May AGM Policy changes.

1. Delegation policy and schedule

May 2026 – no change to powers and intention, working changes to more tightly reflect legislation.

What was	What is
"Decisions made under a delegated authority must be ratified by a quorate council at the next available council meeting"	"Decisions made under a delegated authority must be reported to the next available Council meeting"
No statutory basis for the Scheme of Delegation stated	"This Scheme of Delegation is made under Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972." added
"designated officer for determining the purposes and means of processing personal data"	"designated officer for the management of the processing of personal data on behalf of the Council"
"designated officer for purposes of the Freedom of Information Act 2000"	"designated officer for administering the Council's responsibilities under the Freedom of Information Act 2000"
"in conjunction with the Chair of Council"	"following consultation with the Chair of Council"
"payments authorised by the Finance Group"	"payments following consultation with the Finance Group" (advisory role only)
No definition of "emergency" included	Definition added: emergency = health & safety risk, significant financial loss, or legal compliance risk; actions must be reported to Council
Implicit references to committees included	Clarified that no committees with delegated powers exist / committee references removed
Missing explicit planning delegation link to Council Scheme of Delegation	Add: Clerk may respond to planning consultations only where Council cannot meet in time, based on advisory group input, and must report to next Council meeting

2. **Group membership policy:** changes to membership personnel and updates to wording for tightness to legalities

What was	What is
"recommendations to the Clerk, where the Clerk has delegated authority to act on such recommendations… reported at the next full Council meeting for ratification or potential countermanding"	"recommendations to the Council or to the Clerk where the Clerk already holds delegated authority. All actions are reported to the next full Council meeting"

What was	What is
“recommendations for the clerk to enact under delegated powers specified in the Delegated Powers policy”	“recommendations for consideration by the Council or for the Clerk to act only where delegated authority already exists under the Delegated Powers Policy”
“Planning Advisory Group… Clerk to respond under delegated powers when there is no meeting that month”	“Clerk may respond only where authorised under the Council’s Scheme of Delegation, based on recommendations from the Planning Advisory Group, and reported to the next Council meeting”
“Finance Group: to recommend authorising monthly expenditure (or not) for the Clerk to pay…”	“Finance Group: to review financial information and make recommendations to the Clerk/RFO regarding payments”
“Projects Group: Powers – to be determined project by project”	“Projects Group: advisory only unless specific delegated powers are granted by full Council resolution for a defined project”
Missing explicit planning delegation link to Council Scheme of Delegation	Add: Clerk may respond to planning consultations only where Council cannot meet in time, based on advisory group input, and must report to next Council meeting
Membership changes	Remove FW and add VD – finance group. Remove VD – planning Remove projects group

3. Standing Orders: Updated to latest model standing orders from NALC.

What was (V1)	What is (V2)
Not specified	Informal grievance stage exists before formal grievance process
Not specified	Formal grievance procedure is explicitly defined within staff handling arrangements
Not specified	Grievances are escalated to Chair or Vice-Chair depending on availability and relevance
Not specified	If grievance involves Chair or Vice-Chair, it is escalated to another councillor and reported to full council
General expectation of confidentiality in staff matters	All staff appraisal, grievance and performance records are confidential
No fixed financial reporting timetable specified	Quarterly financial reporting required on 30 June, 30 September, 31 December
General financial reporting only	Quarterly reports must include comparison against budget and highlight variances/overspends
No internal timetable for AGAR circulation/approval	Draft accounts circulated at least 14 days before approval; final approval required before 30 June

What was (V1)	What is (V2)
General committee delegation provisions	Delegation schedules referenced with structured reporting arrangements, especially for planning
Not mentioned	Planning Advisory Group exists to advise Clerk on planning applications
Maintains planning register and general admin duties	Planning applications must be referred to Planning Advisory Group under delegated process
Not specified	Planning decisions made under delegation are reported to the next council meeting
Not present	Formal advisory input system introduced before delegated planning decisions are made
Standard reporting via minutes and finance updates	Structured recurring reporting cycles introduced covering finance, planning and HR governance
Broad role descriptions for Clerk/RFO and members	Clear separation of roles between Clerk/RFO, Planning Advisory Group and Chair/Vice-Chair oversight

4. Financial Regulations: Updated to latest Model regulations from NALC

Section / Rule area	What was (V1)	What is (V2)
Grants / single commitments approval threshold	Council must authorise any grant or single commitment **over £500**	Council must authorise any grant or single commitment **over £2,000**
Bank reconciliation review cycle	Reviewed at each council meeting (or delegated monthly process if bi-monthly meetings)	Reviewed **at least quarterly and at year end**, signed by Chair
Procurement legislation	Public Contracts Regulations 2015	Procurement Act 2023 + Procurement Regulations 2024
Procurement – highest tender threshold	£30,000 incl. VAT → formal tenders or advertised process	£60,000 incl. VAT → formal tenders or advertised process
Procurement – transparency / publication layer	Not defined	£30,000+ incl. VAT → statutory publication/notice compliance required
Procurement – £10k+ quote requirement	Over £10,000 ex VAT → **2 fixed-price quotes**	Over £10,000 ex VAT → **3 fixed-price quotes**
Procurement – lower band quotes	£500–£10,000 ex VAT → **2 estimates**	£1,000–£10,000 ex VAT → **3 estimates**
Procurement – small purchases threshold	Up to £500 → value for money only	Up to £1,000 → value for money only
Procurement authority structure	Mixed delegated model (Clerk <£500; Clerk+Chair <£2k; council >£2k; projects group involvement)	Structured hierarchy: Clerk <£500; Clerk+Chair <£2k;

Section / Rule area	What was (V1)	What is (V2)
		committee <£1k (within budget); council >£2k
Emergency spending limit	Clerk/RFO up to £2,000	Clerk up to £5,000
Order requirement threshold	Orders required above £250 ex VAT	Orders required above £1,000 ex VAT
Contract splitting rule	Not permitted	Not permitted (retained)
Tender minimum supplier rule	≥3 suppliers OR advertised tender at £30k+	≥3 suppliers OR advertised tender at £60k+
Budget salary review timing	Nov/Dec review	By December each year
Budget draft preparation deadline	No later than November	No later than December
Committee budget submission deadline	End of November	End of October
Carried forward project funds	Only with council approval	Only with earmarked reserve approval (clarified control)
Payroll control review	Finance committee reviews payroll reports	Retained (no structural change)
VAT handling	Quarterly reclaim if >£1000	Threshold removed; submission via software by due date
Payment cards	Debit/prepaid/corporate cards permitted with controls	**No payment cards permitted**
Petty cash	Small cash reimbursements allowed	**No petty cash / no cash float system**
Cheque payments structure	2 councillors sign	2 councillors sign + Clerk countersigns
Electronic payments controls	Dual approval implied; admin sets payments	Explicit dual councillor verification + evidence trail retained
Direct debit review cycle	Reviewed every 2 years	Reviewed annually at AGM
BACS/CHAPS review cycle	Not specified	Must be renewed every 2 years
Standing orders review cycle	Not specified	Must be reviewed every 2 years
Emergency procurement authority wording	Clerk/RFO up to £2,000	Clerk up to £5,000
Official order requirement	Above £250 ex VAT	Above £1,000 ex VAT

5. Complaints policy – changes to make more legally compliant

What was (original)	What is (revised)
Complainant **not allowed paid legal advisor**	Complainant may be accompanied or represented by **any person of their choice**
Appeal handled by **two councillors**	Appeal handled by **minimum of three councillors with no prior involvement**
No clear rule on **conflicts of interest**	Explicit requirement that councillors **must have no prior involvement and declare interests**
Clerk always represents Council	Clerk represents Council **unless involved**, in which case an **alternative representative is appointed**
No mention of **independent investigation option**	Council may appoint an **independent investigator where appropriate**
Reference to **Data Protection Act 1998 / May 2018 (unclear)**UK General Data Protection Regulation	

6. FOI & publication policy AND Record retention policy

What was (original policy)	What is (revised policy)
Custom categories for publication scheme (Administration / Finance / Property / Misc)	Uses the official **ICO Model Publication Scheme classes** (Who we are, What we spend, How we make decisions, etc.)
Publication scheme mixed with records retention categories	Separation clarified: **publication scheme = public disclosure**, **retention schedule = internal recordkeeping**
Charging rule: "£25 per hour after 4 hours"	Correct FOIA rule: **£450 limit (18 hours @ £25/hr)**; below limit only disbursement costs apply
No clear FOI refusal framework beyond "exemptions"	Added requirement to apply **FOIA exemptions properly + public interest test** under Freedom of Information Act 2000
No internal review process	Added **formal internal review stage** before

7. Communication, press & media & signage policy

What was (original policy)	What is (revised policy)
FOI applied broadly to "all internal communications"	FOI correctly limited to **recorded information held by the Council** under Freedom of Information Act 2000
GDPR incorrectly used as justification for closing meetings	Meetings now correctly governed by **Local Government Act 1972 (Schedule 12A)**; GDPR only applies to handling personal data

What was (original policy)	What is (revised policy)
No clear separation between FOI and GDPR	FOI (information access) and GDPR (data protection) clearly separated and correctly applied
Anonymous correspondence rule was absolute	Now allows discretion, including safeguarding, FOI requests, and appropriate exceptions
Internal communications described as generally subject to FOI in all cases	Clarified that FOI applies only to **held recorded information**, not informal discussions
Councillor communication rules sometimes unclear	Clarified distinction between **personal views vs Council representation**
Media contact rules slightly restrictive/unclear	Defined structured spokesperson model (Clerk primary, Chair delegated)
GDPR references were broad and sometimes misplaced	GDPR now only used in **data handling and privacy sections**, not governance or meetings
No proper legal framework structure	Added structured legal framework referencing:
Freedom of Information Act 2000	
UK General Data Protection Regulation	
Local Government Act 1972	
Vexatious correspondence section existed but lacked safeguards	Strengthened with **proportionality, evidence requirement, and right to review**
"All communications may be FOI" implied broadly	Clarified FOI only applies to **recorded information held by or on behalf of the Council**
No distinction between meeting confidentiality and data protection law	Corrected: confidentiality governed by **Schedule 12A**, not Information Commissioner's Office

8. Financial reserves policy

What was (original policy)	What is (revised policy)
Included fixed figures for reserves (working balance, EMRs, totals)	**No fixed figures** – policy is principle-based and reviewed annually
Working balance explicitly split into VAT, cashflow, etc.	Working balance concept removed from policy; reserves treated as part of overall financial management
"Precept reserve (1/3rd)" included as a defined reserve category	Removed – not a recognised reserve type under Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance guidance
General reserves partly described using fixed or implied values	General reserves now defined using **Net Revenue Expenditure (NRE) methodology only**
EMRs listed with specific £ allocations	EMRs now described as **principle-based categories only**, no amounts
VAT treated as part of reserve requirement	VAT removed from reserves (treated correctly as cashflow/accounting item)

What was (original policy)	What is (revised policy)
Reserves described with operational figures in appendix	Appendix replaced with **governance principles only**
LGF Act 1992 referenced loosely	Properly linked to requirement to "have regard" to reserves under Local Government Finance Act 1992
JPAG guidance quoted but mixed with local figures	JPAG guidance now used strictly as **principle framework (3–12 months NRE benchmark)**
EMR transfers described informally	EMR changes now require **formal Council resolution + documented justification**
Some ambiguity between reserves, budget, and cashflow	Clear separation now established:

9. Co-option Policy

What was (original policy)	What is (revised policy)
Informal "closed interview meeting" before Council meeting	Optional **informal session allowed**, but explicitly **non-decision-making**and legally separate from formal process
Co-option process partly occurred outside formal meeting structure	All **decisions now made only in a properly convened public Council meeting**
Applicant information described as "strictly private and confidential"	Replaced with **UK GDPR-compliant handling** under UK General Data Protection Regulation and ICO guidance
Ambiguous separation between interview and decision stages	Clear separation: **informal discussion vs formal decision in public meeting**
Risk of pre-determination in interviews	Removed risk by stating **no decisions or voting occur outside Council meeting**
Confidential candidate papers circulated without GDPR framing	Now explicitly handled under **data protection principles and data minimisation**
Eligibility criteria listed but not tightly framed	Retained but clarified as being **derived from statutory eligibility under Local Government Act 1972**
Voting procedure described but slightly informal in structure	Voting now clearly tied to **formal Council meeting rules and proposal/seconding requirement**
Some procedural steps implied rather than structured	Process now clearly divided into:

10. IT security & usage policy

    Updated to include mandatory IOCO reporting of data breaches within 72 hours.

11. Pension policy

Area	As Was (Original Policy)	As Is (Corrected for Compliance)
Regulation 60 statement	Not explicitly identified or structured as a Regulation 60 policy	Regulation 60 explicitly referenced and included as the required employer discretions policy statement
Employer discretions	Listed as “compulsory / non-compulsory items” without clear legal framing	Reframed as **LGPS employer discretions under Regulations 16, 30, 31, 91–93 etc.**
Legal structure	Mixed explanation and policy notes	Clear separation between **statutory LGPS provisions and discretionary powers**
Decision-making authority	Not clearly defined who approves discretions	Clarified that discretions are exercised by **Full Council (or properly delegated committee)**
Review requirement	Annual review stated but not linked to LGPS requirement	Review requirement aligned with **Regulation 60 (periodic review and update as required by law)**
Terminology issues	Some unclear or non-standard LGPS wording	Correct LGPS terminology used (employer, administering authority, discretionary powers)
“Compulsory items” section	Used incorrectly (LGPS does not define discretions this way)	Removed / corrected — replaced with legally accurate classification of scheme rules vs discretion
Forfeiture / retirement powers	Listed without clear regulatory context	Retained but correctly linked to **relevant LGPS regulations**
Policy status clarity	Not clearly defined as statutory employer discretions policy	Clearly defined as **LGPS employer discretions policy under Regulation 60**

Delegated Powers Policy and Register

Part 1. The Delegated Powers Policy

1. This Scheme of Delegation is made under Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972
2. Council Responsibility
    2.1. The Parish Council retains full authority for all decisions, transactions, and actions unless explicitly delegated below.
    2.2. Decisions made under a delegated authority must be reported at the next available council meeting
    2.3. All decisions made under delegated authority will be recorded and published in accordance with the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities 2015.

3. Delegation Framework
    3.1. Delegated powers may only be exercised by the Clerk in their capacity as Proper Officer and/or Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), and by committees as specified in their Terms of Reference.
    3.2. No individual councillor (including the Chair) may exercise any delegated power.
    3.3. The Council currently has no committees with delegated powers.
    3.4. All delegated actions must comply with the Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, and any resolutions or directions given by the Council from time to time.

4. Delegated Powers Register
    4.1. The **Delegated Authority Register** is a **living document**, maintained and updated by the Clerk, which outlines the specific responsibilities, powers, and limits granted by the Council to the Clerk, RFO, and committees.
    4.2. The Register may be **amended**, **added to**, or **removed from** by a resolution of the full Council, provided that statutory resolution requirements are met.
    4.3. Delegated powers granted to **committees** will be specified in their **Terms of Reference** and included in this Register.
    4.4. In-year amendments will be dated in the register until the next AGM where all powers are reviewed and adopted.
    4.5. All delegated action of the Parish Clerk as Proper Officer / RFO shall be in accordance with Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and this Scheme of Delegation and with directions given by the Council from time to time.
5. Responsible Financial Officer
    5.1. The Clerk to the Parish Council will act as the Council's Responsible Financial Officer in all cases where any legislation requires the designation of such an Officer.
    5.2. The Clerk to the Council and will be responsible for the Parish Council's accounting procedures in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations in force at any given time.
6. Policy Review
    6.1. This Scheme of Delegation is effective from the adoption date and will be reviewed annually

6.2. Amendments to the Delegated Powers Register may be made at any time by resolution of the Council where statutory requirements for resolutions are met.

Part 2. The Delegated Authority Schedule

This **Delegated Authority Schedule** outlines the specific powers delegated by the Council. It is a living document and can be updated by resolution of the full Council.

1. **Delegated Authority to the Clerk in their Role as Proper Officer**: The Clerk is authorised to:
   - 1.1. Act as the Council's "Proper Officer" in all cases where any legislation requires the appointment of such an Officer and to ensure the proper discharge of its functions.
   - 1.2. To receive declarations of acceptance of office.
   - 1.3. To receive and record notices disclosing personal and prejudicial interests.
   - 1.4. To grant a dispensation to a councilllor or non-councillor with voting rights at a meeting at which a matter is being considered in which he/she has a disclosable pecuniary interest in accordance with Section 33 of the Localism Act 2011
   - 1.5. To receive and retain plans and documents.
   - 1.6. To sign notices or other documents on behalf of the Council.
   - 1.7. To sign on behalf of the Council any document necessary to enable Council decisions to be enforced
   - 1.8. To receive copies of by-laws made by the Principal Authority.
   - 1.9. To certify copies of by-laws made by the Council.
   - 1.10. To sign summonses to attend meetings of the Council.
   - 1.11. Act as the designated officer for administering the Council's responsibilities under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 To act on matters relating to Health and Safety.
   - 1.12. To act as the Council's designated officer for the management of the processing of personal data on behalf of the Council.under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

1. Delegated Authority to the Clerk in their Role as Responsible Financial Officer (RFO): The Clerk (in their role as **RFO**) is authorised to:
   - 1.1. **Maintain the Council's accounting records** and procedures in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations in force at any given time.
   - 1.2. **Prepare and submit internal and external audit documentation**.
   - 1.3. **Make payments and incur expenditure** in the following circumstances only with list of all payments to be submitted to the next appropriate Council meeting.
     - 1.3.1. **Regular payments**: Payments (e.g. salaries, utility charges, maintenance contracts) agreed at a previous Council meeting for the year.
       - 1.3.1.1. The RFO must submit an annual schedule of these payments at the AGM for ratification.

1.3.2. **Submitted and approved invoices**: Invoices that have been submitted to the Council, duly noted in the minutes, and formally approved.

1.3.3. **Approved quotes for works**: Works for which the Council has received, noted, and approved a quote, provided the final invoice does not exceed the approved amount.

1.3.4. **Budgeted projects or works**: Expenditure on projects or work for which the Council has approved a budget, up to **£1,000**, following consultation with the Chair

1.3.5. **Avoiding interest charges**: Payments necessary to avoid interest under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998, where the due date falls before the next scheduled Council meeting, and the Clerk/RFO certifies there is no dispute or other reason to delay.

1.3.6. **Additional audit work**: Approval of extra audit work (up to **£250**) as required by the External Auditor, without further Council approval. (in excess of this sum the Clerk/RFO shall act after consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council).

1.3.7. **Emergency Works up to £500 :** An emergency is defined as a situation requiring immediate action to protect health and safety, prevent significant financial loss, or ensure legal compliance

1.4. **Invest Council funds** in line with the Council's Investment Policy.

1.5. **Apply for funding** on behalf of the Council for already approved projects, with applications reported to the next meeting; such applications do not obligate the Council to proceed. - MARCH 2025

1.6. **In months where there is no full Council meeting**, the Clerk/RFO is authroised to submit the monthly financial report, including the payment approvals list, to the Finance Advisory Group, and to execute payments **following consultation with the Finance Group**, with signed authority.

May 2026 – no change to powers and intention, working changes to more tightly reflect legislation.

BURNHAM MARKET PARISH COUNCIL

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Burnham Market Parish Council – Group Membership Policy.

Adopted by Burnham Market Parish Council on : May 2026

Reviewed annually - AGM

Last Reviewed Date: AGM May 2026 – changes to membership personnel and updates to wording.

Burnham Market Parish Council - Groups Membership Policy

1. Introduction
Burnham Market Parish Council (BMPC) recognises the importance of councillors and other members working collaboratively within structured groups to ensure effective governance and decision-making. Councillors may be members of sub-committees, internal working groups, or external groups. Sub-committees must operate within defined terms of reference, whereas working groups are less formal.

2. Governance and Conduct
All councillors participating in any group must adhere to the Council's Standing Orders, relevant regulations, and the Code of Conduct. No councillor has the authority to make decisions on behalf of the Council.

However, some groups may be granted the authority to make recommendations to the Clerk, where the Clerk has delegated authority to act on such recommendations, provided that any decision or action taken is reported at the next full Council meeting.

3. Structure of Groups
Groups within BMPC are classified as follows:

- **Sub-Committees**: These must have formal terms of reference and may include non-councillors where appropriate. They may make recommendations to the Council but do not have decision-making authority unless specifically delegated.
- **Internal Working Groups and Advisory Gorups**: These are informal groups established to facilitate discussion and planning within the Council. They do not have delegated decision-making powers but can develop proposals and recommendations recommendations for consideration by the Council or for the Clerk to act upon only where delegated authority already exists under the Delegated Powers Policy.

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Working groups look at one off projects, advisory groups advise the council and/or clerk on an ongoing basis.

- **External Groups**: Councillors may represent BMPC on external bodies or liaise with community groups. While they may provide updates and recommendations to the Council, they do not hold decision-making powers on behalf of BMPC.

4. Delegation and Decision-Making

Where a group makes a recommendation to the Clerk, and the Clerk has delegated authority to act, any resulting decision or action must be reported to the next full Council meeting for formal approval or amendment. A full list of delegated powers is detailed in the Delegated Powers Policy, which will always supersede this policy.

5. Group Membership and Review

The list of groups and their membership is a living document, subject to updates as needed. All changes will be resolved in a full council meeting and minuted accordingly.

This policy will be reviewed annually at the AGM to ensure ongoing relevance and effectiveness.

6. Current Groups and Membership | Living register

Internal Working Groups:

- **Finance Group**: Keith Morris, Angus Piper, Vicky Davies
  - Powers: To receive finance documents in months where there is no meeting, to review monthly financial information and make recommendations to the Clerk/RFO regarding payments..
- **Planning Advisory Group**: David Cressy
  - Powers: To recommend responses to planning applications to the full Council recommend responses to planning applications to the full Council. The Clerk may respond only where delegated authority already exists under the Council's Scheme of Delegation.

Additional groups may be formed, and membership may change as required by the Council – always to be voted and minuted.

BURNHAM MARKET PARISH COUNCIL STANDING ORDERS 2026 (from NALC 2025) (ENGLAND)

National Association of Local Councils (NALC)

020 7637 1865 | nalc@nalc.gov.uk | www.nalc.gov.uk

1. RULES OF DEBATE AT MEETINGS

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

b A motion (including an amendment) shall not be progressed unless it has been moved and seconded.

c A motion on the agenda that is not moved by its proposer may be treated by the chair of the meeting as withdrawn.

d If a motion (including an amendment) has been seconded, it may be withdrawn by the proposer only with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.

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

f If an amendment to the original motion is carried, the original motion (as amended) becomes the substantive motion upon which further amendment(s) may be moved.

g An amendment shall not be considered unless early verbal notice of it is given at the meeting and, if requested by the chair of the meeting, is expressed in writing to the chair.

h A councillor may move an amendment to their own motion if agreed by the meeting. If a motion has already been seconded, the amendment shall be with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.

i If there is more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion, the amendments shall be moved in the order directed by the chair of the meeting.

j Subject to standing order 1(k), only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the chair of the meeting.

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

l A councillor may not move more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion.

m The mover of an amendment has no right of reply at the end of debate on it.

n Where a series of amendments to an original motion are carried, the mover of the original motion shall have a right of reply either at the end of debate on the first amendment or at the very end of debate on the final substantive motion immediately before it is put to the vote.

o Unless permitted by the chair of the meeting, a councillor may speak once in the debate on a motion except:

i. to speak on an amendment moved by another councillor;

ii. to move or speak on another amendment if the motion has been amended since they last spoke;

iii. to make a point of order;

iv. to give a personal explanation; or

v. to exercise a right of reply.

p During the debate on a motion, a councillor may interrupt only on a point of order or a personal explanation and the councillor who was interrupted shall stop speaking. A councillor raising a point of order shall identify the standing order which they consider has been breached or specify the other irregularity in the proceedings of the meeting they are concerned by.

q A point of order shall be decided by the chair of the meeting and their decision shall be final.

r When a motion is under debate, no other motion shall be moved except:

i. to amend the motion;

ii. to proceed to the next business;

iii. to adjourn the debate;

iv. to put the motion to a vote;

v. to ask a person to be no longer heard or to leave the meeting;

vi. to refer a motion to a committee or sub-committee for consideration;

vii. to exclude the public and press;

viii. to adjourn the meeting; or

ix. to suspend particular standing order(s) excepting those which reflect mandatory statutory or legal requirements.

s Before an original or substantive motion is put to the vote, the chair of the meeting shall be satisfied that the motion has been sufficiently debated and that the mover of the motion under debate has exercised or waived their right of reply.

t Excluding motions moved under standing order 1(r), the contributions or speeches by a councillor shall relate only to the motion under discussion and shall not exceed 3 minutes without the consent of the chair of the meeting.

2. DISORDERLY CONDUCT AT MEETINGS

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

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

c If a resolution made under standing order 2(b) is ignored, the chair of the meeting may take further reasonable steps to restore order or to progress the meeting. This may include temporarily suspending or closing the meeting.

3. MEETINGS GENERALLY

Full Council meetings ●
Committee meetings ●
Sub-committee meetings ●

● a **Meetings shall not take place in premises which at the time of the meeting are used for the supply of alcohol, unless no other premises are available free of charge or at a reasonable cost.**

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

● c **The minimum three clear days' public notice of a meeting does not include the day on which the notice was issued or the day of the meeting.**

● ● d **Meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. The public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion.**

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

f The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with standing order 3(e) shall not exceed 20 minutes unless directed by the chair of the meeting.

g Subject to standing order 3(f), a member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes.

h In accordance with standing order 3(e), a question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The chair of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.

i A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct their comments to the chair of the meeting.

j Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the chair of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.

● ● k **Subject to standing order 3(m), a person who attends a meeting is permitted to report on the meeting whilst the meeting is open to the public. To "report" means to film, photograph, make an audio recording of meeting proceedings, use any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear the meeting as it takes place or later or to report or to provide oral or written commentary about the meeting so that the report or commentary is available as the meeting takes place or later to persons not present.**

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

● ● m **The press shall be provided with reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present.**

● n **Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chair of the Council may in their absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chair of the Council (if there is one).**

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

● ● p **Subject to a meeting being quorate, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the councillors and non-councillors with voting**

rights present and voting.

q **The chair of a meeting may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise their casting vote whether or not they gave an original vote.**

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

r **Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on a question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave their vote for or against that question.** Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.

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

i. the time and place of the meeting;

ii. the names of councillors who are present and the names of councillors who are absent;

iii. interests that have been declared by councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;

iv. the grant of dispensations (if any) to councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;

v. whether a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights left the meeting when matters that they held interests in were being considered;

vi. if there was a public participation session; and

vii. the resolutions made.

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

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

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

v **If a meeting is or becomes inquorate no business shall be transacted** and the meeting shall be closed. The business on the agenda for the meeting shall be adjourned to another meeting.

w A meeting shall not exceed a period of 2.5 hours. This may be voted to be suspended

4. COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES

a **Unless the Council determines otherwise, a committee may appoint a sub-committee whose terms of reference and members shall be determined by the committee.**

b **The members of a committee may include non-councillors unless it is a committee which regulates and controls the finances of the Council.**

c **Unless the Council determines otherwise, all the members of an advisory committee and a sub-committee of the advisory committee may be non-councillors.**

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

i. shall determine their terms of reference;

ii. shall determine the number and time of the ordinary meetings of a standing committee up until the date of the next annual meeting of the Council;

iii. shall permit a committee, other than in respect of the ordinary meetings of a committee, to determine the number and time of its meetings;

iv. shall, subject to standing orders 4(b) and (c), appoint and determine the terms of office of members of such a committee;

v. may, subject to standing orders 4(b) and (c), appoint and determine the terms of office of the substitute members to a committee whose role is to replace the ordinary members at a meeting of a committee if the ordinary members of the committee confirm to the Proper Officer 5 days before the meeting that they are unable to attend;

vi. shall, after it has appointed the members of a standing committee, appoint the chair of the standing committee;

vii. shall permit a committee other than a standing committee, to appoint its own chair at the first meeting of the committee;

viii. shall determine the place, notice requirements and quorum for a meeting of a committee and a sub-committee which, in both cases, shall be no less than three;

ix. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a committee;

x. shall determine if the public and press are permitted to attend the meetings of a sub-committee and also the advance public notice requirements, if any, required for the meetings of a sub-committee;

xi. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a sub-committee that they are permitted to attend; and

xii. may dissolve a committee or a sub-committee.

5. ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETINGS

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

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

c **If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the Council shall take place at 6pm.**

d **In addition to the annual meeting of the Council, at least three other ordinary meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times as the Council decides.**

e **The first business conducted at the annual meeting of the Council shall be the election of the Chair and Vice-Chair (if there is one) of the Council.**

f **The Chair of the Council, unless they have resigned or become disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until their successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the Council.**

g **The Vice-Chair of the Council, if there is one, unless they resign or become disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chair of the Council at the next annual meeting of the Council.**

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

i **In an election year, if the current Chair of the Council has been re-elected as a member of the Council, they shall preside at the annual meeting until**

a new Chair of the Council has been elected. They may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chair of the Council and shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.

j Following the election of the Chair of the Council and Vice-Chair (if there is one) of the Council at the annual meeting, the business shall include:

i. **In an election year, delivery by the Chair of the Council and councillors of their acceptance of office forms unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date. In a year which is not an election year, delivery by the Chair of the Council of their acceptance of office form unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date;**

ii. Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the Council;

iii. Receipt of the minutes of the last meeting of a committee;

iv. Consideration of the recommendations made by a committee;

v. Review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, staff and other local authorities;

vi. Review of the terms of reference for committees;

vii. Appointment of members to existing committees;

viii. Appointment of any new committees in accordance with standing order 4;

ix. Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations;

x. Review of arrangements (including legal agreements) with other local authorities, not-for-profit bodies and businesses.

xi. Review of representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back;

xii. In an election year, to make arrangements with a view to the Council becoming eligible to exercise the general power of competence in the future;

xiii. Review of inventory of land and other assets including buildings and office equipment;

xiv. Confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insurable risks;

xv. Review of the Council's and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies;

xvi. Review of the Council's complaints procedure;

xvii. Review of the Council's policies, procedures and practices in respect of its obligations under freedom of information and data protection legislation (*see also standing orders 11, 20 and 21*);

xviii. Review of the Council's policy for dealing with the press/media;

xix. Review of the Council's employment policies and procedures;

xx. Review of the Council's expenditure incurred under s.137 of the Local Government Act 1972 or the general power of competence.

xxi. Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.

6. EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL, COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES

a **The Chair of the Council may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council at any time.**

b **If the Chair of the Council does not call an extraordinary meeting of the Council within seven days of having been requested in writing to do so by two councillors, any two councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council. The public notice giving the time, place and agenda for such a meeting shall be signed by the two councillors.**

c The chair of a committee [or a sub-committee] may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee [or the sub-committee] at any time.

d If the chair of a committee [or a sub-committee] does not call an extraordinary meeting within 3 days of having been requested to do so by 2 members of the committee [or the sub-committee], any 2 members of the committee [or the sub-committee] may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee [or a sub-committee].

7. PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS

a A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least 3 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the recommendation of a committee or a sub-committee.

b When a motion moved pursuant to standing order 7(a) has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved for a further six months.

8. VOTING ON APPOINTMENTS

a Where more than two persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the Council and none of those persons has received an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. A tie in votes may be settled by the casting vote exercisable by the chair of the meeting.

9. MOTIONS FOR A MEETING THAT REQUIRE WRITTEN NOTICE TO BE GIVEN TO THE PROPER OFFICER

a A motion shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting for which it is tabled and in any event shall relate to the performance of the Council's statutory functions, powers and obligations or an issue which specifically affects the Council's area or its residents.

b No motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is on the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least 7 clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.

c The Proper Officer may, before including a motion on the agenda received in accordance with standing order 9(b), correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.

d If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with standing order 9(b) is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it, so that it can be understood, in writing, to the Proper Officer at least 5 clear days before the meeting.

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

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

g Motions received shall be recorded and numbered in the order that they are received.

h Motions rejected shall be recorded with an explanation by the Proper Officer of the reason for rejection.

10. MOTIONS AT A MEETING THAT DO NOT REQUIRE WRITTEN NOTICE

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

i. to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes of a meeting;

ii. to move to a vote;

iii. to defer consideration of a motion;

iv. to refer a motion to a particular committee or sub-committee;

v. to appoint a person to preside at a meeting;

vi. to change the order of business on the agenda;

vii. to proceed to the next business on the agenda;

viii. to require a written report;

ix. to appoint a committee or sub-committee and their members;

x. to extend the time limits for speaking;

xi. to exclude the press and public from a meeting in respect of confidential or other information which is prejudicial to the public interest;

xii. to not hear further from a councillor or a member of the public;

xiii. to exclude a councillor or member of the public for disorderly conduct;

xiv. to temporarily suspend the meeting;

xv. to suspend a particular standing order (unless it reflects mandatory statutory or legal requirements);

xvi. to adjourn the meeting; or

xvii. to close the meeting.

11. MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION

See also standing order 20.

a **The Council shall have in place and keep under review, technical and**

organisational measures to keep secure information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. Such arrangements shall include deciding who has access to personal data and encryption of personal data.

b **The Council shall have in place, and keep under review, policies for the retention and safe destruction of all information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. The Council's retention policy shall confirm the period for which information (including personal data) shall be retained or if this is not possible the criteria used to determine that period (e.g. the Limitation Act 1980).**

c **The agenda, papers that support the agenda and the minutes of a meeting shall not disclose or otherwise undermine confidential information or personal data without legal justification.**

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

12. DRAFT MINUTES

Full Council meetings ●
Committee meetings ●
Sub-committee meetings ●

a If the draft minutes of a preceding meeting have been served on councillors with the agenda to attend the meeting at which they are due to be approved for accuracy, they shall be taken as read.

b There shall be no discussion about the draft minutes of a preceding meeting except in relation to their accuracy. A motion to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes shall be moved in accordance with standing order 10(a)(i).

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

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

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

e **If the Council's gross annual income or expenditure (whichever is higher) does not exceed £25,000, it shall publish draft minutes on a website which is publicly accessible and free of charge not later than one month after the meeting has taken place.**

f Subject to the publication of draft minutes in accordance with standing order 12(e) and standing order 20(a) and following a resolution which confirms the accuracy of the minutes of a meeting, the draft minutes or recordings of the meeting for which approved minutes exist shall be destroyed.

13. CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISPENSATIONS

See also standing order 3(u).

a All councillors and non-councillors with voting rights shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the Council.

b Unless they have been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest. They may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which they had the interest.

c Unless they have been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which they have another interest if so required by the Council's code of conduct. They may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which they had the interest.

d **Dispensation requests shall be in writing and submitted to the Proper Officer** as soon as possible before the meeting, or failing that, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.

e A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by meeting of the Council, or committee or sub-committee for which the dispensation is required and that decision is final.

f A dispensation request shall confirm:

i. the description and the nature of the disclosable pecuniary interest or other interest to which the request for the dispensation relates;

ii. whether the dispensation is required to participate at a meeting in a discussion only or a discussion and a vote;

iii. the date of the meeting or the period (not exceeding four years) for which the dispensation is sought; and

iv. an explanation as to why the dispensation is sought.

g Subject to standing orders 13(d) and (f), a dispensation request shall be considered [by the Proper Officer before the meeting or, if this is not possible, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required] OR [at the beginning of the meeting of the Council, or committee or sub-committee for which the dispensation is required].

h A dispensation may be granted in accordance with standing order 13(e) if having regard to all relevant circumstances any of the following apply:

i. without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from participating in the particular business would be so great a proportion of the meeting transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business;

ii. granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the Council's area; or

iii. it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.

14. CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS

a **Upon notification by the Principal Council that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the Council's code of conduct, the Council shall consider what, if any, action to take against them. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office.**

15. PROPER OFFICER

a The Proper Officer shall be either (i) the clerk or (ii) other staff member(s) nominated by the Council to undertake the work of the Proper Officer when the Proper Officer is absent.

b The Proper Officer shall:

i. **at least three clear days before a meeting of the council, a committee** or a sub-committee**,**

- **serve on councillors by delivery or post at their residences or by email authenticated in such manner as the Proper Officer thinks fit, a signed summons confirming the time, place and the agenda (provided the councillor has consented to service by email), and**
- **Provide, in a conspicuous place, public notice of the time, place and agenda (provided that the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the Council convened by councillors is signed by them).**

See standing order 3(b) for the meaning of clear days for a meeting of a full council and standing order 3(c) for the meaning of clear days for a meeting of a committee;

ii. subject to standing order 9, include on the agenda all motions in the order received unless a councillor has given written notice at least 1 day before the meeting confirming their withdrawal of it;

iii. convene a meeting of the Council for the election of a new Chair of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in their office;

iv. **facilitate inspection of the minute book by local government electors;**

v. **receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities;**

vi. hold acceptance of office forms from councillors;

vii. hold a copy of every councillor’s register of interests;

viii. assist with responding to requests made under freedom of information legislation and rights exercisable under data protection legislation, in accordance with the Council’s relevant policies and procedures;

ix. liaise, as appropriate, with the Council’s Data Protection Officer (if there is one);

x. receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the Council except where there is a resolution to the contrary;

xi. assist in the organisation of, storage of, access to, security of and destruction of information held by the Council in paper and electronic form subject to the requirements of data protection and freedom of information legislation and other legitimate requirements (e.g. the Limitation Act 1980);

xii. arrange for legal deeds to be executed;
(*see also standing order 23);*

xiii. arrange or manage the prompt authorisation, approval, and instruction regarding any payments to be made by the Council in accordance with its financial regulations;

xiv. record every planning application notified to the Council and the Council's response to the local planning authority in a book for such purpose;

xv. refer a planning application received by the Council to the Planning Advisory Group to advise clerk on response to be made under relevcanet delegated authority as per te hdelegation schedule, to be reported at the next council meeting

xvi. manage access to information about the Council via the publication scheme; and

xvii. retain custody of the seal of the Council (if there is one) which shall not be used without a resolution to that effect.
(*see also standing order 23).*

16. RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

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

17. ACCOUNTS AND ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

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

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

c The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to each councillor as soon as practicable after 30 June, 30 September and 31 December in each year a statement to summarise:

i. the Council's receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for each quarter;

ii. the Council's aggregate receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for the year to date;

iii. the balances held at the end of the quarter being reported and

which includes a comparison with the budget for the financial year and highlights any actual or potential overspends.

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

i. each councillor with a statement summarising the Council's receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for the last quarter and the year to date for information; and

ii. to the Council the accounting statements for the year in the form of Section 2 of the annual governance and accountability return, as required by proper practices, for consideration and approval.

e The year-end accounting statements shall be prepared in accordance with proper practices and apply the form of accounts determined by the Council (receipts and payments, or income and expenditure) for the year to 31 March. A completed draft annual governance and accountability return shall be presented to all councillors at least 14 days prior to anticipated approval by the Council. The annual governance and accountability return of the Council, which is subject to external audit, including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to the Council for consideration and formal approval before 30 June.

18. FINANCIAL CONTROLS AND PROCUREMENT

a. The Council shall consider and approve financial regulations drawn up by the Responsible Financial Officer, which shall include detailed arrangements in respect of the following:

i. the keeping of accounting records and systems of internal controls;

ii. the assessment and management of financial risks faced by the Council;

iii. the work of the independent internal auditor in accordance with proper practices and the receipt of regular reports from the internal auditor, which shall be required at least annually;

iv. the inspection and copying by councillors and local electors of the Council's accounts and/or orders of payments; and

v. whether contracts with an estimated value below [60,000] or due to special circumstances are exempt from a tendering process or procurement exercise.

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

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

i. a specification for the goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall be drawn up;

ii. an invitation to tender shall be drawn up to confirm (i) the Council's specification (ii) the time, date and address for the submission of tenders (iii) the date of the Council's written response to the tender and (iv) the prohibition on prospective contractors contacting councillors or staff to encourage or support their tender outside the prescribed process;

iii. tenders are to be submitted in writing in a sealed marked envelope addressed to the Proper Officer;

iv. tenders shall be opened by the Proper Officer in the presence of at least one councillor after the deadline for submission of tenders has passed;

v. tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate meeting of the Council or a committee or sub-committee with delegated responsibility.

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

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

19. HANDLING STAFF MATTERS

a A matter personal to a member of staff that is being considered by a meeting of Council is subject to standing order 11.

b Subject to the Council's policy regarding absences from work, the Council's most senior member of staff shall notify the chair of the council or, if they are not available, the vice-chair of the council of absence occasioned by illness or other reason and that person shall report such absence to the council at its next meeting.

c The chair of the council or in their absence, the vice-chair shall upon a resolution conduct a review of the performance and annual appraisal of the work of Clerk / RFO. The reviews and appraisal shall be reported in writing and are subject to approval by resolution by council.

d Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, the Council's most senior member of staff (or other members of staff) shall contact the Chair of the council or in their absence, the vice-chair of council in respect of an informal or formal grievance matter, and this matter shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the council

e Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, if an informal or formal grievance matter raised by clerk / RFO relates to the chair or vice-chair of council, this shall be communicated to another member of council, which shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of council.

f Any persons responsible for all or part of the management of staff shall treat as confidential the written records of all meetings relating to their performance, capabilities, grievance or disciplinary matters.

g In accordance with standing order 11(a), persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to staff records referred to in standing order 19(f).

20. RESPONSIBILITIES TO PROVIDE INFORMATION

See also standing order 21.

a **In accordance with freedom of information legislation, the Council shall publish information in accordance with its publication scheme and respond to requests for information held by the Council.**

b. The Council shall publish information in accordance with the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities (England) 2015 and any subsequent amendments or replacement legislation or guidance..

21. **RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER DATA PROTECTION LEGISLATION**
(Below is not an exclusive list).

See also standing order 11.

a The Council may appoint a Data Protection Officer.

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

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

d **The Council shall keep a record of all personal data breaches comprising the facts relating to the personal data breach, its effects and the remedial action taken.**

e **The Council shall ensure that information communicated in its privacy notice(s) is in an easily accessible and available form and kept up to date.**

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

22. **RELATIONS WITH THE PRESS/MEDIA**

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

23. **EXECUTION AND SEALING OF LEGAL DEEDS**

See also standing orders 15(b)(xii) and (xvii).

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

b **Subject to standing order 23(a), any two councillors may sign, on behalf**

of the Council, any deed required by law and the Proper Officer shall witness their signatures. *Burnham Market Parish Council does not have a common seal.*

24. **COMMUNICATING WITH DISTRICT AND COUNTY OR UNITARY COUNCILLORS**

a An invitation to attend a meeting of the Council shall be sent, together with the agenda, to the ward councillor(s) of the District and County Council OR Unitary Council representing the area of the Council.

b Unless the Council determines otherwise, a copy of each letter sent to the District and County Council OR Unitary Council shall be sent to the ward councillor(s) representing the area of the Council.

25. **RESTRICTIONS ON COUNCILLOR ACTIVITIES**

a. Unless duly authorised no councillor shall:

i. inspect any land and/or premises which the Council has a right or duty to inspect; or

ii. issue orders, instructions or directions.

26. **STANDING ORDERS GENERALLY**

a All or part of a standing order, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory or legal requirements, may be suspended by resolution in relation to the consideration of an item on the agenda for a meeting.

b A motion to add to or vary or revoke one or more of the Council's standing orders, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory or legal requirements, shall be proposed by a special motion, the written notice by at least 3 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9.

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

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

BURNHAM MARKET FINANCIAL REGULATIONS (Based on NALC model Financial Regulations 2025)

Contents

These Financial Regulations were adopted by the council at its meeting held on [enter date].

1. General

1.1. These Financial Regulations govern the financial management of the council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the council. They are one of the council's governing documents and shall be observed in conjunction with the council's Standing Orders.

1.2. Councillors are expected to follow these regulations and not to entice employees to breach them. Failure to follow these regulations brings the office of councillor into disrepute.

1.3. Wilful breach of these regulations by an employee may result in disciplinary proceedings.

1.4. In these Financial Regulations:

- 'Accounts and Audit Regulations' means the regulations issued under Sections 32, 43(2) and 46 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, or any superseding legislation, and then in force, unless otherwise specified.
- "Approve" refers to an online action, allowing an electronic transaction to take place.
- "Authorise" refers to a decision by the council, or a committee or an officer, to allow something to happen.
- 'Proper practices' means those set out in *The Practitioners' Guide*
- *Practitioners' Guide* refers to the guide issued by the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) and published by NALC in England or Governance and Accountability for Local Councils in Wales – A Practitioners Guide jointly published by One Voice Wales and the Society of Local Council Clerks in Wales.
- 'Must' and **bold text** refer to a statutory obligation the council cannot change.
- 'Shall' refers to a non-statutory instruction by the council to its members and staff.

1.5. The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) holds a statutory office, appointed by the council. The Clerk has been appointed as RFO and these regulations apply accordingly.The RFO;

- acts under the policy direction of the council;
- administers the council's financial affairs in accordance with all Acts, Regulations and proper practices;
- determines on behalf of the council its accounting records and control systems;
- ensures the accounting control systems are observed;
- ensures the accounting records are kept up to date;
- seeks economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of council resources; and
- produces financial management information as required by the council.

1.6. **The council must not delegate any decision regarding:**

- **setting the final budget or the precept (council tax requirement);**
- **the outcome of a review of the effectiveness of its internal controls**
- **approving accounting statements;**
- **approving an annual governance statement;**
- **borrowing;**
- **declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence; and**
- **addressing recommendations from the internal or external auditors**

1.7. In addition, the council shall:

- determine and regularly review the bank mandate for all council bank accounts;
- authorise any grant or single commitment in excess of £2000

2. Risk management and internal control

2.1. **The council must ensure that it has a sound system of internal control, which delivers effective financial, operational and risk management.**

2.2. The Clerk as RFO shall prepare, for approval by the council a risk management policy covering all activities of the council. This policy and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.

2.3. When considering any new activity, the Clerk as RFO shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration by the council.

2.4. **At least once a year, the council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control, before approving the Annual Governance Statement.**

2.5. **The accounting control systems determined by the RFO must include measures to:**

- **ensure that risk is appropriately managed;**
- **ensure the prompt, accurate recording of financial transactions;**
- **prevent and detect inaccuracy or fraud; and**
- **allow the reconstitution of any lost records;**
- **identify the duties of officers dealing with transactions and**
- **ensure division of responsibilities.**

2.6. At least once in each quarter and at each financial year end, full council shall verify bank reconciliations for all accounts produced by the RFO. The Chair shall sign and date the reconciliations on behalf of council and the original bank statements or similar document as evidence of this.

2.7. Regular back-up copies shall be made of the records on any council computer and stored either online or in a separate location from the computer. The council shall put measures in place to ensure that the ability to access any council computer is not lost if an employee leaves or is incapacitated for any reason.

3. Accounts and audit

3.1. All accounting procedures and financial records of the council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

3.2. **The accounting records determined by the RFO must be sufficient to explain the council's transactions and to disclose its financial position with reasonable accuracy at any time. In particular, they must contain:**

- **day-to-day entries of all sums of money received and expended by the council and the matters to which they relate;**
- **a record of the assets and liabilities of the council;**

3.3. The accounting records shall be designed to facilitate the efficient preparation of the accounting statements in the Annual {Governance and Accountability} Return.

3.4. The RFO shall complete and certify the annual Accounting Statements of the council contained in the Annual {Governance and Accountability} Return in accordance with proper practices, as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year. Having certified the Accounting Statements, the RFO shall submit them (with any related documents) to the council, within the timescales required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

3.5. **The council must ensure that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and internal control system in accordance with proper practices**.

3.6. **Any officer or member of the council must make available such documents and records as the internal or external auditor consider necessary for the purpose of the audit** and shall, as directed by the council, supply the RFO, internal auditor, or external auditor with such information and explanation as the council considers necessary.

3.7. The internal auditor shall be appointed by [the council] and shall carry out their work to evaluate the effectiveness of the council's risk management, control and governance processes in accordance with proper practices specified in the Practitioners' Guide.

3.8. The council shall ensure that the internal auditor:

- is competent and independent of the financial operations of the council;
- reports to council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one written report during each financial year;
- can demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships; and
- has no involvement in the management or control of the council

3.9. Internal or external auditors may not under any circumstances:

- perform any operational duties for the council;

- initiate or approve accounting transactions;
- provide financial, legal or other advice including in relation to any future transactions; or
- direct the activities of any council employee, except to the extent that such employees have been appropriately assigned to assist the internal auditor.

3.10. For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to internal audit the terms ‘independent’ and ‘independence’ shall have the same meaning as described in The Practitioners Guide.

3.11. The RFO shall make arrangements for the exercise of electors’ rights in relation to the accounts, including the opportunity to inspect the accounts, books, and vouchers and display or publish any notices and documents required by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, or any superseding legislation, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

3.12. The RFO shall, without undue delay, bring to the attention of all councillors any correspondence or report from internal or external auditors.

4. Budget and precept

4.1. **Before setting a precept, the council must calculate its council tax requirement for each financial year by preparing and approving a budget, in accordance with The Local Government Finance Act 1992 or succeeding legislation.**

4.2. Budgets for salaries and wages, including employer contributions shall be reviewed by the council] at least annually by December for the following financial year and the final version shall be evidenced by a hard copy schedule signed by the Clerk and the Chair of the Council.

4.3. No later than [December each year, the RFO shall prepare a draft budget with detailed estimates of all receipts and payments for the following financial year

4.4. Unspent funds for partially completed projects may only be carried forward by placing them in an earmarked reserve with the formal approval of the full council.

4.5. Each committee (if any) shall review its draft budget and submit any proposed amendments to the council not later than the end of October each year.

4.6. The draft budget with any committee proposals, including any recommendations for the use or accumulation of reserves, shall be considered by the council.

4.7. Having considered the proposed budget and, the council shall determine its council tax (requirement by setting a budget. The council shall set a precept for this amount no later than the end of January for the ensuing financial year.

4.8. **Any member with council tax unpaid for more than two months is prohibited from voting on the budget or precept by Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and must disclose at the start of the meeting that Section 106 applies to them.**

4.9. The RFO shall **issue the precept to the billing authority no later than the end of February** and supply each member with a copy of the agreed annual budget.

4.10. The agreed budget provides a basis for monitoring progress during the year by comparing actual spending and income against what was planned.

4.11. Any addition to, or withdrawal from, any earmarked reserve shall be agreed by the council {or relevant committee}.

5. Procurement

5.1. **Members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times.** Any officer procuring goods, services or works should ensure, as far as practicable, that the best available terms are obtained, usually by obtaining prices from several suppliers.

5.2. The RFO should verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before it is made and in the case of new or infrequent purchases, should ensure that the legal power being used is reported to the meeting at which the order is authorised and also recorded in the minutes.

5.3. Every contract shall comply with the council's Standing Orders and these Financial Regulations and no exceptions shall be made, except in an emergency.

5.4. **For a contract for the supply of goods, services or works where the estimated value will exceed the thresholds set by Parliament, the full requirements of The Procurement Act 2023 and The Procurement Regulations 2024 or any superseding legislation ("the Legislation"), must be followed in respect of the tendering, award and notification of that contract.**

5.5. Where the estimated value is below the Government threshold, the council shall (with the exception of items listed in paragraph 5.12) obtain prices as follows:

5.6. For contracts estimated to exceed £60,000 including VAT, the Clerk shall seek formal tenders from at least three suppliers agreed by the council] OR if not practicable to seek 3 quotes, advertise an open invitation for tenders in compliance with any relevant provisions of the Legislation. Tenders shall be invited in accordance with Appendix 1.

5.7. **For contracts estimated to be over £30,000 including VAT, the council must comply with any requirements of the Legislation regarding the publication of invitations and notices.**

5.8. For contracts greater than £10,000 excluding VAT the Clerk shall seek at least 3 fixed-price quotes;

5.9. where the value is between £1000 and £10,000 excluding VAT, the Clerk shall try to obtain 3 estimates which might include evidence of online prices, or recent prices from regular suppliers.

5.10. For smaller purchases, the Clerk shall seek to achieve value for money.

5.11. **Contracts must not be split to avoid compliance with these rules.**

5.12. The requirement to obtain competitive prices in these regulations need not apply to contracts that relate to items (i) to (iv) below:

i. specialist services, such as legal professionals acting in disputes;

ii. repairs to, or parts for, existing machinery or equipment;

iii. works, goods or services that constitute an extension of an existing contract;

iv. goods or services that are only available from one supplier or are sold at a fixed price.

5.13. When applications are made to waive this financial regulation to enable a price to be negotiated without competition, the reason should be set out in a recommendation to the council {or relevant committee}. Avoidance of competition is not a valid reason.

5.14. The council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.

5.15. Individual purchases within an agreed budget for that type of expenditure may be authorised by:

- The Clerk under delegated authority, for any items below £500 excluding VAT.
- the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of the Council {or Chair of the appropriate committee}, for any items below £2,000 excluding VAT.
- a duly delegated committee of the council for all items of expenditure within their delegated budgets for items under £1000excluding VAT
- the council for all items over £2000

Such authorisation must be supported by a minute (in the case of council or committee decisions) or other auditable evidence trail.

5.16. No individual member, or informal group of members may issue an official order or make any contract on behalf of the council.

5.17. No expenditure may be authorised that will exceed the budget for that type of expenditure other than by resolution of the council {or a duly delegated committee acting within its Terms of Reference} except in an emergency.

5.18. In cases of serious risk to the delivery of council services or to public safety on council premises, the clerk may authorise expenditure of up to £5,000]excluding VAT on repair, replacement or other work that in their judgement is necessary, whether or not there is any budget for such expenditure. The Clerk shall report such action to the Chair immediately and to the council as soon as practicable thereafter.

5.19. No expenditure shall be authorised, no contract entered into or tender accepted in relation to any major project, unless The Council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available and that where a loan is required, Government borrowing approval has been obtained first.

5.20. An official order or letter shall be issued for all work, goods and services {above £1000 excluding VAT unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate. Copies of orders shall be retained, along with evidence of receipt of goods.

5.21. Any ordering system can be misused and access to them shall be controlled by the Clerk/RFO

6. Banking and payments

6.1. The council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the RFO and authorised by the council; banking arrangements shall not be delegated to a committee. The council has resolved to bank with Unity Trust Bank The arrangements shall be reviewed annually for security and efficiency.

6.2. The council must have safe and efficient arrangements for making payments, to safeguard against the possibility of fraud or error. Wherever possible, more than one person should be involved in any payment, for example by dual online authorisation or dual cheque signing. Even where a purchase has been authorised, the payment must also be authorised and only authorised payments shall be approved or signed to allow the funds to leave the council's bank.

6.3. All invoices for payment should be examined for arithmetical accuracy, analysed to the appropriate expenditure heading and verified to confirm that the work, goods or services were received, checked and represent expenditure previously authorised by the council before being certified by the RFO.

6.4. Personal payments (including salaries, wages, expenses and any payment made in relation to the termination of employment) may be summarised to avoid disclosing any personal information.

6.5. All payments shall be made by online banking in accordance with a resolution of the council, or duly delegated committee, or a delegated decision by an officer, unless the council resolves to use a different payment method.

6.6. For each financial year The clerk may draw up a schedule of regular payments due in relation to a continuing contract or obligation (such as Salaries, PAYE, National Insurance, pension contributions, rent, rates, regular maintenance contracts and similar items), which the council may authorise in advance for the year}.

6.7. A copy of this schedule of regular payments shall be presented to council and signed by the chair on each and every occasion when payment is made - to reduce the risk of duplicate payments.

6.8. A list of such payments shall be reported to the next appropriate meeting of the council for information only.

6.9. The Clerk and RFO shall have delegated authority to authorise payments {only} in the following circumstances:

i. any payments of up to £500 excluding VAT, within an agreed budget

ii. payments of up to £2,000]excluding VAT in cases of serious risk to the delivery of council services or to public safety on council premises.

iii. any payment necessary to avoid a charge under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998 {or to comply with contractual terms}, where the due date for payment is before the next scheduled meeting of [the council], where the [Clerk and RFO] certify that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council {or finance committee}.

iv. Fund transfers within the councils banking arrangements up to the sum of £10,000, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council

6.10. The RFO shall present a schedule of payments requiring authorisation, forming part of the agenda for the meeting, together with the relevant invoices, to the council {or finance committee}. The council {or committee} shall review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied itself, shall authorise payment by resolution. The authorised schedule shall be initialled immediately below the last item by the person chairing the meeting. A detailed list of all payments shall be disclosed within or as an attachment to the minutes of that meeting.

7. Electronic payments

7.1. Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, [the RFO] shall be appointed as the Service Administrator. The bank mandate agreed by the council shall identify [a number of] councillors who will be authorised to approve transactions on those accounts and a minimum of two people will be involved in any online approval process. The Clerk may be an authorised signatory, but no signatory should be involved in approving any payment to themselves.

7.2. All authorised signatories shall have access to view the council's bank accounts online.

7.3. No employee or councillor shall disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the council or its banking, to anyone not authorised in writing by the council or a duly delegated committee.

7.4. The Service Administrator shall set up all items due for payment online. A list of payments for approval, together with copies of the relevant invoices, shall be sent [by email] to [two] authorised signatories.

7.5. In the prolonged absence of the Service Administrator, an authorised signatory, shall set up any payments due before the return of the Service Administrator.

7.6. Two councillors who are authorised signatories shall check the payment details against the invoices before approving each payment using the online banking system.

7.7. Evidence shall be retained showing which members approved the payment online

7.8. A full list of all payments made in a month shall be provided to the next [council] meeting and appended to the minutes.

7.9. With the approval of the council in each case, regular payments (such as gas, electricity, telephone, broadband, water, National Non-Domestic Rates, refuse collection, pension contributions and HMRC payments) may be made by variable direct debit, provided that the instructions are signed/approved online by two authorised members/ The approval of the use of each variable direct debit shall be reviewed by The Council at every year at the AGM.

7.10. Payment may be made by BACS or CHAPS by resolution of The Council provided that each payment is approved online by [two authorised bank signatories], evidence is retained and any payments are reported to the Council at the next meeting. The approval of the use of BACS or CHAPS shall be renewed by resolution of the council at least every two years.

7.11. If thought appropriate by the council, regular payments of fixed sums may be made by banker's standing order, provided that the instructions are signed {or approved online} by [two members], evidence of this is retained and any payments are reported to council when made. The approval of the use of a banker's standing order shall be reviewed by [the council] at least every two years.

7.12. Account details for suppliers may only be changed upon written notification by the supplier verified by the clerk This is a potential area for fraud and the individuals involved should ensure that any change is genuine.

7.13. Members and officers shall ensure that any computer used for the council's financial business has adequate security, with anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall software installed and regularly updated.

7.14. Remembered password facilities {other than secure password stores requiring separate identity verification} should not be used on any computer used for council banking.

8. Cheque payments

8.1. Cheques or orders for payment in accordance with a resolution or delegated decision shall be signed by 2 members and countersigned by the Clerk.

8.2. A signatory having a family or business relationship with the beneficiary of a payment shall not, under normal circumstances, be a signatory to that payment.

8.3. To indicate agreement of the details on the cheque with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall also initial the cheque counterfoil and invoice.

8.4. Cheques or orders for payment shall not normally be presented for signature other than at, or immediately before or after a council Meeting. Any signatures obtained away from council meetings shall be reported to the council at the next convenient meeting.

9. Payment cards

9.1. Council has no payment cards

10. Petty Cash

10.1. The council will not maintain any form of cash float. All cash received must be banked intact.

11. Payment of salaries and allowances

11.1. **As an employer, the council must make arrangements to comply with the statutory requirements of PAYE legislation.**

11.2. **Councillors allowances (where paid) are also liable to deduction of tax under PAYE rules and must be taxed correctly before payment.**

11.3. Salary rates shall be agreed by the council, or a duly delegated committee. No changes shall be made to any employee's gross pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the council {or relevant committee}.

11.4. Payment of salaries shall be made, after deduction of tax, national insurance, pension contributions and any similar statutory or discretionary deductions, on the dates stipulated in employment contracts.

11.5. Deductions from salary shall be paid to the relevant bodies within the required timescales, provided that each payment is reported, as set out in these regulations above.

11.6. Each payment to employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall be recorded in a payroll control account or other separate confidential record, with the total of such payments each calendar month reported in the cashbook. Payroll reports will be reviewed by [the finance committee] to ensure that the correct payments have been made.

11.7. Any termination payments shall be supported by a report to the council, setting out a clear business case. Termination payments shall only be authorised by the full council.

11.8. Before employing interim staff, the council must consider a full business case.

12. Loans and investments

12.1. Any application for Government approval to borrow money and subsequent arrangements for a loan must be authorised by the full council and recorded in the minutes. All borrowing shall be in the name of the council, after obtaining any necessary approval.

12.2. Any financial arrangement which does not require formal borrowing approval from the [Secretary of State/Welsh Assembly Government] (such as Hire Purchase, Leasing of tangible assets or loans to be repaid within the financial year) must be authorised by the full council, following a written report on the value for money of the proposed transaction.

12.3. The council shall consider the requirement for an Investment Strategy and Policy in accordance with Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments, which must be written in accordance with relevant regulations, proper practices and guidance. Any Strategy and Policy shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.

12.4. All investment of money under the control of the council shall be in the name of the council.

12.5. All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO.

12.6. Payments in respect of short term or long-term investments, including transfers between bank accounts held in the same bank, shall be made in accordance with these regulations.

13. Income

13.1. The collection of all sums due to the council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO.

13.2. The council will review all fees and charges for work done, services provided, or goods sold at least annually as part of the budget-setting process, following a report of the Clerk. The RFO shall be responsible for the collection of all amounts due to the council.

13.3. Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts shall be reported to the council by [the RFO] and shall be written off in the year. The council's approval shall be shown in the accounting records.

13.4. All sums received on behalf of the council shall be deposited intact with the council's bankers, with such frequency as the RFO considers necessary. The origin of each receipt shall clearly be recorded on the paying-in slip or other record.

13.5. Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the council.

13.6. The RFO shall ensure that VAT is correctly recorded in the council's accounting software and that any VAT Return required is submitted from the software by the due date

13.7. Where significant sums of cash are regularly received by the council, the RFO shall ensure that more than one person is present when the cash is counted in the first instance, that there is a reconciliation to some form of control record such as ticket issues, and that appropriate care is taken for the security and safety of individuals banking such cash.

13.8. Any income that is the property of a charitable trust shall be paid into a charitable bank account. Instructions for the payment of funds due from the charitable trust to the council (to meet expenditure already incurred by the authority) will be given by the Managing Trustees of the charity meeting separately from any council meeting.

14. Payments under contracts for building or other construction works

14.1. Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the RFO shall maintain a record of all such payments, which shall be made within the time specified in the contract based on signed certificates from the architect or other consultant engaged to supervise the works.

14.2. Any variation of, addition to or omission from a contract must be authorised by [the Clerk] to the contractor in writing, with the council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the contract sum by 5% or more, or likely to exceed the budget available.

15. Stores and equipment

15.1. The officer in charge of each section] shall be responsible for the care and custody of stores and equipment in that section

15.2. Delivery notes shall be obtained in respect of all goods received into store or otherwise delivered and goods must be checked as to order and quality at the time delivery is made.

15.3. Stocks shall be kept at the minimum levels consistent with operational requirements.

15.4. The RFO shall be responsible for periodic checks of stocks and stores, at least annually.

16. Assets, properties and estates

16.1. The Clerk shall make arrangements for the safe custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the council.

16.2. The RFO shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date, with a record of all properties held by the council, their location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held, in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.

16.3. The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the Register shall be verified at least annually, possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.

16.4. No interest in land shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law. In each case a written report shall be provided to council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate where required by law).

16.5. No tangible moveable property shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law, except where the estimated value of any one item does not exceed [£500]. In each case a written report shall be provided to council with a full business case.

17. Insurance

17.1. The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the council and the property and risks covered, reviewing these annually before the renewal date in conjunction with the council's review of risk management.

17.2. The Clerk shall give prompt notification to the RFO of all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.

17.3. The RFO shall be notified of any loss, liability, damage or event likely to lead to a claim, and shall report these to [the council] at the next available meeting. The RFO shall negotiate all claims on the council's insurers {in consultation with the Clerk}.

17.4. All appropriate members and employees of the council shall be included in a suitable form of security or fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined [annually] by the council, or duly delegated committee.

18. Suspension and revision of Financial Regulations

18.1. The council shall review these Financial Regulations [annually] and following any change of clerk or RFO. The Clerk shall monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and advise the council of any need to amend these Financial Regulations.

18.2. The council may, by resolution duly notified prior to the relevant meeting of council, suspend any part of these Financial Regulations, provided that reasons for the suspension are recorded and that an assessment of the risks arising has been presented to all members. Suspension does not disapply any legislation or permit the council to act unlawfully.

18.3. The council may temporarily amend these Financial Regulations by a duly notified resolution, to cope with periods of absence, local government reorganisation, national restrictions or other exceptional circumstances.

Appendix 1 - Tender process

1) Any invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases.
2) The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the Clerk in the ordinary course of post, unless an electronic tendering process has been agreed by the council.
3) Where a postal process is used, each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specifically marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract. All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the Clerk in the presence of at least one member of council.
4) Where an electronic tendering process is used, the council shall use a specific email address that will be monitored to ensure that nobody accesses any tender before the expiry of the deadline for submission.
5) Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to Standing Order [insert reference of the council's relevant standing order] and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.
6) Where the council, or duly delegated committee, does not accept any tender, quote or estimate, the work is not allocated and the council requires further pricing, no person shall be permitted to submit a later tender, estimate or quote who was present when the original decision-making process was being undertaken.

Burnham Market Parish Council – Financial Reserves Policy

1. Introduction

Burnham Market Parish Council is required to manage its financial resources responsibly to ensure it can meet its obligations, maintain financial stability, and support future service delivery.

The purpose of this policy is to set out the principles by which the Council determines, maintains, and reviews its financial reserves.

The Council recognises the guidance of the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG Practitioners' Guide), which states that authorities should hold adequate reserves to:

- support day-to-day operations
- manage financial risks
- plan for future expenditure

The level of reserves must be proportionate to the Council's activities and should not be excessive, given that funds are raised through local taxation.

In accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the Council must have regard to the level of reserves when setting its annual budget and precept.

2. Types of Reserves

The Council maintains two main categories of reserves:

2.1 General Reserves

General Reserves are funds that are not restricted for specific purposes.

They exist to:

- manage uneven cash flow
- provide a buffer against unforeseen expenditure
- support financial stability
- help manage budget variations between years

General Reserves are held as part of the Council's overall financial risk management strategy.

The level of General Reserves will be determined annually as part of the budget-setting process, taking into account:

- Net Revenue Expenditure (NRE)

- known financial risks
- planned capital or project expenditure
- cash flow requirements

The Council will have regard to JPAG guidance, which recommends that General Reserves should be maintained at a proportionate level relative to Net Revenue Expenditure.

2.2 Earmarked Reserves (EMRs)

Earmarked Reserves are funds held for specific, identified purposes.

Each EMR must:

- have a clear and approved purpose
- be established by resolution of the Council
- be separately identified in financial records
- be reviewed annually

Typical purposes of EMRs may include:

- asset replacement and maintenance planning
- committed but unspent project funding
- known future liabilities
- specific community or infrastructure projects
- developer or restricted contributions where applicable

EMRs must only be used for the purpose for which they were established unless formally reallocated by Council resolution.

Where the original purpose of an EMR is no longer valid or necessary, the Council may:

- reallocate funds to another EMR
- transfer funds to General Reserves
- or apply funds to a different budget heading

All such decisions must be formally approved by the Council.

3. Establishment and Use of Reserves

The creation, amendment, or closure of any reserve must be:

- approved by resolution of the Council
- supported by a clear justification
- recorded in Council minutes

Reserves must be:

- reviewed at least annually
- considered as part of the budget-setting process

- reported transparently in financial statements

4. Management and Review

The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) is responsible for:

- advising the Council on appropriate reserve levels
- monitoring reserve balances
- ensuring correct classification of reserves
- reporting reserve movements to Council

Movements in reserves will be reported:

- as part of regular financial reporting
- during budget monitoring
- in the year-end accounting statements

The Council will review its reserves annually as part of the budget and precept-setting process, having regard to its financial risks and operational needs.

5. Use of Reserves

Reserves may only be used:

- in accordance with their designated purpose (EMRs), or
- for general financial stability (General Reserves)

The use of reserves must:

- be approved by Council resolution
- be properly recorded in financial statements
- comply with proper accounting practices

6. Financial Risk and Stability

The Council will maintain reserves at a level that reflects:

- its size and financial complexity
- variability of income and expenditure
- exposure to financial risks
- obligations under relevant legislation

Reserves are not intended to fund ongoing operational deficits but to ensure financial resilience.

7. Transparency and Reporting

The Council will ensure that reserves are:

- transparently reported in annual accounts
- clearly distinguished between General and Earmarked Reserves
- subject to audit review as part of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) process

This supports compliance with proper practices guidance issued by JPAG and audit requirements.

8. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually as part of the budget-setting process or earlier if required due to:

- changes in legislation
- updated JPAG guidance
- changes in Council financial risk profile

The Council will continue to have regard to:

- Local Government Finance Act 1992
- guidance issued by the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance
- relevant audit and accounting requirements

Burnham Market Parish Council Complaints Procedure

1. Scope and Purpose

This procedure sets out how Burnham Market Parish Council will handle complaints about its actions, services, or lack of action.

Complaints are treated as concerns against the Council as a corporate body and not against individual councillors or employees.

This procedure does **not** apply to:

- Financial irregularities (to be referred to the Council's internal or external auditor)
- Criminal activity (to be referred to the police)
- Complaints about individual councillors (to be referred to the Monitoring Officer at the relevant principal authority)
- Staff conduct matters, which are dealt with under internal disciplinary procedures (complaints should be directed to the Chair of the Council)

The Council will process complaints in accordance with:

- UK General Data Protection Regulation
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Freedom of Information Act 2000

2. Submitting a Complaint

Complaints should normally be made in writing (by letter or email) to the Clerk or Chair of the Council.

The Council will make reasonable adjustments where required, including:

- Accepting complaints in alternative formats
- Providing assistance to submit a complaint

The complainant will receive:

- An acknowledgement within **7 working days**
- A request to confirm that they wish the complaint to be considered under this formal procedure

3. Initial Handling and Assessment

Upon receipt, the Council will:

- Determine whether the complaint falls within the scope of this procedure
- Identify whether it should be referred to another body
- Ensure that any person involved in the matter does **not participate** in the complaint handling

Where appropriate, the Council may seek to resolve the matter informally before proceeding to a formal hearing.

4. Complaint Review Process

The complaint will be considered by:

- A panel of **three councillors**, or
- The full Council (excluding at least three councillors reserved for any appeal stage)

All councillors involved must:

- Have had **no prior involvement** in the matter
- Declare any interests and withdraw where appropriate

The Council may appoint an independent person to investigate and report where necessary.

Both the complainant and the Council will:

- Exchange relevant information and documentation at least **7 working days** before the meeting

The Clerk will normally present the Council's position unless they are directly involved in the matter, in which case an alternative representative will be appointed.

Personal data will be handled confidentially and only disclosed where necessary.

5. Hearing the Complaint

At the meeting:

1. The Chair will explain the procedure
2. The complainant (or their representative) presents their case
3. Councillors may ask questions of the complainant
4. The Council's representative presents the Council's position
5. Councillors may ask questions of the Council's representative
6. Both parties may summarise their case
7. Both parties withdraw while the panel deliberates

The complainant may be accompanied or represented by a person of their choice.

A decision may be made at the meeting or deferred to a later date.

6. Outcome

The Council will provide a written decision within **7 working days**, including:

- The findings of the Council
- Any action to be taken

- Reasons for the decision
- Details of the appeal process

The Council will aim to conclude complaints within **28 working days**, where reasonably practicable.

7. Appeal Process

If the complainant believes the complaint was not handled fairly, they may submit an appeal within **14 days** of the decision.

The appeal will be considered by:

- A panel of at least **three councillors**
- None of whom had any prior involvement in the complaint

The appeal panel will review:

- Whether the procedure was followed correctly
- Whether the decision was reasonable based on the evidence

The appeal outcome will be provided within **21 working days** and may:

- Uphold the original decision
- Refer the matter back for reconsideration

The appeal decision is final.

8. Habitual or Vexatious Complaints

The Council recognises that a small number of complaints may be persistent, unreasonable, or vexatious.

Before applying any restrictions, the Council will:

- Ensure the complaints procedure has been fully and properly followed
- Seek to resolve concerns through clarification or alternative approaches

A complaint may be considered vexatious where there is clear evidence of:

- Repeatedly raising the same issue after the procedure has concluded
- Refusal to engage with the process
- Excessive or abusive contact
- Pursuit of unrealistic or unreasonable outcomes

Any decision to classify a complaint as vexatious must:

- Be based on evidence
- Be proportionate
- Be approved by the Council or an appropriate committee

Restrictions may include:

- Limiting methods or frequency of contact
- Requiring communication through a nominated representative
- Declining to respond to further correspondence on the same matter

The complainant will be:

- Notified in writing
- Given reasons for the decision
- Informed of their right to request a review

Restrictions will be reviewed every **6–12 months**.

9. Further Action

If a complainant remains dissatisfied, they may seek further advice from:

- The Monitoring Officer at the relevant principal authority
- The Local Government Ombudsman (noting that parish councils are not normally within its jurisdiction, but it may provide guidance depending on the nature of the complaint)

10. Review of Procedure

This procedure will be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains effective and compliant with current guidance and legislation.

Burnham Market Parish Council

Freedom of Information & Publication Scheme Policy

(Including Records Management Policy)

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1. Introduction

Burnham Market Parish Council is committed to openness and transparency and will make information available to the public wherever possible.

This policy sets out:

- The Council's **Publication Scheme**
- How to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000
- How the Council manages its records

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2. Publication Scheme

The Council has adopted the **Model Publication Scheme for Local Councils** issued by the Information Commissioner's Office.

Information is made available proactively wherever possible via the Council's website, or on request.

Classes of Information

The Council publishes information in the following standard classes:

1. **Who we are and what we do**
   (e.g. councillor details, contact information, committees)
2. **What we spend and how we spend it**
   (e.g. budgets, accounts, audit reports)
3. **What our priorities are and how we are doing**
   (e.g. plans, reports, performance information)
4. **How we make decisions**
   (e.g. meeting agendas, minutes)
5. **Our policies and procedures**
   (e.g. standing orders, policies, procedures)
6. **Lists and registers**
   (e.g. asset register, register of interests)
7. **Services we offer**
   (e.g. allotments, community facilities)

Information will normally be available:

- On the Council's website
- By email request
- For inspection by appointment where necessary

3. Requests for Information

If information is not already published, it can be requested in writing (including email) to the Parish Clerk.

The Council will:

- Respond promptly and **within 20 working days**
- Provide information in the requested format where reasonably practicable

4. Exemptions

Some information may be withheld where permitted under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

When applying exemptions, the Council will:

- Identify the relevant legal exemption
- Apply the **public interest test** where required
- Explain the reasons for withholding information

Personal data will be handled in accordance with:

- UK General Data Protection Regulation
- Data Protection Act 2018

5. Charging Policy

The Council aims to provide information free of charge where possible.

Disbursement Costs

A reasonable charge may be made for:

- Photocopying
- Printing
- Postage

Appropriate Limit

Under the Act, the cost limit for parish councils is **£450** (equivalent to 18 hours of staff time).

- If the estimated cost is **below £450**, only disbursement costs will be charged
- If the estimated cost **exceeds £450**, the Council may:
    - Refuse the request, or
    - Charge the full cost of compliance

Where a charge applies, a **Fees Notice** will be issued. The request will not be processed until payment is received.

6. Complaints

If a requester is dissatisfied, they may request an **internal review**.

Requests for internal review should be submitted within **40 working days** of the response and will be considered by a person or body not involved in the original decision.

Following the internal review, if the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may refer the matter to the Information Commissioner's Office.

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7. Records Management Policy

The Council recognises that effective records management underpins compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and data protection legislation.

The Council will:

- Maintain records that are accurate and up to date
- Retain records only for as long as necessary
- Dispose of records securely and appropriately
- Preserve records of historical importance

Where appropriate, records may be deposited with the Norfolk Record Office.

8. Records Retention Schedule

Key

- **P** = Preserve permanently
- **R** = Review
- **D** = Destroy

Administration

Record	Action	Retention	Reason
Signed minutes	P	Indefinite	Archive
Agendas	P	Indefinite	Archive
Draft minutes	D	After approval	Administrative
Standing orders	P	Indefinite	Governance
Declarations of office	P	Indefinite	Legal
Contracts & leases	P	Indefinite	Legal/audit
Major tenders	R	12 years+	Limitation
Minor tenders	D	12 years	Limitation
Routine correspondence	D	As required	Admin

Finance

Record	Action	Retention	Reason
Accounts & returns	P	Indefinite	Audit
Bank statements	D	7 years	Audit
Invoices	D	7 years	VAT
Payroll records	D	12 years	Legal

Property

Record	Action	Retention	Reason
Asset register	P	Ongoing	Management
Title deeds	P	Indefinite	Legal
Maintenance records	R/D	7 years+	Management

Miscellaneous

Record	Action	Retention	Reason
Newsletters	D	5 years	Record
Photographs	R	As required	Archive

9. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure compliance with current legislation and guidance from the Information Commissioner's Office.

Burnham Market Parish Council

Data Protection & GDPR Policy

1. Introduction

Burnham Market Parish Council is committed to protecting personal data and complying with data protection law.

This policy explains how personal data is collected, used, stored, and protected in accordance with:

- UK General Data Protection Regulation
- Data Protection Act 2018

The Council is committed to the principles of:

- lawfulness, fairness, and transparency
- accountability
- data minimisation and security

(UK GDPR Article 5; Data Protection Act 2018)

2. Scope

This policy applies to all personal data processed by the Council, including data relating to:

- employees
- councillors
- volunteers
- contractors and suppliers
- tenants and service users
- members of the public

(UK GDPR Article 2 & Article 4 – definition of personal data processing)

3. Data Controller and Governance

3.1 Data Controller

The Council is the **data controller** under UK GDPR (Article 4(7)) and is responsible for determining how and why personal data is processed.

3.2 Data Handling Responsibilities

The Parish Clerk and authorised staff act under the authority of the Council and process personal data only on its instructions.

This reflects the requirement under UK GDPR Article 29 (processing under authority of the controller).

3.3 ICO Registration

The Council will maintain registration with the Information Commissioner's Office as required under the Data Protection Act 2018.

4. Data Protection Principles

The Council processes personal data in accordance with **UK GDPR Article 5**, ensuring that data is:

- processed lawfully, fairly, and transparently
- collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes
- adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary
- accurate and kept up to date
- retained only for as long as necessary
- processed securely

5. Types of Personal Data Processed

The Council may process:

- **Identity and contact data** (Article 4 UK GDPR)
- **Employment data** (payroll, recruitment records)
- **Service-related correspondence**
- **Special category data** (Article 9 UK GDPR), such as:
  - health information
  - ethnicity
  - religious beliefs

Special category data is only processed where a lawful condition under Article 9 applies and where strictly necessary.

6. Legal Basis for Processing

Under UK GDPR Article 6, the Council processes personal data under one or more of the following lawful bases:

- consent (where appropriate and freely given)
- contract performance
- legal obligation
- public task / official authority

Where special category data is processed, additional conditions under Article 9 UK GDPR and Schedule 1 of the Data Protection Act 2018 will apply.

7. Data Sharing

Personal data may be shared only where necessary with:

- auditors
- legal advisers
- IT and service providers
- government or regulatory bodies

All third parties must comply with UK GDPR requirements (Articles 28–30).

8. Data Security

In accordance with UK GDPR Article 32, the Council implements appropriate technical and organisational measures including:

- controlled access to systems
- password protection
- secure storage of records
- staff training on data protection
- monitoring and risk management

9. Data Retention and Disposal

Under UK GDPR Article 5(1)(e), personal data is retained only for as long as necessary.

Retention periods are set out in the Council's Records Management Policy.

Data is securely deleted or archived in accordance with legal and operational requirements.

10. Personal Data Breaches

In accordance with UK GDPR Articles 33 and 34:

- The Council will assess all personal data breaches without undue delay
- Where required, the Council will notify the Information Commissioner's Office within 72 hours
- Where there is a high risk to individuals, affected individuals will also be informed

11. Individual Rights

Under UK GDPR Articles 12–22, individuals have the right to:

- be informed
- access their data (Subject Access Request)
- rectification of inaccurate data
- erasure ("right to be forgotten", subject to legal limits)

- restriction of processing
- data portability (where applicable)
- object to processing
- not be subject to automated decision-making

Requests will be responded to within **one calendar month**, in accordance with Article 12 UK GDPR.

Requests may be refused or limited only where legally justified under UK GDPR or the Data Protection Act 2018.

12. Children’s Data

Where the Council processes children’s data:

- the UK digital consent age is **13 years** (UK GDPR Article 8)
- where required, verifiable parental consent will be obtained
- processing will always consider safeguarding and best interests of the child

13. Complaints and Supervisory Authority

Individuals may first contact the Council to resolve any concerns.

If unresolved, complaints may be escalated to the:
Information Commissioner's Office

(contact details as published on the ICO website)

14. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure continued compliance with:

- UK General Data Protection Regulation
- Data Protection Act 2018
- guidance issued by the Information Commissioner's Office

Burnham Market Parish Council

IT Usage and Security Policy for Staff and Council Members

Adopted: 09/12/24
Review: Biannually
Last reviewed: [insert date]

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all staff and council members use Parish Council IT equipment responsibly and safely. This includes using it for Council-related tasks, protecting against viruses and cyber threats, complying with security measures, and managing sensitive information appropriately.

This policy aims to protect both the Parish Council's IT assets and the security of the data and systems in use.

Appropriate Use of IT Equipment

- **Council Equipment:** All IT equipment, including computers, tablets, smartphones, and peripherals (such as printers and scanners), provided by the Parish Council is for official Council business only.
- **Usage Restrictions:** Personal use of Council IT equipment should be kept to an absolute minimum. Council devices should not be used for personal emails, social media, or accessing non-work-related websites.
- **Respect for Equipment:** All users should take reasonable care to avoid damaging equipment. Devices should not be dropped, exposed to water, or subject to physical stress.

Internet and Network Access

- **Safe Browsing:** Internet use should be limited to Council-related activities. Users should avoid accessing inappropriate or non-work-related sites.
- **Protection Against Cyber Threats:**
  - Only approved software may be installed.
  - Devices must have up-to-date antivirus protection with automatic scanning enabled.
  - Public Wi-Fi should be avoided when accessing Council systems unless appropriately secured (e.g. via VPN or equivalent protection).
  - Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) must be used where available for Council systems, email, and shared files.

Security Measures

- **Password Protection:** Strong, unique passwords or passphrases must be used for all accounts and devices.
- **Locking Devices:** Devices must be locked or logged off when unattended.
- **Data Protection:** Sensitive Council data should be protected using appropriate security measures, including encryption where systems allow and where appropriate to the level of sensitivity.
- **Downloads and Storage:** Sensitive information should not be stored locally on devices unless necessary for Council business and protected appropriately.
- **Backups:** Council data is stored in secure cloud systems (e.g. OneDrive or equivalent). Regular backups are undertaken to ensure data integrity and recovery capability.

Handling Lost or Stolen Equipment

In the event of loss or theft of a Council device, the following steps must be taken immediately:

1. Report to the Parish Clerk immediately.
2. The Clerk will arrange for access to Council systems (email, shared drives, cloud services) to be revoked or reset.
3. Where applicable, passwords will be reset and access disabled to prevent unauthorised use.
4. If theft is suspected, the incident will be reported to the police.
5. Replacement equipment will be arranged in accordance with Council asset procedures.

Data Breach Reporting (UK GDPR Compliance)

Where a personal data breach occurs or is suspected, it must be reported immediately to the Parish Clerk.

The Clerk will assess the breach and determine whether it is reportable to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

Where required under **UK GDPR Article 33**, reportable breaches will be notified to the ICO **within 72 hours of the Council becoming aware of the breach**, unless the breach is unlikely to result in a risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.

Where the risk is high, affected individuals will also be notified in accordance with **UK GDPR Article 34**.

General Responsibilities

- All users are responsible for complying with this policy.
- Any security incidents or suspicious activity must be reported immediately to the Parish Clerk.
- Staff and councillors may be required to undertake periodic training on IT security and safe use of systems.

Consequences of Misuse

Failure to comply with this policy may result in restricted access to Council IT systems and/or disciplinary action depending on the severity of the breach.

Adopted May 2026
Review annually

Burnham Market Parish Council – Communications Policy

1. Purpose

This policy sets out how Burnham Market Parish Council manages communications to ensure they are lawful, accurate, consistent, and in line with Council decisions.

It applies to all Councillors, staff, and anyone acting on behalf of the Council.

2. Legal Framework

This policy operates in accordance with:

- Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI – access to recorded information held by the Council)
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (personal data handling and privacy)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Local Government Act 1972 (including Schedule 12A – exempt information)
- Council Standing Orders
- Members' Code of Conduct
- ICO guidance issued by the Information Commissioner's Office

3. General Principles

The Council will ensure that:

- communications reflect formally agreed Council decisions
- information provided is accurate, clear, and not misleading
- personal opinions are not presented as Council policy
- decisions are made at properly convened Council meetings unless lawfully delegated
- transparency is maintained while respecting lawful confidentiality

Information held by the Council may be subject to disclosure under the FOI Act, subject to statutory exemptions.

4. Lawful Decision-Making and Meetings

Council decisions must be made:

- at properly convened Council meetings, or
- by authorised delegation under Standing Orders

Where matters are considered confidential, they may be discussed in closed session under **Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972**.

GDPR does not determine whether meetings are open or closed; it governs how personal data is handled if disclosed.

5. Official Communications

- Only Council-approved decisions may be communicated as Council policy
- The Clerk is the principal officer responsible for official communications
- The Chair (or Vice-Chair if delegated) may also act as spokesperson
- Individuals must not represent personal views as Council decisions

When acting officially, communications must clearly state authority (e.g. "on behalf of the Council").

6. Councillor and Staff Conduct in Communication

Councillors and staff must:

- ensure communications do not misrepresent Council decisions
- avoid using Council titles to imply authority in personal communications
- clearly distinguish between personal views and Council positions

Councillors remain free to express personal views, provided they do not misrepresent Council policy.

7. Internal Communications

Internal communications are used for administration and coordination only.

Key principles:

- internal discussion does not replace formal decision-making
- decisions must be made in Council meetings unless delegated
- working group discussions must be reported back to Council where relevant

Information recorded in internal communications may be disclosable under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 if held by or on behalf of the Council.

FOI applies to recorded information only; it does not regulate informal discussion in real time.

8. Communications with the Public

The Council will:

- respond to public enquiries in a timely and professional manner
- provide factual information based on Council decisions
- avoid speculation or personal opinion in official responses

Councillors engaging informally with the public must not:

- commit the Council to action
- misrepresent Council decisions
- make statements outside their delegated authority

The Council may choose not to respond to anonymous correspondence unless:

- there is a safeguarding concern
- it relates to a statutory request (e.g. FOI under the Freedom of Information Act 2000)
- or the Council determines it is appropriate to respond

9. Communications with the Media

- The Clerk is the primary media contact for the Council
- The Chair (or Vice-Chair if delegated) may also act as spokesperson
- All media statements must reflect Council-approved positions

Councillors or staff speaking in a personal capacity must:

- make clear they are not representing the Council
- not use their Council title in a way that implies authority

10. Written Communications (Email and Correspondence)

- Council business should normally be conducted using official Council email accounts
- Communications relating to Council business may be subject to disclosure under the FOI Act
- Personal email accounts should not normally be used for Council business
- All communications must comply with the Members' Code of Conduct
- Personal data must be handled in accordance with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018

11. Other Communication Channels

Telephone, messaging apps, and online platforms may be used for operational matters.

However:

- recorded communications may be disclosable under FOI if held by the Council
- substantive decisions must not be made outside formal meetings unless delegated
- informal channels must not be used to circumvent decision-making procedures

12. Social Media and Online Communication

- The Clerk (or authorised officer) manages official Council online accounts
- Posts will be factual and relate to Council business
- Inappropriate or defamatory content may be moderated or removed

Councillors:

- may maintain personal accounts
- must not imply they are speaking for the Council unless authorised
- must avoid using Council titles in a misleading way online

13. Persistent or Vexatious Communications

The Council may apply proportionate measures where communication becomes:

- abusive
- excessive
- or unreasonable in nature

Before any restriction is applied, the Council will:

- assess the communication history
- attempt informal resolution where appropriate
- ensure decisions are evidence-based and proportionate

Where restrictions are applied:

- the individual will be informed in writing
- reasons will be provided
- a review mechanism will be offered

14. Promotions, Advertising and Signage

The Council may permit promotion of local events at its discretion.

- Permission is required for advertising on Council land
- Approval is normally limited to local community events
- Signage may be displayed up to 5 days before an event
- All signage must be removed within 24 hours after the event
- Unauthorised signage may be removed by the Council

15. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure compliance with:

- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- UK General Data Protection Regulation
- Local Government Act 1972
- ICO guidance issued by the Information Commissioner's Office

Burnham Market Parish Council – Co-option Policy

1. Introduction

This policy sets out the procedure for co-option to fill casual vacancies on Burnham Market Parish Council.

Co-option is permitted under the Local Government Act 1972 and is used where a casual vacancy has not been filled by election.

The Council will ensure that all applicants are treated fairly, consistently, and transparently.

In accordance with National Association of Local Councils guidance, co-option must be:

- open
- fair
- transparent
- free from bias

2. Discretion of the Council

The Council is not obliged to fill a vacancy by co-option.

Even where applications are received, the Council:

- may choose not to co-opt
- is not required to appoint any applicant
- retains full discretion under s.89 of the Local Government Act 1972

3. Encouraging Applications

When a vacancy arises, the Council will:

- publicise the vacancy on noticeboards and the Council website
- invite expressions of interest
- encourage applications from eligible persons

Councillors and residents may lawfully suggest that individuals consider applying.

Applicants must be eligible to serve as a parish councillor under statutory requirements.

4. Eligibility

A person is eligible for co-option if they meet at least one statutory qualification under the Local Government Act 1972, including:

- being an elector for the parish, or
- having lived or worked in the parish, or
- having occupied land or premises in the parish, or
- living within three miles of the parish boundary (as applicable under electoral law)

A person is disqualified if they:

- hold a paid office under the Council
- are subject to bankruptcy restrictions
- have been disqualified under electoral or criminal law provisions
- are otherwise disqualified under relevant legislation

5. Application Process

When expressions of interest are received:

5.1 Application Form

Applicants will complete a Councillor Application and Eligibility Form.

5.2 Review of Eligibility

The Clerk will review applications to confirm eligibility criteria are met.

5.3 Circulation of Information

Eligible applications will be circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting.

Personal data will be handled in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation and ICO principles of data minimisation and confidentiality.

6. Interview and Meeting Process

6.1 Informal Meeting (optional)

The Council may hold an informal session to allow applicants to:

- introduce themselves
- ask questions about the role
- understand Council responsibilities

This session is **not part of the formal decision-making process**.

No decisions will be made in this session.

6.2 Formal Co-option Decision (public meeting)

The decision to co-opt will be made only at a properly convened Council meeting held in public.

At that meeting:

- applicants may be invited to speak
- Councillors may ask questions
- the public may be present unless excluded under lawful exemptions

The Council will then proceed to vote.

7. Decision-Making

- Only Councillors present at the meeting may vote
- Each vacancy requires a separate vote
- A candidate must be proposed and seconded before voting

If there are more candidates than vacancies:

- voting will continue until a majority is reached

If candidates exceed vacancies:

- normal Council voting procedures apply

The Council retains full discretion not to appoint any candidate.

8. Interests and Fairness

Councillors must declare any interest where:

- a candidate is a relative
- there is a close personal connection
- bias may reasonably be perceived

Where such an interest exists, the Councillor must not take part in discussion or voting.

9. Outcome of Co-option

Successful candidates:

- become Councillors with immediate effect
- must sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office
- must complete a Register of Interests form within statutory timescales
- are subject to the Members’ Code of Conduct

Their term continues until the next ordinary local elections.

10. Transparency and Confidentiality

The Council will ensure:

- decision-making is transparent
- all voting occurs in public session
- applicant information is handled securely

Personal data submitted by applicants will be processed in accordance with:

- UK General Data Protection Regulation
- Information Commissioner's Office guidance

11. Publication and Review

This policy will be:

- reviewed periodically
- updated in line with changes to legislation or guidance
- applied consistently to all co-option processes

Adopted : May 2025
Review Annually Last reviewed: May 2026 : no changes

BURNHAM MARKET PARISH COUNCIL EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

Our commitment

The council is committed to providing equal opportunities for the public in accessing services and in employment and to avoid unlawful discrimination.

This policy is intended to assist the council to put this commitment into practice. Compliancewith this policy should also ensure that employees do not commit unlawful acts of discrimination.

Striving to ensure that the work environment is free of harassment and bullying and thateveryone is treated with dignity and respect is an important aspect of ensuring equal opportunities in employment.

The law

It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment because of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour,nationality, caste and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, or because someone is married or in a civil partnership. These are known as "protected characteristics".

Discrimination after employment may also be unlawful, e.g. refusing to give a reference for areason related to one of the protected characteristics.

The council will not discriminate against or harass a member of the public in the provision ofservices or goods. It is unlawful to fail to make reasonable adjustments to overcome barriersto using services caused by disability. The duty to make reasonable adjustments includes the removal, adaptation or alteration of physical features, if the physical features make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to make use of services. In addition,service providers have an obligation to think ahead and address any barriers that may impede disabled people from accessing a service.

Types of unlawful discrimination

<u>Direct discrimination</u> is where a person is treated less favourably than another because of aprotected characteristic.

In limited circumstances, employers can directly discriminate against an individual for a reason related to any of the protected characteristics where there is an occupational requirement. The occupational requirement must be crucial to the post and a proportionatemeans of achieving a legitimate aim.

<u>Indirect discrimination</u> is where a provision, criterion or practice is applied that is discriminatory in relation to individuals who have a relevant protected characteristic such that it would be to the detriment of people who share that protected

characteristic compared with people who do not, and it cannot be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving alegitimate aim.

Harassment is where there is unwanted conduct, related to one of the protected characteristics (other than marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity) thathas the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity; or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It does not matter whether or not this effectwas intended by the person responsible for the conduct.

Associative discrimination is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassedfor association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.

Perceptive discrimination is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassedbased on a perception that he/she has a particular protected characteristic when he/she does not, in fact, have that protected characteristic.

Third-party harassment occurs where an employee is harassed and the harassment isrelated to a protected characteristic, by third parties.

Victimisation occurs where an employee is subjected to a detriment, such as being denied atraining opportunity or a promotion because he/she made or supported a complaint or raiseda grievance under the Equality Act 2010, or because he/she is suspected of doing so.
However, an employee is not protected from victimisation if he/she acted maliciously ormade or supported an untrue complaint.

Failure to make reasonable adjustments is where a physical feature or a provision, criterionor practice puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared with someone who does not have that protected characteristic and the employer has failed to make reasonable adjustments to enable the disabled person to overcome the disadvantage.

Equal opportunities accessing Council Services

Burnham Market Parish Council aims to ensure that its services and activities meet the varied needs and expectations of the local people and thateveryone has equal access to all services regardless of age, gender, sex andsexual orientation, disability, marital status, ethnicity, religious belief or any other individual characteristics which may limit a person's opportunity in life.

The Council will endeavour to

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimization

- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a characteristicand those who do not

Foster good relations between people who share a characteristic and thosewho do not

In order to promote equality of access to services the Council will aim to ensure the following:

- The services provided are in response to the needs of the whole community

- The Council will monitor views and take into account parishioner views

- The information on services and activities is widely available to ensuremaximum awareness of provisions

- That in advertising and publicity the Council will be presented as an authoritycommitted to promoting equality of access to employment and services

- That staff will be consulted, and their contribution valued in the informationand promotion of equality of access to Council services

That staff will be trained and supported in carrying out their duties in line withimplementing equal opportunities policies

Monitoring

The council will monitor the service delivery onthe basis of age, gender, sex and sexual orientation, disability, marital status, ethnicity, religious belief or any other individual characteristics to ensure that they actfairly and without discrimination.

Equal opportunities in employment

The council will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy

Employment & Recruitment

Person and job specifications will be limited to those
requirements that are necessary for theeffective performance of the job. Candidates for employment or promotion will be assessed objectively against the requirements for the job, taking account of any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with a disability. Disability and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions except where necessary

Adopted : May 2025
Review Annually Last reviewed: May 2026 : no changes

Working practices

The council will consider any possible indirectly discriminatory effect of its standard working practices, including the number of hours to be worked, the times at which these are to be worked and the place at which work is to be done, when considering requests for variations to these standard working practices and will refuse such requests only if the council considers it has good reasons, unrelated to any protected characteristic, for doing so. The council will comply with its obligations in relation to statutory requests for contract variations.The council will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability.

Equal opportunities monitoring

The council will monitor the ethnic, gender and age composition of the existing workforce and of applicants for jobs (including promotion), and the number of people with disabilitieswithin these groups, and will consider and take any appropriate action to address any problems that may be identified as a result of the monitoring process.

The council treats personal data collected for reviewing equality and diversity in accordancewith the data protection policy. Information about how data is used and the basis for processing is provided in the council's privacy notices.

Dignity at work

The council has a separate policies concerning issues of bullying and harassment on any ground, and how complaints of this type will be dealt with.

People not employed by the council

The council will not discriminate unlawfully against those using or seeking to use theservices provided by the council.
You should report any bullying or harassment by suppliers, visitors or others to the council who will take appropriate action

Training

The council will raise awareness of equal opportunities to those likely to be involved on recruiotment or other decision making where equal opportunities issues rae likely to arise. The council wil raise awareness of all staff engaged to work at the council to help them, understand their rights and responsibilities under the dignity at work policy and what they can do to help create a working enviroenmnenbt free of bullying and harassment

Your responsibilities

Every employee is required to assist the council to meet its commitment to provide equal opportunities in employment and avoid unlawful discrimination. Employees can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the council for any act of unlawful discrimination.Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence.

Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees or customersare disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the council's disciplinary procedure.
Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct andcould lead to dismissal without notice.

Grievances

If you consider that you may have been unlawfully discriminated against, you should use thecouncil's grievance procedure to make a complaint. If your complaint involves bullying or harassment, the grievance procedure is modified as set out in the dignity at work policy.

The council will take any complaint seriously and will seek to resolve any grievance that itupholds. You will not be penalised for raising a grievance, even if your grievance is not upheld, unless your complaint is both untrue and made in bad faith.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be monitored periodically by the council to judge its effectiveness and will be updated in accordance with changes in the law. [In particular, the council will monitor the ethnic and gender composition of the existing workforce and of applicants for jobs (including promotion), and the number of people with disabilities within these groups, and will review itsequal opportunities policy in accordance with the results shown by the monitoring. If changesare required, the council will implement them.

Information provided by job applicants and employees for monitoring purposes will be usedonly for these purposes and will be dealt with in accordance with relevant data protection legislation.]
This is a non-contractual procedure which will be reviewed from time to time

Burnham Market Parish Council

Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) Pensions Policy

Adopted: May 2026
Review: Every 3 years, or sooner if legislation changes
Last reviewed: May 2026

1. Policy Statement

Burnham Market Parish Council participates in the **Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)** as administered by the relevant administering authority (Norfolk Pension Fund or successor body).

The Council is committed to complying with the **Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 (as amended)**and all associated pensions legislation, including relevant provisions of the **Pensions Act 2008**.

This policy sets out:

- how the LGPS is applied within the Council
- the Council's responsibilities as an employer
- the exercise of discretionary powers under LGPS regulations, including **Regulation 60**

2. Scheme Membership

Eligible employees are automatically enrolled into the LGPS in accordance with statutory auto-enrolment requirements unless they opt out in accordance with legislation.

Membership and benefits are governed by the LGPS Regulations and administered by the Fund administering authority.

3. Contributions

Employee and employer contribution rates are set in accordance with the LGPS Regulations and actuarial valuation of the fund.

- Employee contributions are deducted from salary in accordance with national LGPS banding.
- Employer contributions are set by the Fund Actuary and paid by the Council.

The Council has no discretion over contribution rates except where explicitly permitted under LGPS regulations.

4. Employer Responsibilities

The Council, as an LGPS employer, is responsible for:

- enrolling eligible employees into the LGPS
- making employer contributions as determined by the pension fund actuary
- administering pension-related employment data accurately and promptly
- complying with all LGPS regulatory requirements
- ensuring staff are informed of pension rights

Operational administration may be carried out by the Clerk or appointed officer, but all statutory employer decisions rest with the Council.

5. LGPS Employer Discretions (Regulation 60 Policy)

In accordance with **Regulation 60 of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 (as amended)**, the Council is required to prepare, maintain, publish, and review a written policy statement on the exercise of its discretionary powers.

The Council has considered all discretionary powers available to it and confirms the following:

5.1 Discretions the Council may exercise

The Council may consider exercising the following discretions on a case-by-case basis:

- granting additional pension (LGPS Regulation 31)
- flexible retirement (LGPS Regulation 30(6))
- waiving actuarial reductions in whole or part (LGPS Regulation 30(8))
- awarding additional pension contributions (LGPS Regulation 16)
- considering employer consent decisions relating to early release of benefits
- decisions relating to forfeiture of pension rights (LGPS Regulations 91–93)
- appointment of an adjudicator under the Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (IDRP)

5.2 Council Policy on Exercise of Discretions

The Council's policy is:

- All discretions will be considered by Full Council or a delegated Staffing Committee where formally authorised
- Each case will be considered on its individual merits
- Decisions will take account of:
  - affordability
  - actuarial cost to the Council
  - legal obligations
  - fairness and consistency
- The Council is not obliged to exercise any discretion in any particular case

5.3 Non-Exercise of Certain Discretions

The Council confirms it does not routinely adopt blanket enhancement of pension benefits and will not exercise discretions unless formally agreed in writing by resolution.

5.4 Review Requirement (Regulation 60 Compliance)

This policy will be:

- reviewed at least every **three years**
- reviewed sooner if there are changes in LGPS regulations or Council structure
- published and provided to the administering authority upon request

6. Retirement and Flexible Retirement

Requests for flexible retirement or early retirement will be considered in accordance with LGPS Regulations and Council policy.

Approval is discretionary and subject to:

- financial affordability
- service delivery requirements
- actuarial costs to the Council

7. Dispute Resolution

Internal disputes relating to LGPS decisions will be handled through the LGPS **Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (IDRP)** as required under the LGPS Regulations.

Where required, the Council will appoint a decision-maker in accordance with the IDRP framework.

8. Policy Governance

This policy is approved by Full Council and forms part of the Council's governance framework.

It will be made available to:

- employees
- pension fund administrators
- auditors upon request

9. Legislative Framework

This policy is prepared in accordance with:

- Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 (as amended), including Regulation 60
- Pensions Act 2008
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Public Service Pensions Act 2013

Norfolk Pension Fund

April 2026

Employer Briefing

LGPS (Miscellaneous Amendments) (Member Benefits) Regulations 2026: Implementing Access and Fairness proposals – phase one.

LGPS Changes to Unpaid Leave & Family Leave

Supporting Fairness and Reducing the Gender Pensions Gap

Effective from 1 April 2026

The Government has introduced changes to the LGPS rules that are designed to reduce the impact that unpaid leave and caring responsibilities can have on pension outcomes, particularly for women. This briefing explains **what employers need to do** and **what will change in practice**.

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1. Authorised Unpaid Leave – Less Than 15 Days

What's changing

From **1 April 2026**, LGPS pension contributions are **compulsory** during periods of authorised unpaid leave lasting **less than 15 calendar days** (including additional annual leave purchased) but (excluding strike action).

What employers must do

- **Deduct employer and member pension contributions** on *lost pensionable pay*.
- Calculate lost pensionable pay using the employee's **contractual ("normal") pay**, not Assumed Pensionable Pay (APP).
- Ensure payroll systems:
    - Do **not reduce pensionable pay** for these short unpaid absences.
    - Can make retrospective adjustments if the length of absence changes.
- Ensure correct reporting of pay and contributions to the administering authority (including separate reporting for 50/50 section members).

✅ Employees will **no longer need to buy back pension** for short unpaid absences.

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2. Authorised Unpaid Leave – 15 Days or More (QAPAs)

What's changing

For authorised unpaid leave of **15 days or more**, a new option is introduced: **Qualifying Additional Pension Arrangements (QAPAs)**.

Pension contributions are **not deducted automatically**, but employees can choose to buy back pension for the unpaid period.

What employers must do

- Continue to **stop pension deductions** during the unpaid period itself.
- **Inform employees** taking extended unpaid leave about their pension options, including:
  - Dates of unpaid leave.
  - Cost to the employee.
  - Employer contributions payable.
  - Amount of pension that could be bought.
- Decide whether to allow employees **more than one year** to elect to buy back pension (employer discretion).
- If a member makes an election to pay a QAPA, provide full details to the administering authority (costs, payment method, duration).

✅ **New Employer Action:** to undertake the calculation, deduction and notification of the Employee and Employer contributions from the Lost Pay.

✅ **New Employer Action:** use calculator developed by LGA to calculate QAPA. See example below.

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3. Child-Related Leave – Expanded Definition

What's changing

From **1 April 2026**, *child-related leave* now includes:

- Unpaid **additional maternity leave**
- Unpaid **additional adoption leave**
- Unpaid **shared parental leave**

During these periods, **Assumed Pensionable Pay (APP)** applies, meaning members will no longer have to buy back lost pension for any period of unpaid child-related leave.

What employers must do

- Apply APP during relevant unpaid periods:
  - Employer pays contributions on APP.
  - Employees pay contributions on any actual pay received.
- Report APP as pensionable pay to the administering authority.
- Manage LGPS **50/50 section** rules carefully:
  - Employees must move to the **main section** if they are unpaid at the start of the next pay period.
- Review existing maternity, adoption and shared parental leave cases that extend beyond 1 April 2026.
- **Notify affected employees** where their pension position changes.

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4. Paternity Leave & Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave

What's changing

Paternity leave rules have been updated to reflect new employment legislation, including new
bereaved partner's paternity leave of up to 52 weeks.

What employers must do

- Treat paternity leave (including bereaved partner's paternity leave) as **child-related leave** for pension purposes.
- Apply APP whether leave is paid or unpaid.
- Move employees from the 50/50 section to the main section where unpaid leave continues into the next pay period.

Why This Matters

These changes help:

- Protect pension build-up during short unpaid absences.
- Reduce pension disadvantages linked to child-related and caring responsibilities.
- Improve long-term pension equality across the LGPS.

Accurate payroll processing and clear communication with employees are essential to achieving these outcomes.

Employer Checklist

✓ Update payroll systems for unpaid leave rules

✓ Brief HR and managers who approve leave

✓ Review annual leave purchase arrangements

✓ Update employee communications

✓ Coordinate payroll, HR and pensions processes

✓ Notify NPF of QAPA using form within QAPA calculator and i-Connect

✓ Report Child-Related Leave APP via i-Connect

✓ See Preview example of QAPA calculator

QAPA Example

Stage 1 – Input member data, 'Lost' pay and contribution rates:

Authorised unpaid leave - inputs

Employee Name	Joe Smith		
NINo	XX123456X		
Pay ref	123456		
Other ref			
Employer	Admin Authority		
Member paid	monthly	Pay periods per year	12
Main or 50/50?	Main section	Accrual rate	49

Unpaid absence start date	01/04/2026
End date	23/05/2026

			Contribution rate for period			
From	To	'Lost' Pay	Member	Employer	Member cost	Employer cost
01/04/2026	23/05/2026	£1,529.44	5.50%	15.50%	£84.12	£237.06

This will populate the totals and the contributions required:

	Totals	**£1,529.44**		**£84.12**	**£237.06**
	'Lost' pension	**£31.21**			

Regular contributions			**Member**	**Employer**
Number of years	1	Contribution due per month	**£7.01**	**£19.76**
Number of years	2	Contribution due per month	**£3.51**	**£9.88**
Number of years	3	Contribution due per month	**£2.34**	**£6.59**
Number of years	4	Contribution due per month	**£1.75**	**£4.94**

For a long authorised absence, the additional contributions can be paid over a longer period
Amend the figure in Column B to find the cost per pay period for a longer repayment period

The contract must end before the member's Normal Pension Age in the LGPS. This is the same as their State Pension Age
For older members, check the State Pension Age timetable

Stage 2 – Members should be given the option to pay the contributions via lump sum or via a regular contribution in whole years. There are 'tabs' on the QAPA calculator which contain the option form that the member should complete – either 'Member lump sum only' or 'Member options'. You should complete your return details email or address and the deadline for completion.

You may choose whether to use the lump sum only option, depending on the value of the contributions the member would be required to pay.

Member lump sum only:

Unpaid leave - LGPS member lump sum option

Employee Name	Joe Smith	**Pay ref**	123456
NINo	XX123456X	**Other ref**	0

Authorised unpaid leave from: 01/04/2026 To: 23/05/2026

Extra pension contributions to cover the unpaid period **£84.12**

Extra yearly pension if you pay this optional cost **£31.21**

Please complete the 'Your decision' section below to let us know if you would like to pay these optional contributions. Return the completed form to:
Employer to enter return address or email address

You must return this form by **23/05/2027**

Your decision

Please read the 'Unpaid leave - notes for LGPS members' before completing this form.
Then sign and date Option 1 or 2 below to let us know your decision.

Option 1: I would like to pay optional pension contributions to cover the unpaid period of leave shown above
I understand that contributions of **£84.12**
will be deducted from my pay in the first available pay period after I return this form
I understand that my employer will share this information with the pension fund on my behalf

Signed ____________________ **Date** ____________

Option 2: I do not wish to pay optional pension contributions to cover the unpaid period of leave shown above

Signed ____________________ **Date** ____________

Member options:

Unpaid leave - LGPS member options

Employee Name	Joe Smith	**Pay ref**	123456
NINo	XX123456X	**Other ref**	0

Authorised unpaid leave from: 01/04/2026 To: 23/05/2026

Extra pension contributions to cover the unpaid period **£84.12**

Extra yearly pension if you pay this optional cost **£31.21**

Please complete the 'Your decision' section below to let us know if you would like to pay these optional contributions. Return the completed form to:

Employer to enter relevant address or email address

You must return this form by **23/05/2027**

Your decision

Please read the 'Unpaid leave - notes for LGPS members' before making your decision.
You can pay by lump sum or regular contributions each pay period.
Sign and date Option 1, 2 or 3 below to let us know your decision.

Option 1: I would like to pay optional pension contributions to cover the unpaid period of leave shown above **by lump sum**. I understand that contributions of **£84.12** will be deducted from my pay in the first available pay period after I return this form.
I understand that my employer will share this information with the pension fund on my behalf.

Signed ____________________ **Date** __________

Option 2: I would like to pay optional pension contributions to cover the unpaid period shown above by **regular contributions** over 1 year

I understand that contributions of £7.01 will be deducted monthly

For each year I pay these additional contributions, I will buy extra yearly pension of £31.21

I understand the extra contributions will start from the first pay period after I return this form

I understand that my employer will share this information with the pension fund on my behalf.

Signed ____________________ **Date** __________

Option 3: I do not wish to pay optional pension contributions to cover the unpaid period of leave shown above

Signed ____________________ **Date** __________

Stage 3 – Confirmation of member decision and deductions made.

Complete the Info for LGPS Fund to confirm the period of unpaid leave the type of contributions and values of lost pay and contributions paid and contact details.

N.B. Lump Sum data and Regular contribution data completed for example but would be either/or for actual cases

Unpaid leave - information for LGPS pension fund

Employer	Admin Authority	**NINo**	XX123456X
Employee Name	Joe Smith	**Pay ref**	123456
		Other ref	0

The member named above took a period of authorised unpaid leave:
From: **01/04/2026** To: **23/05/2026**

The member has elected to pay into a QAPA to cover the unpaid period
The additional contributions will be paid by **Regular contributions**

Pay 'lost' in the unpaid period		**£1,529.44**
Pension 'lost' in this period, based on membership of the	Main section	**£31.21**
Total member pension contributions payable		**£84.12**
Total employer pension contributions payable		**£237.06**

Lump sum contribution

The member and employer contributions shown above will be deducted in Jun-26
If paying by lump sum, input the pay period when the lump sums will be deducted

Regular contributions

The member and employer contributions will be collected through regular contributions
Complete the shaded areas below if paying by regular contributions

Additional contributions start date	**01/06/2026**	
Additional contributions end date	**31/05/2027**	
Length of arrangement	**1**	year
Total extra pension being purchased	**£31.21**	
Extra pension purchased per year	**£31.21**	
The member is paid	**monthly**	
Member contributions per pay period	**£7.01**	
Employer contributions per pay period	**£19.76**	

Additional information

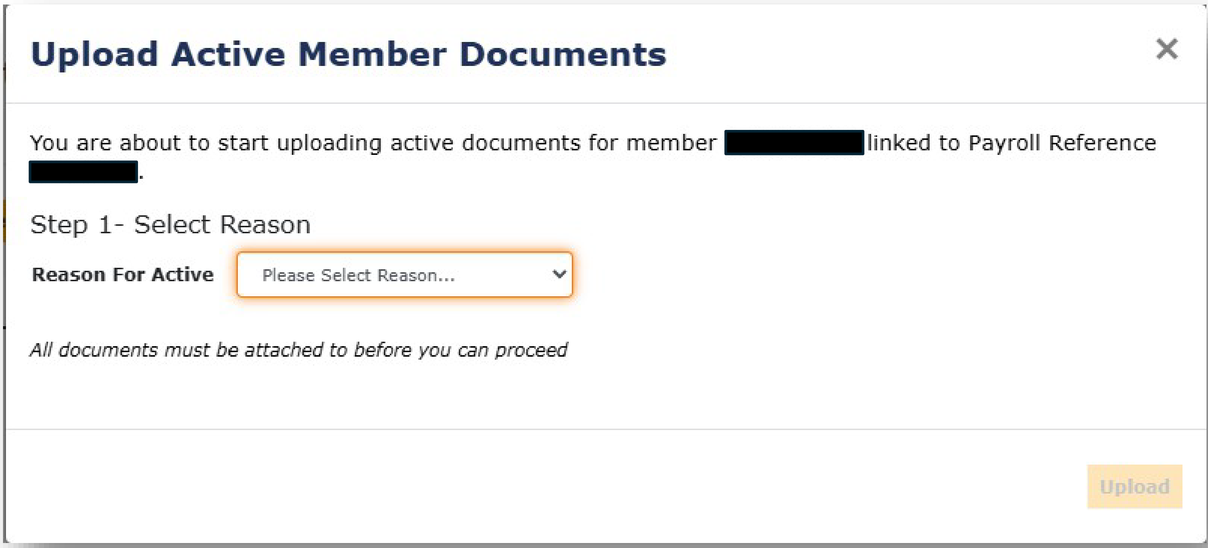
Contact information for queries

If you have any questions about this QAPA, please contact:

Name	Employer Contact
Phone	Employer Phone
Email	Employer email

Stage 4 – Upload of form

Upload the option and LGPS info to the member record via i-Connect. In the reason choose 'Notification of Unpaid Leave – Form SR47B' – NB. Form SR47B not required.



Stage 5 – Submission of data via i-Connect File Upload or Online Return

When member returns from authorised unpaid leave – confirm date and reason in following i-Connect data submission

When member elects to pay lump sum or Regular contributions – increase the value of the Period and Cumulative Pensionable Pay and Employee and Employer Contributions (whether by lump sum or by regular contributions).

Contact us

If you have any questions or need help regarding LGPS changes to unpaid leave and family leave, please contact pensions.technical@norfolk.gov.uk