

<b>ROCHFORD PARISH COUNCIL</b>
<b>REPORT</b>

<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	13 <sup>th</sup> May 2026
<b>SUBJECT</b>	Full Council and Standing Committee Meeting Schedule for 2026/2027
<b>AUTHOR</b>	Emma Terris – Clerk and RFO
<b>CIRCULATION</b>	Full Council

Proposed meeting schedule for Full Council and Standing Committee meetings for 2026/2027

Timing to be discussed and confirmed.

All meetings to be held at The Parish Rooms, Rochford (unless otherwise notified)

<b>Month</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
<b>May 2026</b>	Wednesday, 13 <sup>th</sup>	Full Council
	Thursday, 28 <sup>th</sup>	Annual Parish Meeting (WI Hall)
<b>June 2026</b>		Community Projects
		General Purposes
		Finance Committee
	Wednesday, 24 <sup>th</sup>	Full Council
<b>July 2026</b>		Community Projects
		General Purposes
		Finance Committee
	Wednesday, 29 <sup>th</sup>	Full Council
<b>August 2026</b>	<b>No Meetings</b>	
<b>September 2026</b>		Community Projects
		General Purposes
		Finance Committee
	Wednesday, 30 <sup>th</sup>	Full Council
<b>October 2026</b>		Community Projects
		General Purposes
		Finance Committee
	Wednesday, 29 <sup>th</sup>	Full Council
<b>November 2026</b>		Community Projects
		General Purposes
		Finance Committee

	Wednesday, 25 <sup>th</sup>	Full Council
<b>December 2026</b>	<b>No Meetings</b>	
<b>January 2027</b>		Community Projects
		General Purposes
		Finance Committee
	Wednesday, 27 <sup>th</sup>	Full Council
<b>February 2027</b>		Community Projects
		General Purposes
		Finance Committee
	Wednesday, 24 <sup>th</sup>	Full Council
<b>March 2027</b>		Community Projects
		General Purposes
		Finance Committee
	Wednesday, 24 <sup>th</sup>	Full Council
<b>March 2027</b>		Community Projects
		General Purposes
		Finance Committee
	Wednesday, 24 <sup>th</sup>	Full Council
<b>April 2027</b>		Community Projects
		General Purposes
		Finance Committee
	Wednesday, 24 <sup>th</sup>	Full Council
<b>May 2027</b>	Wednesday, 12 <sup>th</sup>	Full Council
	Thursday, 27 <sup>th</sup>	Annual Parish Meeting (venue tbc)

<b>ROCHFORD PARISH COUNCIL</b>
<b>REPORT</b>

<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	13 <sup>th</sup> May 2026
<b>SUBJECT</b>	Annual Review of Council's Financial Administration
<b>AUTHOR</b>	Emma Terris – Clerk and RFO
<b>CIRCULATION</b>	Full Council

**12. Annual Review of Council's Financial Administration**

- 12.1 To review and approve the list of bank account signatories for the 2026/2027 municipal year.**

**Unity Trust Bank – Current and Savings Account**

***View the bank accounts and submit payments for authorisation***

Emma Terris – Clerk and RFO

***View the bank accounts and authorise payments***

Cllr J Edmunds

Cllr P Nash

Cllr A Williams

**Metro Bank – Imprest and Instant Access Account**

***View the bank accounts and submit payments for authorisation***

Emma Terris – Clerk and RFO

***View the bank accounts and authorise payments***

Cllr P Nash

Cllr A Williams

**CCLA Bank**

***View the bank accounts and submit payments for authorisation***

Emma Terris – Clerk and RFO

***View the bank accounts and authorise payments***

Cllr J Edmunds

Cllr A Williams

**12.2 To receive and approve the standing orders and direct debit payments for the 2026/2027 municipal year**

<b>Name of Provider</b>	<b>Description</b>
Smart Pensions	Pension Provider
HMRC	PAYE and NI Contributions
Sky Business	Telephone and Broadband
N Power	Electric and Gas
SSE Energy	Electric and Gas
Fuel Card Service BP	Fuel Card
Scribe Accounts	Accounting Software
Cloudy IT	IT
Penninsula	HR and H&S Support
Rochford District Council	Business Rates

**12.3 To agree salary and councillor expenses can be paid by BACS on the 21<sup>st</sup> of each month**

Salaries and allowances are currently paid from the Unity Trust Current Account via BACS on the 21<sup>st</sup> of each month.

**12.4 To agree that Delegated Authority is granted to the Clerk in line with Financial Regulations**

Financial regulations included within the pack.



# **ROCHFORD PARISH COUNCIL**

# **STANDING ORDERS 2026 (ENGLAND)**

<b>Date Approved by Full Council</b>	May 2026
<b>Date of Next Review</b>	May 2027

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## **INTRODUCTION**

**This is an update to Model Standing Orders 14 and 18.**

### **HOW TO USE MODEL STANDING ORDERS**

Standing orders are the written rules of a local council. Standing orders are essential to regulate the proceedings of a meeting. A council may also use standing orders to confirm or refer to various internal organisational and administrative arrangements. The standing orders of a council are not the same as the policies of a council but standing orders may refer to them.

Local councils operate within a wide statutory framework. NALC model standing orders incorporate and reference many statutory requirements to which councils are subject. It is not possible for the model standing orders to contain or reference all the statutory or legal requirements which apply to local councils. For example, it is not practical for model standing orders to document all obligations under data protection legislation. The statutory requirements to which a council is subject apply whether or not they are incorporated in a council's standing orders.

The model standing orders do not include model financial regulations. Financial regulations are standing orders to regulate and control the financial affairs and accounting procedures of a local council. The financial regulations, as opposed to the standing orders of a council, include most of the requirements relevant to the council's Responsible Financial Officer. Model financial regulations are available to councils in membership of NALC.

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 ( ) 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 for a meeting does not include the day on which the notice was issued or the day of the meeting unless the meeting is convened at shorter notice** OR [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 ( ) 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 (5) 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 shall raise their hand when requesting to speak and stand when speaking (except when a person has a disability or is likely to suffer discomfort). The chair of the meeting may at any time permit a person to be seated when speaking.
- j A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct their comments to the chair of the meeting.
- k 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.
- l **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.**
- m **A person present at a meeting may not provide an oral report or oral commentary about a meeting as it takes place without permission.**
- n **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.**
- o **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).**
- p **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.

- q **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.**
- r **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.*

- s **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.
- t 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.
- u **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.**
- v **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.*

- w **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.
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- x A meeting shall not exceed a period of 2 hours.

#### 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 three 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 7 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 2 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 five 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 three 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 the 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,

**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 ( ) days 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 Chair or

in their absence the Vice-Chair (if there is one) of the Council within two working days of receipt to facilitate an extraordinary meeting if the nature of a planning application requires consideration before the next ordinary meeting of the Council.

- 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 the Staffing Committee 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 Staffing Committee or, if they are not available, the vice-chair (if there is one) of the Staffing Committee of absence occasioned by illness or other reason and that person shall report such absence to the Staffing Committee at its next meeting.
- c The chair of Staffing Committee or in their absence, the vice-chair completes the annual appraisal and six month review of the Clerk. The Clerk completes the annual appraisal and six month review of the Administrative Assistants and Maintenance Officer. All appraisals are completed in accordance with the Appraisal Policy.
- d If a formal or informal disciplinary is required
- e 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 Staffing Committee or in their absence, the vice-chair of the Staffing Committee in respect of an informal or formal grievance matter, and this matter shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the Staffing Committee.
- f Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, if an informal or formal grievance matter raised by Clerk and

Responsible Finance Officer relates to the chair or vice-chair of the Staffing Committee, this shall be communicated to another member of the Staffing Committee, which shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the Staffing Committee.

- g 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.
- h 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.**

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

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.

**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.**

*The above is applicable to a Council without 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 seven 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.

# **ROCHFORD PARISH COUNCIL**

## **FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

*Based on the NALC 2024 Standard document and 2025 recommended updates*

## **Contents**

1. General
2. Risk management and internal control
3. Accounts and audit
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8. Cheque payments
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10. Petty Cash
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14. Payments under contracts for building or other construction works
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## **Appendix 1 - Tender process**

## 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 (CLERK) holds a statutory office, appointed by the council. The Clerk has been appointed as CLERK and these regulations apply accordingly. The CLERK;
  - 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 £5,000;

**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 shall prepare, for approval by finance committee, 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 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 CLERK 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, a member other than the Chair or a cheque signatory shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations for all accounts produced by the CLERK. The

member shall sign and date the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of this. This activity, including any exceptions, shall be reported to and noted by the council.

- 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 CLERK in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

- 3.2 The accounting records determined by the CLERK 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 (AGAR) Return.

- 3.4 The CLERK 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 CLERK 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 CLERK, 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 CLERK 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 CLERK 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 (England) 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 Finance Committee at least annually no later than October 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. The Clerk will inform committees of any salary implications before they consider their draft budgets.
- 4.3 No later than December each year, the CLERK shall prepare a draft budget with detailed estimates of all receipts and payments/income and expenditure for the following financial year {along with a forecast for the

following [three financial years]}, taking account of the lifespan of assets and cost implications of repair or replacement.

- 4.4 Unspent budgets for completed projects shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year. 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 shall review its draft budget and submit any proposed amendments to the council not later than the end of November 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, 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 Clerk 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.

## 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 CLERK 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 £100,000 including VAT, the Clerk shall 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 £3,000 excluding VAT the Clerk shall seek at least 3 fixed-price quotes;
- 5.9 Where the value is between £500 and £3,000 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. 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 **£1,000** excluding VAT.
  - the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of the Council or Chair of the appropriate committee, for any items below 1,000 excluding VAT.
  - a duly delegated committee of the council for all items of expenditure within their delegated budgets for items under £5,000 excluding VAT.
  - the council for all items over £5,000;

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 {unless instructed to do so in advance by a resolution of the council} 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 £1,000 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 as soon as possible 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 £250 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.

## **6. Banking and payments**

- 6.1 The council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the CLERK and authorised by the council; banking arrangements shall not be delegated to a committee. The council has resolved to bank with Metro 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 CLERK. Where the certification of invoices is done as a batch, this shall include a statement by the CLERK that all invoices listed have been 'examined, verified and certified' by the CLERK.
- 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 list of such payments shall be reported to the next appropriate meeting of the council for information only.
- 6.8 The Clerk and CLERK shall have delegated authority to authorise payments only in the following circumstances:
- i. any payments of up to £1,000 excluding VAT, within an agreed budget.
  - ii. payments of up to £1,000 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 CLERK] 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.
- 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.

6.9 The CLERK shall present a schedule of payments requiring authorisation, forming part of the agenda for the meeting, together with the relevant invoices, to the council. The council 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 CLERK shall be appointed as the Service Administrator. The bank mandate agreed by the council shall identify 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.
- 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 online 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 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.
- 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 least every two years.
- 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 [two of] the Clerk and [the CLERK] [a member]. This is a potential area for fraud and the individuals involved should ensure that any change is genuine. Data held should be checked with suppliers every [two years].
- 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 two members.
- 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 counteClerkil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall also initial the cheque counteClerkil 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 Any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Clerk and will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £1,000 unless authorised by council or finance committee in writing before any order is placed.
- 9.2 A pre-paid debit card may be issued to employees with varying limits. These limits will be set by the council. Transactions and purchases made will be reported to the council and authority for topping-up shall be at the discretion of the council.
- 9.3 Any corporate credit card or trade card account opened by the council will be specifically restricted to use by the Clerk unless specifically authorised by the council and any balance shall be paid in full each month.
- 9.4 Members of staff shall not be required to use personal credit or debit cards to make a purchase on behalf of the council.

## **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 (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 CLERK.
- 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 CLERK.
- 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 CLERK 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 CLERK 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 CLERK 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 Any repayment claim under section 33 of the VAT Act 1994 shall be made quarterly where the claim exceeds £100 and at least annually at the end of the financial year.

### **14. Payments under contracts for building or other construction works**

- 14.1 Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the CLERK 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 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.
- 15.2 Stocks shall be kept at the minimum levels consistent with operational requirements.

## **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 CLERK 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 Clerk 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 of all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.
- 17.3 The Clerk 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 Clerk shall negotiate all claims on the council's insurers.
- 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 by the council, or duly delegated committee.

## **18. Charities**

- 18.1 Where the council is sole managing trustee of a charitable body the Clerk shall ensure that separate accounts are kept of the funds held on charitable trusts and separate financial reports made in such form as shall be appropriate, in accordance with Charity Law and legislation, or as determined by the Charity Commission. The Clerk shall arrange for any audit or independent examination as may be required by Charity Law or any Governing Document.

## **19. Suspension and revision of Financial Regulations**

- 19.1 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.
- 19.2 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.
- 19.3 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.

**This policy was adopted on**

**Date of next review**



# ROCHFORD PARISH COUNCIL

## CODE OF CONDUCT

<b>Date Approved by Full Council</b>	May 2026
<b>Date of Next Review</b>	May 2027

## **Introduction**

The Local Government Association (LGA) has developed this Model Councillor Code of Conduct, in association with key partners and after extensive consultation with the sector, as part of its work on supporting all tiers of local government to continue to aspire to high standards of leadership and performance. It is a template for councils to adopt in whole and/or with local amendments.

All councils are required to have a local Councillor Code of Conduct.

The LGA will undertake an annual review of this Code to ensure it continues to be fit-for-purpose, incorporating advances in technology, social media and changes in legislation. The LGA can also offer support, training and mediation to councils and councillors on the application of the Code and the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and the county associations of local councils can offer advice and support to town and parish councils.

## **Definitions**

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, a “councillor” means a member or co-opted member of a local authority or a directly elected mayor. A “co-opted member” is defined in the Localism Act 2011 Section 27(4) as “a person who is not a member of the authority but who

- a) is a member of any committee or sub-committee of the authority, or;
- b) is a member of, and represents the authority on, any joint committee or joint sub-committee of the authority;

and who is entitled to vote on any question that falls to be decided at any meeting of that committee or sub-committee”.

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, “local authority” includes county councils, district councils, London borough councils, parish councils, town councils, fire and rescue authorities, police authorities, joint authorities, economic prosperity boards, combined authorities and National Park authorities.

## **Purpose of the Code of Conduct**

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to assist you, as a councillor, in modelling the behaviour that is expected of you, to provide a personal check and balance, and to set out the type of conduct that could lead to action being taken against you. It is also to protect you, the public, fellow councillors, local authority officers and the reputation of local government. It sets out general principles of conduct expected of all councillors and your specific obligations in relation to standards of conduct. The LGA encourages the use of support, training and mediation prior to action being taken using the Code. The fundamental aim of the Code is to create and maintain public confidence in the role of councillor and local government.

## **General principles of councillor conduct**

Everyone in public office at all levels; all who serve the public or deliver public services, including ministers, civil servants, councillors and local authority officers; should uphold the [Seven Principles of Public Life](#), also known as the Nolan Principles.

Building on these principles, the following general principles have been developed specifically for the role of councillor.

In accordance with the public trust placed in me, on all occasions:

- I act with integrity and honesty
- I act lawfully
- I treat all persons fairly and with respect; and
- I lead by example and act in a way that secures public confidence in the role of councillor.

In undertaking my role:

- I impartially exercise my responsibilities in the interests of the local community
- I do not improperly seek to confer an advantage, or disadvantage, on any person
- I avoid conflicts of interest
- I exercise reasonable care and diligence; and
- I ensure that public resources are used prudently in accordance with my local authority's requirements and in the public interest.

## **Application of the Code of Conduct**

This Code of Conduct applies to you as soon as you sign your declaration of acceptance of the office of councillor or attend your first meeting as a co-opted member and continues to apply to you until you cease to be a councillor.

This Code of Conduct applies to you when you are acting in your capacity as a councillor which may include when:

- you misuse your position as a councillor
- Your actions would give the impression to a reasonable member of the public with knowledge of all the facts that you are acting as a councillor;

The Code applies to all forms of communication and interaction, including:

- at face-to-face meetings
- at online or telephone meetings
- in written communication
- in verbal communication
- in non-verbal communication
- in electronic and social media communication, posts, statements and comments.

You are also expected to uphold high standards of conduct and show leadership at all times when acting as a councillor.

Your Monitoring Officer has statutory responsibility for the implementation of the Code of Conduct, and you are encouraged to seek advice from your Monitoring Officer on any

matters that may relate to the Code of Conduct. Town and parish councillors are encouraged to seek advice from their Clerk, who may refer matters to the Monitoring Officer.

**Standards of councillor conduct**

This section sets out your obligations, which are the minimum standards of conduct required of you as a councillor. Should your conduct fall short of these standards, a complaint may be made against you, which may result in action being taken.

Guidance is included to help explain the reasons for the obligations and how they should be followed.

## General Conduct

### 1. Respect

**As a councillor:**

**1.1 I treat other councillors and members of the public with respect.**

**1.2 I treat local authority employees, employees and representatives of partner organisations and those volunteering for the local authority with respect and respect the role they play.**

Respect means politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech, and in the written word. Debate and having different views are all part of a healthy democracy. As a councillor, you can express, challenge, criticise and disagree with views, ideas, opinions and policies in a robust but civil manner. You should not, however, subject individuals, groups of people or organisations to personal attack.

In your contact with the public, you should treat them politely and courteously. Rude and offensive behaviour lowers the public's expectations and confidence in councillors.

In return, you have a right to expect respectful behaviour from the public. If members of the public are being abusive, intimidatory or threatening you are entitled to stop any conversation or interaction in person or online and report them to the local authority, the relevant social media provider or the police. This also applies to fellow councillors, where action could then be taken under the Councillor Code of Conduct, and local authority employees, where concerns should be raised in line with the local authority's councillor- officer protocol.

### 2. Bullying, harassment and discrimination

**As a councillor:**

**2.1 I do not bully any person.**

**2.2 I do not harass any person.**

**2.3 I promote equalities and do not discriminate unlawfully against any person.**

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) characterises bullying as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Bullying might be a regular pattern of behaviour or a one-off incident, happen face-to-face, on social media, in emails or phone calls, happen in the workplace or at work social events and may not always be obvious or noticed by others.

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 defines harassment as conduct that causes alarm or distress or puts people in fear of violence and must involve such conduct on at least two occasions. It can include repeated attempts to impose unwanted communications and

contact upon a person in a manner that could be expected to cause distress or fear in any reasonable person.

Unlawful discrimination is where someone is treated unfairly because of a protected characteristic. Protected characteristics are specific aspects of a person's

identity defined by the Equality Act 2010. They are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Equality Act 2010 places specific duties on local authorities. Councillors have a central role to play in ensuring that equality issues are integral to the local authority's performance and strategic aims, and that there is a strong vision and public commitment to equality across public services.

### **3. Impartiality of officers of the council**

**As a councillor:**

#### **3.1 I do not compromise, or attempt to compromise, the impartiality of anyone who works for, or on behalf of, the local authority.**

Officers work for the local authority as a whole and must be politically neutral (unless they are political assistants). They should not be coerced or persuaded to act in a way that would undermine their neutrality. You can question officers in order to understand, for example, their reasons for proposing to act in a particular way, or the content of a report that they have written. However, you must not try and force them to act differently, change their advice, or alter the content of that report, if doing so would prejudice their professional integrity.

### **4. Confidentiality and access to information As a councillor:**

#### **4.1 I do not disclose information:**

**a. given to me in confidence by anyone**

**b. acquired by me which I believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature, unless**

**i. I have received the consent of a person authorised to give it;**

**ii. I am required by law to do so;**

**iii. The disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional legal advice provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person; or**

**iv. the disclosure is:**

**1. reasonable and in the public interest; and**

**2. made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the local authority; and**

**3. I have consulted the Monitoring Officer prior to its release.**

**4.2 I do not improperly use knowledge gained solely as a result of my role as a councillor for the advancement of myself, my friends, my family members, my employer or my business interests.**

**4.3 I do not prevent anyone from getting information that they are entitled to by law.** Local authorities must work openly and transparently, and their proceedings and printed materials are open to the public, except in certain legally defined circumstances. You should work on this basis, but there will be times when it is required by law that discussions, documents and other information relating to or held by the local authority must be treated in a confidential manner. Examples include personal data relating to individuals or information relating to ongoing negotiations.

## **5. Disrepute**

**As a councillor:**

### **5.1 I do not bring my role or local authority into disrepute.**

As a Councillor, you are trusted to make decisions on behalf of your community and your actions and behaviour are subject to greater scrutiny than that of ordinary members of the public. You should be aware that your actions might have an adverse impact on you, other councillors and/or your local authority and may lower the public's confidence in your or your local authority's ability to discharge your/its functions. For example, behaviour that is considered dishonest and/or deceitful can bring your local authority into disrepute.

You are able to hold the local authority and fellow councillors to account and are able to constructively challenge and express concern about decisions and processes undertaken by the council whilst continuing to adhere to other aspects of this Code of Conduct.

## **6. Use of position**

**As a councillor:**

### **6.1 I do not use, or attempt to use, my position improperly to the advantage or disadvantage of myself or anyone else.**

Your position as a member of the local authority provides you with certain opportunities, responsibilities, and privileges, and you make choices all the time that will impact others. However, you should not take advantage of these opportunities to further your own or others' private interests or to disadvantage anyone unfairly.

## **7. Use of local authority resources and facilities**

**As a councillor:**

### **7.1 I do not misuse council resources.**

### **7.2 I will, when using the resources of the local authority or authorising their use by others:**

- a. act in accordance with the local authority's requirements; and**
- b. ensure that such resources are not used for political purposes unless that use could reasonably be regarded as likely to facilitate, or be conducive to, the discharge of the functions of the local authority or of the office to which I have been elected or appointed.**

You may be provided with resources and facilities by the local authority to assist you in carrying out your duties as a councillor.

Examples include:

- office support
- stationery
- equipment such as phones, and computers
- transport
- access and use of local authority buildings and rooms.

These are given to you to help you carry out your role as a councillor more effectively and are not to be used for business or personal gain. They should be used in

accordance with the purpose for which they have been provided and the local authority's own policies regarding their use.

## **8. Complying with the Code of Conduct As a Councillor:**

**8.1 I undertake Code of Conduct training provided by my local authority.**

**8.2 I cooperate with any Code of Conduct investigation and/or determination.**

**8.3 I do not intimidate or attempt to intimidate any person who is likely to be involved with the administration of any investigation or proceedings.**

**8.4 I comply with any sanction imposed on me following a finding that I have breached the Code of Conduct.**

It is extremely important for you as a councillor to demonstrate high standards, for you to have your actions open to scrutiny and for you not to undermine public trust in the local authority or its governance. If you do not understand or are concerned about the local authority's processes in handling a complaint you should raise this with your Monitoring Officer.

## **Protecting your reputation and the reputation of the local authority**

### **9. Interests**

#### **As a councillor:**

**9.1 I register and disclose my interests.**

Section 29 of the Localism Act 2011 requires the Monitoring Officer to establish and maintain a register of interests of members of the authority.

You need to register your interests so that the public, local authority employees and fellow councillors know which of your interests might give rise to a conflict of interest. The register is a public document that can be consulted when (or before) an issue arises. The register also protects you by allowing you to demonstrate openness and a willingness to be held accountable. You are personally responsible for deciding whether or not you should disclose an interest in a meeting, but it can be helpful for you to know early on if others think that a potential conflict might arise. It is also important that the public know about any interest that might have to be disclosed by you or other councillors when making or taking part in decisions, so that decision making is seen by the public as open and honest. This helps to ensure that public confidence in the integrity of local governance is maintained.

You should note that failure to register or disclose a disclosable pecuniary interest as set out in **Table 1**, is a criminal offence under the Localism Act 2011.

**Appendix B sets** out the detailed provisions on registering and disclosing interests. If in doubt, you should always seek advice from your Monitoring Officer

## **10. Gifts and hospitality As a councillor:**

- 10.1 I do not accept gifts or hospitality, irrespective of estimated value, which could give rise to real or substantive personal gain or a reasonable suspicion of influence on my part to show favour from persons seeking to acquire, develop or do business with the local authority or from persons who may apply to the local authority for any permission, licence or other significant advantage.**
- 10.2 I register with the Monitoring Officer any gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £50 within 28 days of its receipt.**
- 10.3 I register with the Monitoring Officer any significant gift or hospitality that I have been offered but have refused to accept.**

In order to protect your position and the reputation of the local authority, you should exercise caution in accepting any gifts or hospitality which are (or which you reasonably believe to be) offered to you because you are a councillor. The presumption should always be not to accept significant gifts or hospitality. However, there may be times when such a refusal may be difficult if it is seen as rudeness in which case, you could accept it but must ensure it is publicly registered. However, you do not need to register gifts and hospitality which are not related to your role as a councillor, such as Christmas gifts from your friends and family. It is also important to note that it is appropriate to accept normal expenses and hospitality associated with your duties as a councillor. If you are unsure, do contact your Monitoring Officer for guidance.

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix A – The Seven Principles of Public Life**

The principles are:

#### **Selflessness**

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

#### **Integrity**

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must disclose and resolve any interests and relationships.

#### **Objectivity**

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

#### **Accountability**

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

#### **Openness**

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

#### **Honesty**

Holders of public office should be truthful.

#### **Leadership**

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

## Appendix B Registering interests

Within 28 days of becoming a member or your re-election or re-appointment to office you must register with the Monitoring Officer the interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 1 (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests)** which are as described in "The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012". You should also register details of your other personal interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 2 (Other Registerable Interests)**.

**"Disclosable Pecuniary Interest"** means an interest of yourself, or of your partner if you are aware of your partner's interest, within the descriptions set out in Table 1 below.

**"Partner"** means a spouse or civil partner, or a person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom you are living as if you are civil partners.

1. You must ensure that your register of interests is kept up-to-date and within 28 days of becoming aware of any new interest, or of any change to a registered interest, notify the Monitoring Officer.
2. A 'sensitive interest' is as an interest which, if disclosed, could lead to the councillor, or a person connected with the councillor, being subject to violence or intimidation.
3. Where you have a 'sensitive interest' you must notify the Monitoring Officer with the reasons why you believe it is a sensitive interest. If the Monitoring Officer agrees they will withhold the interest from the public register.

### Non participation in case of disclosable pecuniary interest

4. Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to one of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in **Table 1**, you must disclose the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest. Dispensation may be granted in limited circumstances, to enable you to participate and vote on a matter in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest.
5. [Where you have a disclosable pecuniary interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it ]

### Disclosure of Other Registerable Interests

6. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to the financial interest or wellbeing of one of your Other Registerable Interests (as set out in **Table 2**), you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

## Disclosure of Non-Registerable Interests

7. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to your financial interest or well-being (and is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest set out in Table 1) or a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate, you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.
8. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **affects** –
- your own financial interest or well-being;
  - a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate; or
  - a financial interest or wellbeing of a body included under Other Registerable Interests set out in **Table 2**

you must disclose the interest. In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied

9. Where a matter (referred to in paragraph 8 above) **affects** the financial interest or well-being:
- to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
  - a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

10. [Where you have an Other Registerable Interest or Non-Registerable Interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it]

**Table 1: Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

This table sets out the explanation of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in the [Relevant Authorities \(Disclosable Pecuniary Interests\) Regulations 2012](#).

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation</b>	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
<b>Sponsorship</b>	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
<b>Contracts</b>	Any contract made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the council (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
<b>Land and Property</b>	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council. 'Land' excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.
<b>Licenses</b>	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer
<b>Corporate tenancies</b>	(a) Any tenancy where (to the councillor's knowledge)— (b) the landlord is the council; and the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a

	beneficial interest in the securities* of.
<b>Securities</b>	<p>Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where—</p> <p>(a) that body (to the councillor's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and</p> <p>(b) either—</p> <p>(i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or</p> <p>(ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/ her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were. spouses/civil partners have a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.</p>

\* 'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

\* 'securities' means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

**Table 2: Other Registrable Interests**

You must register as an Other Registerable Interest :

- a) any unpaid directorships
- b) any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority
- c) any body
  - (i) exercising functions of a public nature
  - (ii) directed to charitable purposes or
  - (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)

of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management

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## Appendix C – the Committee on Standards in Public Life

The LGA has undertaken this review whilst the Government continues to consider the recommendations made by the Committee on Standards in Public Life in their report on [Local Government Ethical Standards](#). If the Government chooses to implement any of the recommendations, this could require a change to this Code.

The recommendations cover:

- Recommendations for changes to the Localism Act 2011 to clarify in law when the Code of Conduct applies
- The introduction of sanctions
- An appeals process through the Local Government Ombudsman
- Changes to the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012
- Updates to the Local Government Transparency Code
- Changes to the role and responsibilities of the Independent Person
- That the criminal offences in the Localism Act 2011 relating to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests should be abolished

The Local Government Ethical Standards report also includes Best Practice recommendations. These are:

**Best practice 1:** Local authorities should include prohibitions on bullying and harassment in codes of conduct. These should include a definition of bullying and harassment, supplemented with a list of examples of the sort of behaviour covered by such a definition.

**Best practice 2:** Councils should include provisions in their code of conduct requiring councillors to comply with any formal standards investigation and prohibiting trivial or malicious allegations by councillors.

**Best practice 3:** Principal authorities should review their code of conduct each year and regularly seek, where possible, the views of the public, community organisations and neighbouring authorities.

**Best practice 4:** An authority's code should be readily accessible to both councillors and the public, in a prominent position on a council's website and available in council premises.

**Best practice 5:** Local authorities should update their gifts and hospitality register at least once per quarter, and publish it in an accessible format, such as CSV.

**Best practice 6:** Councils should publish a clear and straightforward public interest test against which allegations are filtered.

**Best practice 7:** Local authorities should have access to at least two Independent Persons.

**Best practice 8:** An Independent Person should be consulted as to whether to undertake a formal investigation on an allegation, and should be given the option to review and comment on allegations which the responsible officer is minded to dismiss as being without merit, vexatious, or trivial.

**Best practice 9:** Where a local authority makes a decision on an allegation of misconduct following a formal investigation, a decision notice should be published as soon as possible on its website, including a brief statement of facts, the provisions of the code engaged by the allegations, the view of the Independent Person, the reasoning of the decision-maker, and any sanction applied.

**Best practice 10:** A local authority should have straightforward and accessible guidance on its website on how to make a complaint under the code of conduct, the process for handling complaints, and estimated timescales for investigations and outcomes.

**Best practice 11:** Formal standards complaints about the conduct of a parish councillor towards a clerk should be made by the chair or by the parish council, rather than the clerk in all but exceptional circumstances.

**Best practice 12:** Monitoring Officers' roles should include providing advice, support and management of investigations and adjudications on alleged breaches to parish councils within the remit of the principal authority. They should be provided with adequate training, corporate support and resources to undertake this work.

**Best practice 13:** A local authority should have procedures in place to address any conflicts of interest when undertaking a standards investigation. Possible steps should include asking the Monitoring Officer from a different authority to undertake the investigation.

**Best practice 14:** Councils should report on separate bodies they have set up or which they own as part of their annual governance statement and give a full picture of their relationship with those bodies. Separate bodies created by local authorities should abide by the Nolan principle of openness and publish their board agendas and minutes and annual reports in an accessible place.

**Best practice 15:** Senior officers should meet regularly with political group leaders or group whips to discuss standards issues.

***The Parish has committed to reviewing the Code on an annual basis to ensure it is still fit for purpose.***



# Rochford Parish Council

## RETENTION AND DISPOSAL OF DOCUMENTS POLICY

<b>Date Approved by Full Council</b>	April 2024
<b>Date of Next Review</b>	May 2026

This policy applies to all records created, received or maintained by Rochford Parish Council (the Council) in the course of carrying out its functions. Records are defined as those documents which facilitate the business carried out by the Council and which are thereafter retained (for a set period) to provide evidence of its transactions or activities. These records may be created, received or maintained in hard copy or electronically.

A small percentage of the Council's records will be selected for permanent preservation as part of the Council's archives and for historical purposes and these will be held offsite at Essex County Records Office and details of which documents have been forwarded to them are retained on council files for future reference.

The person with overall responsibility for this policy is the Clerk of the Council.

The Clerk must ensure that records for which they are responsible are accurate, maintained and disposed of in accordance with the Council's record management guidelines (see below) and that they take account of the council's Freedom of Information Publication Scheme.

The Clerk will give guidance for good records management practice and will promote compliance with this policy.

There are no firm guidelines for the retention of general correspondence in any format. However, a regular review of all documentation should be carried out by the Clerk at least quarterly but can be more often, with ephemeral items marked for destruction and the remainder being considered for archiving as detailed above. This will be carried out at the discretion of the Clerk in accordance with the current Standing Orders.

The following list is based on the minimum guidance issued by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC)

<b>DOCUMENT</b>	<b>RETENTION PERIOD</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
Minutes	Indefinite	Retain in office and archive after 2 years
Scales of Fees and Charges	6 years	Destroy after 6 years
Receipts and Payments Books	6 years	Destroy after 6 years
Receipt books of all kinds	6 years	Destroy after 6 years
Bank statements	6 years	Destroy after 6 years
Bank Paying in Books	6 years	Destroy after 6 years
Cheque Book stubs	6 years	Destroy after 6 years
Quotations and tenders	6 years	Destroy after 6 years
Paid Invoices	6 years	Destroy after 6 years
Paid Cheques	6 years	Destroy after 6 years
VAT Records	6 years	Destroy after 6 years
Petty cash, postage and telephone books	6 years	Destroy after 6 years
Electronic financial information	Indefinite	Finance system now used that keeps a permanent record. The system is password protected.
Emails	6 years	Destroy after 6 years
Timesheets	3 years	Destroy after 3 years
Pension Information	12 years	Destroy after 12 years
Salary files	6 years	Destroy after 6 years
Employers Liability Insurance Certificate	Indefinite	Retain in Office
Insurance Policies	While Valid	Review after 1 year and destroy
Investments	Indefinite	Retain in long-term storage
Title Deeds, lease agreements, contracts	Indefinite	Deposit at bank and/or retain in archive
Members Allowance Register	6 years	Destroy after 6 years

**The Parish Rooms and The Kings Head (Room 3)**

Application to Hire	6 years	Destroy after 6 years
Letting Diaries	6 years	Destroy after 6 years
Copies of bills to hirers	6 years	Destroy after 6 years
Record of any tickets issued	6 years	Destroy after 6 years
Electronic applications and invoices	Indefinite	Finance system now used keeps a permanent record. The system is password protected.
<b>Allotments</b>		
Register of Plots	Indefinite	Retain in archive
<b>Lawn Cemetery</b>		
Register of Fees Collected	Indefinite	Retain in archive
Register of Burials	Indefinite	Retain in archive
Register of Purchased Graves	Indefinite	Retain in archive
Register/plan of grave spaces	Indefinite	Retain in archive
Register of Memorials	Indefinite	Retain in archive
Applications for Internment	Indefinite	Retain in archive
Application for right to erect a memorial	Indefinite	Retain in archive
Disposal Certificates	Indefinite	Retain in archive
Copy of certificates of grant of exclusive right of burial	Indefinite	Retain in archive
Personnel Files	6 Years (after employee has left employment)	Destroy after 6 years
Interview and other connected personnel processes	6 Months (after the date of the interview)	Destroy after 6 months

Any records not selected for permanent preservation, and which have reached the end of their administrative life must be destroyed in a secure manner.

This policy is deemed to cover all documents, whether in hard copy (e.g. letters etc.), electronic format (e.g. emails etc.) or in any other recording medium.

If a record due to destruction is known to be the subject of a request for information, destruction should be delayed until disclosure has taken place or, if the Council has decided not to disclose the information, until the complaint and appeal provisions of The Freedom of Information Act have been exhausted.



# Rochford Parish Council

## Complaints Policy

<b>Date Approved by Full Council</b>	February 2026
<b>Date of Next Review</b>	

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## **1. Introduction**

Rochford Parish Council is committed to providing a quality service for its residents and visitors. The Council welcomes positive reviews from the community and encourages contact from residents. However, if a person is dissatisfied with the standard of service they have received from the Council, or about an action or lack of action by this Council, this Complaints Procedure sets out how to contact the Council and how Rochford Parish Council will try to resolve your complaint. Complaints submitted anonymously will not be considered.

A Complaint is defined by the Council as an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about the councillors' action (or lack thereof) or poor standard of service. Most complaints should be able to be resolved informally over the telephone, by email or by a short visit to the Council. Every effort should be put forward by the Council to resolve informal complaints quickly and efficiently to prevent it becoming formal.

## **2. Complaints Policy**

- The Complaints system will be easily accessible to member of public.
- It will be simple to understand and use, and its operation will be regularly reviewed.
- Complaints received will be acknowledged and logged on a computerised database.
- All complaints will receive a full and fair investigation.
- A response will normally be sent within 21 working days of receipt, subsequent to outcomes of the investigation.
- Subject to the need for a thorough investigation, the procedures will respect people's desire for confidentiality.
- The Council response will address all the points at issue and will attempt to provide effective and appropriate redress where fault on the part of the Council has been acknowledged.
- Where relevant, the Council will want to learn from complaints and provide appropriate information to line managers within the Council so that services can be improved, and systems altered where needed.

## **3. Complaints Procedure**

### **Stage 1**

1. The complainant should address the complaint about the Council's procedures or administration, in writing to the Clerk of the Council.  
This can

be by letter or by email. Verbal complaints can only be dealt with if the subject matter is very straightforward.

2. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the Clerk of the Council, then it should be sent to the Chairman of the Council. This would be relevant if the matter is one with which the Clerk has been closely involved.
3. The Clerk of the Council will send an acknowledgement letter or email within 3 working days of receipt, most likely detailing when it is likely to be dealt with, how it will be dealt with and who will deal with it.
4. The Clerk of the Council (or the Chairman of the Council if the above point (2) applies) will let the complainant have a response in writing within 15 working days. If the complaint is very serious or complex, it may take longer, in which case, the complainant will be advised accordingly.

## **Stage 2**

1. Complaints initially handled by the Clerk of the Council – If the complaint is not resolved in Stage 1, the complainant may ask for a review of the case by the Chairman of the Council, who should respond to the complainant, in writing, in 7 working days.
2. Complaints initially handled by the Chairman of the Council – If the complaint is not resolved in Stage 1, the complainant may ask for a review of the case by the Vice Chairman, who will respond to the complainant, in writing, in 7 working days.

## **4. At the Meeting**

1. The committee shall consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and the press.
2. If the Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Council have previously been involved, they will have to withdraw from the committee and a chairman will need to be elected to conduct the business of the complaint.
3. The Chairman of the committee or the member presiding will introduce everyone and will explain the procedure.
4. The complainant or representative will outline the grounds for the complaint.
5. Members may ask any question/s of the complainant.
6. If relevant, the Clerk of the Council or deputy proper officer will explain the Council's position.]

7. Members may ask any question/s of the Clerk of the Council or the deputy proper officer.
8. The Clerk of the Council or deputy proper officer and complainant will be offered the opportunity of last word (in this order).
9. The Clerk of the Council or deputy proper officer, complainant and representative/s will be asked to leave the room while members decided whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been justified. If a point of clarification is required, both parties will be invited back.
10. The Clerk of the Council or deputy proper officer, complainant, their representative/s and councillors who are not members of the Organisation, Methods and Personnel committee will return, along with any members of the public or press (see paragraph 1), to hear the decision or to be advised when the decision will be made.
11. If a member presiding had been elected under paragraph 2, the Chairman of the Organisation, Methods and Personnel committee will resume chairmanship.

## **5. After the Meeting**

1. The decision will be confirmed in writing to all involved parties within seven working days together with details of any action to be taken.
2. If the complainant is still unhappy, their case can be presented either in person or in writing to the Organisation, Methods and Personnel committee, which will consider the matter in the absence of any members who have been previously involved.
3. The complainant shall be invited to attend the relevant meeting and bring with them such representation as they wish.
4. Seven clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the Council with copies of any documentation or other evidence, which they wish to refer to at the meeting. The Council shall similarly provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting.

## **6. The Investigation Report**

### **The Investigation and Report should contain:**

- Full details of the outcome of the investigation.
- A recommendation whether they believe the complaint is:  
Upheld/partially upheld/not upheld.

- Any actions proposed to deal with issues raised and necessary to avoid this happening in the future.
- On receipt of the report of the Investigation, the Clerk or the Chairman will prepare a response including determining if a refund of fees is appropriate.
- Recommendations of how to avoid this type of complaint in future will be sent to the relevant manager.

## 7. Responses

The following range of responses will enable the Council to ensure that responses are fair and impartial, and demonstrates to users that it welcomes comments on the quality of its service:

- Expression of regret whenever possible and appropriate.
- Apology when a fault on the part of the Council is identified.
- Correction of organisational deficiency where appropriate, which will be recognised in the response, where appropriate.
- Maximum liability is normally limited to the refund of fees or charges already paid if the Council is found liable for not providing an adequate service.

## 8. Monitoring and Review

The Organisation, Methods and Personnel committee will receive quarterly reports from the Clerk reporting all complaints and compliments received and any actions taken.

## 9. What this Policy and Procedure does not cover

*Please note that this procedure is designed for dealing with complaints about the Council's administration or its procedures. If your complaint is about anything that is not the Parish Council's responsibility, it will be passed on to the appropriate authority.*

If your complaint is about any of the following, there are separate procedures in place:

- Complaints by one Council employee against another Council employee, or complaints by a Council employee against the Council as their employer:**  
This will be dealt with under the Council's disciplinary and grievance procedures.

**b. Complaints against councillors:**

These are covered by the Code of Conduct for Members adopted by the Parish Council and complainants should contact the Monitoring Officer of Rochford District Council who will decide if further action is necessary.

**c. Allegations of financial irregularity:**

Local electors may object to the Council's Annual Accounts under Section 16, Audit Commission Act 1998. On other matters, the Council may need to consult with its internal auditor or the Audit Commission.

**d. Criminal Activity:**

The complainant should be advised to contact the police.

**e. Safeguarding:**

The complainant should be advised to contact the Essex Safeguarding Children Board

website- [www.escb.co.uk](http://www.escb.co.uk)

telephone- 0333 013 8936

The complainant should be advised to contact the Essex Safeguarding Adults Board

website- [www.essexsab.org.uk](http://www.essexsab.org.uk)

telephone- 0845 603 7630



# **Rochford Parish Council**

## **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AT MEETINGS POLICY**

<b>Date Approved by Full Council</b>	May 2026
<b>Date of Next Review</b>	May 2027

## **1. Purpose**

This policy outlines the procedure for Parish Councillors to notify the Parish Council of their inability to attend meetings. It ensures that elected councillors fulfil their responsibilities while complying with legal requirements regarding attendance.

## **2. Scope**

This policy applies to all elected and co-opted members of the Parish Council, who have been officially served notice of their election or appointment.

## **3. Legal Context**

Parish Councillors are elected members and must adhere to the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972, Section 85, which requires that councillors attend council meetings regularly. If a councillor does not attend any meeting for six consecutive months, without the Council formally approving their reason for absence, they will automatically lose their seat.

## **4. Procedure for Offering Apologies**

### **a) Advance Notice**

- Councillors who cannot attend a meeting must notify the Clerk of the Council as soon as possible and no later than 12:00 noon on the day of the meeting.
- Apologies can be offered in person, by email or by telephone.

### **b) Contents of Apology**

- The Councillor must provide a valid reason for their absence, such as illness, family emergency, work commitments or other pre-approved personal matters.

### **c) Recording of Apologies**

- The Clerk of the Council will record apologies in the minutes of the meeting. However, the specific reason offered and approved will not be minuted.
- The Parish Council will vote at the start of the meeting to determine whether the reason for the apology will be accepted and, as such, the member excused.
- If the reason is not deemed acceptable, the absence will be recorded as 'unauthorised'

### **d) Non-Attendance Without Apology**

- Councillors who fail to provide an apology for the meeting and do not attend will have their absence recorded as 'absent'. The wording 'absent' is accepted to mean 'not authorised'.

- Persistent unauthorised absences will prompt a review by the Council, and under the Local Government Act 1972, councillors may face disqualification if they fail to attend for a continuous six-month period without a valid reason.

**e) Exceptional Circumstances**

- In cases of emergency or other unavoidable circumstances only (i.e. broken-down vehicle or medical emergency), councillors may submit apologies after the meeting. The Parish Council will consider these late apologies on a case-by-case basis and vote on whether to accept them.
- The minutes of the meeting not attended will reflect the position known at the time of the meeting. Should the Council vote to accept late apologies, it will be reflected in the minutes of the meeting at which the apologies are heard.
- When the Council is considering late apologies the member, who submitted the apologies, will be asked to leave the room. The Council's decision on whether or not to accept the late apologies will be final.

**5. Responsibilities**

Councillors: Councillors must ensure they notify the Clerk of the Council if they are unable to attend meetings and provide valid reasons for their absence. As elected members, councillors have a duty to serve their community and fulfil the responsibilities of their office.

Clerk: The Clerk of the Council is responsible for recoding apologies, ensuring the meeting minutes reflect accurate attendance, and presenting councillor absences for the council's consideration.

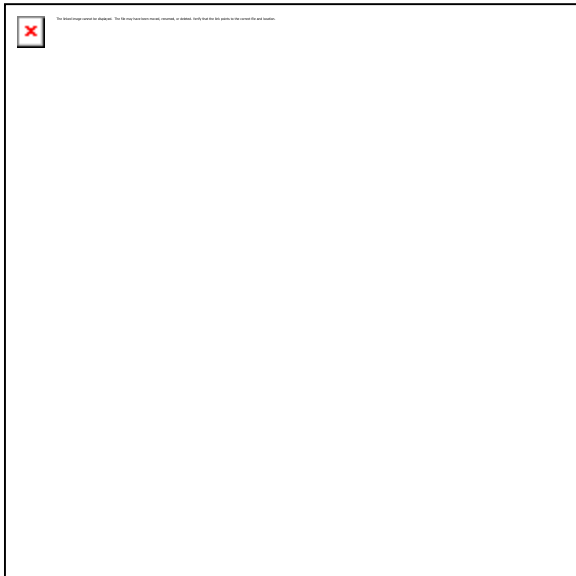
**6. Notice of Election and Responsibilities**

All councillors, upon election or co-option, are served notice of their appointment, which outlines their duties, including the requirement to attend council meetings.

By accepting this notice, councillors agree to comply with the Council's Apologies for Absence at Meetings Policy and to provide reasons for any non-attendance as outlined in this policy.

**7. Consequences of Non-Compliance**

Councillors who fail to attend any meeting for a continuous six-month period, without the Council's approval of their reason for absence, may be disqualified and removed from their seat.



Emma Goodings  
Director of Place  
Brentwood Borough Council &  
Rochford District Council

Rochford Parish Council  
Parish Council Rooms  
West Street  
Rochford  
Essex SS4 1AS

Ask for: Ms Mo Aleshinloye  
Direct Dial: 01702 546366  
Email: [planning.applications@rochford.gov.uk](mailto:planning.applications@rochford.gov.uk)  
My Ref: 26/00319/FUL  
Your Ref:

1st May 2026

Application No: **26/00319/FUL**  
Applicant: **Mrs Susan Timmins**  
Site Location: **8 Rochford Hall Close Rochford Essex SS4 1HF**  
Proposal: **Single storey pitched roofed rear extension with rooflights & fenestration alterations.**

Dear Sir/Madam

**Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)**  
**Town & Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 (as amended)**  
**Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended)**  
**Town & Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992**

**Parish/Town Council Planning Consultation**

I have received plans(s) and application form in respect of the proposal detailed above for your consideration. These can be viewed using the following link:- [Rochford Development Control](#) .

I should be grateful if you would forward any observations that you may have to make within 21 days of the date of this letter .

If there is no response to this consultation letter within 21 days, it will be assumed that you have no comments to make on the proposal.

Yours faithfully,

Ms Emma Goodings  
MA Hons (cantab) MA MRTPI

Post and parcel deliveries **ONLY**: Rochford District Council, Civic Suite , 2 Hockley Road, Rayleigh, Essex, SS6 8EB. **IN PERSON AT RECEPTION**: Rochford Library, 8 Roche Close, Rochford, Essex, SS4 1PX. Phone: 01702 546366 Website: [www.rochford.gov.uk](http://www.rochford.gov.uk)

Rochford Parish Council  
Parish Council Rooms  
West Street  
Rochford  
Essex SS4 1AS

Ask for: Mr Thomas Byford  
Direct Dial: 01702 963316  
Email: [planning.applications@rochford.gov.uk](mailto:planning.applications@rochford.gov.uk)  
My Ref: 26/00244/LBC  
Your Ref:

30th April 2026

Application No: **26/00244/LBC**  
Applicant: **Mr Michael Simpson**  
Site Location: **19 South Street Rochford Essex**  
Proposal: **Full Planning Application and Listed Building Consent for the change of use of the existing building and its curtilage from Use Class E (Offices and Professional Services) to Use Class C3 (Dwellinghouses); internal alterations to facilitate the creation of 8 residential units; conversion of the existing ancillary building to provide cycle and refuse storage; erection of a proposed bungalow to the rear of the site; provision of allocated vehicular parking, including a size 5 turning area; and associated landscaping works.**

Dear Sir/Madam

**Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)**

**Town & Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 (as amended)**

**Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended)**

**Town & Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992**

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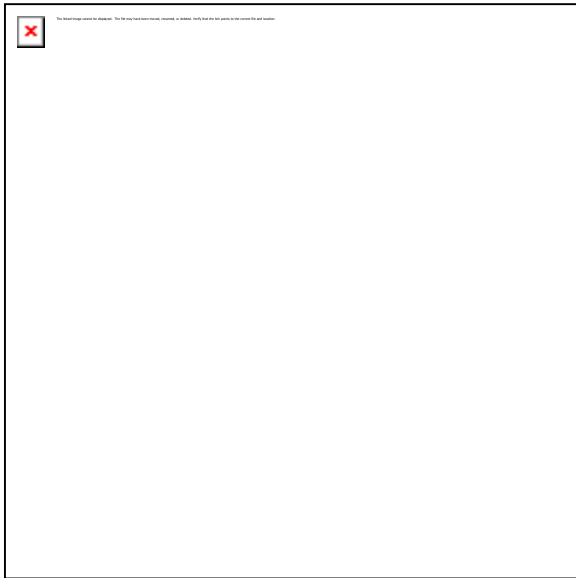
If there is no response to this consultation letter within 21 days, it will be assumed that you have no comments to make on the proposal.

Yours faithfully,



Ms Emma Goodings  
MA Hons (cantab) MA MRTPI

Post and parcel deliveries **ONLY**: Rochford District Council, Civic Suite , 2  
Hockley Road, Rayleigh, Essex, SS6 8EB. **IN PERSON AT RECEPTION**:  
Rochford Library, 8 Roche Close, Rochford, Essex, SS4 1PX. Phone:  
01702 546366 Website: [www.rochford.gov.uk](http://www.rochford.gov.uk)



Emma Goodings  
Director of Place  
Brentwood Borough Council &  
Rochford District Council

Rochford Parish Council  
Parish Council Rooms  
West Street  
Rochford  
Essex SS4 1AS

Ask for: Ms Mo Aleshinloye  
Direct Dial: 01702 546366  
Email: [planning.applications@rochford.gov.uk](mailto:planning.applications@rochford.gov.uk)  
My Ref: 26/00319/FUL  
Your Ref:

1st May 2026

Application No: **26/00319/FUL**  
Applicant: **Mrs Susan Timmins**  
Site Location: **8 Rochford Hall Close Rochford Essex SS4 1HF**  
Proposal: **Single storey pitched roofed rear extension with rooflights & fenestration alterations.**

Dear Sir/Madam

**Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)**  
**Town & Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 (as amended)**  
**Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended)**  
**Town & Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992**

**Parish/Town Council Planning Consultation**

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