accepted and recorded in the Gifts and Hospitality Register, but these should be authorised in advance in writing by the Director/Section Manager wherever possible. Where this is not possible, the written sanction of the Director/Section Manager should be obtained and recorded as soon as possible thereafter.

Review of Gifts and Hospitality Registers

55. The Chief Executive and each Director shall review their respective Gifts and Hospitality Registers (and in the case of the Chief Executive also the Corporate Gift/Sponsorship Register) on a three-monthly basis and will sign the Register to signify that they are satisfied to the best of their knowledge that there is full compliance with the

provisions relating to gifts and hospitality. The Monitoring Officer will ensure that reminders are sent to staff at least annually.

56. If there is any doubt about whether an invitation should be accepted it may be

preferable to entertain prospective contractors on the Council's premises. The level of hospitality offered will obviously vary according to the circumstances of each situation, but in all cases, you should be able to justify the arrangements you have made in the interest of the Council as a whole. All hospitality should be properly authorised and recorded in a register held by the Director. (In the case of a Director this will be recorded in a register held by the Chief Executive). See Appendix 3 for the form which needs to be completed.

STANDARD OF APPEARANCE

57. The Council has the right to expect high standards of appearance from staff whilst undertaking their duties. Employees should be neat, well groomed and professional in appearance whilst dressing appropriately for the task they are undertaking. Where uniforms are provided as part of your role you are expected to wear these at all times you are on duty during your normal officer hours. If part of your duties involves being on call, this requirement would not apply to your out of hours work.

58. Where provided, safety equipment and protective clothing must be worn as instructed. No such equipment may be tampered with and any defects apparent must be brought to the attention of the appropriate manager without delay.

59. For the protection of the public and employees, it is important that you are easily identifiable whilst at work either within the offices or within the community. Cardkey identification cards, where provided, must be worn, so as to be clearly visible, at all times. When making visits to the homes or premises of the public, official Council identification should be presented promptly and where appropriate ahead of being requested.

FRAUD AND THEFT

60. The Council will not tolerate fraud or theft committed by employees at or during the course of their work. If evidence comes to light that fraud or theft has occurred the matter will be fully investigated internally and if sufficient evidence is available of possible involvement in fraud or theft staff will be suspended. If sufficient evidence is available that a loss has been incurred by the Council and by implication a criminal act has occurred, the matter will be referred to the Police who may undertake their own quite separate investigation. Under the Council's Disciplinary Policy staff may be subject to disciplinary action or dismissed if there is evidence to suggest either fraud or theft has been committed. Offences committed outside work may also be dealt with under the Disciplinary Policy and you should ensure that you understand how this could affect your employment with the Council.

BREACH OF THE CODE

61. Breach of this Code of Conduct by you will be regarded as a disciplinary offence. Serious breach will be regarded as gross misconduct. Examples of serious breach include:

failure to inform an appropriate manager about fraud or impropriety of which you are aware; misuse of confidential information; failure to declare a personal or prejudicial interest in a contract and making private gain as a result; private activities which bring the Council into disrepute; preferential treatment of contractors or clients in return for gifts or hospitality; use of Council equipment or facilities for private gain.

Swale Borough Council Constitution

October 2018

Part 4.2 Officers' Code of Conduct and Guide

MEMBER-OFFICER PROTOCOL JANUARY 2025

Protocol for Member/Officer Relations

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Mutual trust and respect between members and officers is core to the Council's governance strategy and working culture. It is an essential partnership necessary for the effective and successful operation of the Council.
- 1.2 The Member Code of Conduct states " *The public have high expectations of us and entrust us to represent our local area, taking decisions fairly, openly, and transparently. We have both an individual and collective responsibility to meet these expectations by maintaining high standards and demonstrating good conduct, and by challenging behaviour which falls below expectations.*" Therefore, this Protocol supplements the Member Codes of Conduct.
- 1.3 The Council has adopted Codes of Conduct for both officers and members. The Protocol also seeks to reflect the principles underlying the respective Codes of Conduct which apply to members and officers. The shared objective of these Codes is to enhance and maintain the integrity (real and perceived) of local government.
- 1.4 This Protocol guides members and officers of the Council in their relations with one another. Members and officers have a responsibility to act fairly, honestly, in good faith.
- 1.5 Given the variety and complexity of such relations, this Protocol does not seek to be either prescriptive or comprehensive. It seeks simply to offer guidance on some of the issues, which most commonly arise. It is hoped however, that the approach, which it adopts to these issues, will serve as a guide to dealing with other issues.
- 1.6 Members and officers must always respect the roles and duties of each other. They must show respect in all their dealings and by not seeking to take unfair advantage by virtue of their position.

2 The Role of Members and Officers and Effective Relations

- 2.1 Members and officers are indispensable to one another and mutual respect between both is essential. It is important to recognise and take account of their different roles. This is necessary for the day-to-day interaction between members and officers and for the public perception of the council by ensuring transparency between the political role of members and the professional, impartial, role of officers.
- 2.2 Members provide a democratic mandate to the council, whereas officers contribute to the professional expertise needed to deliver the policy framework agreed by members.
- 2.3 Members are accountable to the electorate and serve only for as long as their term of office lasts whereas officers are employees of the council and accountable to it.
- 2.4 An officer's role essentially is to put policies into effect and organise the provision of services. Officers may also be delegated by members to make policy decisions. Officers may have to advise members from time to time that certain courses of action cannot be carried out. Officers, therefore, have a duty to give unbiased professional advice.
- 2.5 Ultimately, officers serve the Council as a whole and not any political group, combination of groups or any individual member. Nonetheless, officers may properly be called upon to assist the deliberations of political groups and to help individual members in their different roles.
- 2.6 Mutual respect and good communication are the key to establishing good member and officer relations.
- 2.7 Where a personal relationship has been disclosed, those concerned should avoid a situation where conflict could be perceived. Specifically, a member should not sit on a body or participate in any decision which directly affects the Officer on a personal basis.

2.8 In order to be effective, both members and officers should discuss together and agree the values and behaviours they expect from each other in a relationship of mutual trust.

2.9 Members and officers should communicate clearly and openly avoiding ambiguity and the risk of misunderstanding.

2.10 Members and officers should work in a spirit of partnership, to turn the council's core values and priorities into practical policies for implementation.

2.11 Officers can expect from members:

- political leadership and direction.
- respect, dignity and courtesy.
- Not to be treated or considered as subordinate or subservient but a partner within their respective roles.
- an understanding of and support for respective roles, workload and pressures.
- not to be subjected to bullying.
- not to be harassed or placed undue pressure.
- not to use their position or relationship with officers to advance their personal interests or those of others or to influence decisions improperly.
- to comply with the Member Code of Conduct.

2.12 Members can expect officers to:

- behave in a professional manner and courteous manner.
- To respect, have dignity and courtesy.
- maintain confidentiality.
- perform their duties effectively, efficiently and with political neutrality.
- avoid personal close familiarity with members and not use their relationship with members to advance their personal interests or to influence decisions improperly.

- report to their director any time that a member asks or pressurises the officer to deal with a matter outside of Council procedure or policy.
- demonstrate an understanding of and support for respective roles, workload and pressures.
- comply with the Officer Code of Conduct

2.13

Communication and Consultation		
Political (Members)	Collaboration (Together)	Operational (Officers)
Being clear about the Council's priorities	Prioritisation taking account of aims and constraints.	Options and platforms for consultation and communication
Understanding people's concerns	Understanding and responding to community concerns	Managing and facilitating the change (meetings in the community etc)
Signalling political change	Focus on the positive	
	Promoting community interaction and leveraging community action	

Partnership Working		
Political (Members)	Collaboration (Together)	Operational (Officers)
<p>Understanding that councillors have a community leadership role that goes beyond the Council's services</p> <p>Be clear about what we can and cannot do (and what we are responsible for)</p> <p>Provide the political willingness to work in partnership and understand this may involve some loss of control/sovereignty</p>	<p>Agree services to be delivered in partnership</p> <p>Sign up to the aims and ambitions of the partnership</p> <p>Facilitate 'connectivity' – e.g. with parish and town councils, VCS</p> <p>Leveraging capacity from partnerships and communities</p>	<p>Being clear about the resource required to lobby or undertake work on behalf of a partner</p> <p>Resource and service partnerships as required</p>
Governance		
Political (Members)	Collaboration (Together)	Operational (Officers)
<p>Provide a political steer on political architecture and decision-making</p> <p>Providing a political steer on appetite for risk</p>	<p>Understand, oversee and approve key control mechanisms</p> <p>Set the approach to risk and be clear on the appetite for it</p>	<p>Advise on what is required to meet statutory obligations and ensure they are met</p> <p>Set and manage departmental budgets and operational risks</p>

	Work together on a realistic and deliverable budget	
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3 Officer Impartiality and Undue Pressure

- 3.1 Members must not do anything which compromises or is likely to compromise officers' impartiality.
- 3.2 The Council operates through a system of groups of councillors, based on political affiliation. All Officers must, in their dealings with political groups and individual Members, treat them in a fair and even-handed manner. Officers must at all times, maintain political neutrality (see para' 17 Officer Code of Conduct)
- 3.3 The support provided by officers can take many forms, ranging from the meeting with a Chair and Vice-Chair before a committee meeting to a presentation to a full political group meeting. Officers will provide support and advice to the executive, scrutiny and regulatory functions of the Council. Officers will also provide advice and assistance to individual members in respect of Council business, including issues raised by constituents.
- 3.4 Officers, therefore, must ensure that there is no conflict of interest in their advice or conduct.
- 3.5 Whilst in practice such support is likely to be in most demand from whichever political group is for the time being in control of the Council, it should be available to all political groups. The advice given by officers to different political groups should be consistent.
- 3.6 Members must respect officers' impartiality.
- 3.7 The LGA Members Code of Conduct states, paragraph 3, "*Officers work for the local authority as a whole and must be politically neutral (unless*

they are political assistants). They should not be coerced or persuaded to act in a way that would undermine their neutrality. Members can question officers in order to understand, for example, their reasons for proposing to act in a particular way, or the content of a report that they have written. However, members must not try and force officers to act differently, change their advice, or alter the content of that report, if doing so would prejudice their professional integrity”.

- 3.8 Therefore, a member should not apply undue pressure on an officer to do anything which he/she is not empowered or authorised to do, or which is against the officer’s professional judgement, or to undertake work outside normal duties or normal hours (other than within accepted working patterns, e.g. evening meetings). Members should be aware that to exert pressure improperly on an officer in this way may be a breach of the Council's Code of Conduct for Members.
- 3.9 Similarly, an officer must neither seek to use undue influence on an individual member to decide in her/his favour nor raise personal matters to do with her/his job nor make claims or allegations about other employees. The Council has formal procedures for consultation, grievance and discipline set out in Part 4.1 Members' Code of Conduct

4 Service Standards

- 4.1 Officers and members will do their best to give timely responses to enquiries from one another. This will be in accordance with the minimum service standards. Enquiries should be responded to in no later than 10 working days unless a holding response, setting out the reasons for delay is given. However, neither officers should not have unreasonable requests placed on them.

5 Confidentiality and access to information

- 5.1 The Officers Code of Conduct emphasises importance of maintaining confidential information. For example, officers will provide advice and information to members on declarations of interests. However,

members will know the nature and extent of any interest they may have. It is the member's responsibility, therefore, to decide whether any interest should be declared. Officers must, when requested to do so, respect members' confidentiality when providing advice on declarations of interest but may otherwise draw to a members' attention the need to declare a known interest.

- 5.2 Officers are reminded that the misuse of confidential information is a breach of the Officers Code of Conduct; thus, regarded as a disciplinary offence.
- 5.3 Any Council information provided to a member must only be used by the member for the purpose for which it was provided i.e. in connection with the proper performance of the member's duties as a member of the Council.
- 5.4 Officers should make it clear to members if they are giving them confidential information. If a member is not sure whether information is confidential, he or she should ask the relevant officer, but treat the information as confidential in the meantime.
- 5.5 Each member has the right to inspect and have copies of the reports, minutes and background papers relating to the public part of any Council, Panel or Committee agenda. This is set out in Part 3.2 Access to Information Procedure Rules
- 5.6 The Members Code of Conduct, states "*[members] Behaving in accordance with all our legal obligations, alongside any requirements contained within this authority's policies, protocols and procedures, including on the use of the Authority's resources.*" Accordingly, members are expected to comply with Paragraph 10, Part 3.2 Access to Information Procedure Rules members do not have an automatic right of access to all documents relating to confidential or "Exempt" items on the agenda. These might include, for instance, information relating to employees, occupiers of council property, applications for grants, contracts, industrial relations negotiations, legal advice and criminal investigations.

- 5.7 In respect of such confidential information, members will normally receive, or have access to all papers unless they are of particular sensitivity. A member may have access to such sensitive documentation insofar as it is reasonably necessary to enable them to properly perform their duties as a member of the Council. The relevant question to be asked is whether they need to know the information to perform such duties.
- 5.8 Any Council confidential information provided to a member must only be used by the member in connection with the proper performance of the member's duties as a member of the Council. Confidential information should not be disclosed, discussed with or released to any other persons. Such disclosure would be a betrayal of trust.
- 5.9 Members should never disclose or use confidential information for the personal advantage of themselves or of anyone known to them, or to the disadvantage or the discredit of the Council or anyone else.
- 5.10 Any confidential information provided to members should be clearly marked as such prior to its provision.
- 5.11 Further advice regarding members' rights to inspect Council documents may be obtained from the Monitoring Officer.

6 Officer relations with specific members

- 6.1 The working relationship between senior officers and the Leader/Committee Chairs will be particularly close. Committee Chairs will have broad-ranging responsibilities. Officers may provide briefing notes, advice and information to the Committee Chairs in respect of reports or questions at Panel, Committee and Council Meetings. This relationship, however, must not:
- compromise officers' duties to all members of the Council;
 - be so close as to give the appearance of partiality on the part of the officer;

- undermine the confidentiality of any discussions that officers are privy to;
- compromise officers' professional responsibility to advise members that a particular course of action should not be pursued;
- abrogate officer responsibility for action taken under delegated powers.

6.2 Committee Chairs are recognised as the legitimate elected spokesperson on their committees' areas of responsibility. Where authority is delegated to officers (under the Scheme of Delegations to Officers), they will often wish to consult the relevant Chairs about the action which they propose to take, but the responsibility for the final decision remains with the officer who is accountable for it.

7 Officer attendance at political group meetings

7.1 Officer advice and support will be provided to: -

- Council Meetings;
- Meetings of any Committees established by the Council;
- Meetings of Committees/Sub-Committees and Panels;
- Working Parties/Forums, etc.;
- Chairs/Vice-Chairs of Committees and Panels;
- All Members of Council on Council business

7.2 Senior officers may be invited to attend political group meetings. The Chief Executive will decide whether such attendance may take place. If it is agreed that an officer can attend a political group meeting, the Chief Executive will inform the other group leaders and offer a similar facility.

7.3 Officer attendance at group meetings must be approved in advance, by the relevant Director.

- 7.4 Officer support will not extend beyond providing factual information or professional advice in relation to matters of Council business.
- 7.5 Officers will not be involved in advising on matters of party business, and therefore should not be expected to be present at meetings or parts of meetings when such matters are to be discussed.
- 7.6 Political group meetings are not empowered to make decisions on behalf of the Council, and conclusions reached at such meetings do not rank as formal Council decisions. The presence of an officer confers no formal status on such meetings in terms of Council business and must not be interpreted as doing so. Where officers provide factual information and advice to a political group in relation to a matter of Council business, this is not a substitute for providing all the necessary information and advice when the matter in question is formally considered by the relevant committee of the Council.
- 7.7 It must not be assumed that an officer is supportive of a particular policy or view considered at a political group meeting simply because they have attended or provided information to the meeting.
- 7.8 Officers will respect the confidentiality of any political group discussions at which they are present and, unless requested to do so by that political group, will not relay the content of such discussions to another political group or to other Members. This will not prevent an officer providing feedback to other officers on a need-to-know basis. Factual information upon which advice is based will, if requested, be available to all political groups.
- 7.9 The duration of an officer's attendance at a political group meeting will be at the discretion of the group, but an officer may leave at any time if they feel it is no longer appropriate to be there.
- 7.10 An officer accepting an invitation to any one political group meeting will not decline an invitation to advise another group about the same matter.

- 7.11 Officers should be given the opportunity of verifying comments and advice attributed to them in any written record of a political group meeting.
- 7.12 No member will refer in public or at meetings of the Council, to advice or information given by officers to a political group meeting.
- 7.13 At political group meetings, where some of those present are not members of the Council, care must be taken not to divulge confidential information relating to Council business.
- 7.14 Special care needs to be exercised whenever officers are involved in providing information and advice to a meeting of a political group which includes persons who are not members of the Council. Such persons will not be bound by the codes of conduct [for members and employees] (in particular, the provisions concerning the declarations of interest and confidentiality) and for this and other reasons, officers may not be able to provide the same level of information and advice as they would to a members only meeting.
- 7.15 Should any difficulty or uncertainty arise in the area of officer advice to political groups, this will be raised with the relevant Director, who should discuss the matter with the group leader.

8. Friendships/relationships between members and officers

- 8.1 Informal and collaborative two-way contact between members and officers is encouraged, but personal familiarity in the workplace can damage the relationship, as might a family or business connection.
- 8.2 Members and officers should always be open about their relationships to avoid any reason for suspicion and any appearance of improper conduct. Close personal familiarity in the workplace should be avoided; i.e. 'be friendly, but don't be friends'.
- 8.3 Members and officers should inform the Monitoring Officer of any relationship which might be seen as unduly influencing their work in their respective roles.

9. Use of council resources and facilities

- 9.1 The only basis on which the Council can lawfully provide support services to members (e.g. stationery, typing, printing, photocopying, transport, computers etc), is to assist them in discharging their role as members of the Council.
- 9.2 Members should not approach or pressure staff to carry out duties or provide resources or support in a biased or partisan way. Examples are:
- business which is solely to do with a political party;
 - work in connection with a ward or constituency party political meeting;
 - electioneering;
 - work associated with an event attended by a member in a capacity other than as a member of the Council;
 - private personal correspondence;
 - work in connection with another body or organisation where a member's involvement is other than as a member of the Council; and
 - support to a member in his/her capacity as a councillor of another local authority.

10. Criticism and complaints

- 10.1 Members and officers must conduct themselves in a way that is acceptable within a professional environment. They must afford dignity, trust and respect to everyone and themselves. They must have awareness of the effect of their behaviour on others and only make reasonable and manageable demands.
- 10.2 Members and officers must not conduct themselves in an unacceptable manner. The Members Code of Conduct states:

" Valuing my colleagues and staff and engaging with them in an appropriate manner and one that underpins the mutual respect between us that is essential to good local government.

Always treating people with respect, including the organisations and public I engage with and those I work alongside".

10.3 In line with the above, LGA model of Code of Conduct , at paragraph 2, explicitly states members must not bully, harass or discriminate.

10.4 Bullying is characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Bullying might be a regular pattern of behaviour or a one-off incident, happen face-to-face on social media, in emails or phone calls, happen in the workplace or at work social events and may not always be obvious or noticed by others. Examples of bullying include but are not limited to:

- verbal abuse, such as shouting, swearing, threats, insults, sarcasm, ridiculing or demeaning others, inappropriate nicknames, or humiliating language
- physical or psychological threats or actions towards an individual or their personal property
- practical jokes
- overbearing or intimidating levels of supervision, including preventing someone from undertaking their role or following agreed policies and procedures
- inappropriate comments about someone's performance
- abuse of authority or power, such as placing unreasonable expectations on someone in relation to their job, responsibilities, or hours of work, or coercing someone to meet such expectations
- ostracising or excluding someone from meetings, communications, work events or socials
- sending, distributing, or posting detrimental material about other people, including images, in any medium

- smear campaigns.

10.5 Bullying behaviour should be contrasted with the legitimate challenges which a member can make in challenging policy or scrutinising performance. An example of this would be debates in the chamber about policy or asking officers to explain the rationale for the professional opinions they have put forward. Members are entitled to challenge fellow councillors and officers as to why they hold their views. However, if the criticism is a personal attack, threat, unsubstantiated allegation, abusive or offensive in nature, members are likely to cross the line of what is acceptable behaviour.

10.6 Harassment is conduct that causes alarm or distress or puts people in fear of violence and must involve such conduct on at least two occasions. It can include repeated attempts to impose unwanted communications and contact upon a person in a manner that could be expected to cause distress or fear in any reasonable person. Examples of harassment include but are not limited to:

- sending unwelcome emails
- unnecessarily repetitive, intrusive questioning
- unwelcome physical contact such as touching or invading 'personal space'
- haranguing
- intimidation
- inappropriate remarks or questioning such as comments about someone's appearance, lewd comments, and offensive jokes
- overbearing or intimidating levels of supervision, including preventing someone from undertaking their role or following agreed policies and procedures
- inappropriate comments about someone's performance
- placing unreasonable expectations on someone in relation to their job, responsibilities, or hours of work, or coercing someone to meet such expectations
- sexual harassment

There is not an exhaustive list of acts of harassment that may constitute a criminal offence. Examples may include, but are not limited to physical assault:

- making violent or death threats

- stalking
- hate crimes
- sexual harassment

10.6 Unlawful discrimination is where someone is treated unfairly because of a protected characteristic e.g. age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Examples of discriminatory behaviour include but are not limited to:

- exclusion or victimisation based on the Protected Characteristics
- treating someone less favourably or limiting their opportunities based on any of the Protected Characteristics
- comments, slurs, jokes, statements, questions, or gestures that are derogatory or offensive to an individual's or group's characteristics
- promoting negative stereotypes relating to individual's or group's characteristics
- racial or ethnic slurs, insults, or jokes
- intolerance toward religious customs
- mimicking, mocking, or belittling a person's disability
- homophobic, biphobic or transphobic comments or slurs
- discriminating against pregnant people or mothers
- declaring ('outing') someone's religion or sexuality or threatening to do so against their will
- deliberate, unwarranted application of an authority's practice, policy or rule in a way that may constitute indirect discrimination
- instructing, causing, inducing, or knowingly helping someone to commit an act of unlawful discrimination under the Equality Act 2010.

10.7 Members and officers personality and life experiences will naturally incline them to think and act in certain ways. They may form views about others based on those experiences, such as having an affinity with someone because they have a similar approach to life or thinking less of someone because they are from a different generation. This is known as

“unconscious bias” and it can lead people to make decisions based on biases or false assumptions. Members need to be alert to the potential of unconscious bias and ensure they make decisions based on evidence, and not on assumptions they have made based on biases.

10.8 Members must not intimidate or attempt to intimidate any officer who is likely to be a complainant, a witness, or involved in the administration of any investigation or proceedings relating to a failure to comply with the Member Code of Conduct.

10.9 A Member who is unhappy about the actions taken by, or conduct of, an officer should:

- avoid personal attacks on, or abuse of, the Officer at all times;
- ensure that any criticism is well founded and constructive;
- never make a criticism in public;
- take up the concern with the officer privately. If direct discussion with the officer is inappropriate (e.g. because of the seriousness of the concern) or fails to resolve the matter, the member should raise the issue with the officer’s manager or the relevant Director.

10.10 Members and officers should not criticise or undermine respect for the other at meetings of the Full Council, Committee or Sub-Committees, or in any public forum.

10.11 Members should not raise matters relating to the conduct or capability of an individual officer or officers collectively at meetings held in public. officers should observe the same rule in respect of Members.

10.12 If a member believes that they have not been treated with proper courtesy or has a concern about the conduct or capability of an officer, then they should raise the matter confidentially with the Chief Executive or relevant Director who may utilise the Council’s formal disciplinary procedures if this is considered appropriate. If the member is still not satisfied with the action that has been taken, then they may raise the matter confidentially with the Chief Executive, or a Director if the Chief Executive considered the original concern, who will look into the matter afresh. If they believe that there is a case to answer, then they may utilise the Council’s formal disciplinary procedures. If the Chief

Executive/Director suggests no action they will inform the member and relevant Group Leader of this.

10.13 If an officer feels that they have not been treated with respect or is concerned about any action or statement relating to themselves or a colleague by a member, or the conduct of a member, they should raise the matter with their line manager. If they are not satisfied with any action that has been taken as a result, they should raise the matter with the Chief Executive or their Director. If the Chief Executive or Director is of the opinion that the member has acted in breach of the Members' Code of Conduct, they should make a complaint to the Monitoring Officer.

11. Oversight, breaches and further advice

11.1 The Executive Management Team and Standards Committee oversees compliance of this Protocol.

11.2 If a member believes an officer may have acted other than in accordance with this Protocol, he/she should raise their concern with the relevant Director who will consider how the complaint or allegation should be dealt with. A breach of this Protocol by an Officer may lead to an investigation under the Council's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

11.3 If an officer feels that they have not been treated with respect or is concerned about any action or statement relating to themselves or a colleague by a member, or the conduct of a member, they should raise the matter with their line manager. If they are not satisfied with any action that has been taken as a result, they should raise the matter with the Chief Executive or their Director. If the Chief Executive or Director is of the opinion that the member has acted in breach of the Members' Code of Conduct, they should make a complaint to the Monitoring Officer.

11.4 Further advice or clarification can be sought from the Monitoring Officer or the Head of Legal Partnership.

PART 5 - MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Swale Borough Council, in exercise of the powers conferred by Section 18 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 as amended by Section 99 of the Local Government Act 2000 and various Regulations the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 hereby makes the following scheme:
- 1.2 This scheme may be cited as the Swale Borough Council Members' Allowances Scheme and shall have effect from the start of the new Municipal Year (Annual Council meeting). It will be subject to change following any significant revisions to responsibilities or committees which require the deliberations of the Independent Members' Allowances Panel.
- 1.3 In this scheme:
 - "Councillor" means a member of the Swale Borough Council who is a Councillor;
 - "Total estimated allowances" means the aggregate of the amounts estimated by the Director of Resources at the time when a payment of basic allowance or special responsibility allowance is made, to be payable under this scheme in relation to the relevant year;
 - "Year" means the 12 months commencing with the Annual Council meeting. The first monthly payment will be made in June after the Annual Council meeting and will cease the following May.

2. Basic Allowance

- 2.1 Subject to paragraphs 7 and 8, for 2024/25 a basic allowance of £6,786 shall be paid to each Councillor by monthly instalments.

3. Special Responsibility Allowances

- 3.1 Subject to paragraphs 7 and 8, a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) shall be paid each year by monthly instalments to those Councillors who hold the special responsibilities in relation to the authority that are specified in Schedule 1 to this scheme.
- 3.2 The amount of each such allowance shall be the amount specified against that special responsibility in Schedule 1, and any notes applicable.

4. Maternity, paternity, adoption and sickness leave

- 4.1 All councillors shall continue to receive their basic allowance in full for a period up to six months in the case of absence from their councillor duties due to maternity, paternity, adoption or sickness absence. In the case of a premature birth, the length of this period will be extended to cover the period between the birth and the due date plus six months from the due date.

- 4.2 Councillors entitled to a special responsibility allowance shall continue to receive their allowance in full for a period of six months in the case of absence from their councillor duties due to maternity, paternity, adoption or sickness absence. In the case of a premature birth, the length of this period will be extended to cover the period between the birth and the due date plus six months from the due date.
- 4.3 If a replacement to cover the period of absence under these provisions is appointed by council or the leader (or in the case of a party group position the party group) the replacement shall be entitled to claim a special responsibility allowance pro rata for the period over which the cover is provided.
- 4.4 Under s85 of the Local Government Act 1972, any councillor who fails to attend a meeting of the council for a period of six months will cease to be a member of the council unless the full council resolves to grant a dispensation. This policy neither removes this requirement nor fetters the council's discretion in the granting or withholding of dispensations, but will be a relevant factor in decisions about dispensations in cases in which the primary reason for absence has been and continues to be maternity, paternity, adoption or sickness.
- 4.5 Any councillor who decides not to return at the end of their maternity, paternity, adoption or sickness leave must notify the council at the earliest possible opportunity. All allowances will cease from the effective resignation date. If an election is held during a councillor's maternity, paternity, adoption or sickness leave and they are not re-elected, or decide not to stand for re-election, all allowances will cease from the Monday after the election date when they would technically leave office.

5. Travel Allowances

- 5.1 Councillors will be entitled to claim reasonable travel costs in respect of approved duties specified in Schedule 2 to this scheme and approved attendance at conferences/seminars. Where mileage or expenses are claimed this must be by the shortest available route or on the most economic fare. Distances and fares may be checked. Excessive claims can be rejected. Where a route which is not the shortest route is taken this must be justified within the claim and supported with evidence for example where a road was closed. Councillors cannot claim for expenses that they might alternatively claim from their business or employer. Claims for travel expenses outside of the borough will only be considered for travel on council business and with reference to Schedule 2.
- 5.2 Mileage rates for Councillors have been set as 45p per mile.
- 5.3 The cycle allowance will be 45p per mile.

6. Subsistence Allowance

- 6.1 Subsistence Allowances for which Councillors can claim for undertaking approved duties specified in Schedule 2 to this scheme and approved attendance at conferences/seminars, are based and indexed to the guidance published by the South East Employers (SEE).

- 6.2 Allowances claims should be for 'actuals'. For 2024/25 these rates can be viewed on the SEE website and have not changed since 2020 - 2022: <https://www.seemp.co.uk/free-resources/latest-on-pay/subsistence-allowances/>

7. Renunciation

- 7.1 A Councillor may by notice in writing given to the Director of Resources elect to forego any part of their entitlement to an allowance under this scheme.

8. Part-year Entitlements

- 8.1 The provisions of this paragraph shall have effect to regulate the entitlements of a Councillor to basic and special responsibility where, during a year, this scheme is amended or that Councillor becomes, or ceases to be, a Councillor, or accepts or relinquishes a special responsibility in respect of which a special responsibility allowance is payable.
- 8.2 If an amendment to this scheme changes the amount to which a Councillor is entitled by way of a basic allowance or a special responsibility allowance, then in relation to each of the periods:
- (a) Beginning with the year and ending with the day before that on which the first amendment in that year takes effect, or
- (b) Beginning with the day on which an amendment takes effect and ending with the day before that on which the next amendment takes effect, or (if none) with the year, the entitlement to such an allowance shall be to the payment of such part of the amount of the allowance under this scheme as it has effect during the relevant period as bears to the whole the same proportion as the number of the days in the period bears to the number of days in the year.
- 8.3 Where the term of office of a Councillor begins or ends otherwise than at the beginning or end of a year, the entitlement of that Councillor to a basic allowance shall be to the payment to such part of the basic allowance as bears to the whole the same proportion as the number of days during which their term of office subsists bears to the number of days in that year.
- 8.4 Where this scheme is amended as mentioned in sub-paragraph (8.2), and the term of office of a Councillor does not subsist throughout the period mentioned in sub-paragraph (8.2 (a)), the entitlement of any such Councillor to a basic allowance shall be to the payment of any such part of the basic allowance referable to each such period (ascertained in accordance with that sub-paragraph) as bears to the whole the same proportion as the number of days during which their term of office as a Councillor subsists bears to the number of days in that period.
- 8.5 Where a Councillor has during part of, but not throughout, a year such special responsibilities as entitle them to a special responsibility allowance, that Councillor's entitlement shall be to payment of such part of that allowance as bears to the whole of the same proportion as the number of days during which they have such special responsibilities bears to the number of days in that year.

- 8.6 Where a Councillor has during part, but does not have through the whole, of any period mentioned in sub-paragraph (8.2 (b)) of that paragraph any such special responsibilities as entitle them to a special responsibility allowance, that Councillor's entitlement shall be to payment of such part of the allowance referable to each such period (ascertained in accordance with that sub-paragraph) as bears to the whole the same proportion as the number of days in that period during which they have such special responsibilities bears to the number of days in that period.
- 8.7 In the event of extenuating circumstances the Leader of the Council and Director of Resources may vary the entitlement.

9. Claims and Payments

- 9.1 A claim for travel allowance shall include, or be accompanied by, a statement by the Councillor claiming the allowance that they are not entitled to receive remuneration in respect of the matter to which the claim relates otherwise than under the scheme. Councillors should endeavour to claim their travel allowances on a regular monthly basis. Claims received for expenses incurred more than three months previously will not be accepted.
- 9.2 Payments shall be made:
- (a) In respect of the basic allowance, in instalments of one-twelfth of the amount specified in this scheme on the 25th day of each month;
 - (b) In respect of the special responsibility allowances, in instalments of one-twelfth of the amount specified in this scheme on the 25th day of each month;
 - (c) In respect of travel allowances, these will be paid on the 25th day of each month in respect of claims received up to the 10th day of the month of payment;
 - (d) For each Municipal Year the first monthly payment will be made in June after the Annual Council meeting and will cease the following May.
- 9.3 Claims in respect of subsistence allowances should be included with the claim for travel allowances and will be paid in accordance with 9(c) above.

10. Indexation

- 10.1 The following indices are applied to the remuneration and allowances paid to Members of Swale Borough Council:
- A. Basic Allowance, SRAs, Co-optees Allowances.
Indexed to the annual percentage salary increase for local government staff (at spinal column 49) to be implemented from the start of the Municipal Year for which year it is applicable.
 - B. Subsistence Allowances:
Subsistence Allowances should be indexed to the rates published each year in guidance issued by the SEE.

11. Dependants' Carers' Allowance

11.1 This shall be reimbursed to a maximum of £9.30 per hour upon production of receipts. This rate will be linked to the National Living Wage determined by the Living Wage Foundation and reviewed on an annual basis.

11.2 In respect of the more specialist care, this should be reimbursed at the actual cost upon production of receipts. In the case of reimbursement for specialist care, medical evidence that this type of care is required must also be provided.

12. Publicity

12.1 The Council has a duty to publicise annually details of the actual sums paid to each Councillor for each type of allowance.

13. Parish and Town Council allowances

13.1 The Independent Members' Allowances Panel also makes recommendations to Town and Parish Councils on the level of allowances that they may set. This is set out in Schedule 3.

14. Co-optees' Allowance

14.1 A Co-optees' Allowance has been set, to cover the cost of travel and subsistence for any co-optees appointed. This has been set at £9.50 per hour plus reasonable preparation time for any meeting.

15. Other related items (not within the Members' Allowances Scheme but included for completeness)

15.1 The Council has set a personal allowance for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. This is set out in Schedule 4.

SCHEDULE 1

The following are specified as the special responsibilities in respect of which special responsibility allowances are payable. The amounts of those allowances are calculated as a % of the Leader's entitlement:

Special Responsibility Allowances for 2024/25:

	£
SRA	
Leader	£16,965.00
Deputy Leader	£8,483.00
Leader of the Main Opposition	£5,938.00
Leader of the smaller groups (A group leader requires 10% of total members, 5 members in the group to qualify for allowance)	£2,036.00
Chair of Service Committees	£5,938.00
Chair of Planning Committee	£6,786.00
Chair of Licensing Committee	£2,036.00

Chair of Audit Committee	£2,036.00
Chair of Standards Committee	£2,036.00
Chair of Area Committees	£2,036.00

Note: -

Only one Special Responsibility Allowance can be paid to a Councillor in addition to the Basic Allowance.

SCHEDULE 2

1. Councillors are entitled to claim for the attendance at meetings properly called to transact any functions or duties of the Council of which the Councillor is a member or to which he/she is required to attend in order to assist the Committee/Panel/Working Group in its deliberations. (This would include for example, if invited to the Service Committee as a witness).
2. Allowances will also be paid for site visits arranged by the Service Committees, a Committee, Panel, or Working Group of the Council.
3. Also as an approved duty for payment of travel and subsistence allowances, is the attendance of meetings on the Approved Duties List. The approved list comprises of the list of outside body appointments.
4. Chairmen and Spokespersons may claim for attending Chairman's Briefings, or meetings with Officers in connection with a matter relating to their Committee, subject to them being pre-arranged.
5. Members may claim for attendance at meetings with Management Team and Heads of Service, which have been pre-arranged.
6. Members may claim for attendance at Member Briefings or training events organised by the Council, or at Conferences, if their attendance has been approved by the Chief Executive in conjunction with their Group Leader.
7. In the case of meetings that are not covered under this scheme, the Chief Executive and the Head of Legal Partnership have delegated authority to determine whether it is an approved duty. Members are asked to seek advice before attending such events.
8. Councillors are not eligible to claim for attendance at political group meetings or for attending parish council meetings in their ward.
9. Councillors are not able to claim for home to work or commuting to work. (This is due to HMRC rules.) Where a Councillor attends a meeting which is on their way home from work, the additional mileage incurred in attending may be claimed.

SCHEDULE 3

PARISH COUNCILLOR ALLOWANCES

(Paragraph 27 of The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (SI2003/1021) refers).

1. That recommendations for Parish Council Allowances for the Borough of Swale be set as follows:

a) Chair's Allowance (Chair of Parish Council) - a maximum of 10% of Swale Borough Council's Basic Allowance.

b) Basic Allowance (All other Parish Councillors) - a maximum of 5% of Swale Borough Council's Basic Allowance.

(Executive Minute No. 722/2/06 and Council Minute No. 765(iii)/3/06 refer).

SCHEDULE 4

MAYOR'S ALLOWANCES SCHEME

(Not within the remit of the Members' Allowances Panel - Council Minute No. 765(iii)/3/06 refers).

1. Mayoral Allowances are payable to the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor.
2. The Mayor's allowance for 2024/25 is set at 70% of the basic allowance £4,750.20 and the Deputy Mayor set at 30% of the basic allowance £2,038.80. The allowances will be increased by the equivalent % applicable to the annual Council staff pay award and are payable following appointment at the Annual Council meeting.
3. Payment arrangements are the same as those for the Members' Allowance Scheme but can be varied with agreement by the Director of Resources.
4. Travel allowance is payable for bona fide purposes, where the Mayoral car or Mayoral Chauffeur are not available. Normally the Mayoral car is at the disposal of the Mayor/Mayoress and therefore it is likely that the Deputy Mayor/Mayoress will be attending functions in their own car. Similarly, it would not be normal for the Mayoral car to be used for administrative visits to Swale House to transact Mayoral business with the Mayoral staff.
5. Changes to the Mayoral Allowances can only be made by the Policy and Resources Committee and such allowances are not subject to the statutory publicity requirements of the Members' Allowance Scheme.

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