Local Council Documents & Policies (Version 7)

All parish and town councils operate to the same rules and regulations, often laid down in the Local Government Act 1972. The following is a list of documents and policies that all councils should have or consider having.

If you do not have all the ‘must have’ (red) documents, consider preparing and adopting them over time, it is not necessary to adopt them all at once.

The purpose of having documents and policies is to guide the work of the council and to help it discharge its functions; they should be viewed as a help, not a hindrance.

Examples of some documents can be found on the internet and/or from NALC/CALC or SLCC if the Clerk is a member. (Helpful tip: when searching online, use quote marks to retrieve the most relevant pages. For example, if searching for an equality policy used by parish councils, search for “parish council” + “equality policy”).

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| BP – Best practice | Status |  |
| SR – Statutory Requirement | **RED** | Must have |
| AR – Audit Requirement | **AMBER** | Good to have |
| CR – Contractual Requirement |  |  |

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| **Section** | **Comments** | **Status** | **Check** |
| **Basic Governance** | | | |
| Standing Orders | Model available from NALC – April 2022 | **AR/BP** |  |
| Financial Regulations | Model available from NALC – 2024 | **SR[[1]](#footnote-1)** |  |
| Minute book | Not necessarily a ‘book’ but council must keep all minutes as a formal record of the council’s business | **SR[[2]](#footnote-2)** |  |
| Code of Conduct | All councils are required to adopt a Code of Conduct. Examples available from LGA (<https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/councillor-and-officer-development/councillor-hub/role-councillor/code-conduct-and>) or your Borough Council monitoring officer | **SR[[3]](#footnote-3)** |  |
| Planning register | A list of planning applications received, their status and the council’s response. | **BP** |  |
| Parish Emergency Plan | A document that describes what the council/community would do in the event of an emergency. | **BP** |  |
| Cllr attendance register | A register of attendance, recording whether or not absence was approved by council | **BP** |  |
| Risk Assessment Policy new |  | **BP** |  |
| Risk assessment register | Detailed list of all risks in parish, their level, likelihood and what mitigating steps the council is taking. | **AR** |  |
| Deeds of all land holdings | A list of all deeds, their scope, effect and lifespan. Should include a description of the location of the physical deeds and any copies. | **BP** |  |
| Copies of all lease agreements new | Should include a description of the location of the lease agreement. | **BP** |  |

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| Insurance register | A list of the insurable interests of the council, the name of insurance provider, the amount covered and the term of the policy | **BP** |  |
| Members’ Registers of Interest | A complete set of up-to-date registers of interests for all current Councillors (copy or link to, held by Monitoring Officer) | **SR4** |  |
| Declarations of Acceptance of Office | Should be stored for the term of office plus one year | **SR5** |  |
| Members’ Allowances Policy | A document that shows whether or not the council has a Parish Basic Allowance Scheme, and if so its details | **BP** |  |
| Register of gifts and hospitality | Code of Conduct requirement | **BP** |  |
| Contracts for the supply and receipt of services | Copies of the contracts should be securely held by the clerk | **BP** |  |
| Co-option Procedure | A procedure which informs of the process, but also reminds Cllrs/Clerk process to follow | **BP** |  |
| Terms of Reference for committees new | TORs for each committee informing what they are responsible for, if they have delegated powers (or not) | **BP** |  |
| Delegated authority in respect of officers and committees | List of all approved delegated powers, whether listed in docs such as SOs or if there are additional such as for planning | **BP** |  |
| Motions book | To cover motions received and rejected as described in Model Standing Orders | **BP** |  |
| **Openness & accountability** | | | |
| Publication Scheme under the Freedom of Information Act | Model from the ICO website ( | **SR6** |  |
| Data protection/ information security policy | A policy describing how the council intends to discharge its duties under GDPR | **BP** |  |
| Subject Access Request (SAR) disclosure log new | Indicating the information that has been provided in response to subject access requests | **SR7** |  |
| Data breach policy | A policy describing how the council reports data breaches | **BP** |  |
| Data breach log | A log of all data breaches (including those not required to be reported) | **SR8** |  |
| Complaints procedure | Not a statutory requirement for local councils but extremely inadvisable to operate without one. Ensure it mentions all Complaints against a Cllrs conduct is directed to the MO | **BP** |  |
| CCTV Policy | If the council owns or operates CCTV there must be a written policy in place | **SR9** |  |
| Transparency Code compliance | Checklist to ensure compliance with the Transparency Code for councils under £25,000 turnover, or those over £200,000 turnover. For councils in between £25,000 and £200,000 there is no statutory code, but they should follow the principles and guidelines in either or both codes as a matter of best practice. | **SR10**  **SR11** |  |

4

Localism Act 2011 s29 (5) and (7)

5

Local Government Act 1972 s 83(4)

5

Freedom of Information Act 2000, s.20

1. Data Protection Act 2018, Chapter 4
2. Data Protection Act 2018, Chapter 4

9

Protections of Freedoms Act 2012 (CCTV Code of Practice)

10

The Smaller Authorities (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015, SI 494

11

Local Government Transparency Code 2015

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| **Communications** | |  | |
| Web site management policy new | Dependent on who is managing web site | **BP** |  |
| Web Site Accessibility Statement new | Sets out what web site content is and isn’t accessible and how users can contact the council for assistance | **SR12** |  |
| Social Media Policy new | Example available from NALC | **BP** |  |
| Press and Media Relations Policy new | Example available from NALC | **BP** |  |
| Calendar of council meeting dates inc. Annual Parish Meeting new | As agreed and minuted at a parish council meeting | **BP** |  |
| **Play Areas** (Skip section if council does not own, manage or operate play areas) | |  | |
| Record of play equipment inspections | A comprehensive listing of when, how and by who play equipment was inspected including details of any defects found during weekly visual inspections. The council must ensure its record keeping is exemplary as the records will be scrutinized should there be an accident investigation. | **BP** |  |
| Record of Annual inspection and copies of inspection certificate | All play equipment should be professionally inspected on an annual basis (at least) and a certificate issued. Council has a legal duty of care towards those using the play area. | **BP** |  |
| Record of contractors’ insurance,  including copies of contractor’s liability  insurance documents | Councils should ensure that wherever contractors are engaged that they are qualified, competent and carry sufficient insurance to carry out the work. Can be organised as a checklist of contractor’s competencies. | **BP** |  |
| Play Area Management and Improvement Plan new | This will help the council to plan for equipment replacement and should be considered alongside the inspection records. | **BP** |  |
| **Burial Authorities** (Skip section if council does not own, manage or operate burial grounds) | |  | |
| Burials Administration Policy new | To be open and transparent | **BP** |  |
| Register and record of burials | Must retain documents indefinitely | **SR13** |  |
| Register of graves | Must retain documents indefinitely | **SR14** |  |
| Map of graves/cemetery | Must retain documents indefinitely | **SR15** |  |
| Record of exclusive rights of burial | A definitive listing of any grants made by the council for burial rights. | **SR16** |  |
| List of Cemetery charges | To be open and transparent | **BP** |  |
| **Allotments** (Skip section if council does not own, manage or operate allotments) | |  | |
| Allotments Register | Recording size, location, tenant, plot number etc | **BP** |  |
| Allotments Plan | Visual representation of Allotment Register | **BP** |  |
| Tenancy agreements | Including copies of those issued and a blank for new tenants | **BP** |  |
| List of allotment charges | To be open and transparent | **BP** |  |
| Copy of allotment rules | To be open and transparent | **BP** |  |

12 Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018

13

Local Authorities’ Cemeteries Order SI 204

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Local Authorities’ Cemeteries Order SI 204

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Local Authorities’ Cemeteries Order SI 204

16

Local Authorities’ Cemeteries Order 1977, Sch 2 pt. II

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| **Financial** |  |  | |
| Accounts (e.g. daybook) | Normally kept in electronic format, e.g. Excel spreadsheet or specialised finance software. | **SR17** |  |
| Prior year Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) | Retain for audit trail | **BP** |  |
| Bank mandate new | To list all signatories and authorisations | **BP** |  |
| Bank statements | Retain for audit trail | **BP** |  |
| Cheque books | Retain old books for audit trail | **BP** |  |
| Paying in books | Retain old books for audit trail | **BP** |  |
| Invoices and receipts | Should retain for 6 years plus current year (VAT requirement) | **BP** |  |
| Insurance documents | Inc. Cert of employer’s liability, public liability. Since 1 October 2008 there has been no legal requirement for employers to keep copies of out-ofdate certificates. However, employers are strongly advised to keep, as far as is possible, a complete record of their employers’ liability insurance | **BP** |  |
| VAT reclaim record | HMRC can request to review records up to 6 years after the current financial year, so it is best to retain records for 6 years. | **BP** |  |
| Investment Policy new | Sample available from NALC | **BP** |  |
| Investment certificates / bonds | Retain indefinitely | **AR** |  |
| Asset register (inc. Record of deeds) | Sample available from NALC | **AR** |  |
| Grant giving policy and application form new | Sample available from NALC | **BP** |  |
| Record of grants made under S137 | Recorded in accounts separately | **SR18** |  |
| Record of borrowings | To allow the council to fully appreciate its financial situation. | **BP** |  |
| Financial risk assessment new | Sample available from NALC | **BP** |  |
| Schedule of charges & fees for council information new | Model publication scheme | **SR19** |  |
| Reserves Policy new | Sample available from NALC | **BP** |  |
| Internet Banking Policy new | Dependent on which bank the parish uses | **BP** |  |
| Procurement new | Partly covered by Financial Regulations | **BP** |  |
| **Employment & Personnel** |  |  | |
| Employing people procedures | Recruitment policy, induction arrangements, appraisal procedures etc. | **BP** |  |
| Written statement of particulars of employment | Model available from NALC (2011 edition).  Employers have a duty to supply on the first day of employment. | **SR20** |  |
| Job description (Clerk) | Model available from NALC (2011 edition). Not a legal requirement as such but extremely inadvisable to employee someone without one as | **BP** |  |

17

Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003, SI 2003/533

18

Local Government Act 1972 s 137(4)

19

Freedom of Information Act 2000

20

Employment Rights Act 1996, pt. 1, s.1

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|  | lack of clarity around roles is the biggest cause of employment grievance. |  |  |
| Job descriptions (other staff) | To be written be the council and should be as accurate as possible to prevent misunderstanding of roles. | **BP** |  |
| Working from home policy | Where relevant. Covers use of home, home security, lone working, access by other members of staff, councillors, and members of the public. | **BP** |  |
| Expenses Policy | The level of expenses paid, including mileage rates, subsistence, telephone etc. | **CR** |  |
| Working Time Policy new | TOIL, leave, hours, should be in contract or staff handbook | **BP** |  |
| Grievance procedures | Model available from CALC. Guidance is provided in the form of the ACAS Code of Practice on Discipline and Grievance. Including provisions for whistleblowing. | **BP** |  |
| Disciplinary procedures | Model available from CALC. Guidance is provided in the form of the ACAS Code of Practice on Discipline and Grievance. | **BP** |  |
| Bullying and Harassment / Dignity at Work | ACAS produce advice leaflets | **BP** |  |
| Equality & Diversity Policy | Very small councils with only a single employee may decide not to have a written policy but must nevertheless comply with relevant discrimination legislation (e.g. age/sex discrimination, disabled access etc). Councils with more than one employee should certainly have a written policy and the concepts of equal treatment extend to councillors as well as staff. | **BP** |  |
| Computer use, electronic  communications and telephone Policy | Sets out how/when computers will be used, the policy for backing up data, how e-mail and telephone communications will be dealt with etc. This policy applies to anyone using computers or sending or receiving phone and/or electronic communications on behalf of the council, including individual councillors. | **BP** |  |
| Payroll Record | HMRC requirement – retain for 3 years | **BP** |  |
| Notice of tax codes | Or copy of agreement to code out | **BP** |  |
| Holiday record | To ensure the correct leave is taken | **BP** |  |
| Sickness absence policy and records | Sample available from NALC | **BP** |  |
| Business Continuity Plan new | Sample available from NALC | **BP** |  |
| Health & Safety Policy | Including fire policy and procedures, computer screen usage, eye care generally, alcohol and drug policy, work station setup, food hygiene etc. Every council must have one, but if there are fewer than  5 employees this doesn’t have to be written down. | **SR21** |  |
| Accident Book new | Available to purchase, or use Excel | **BP** |  |
| Training Statement of Intent | All councils should have a statement outlining the CPD/training requirements for councillors and staff for the year. A model is available from NALC. | **BP** |  |

21

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 Chapter 37

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| Training Record new | Detailing courses each councillor has been on | **BP** |  |
| Pension & Retirement Policy | Sets out whether the council uses the Local Government Pension Scheme or another pension scheme. Includes details of how employees’ contributions will be calculated for a pension and pension administration details. Will also include a statement in reference to working age requirements. | **SR22** |  |
| Auto-enrolment Records new | Must be kept by law | **SR23** |  |
| Family friendly policy | Including details of flexible working arrangements and provision for maternity/paternity/adoption/parental leave. | **BP** |  |
| Disabled Access Audit | To comply with the Equality Act 2010 | **SR24** |  |
| Employee Code of Conduct new | Employee Code dealing with, for example, provisions for disclosing pecuniary interests. | **BP** |  |
| Lone working (other staff) new | To be written be the council and should be as accurate as possible | **BP** |  |
| Use of own vehicles for work new | Should outline insurance provision and mileage reimbursements (if applicable) | **BP** |  |
| Annual appraisal records new | Requirement under SO 19(c) in the Model Standing Orders (2016) | **BP** |  |
| ***Environment*** |  |  | |
| Development control policy | A list of policies on which the council will base its responses to planning applications. May be, or include reference to, a Neighbourhood Plan, Village Design Statement, Parish Plan or Landscape Character Assessment. | **BP** |  |
| Certificate of waste disposal | A copy is required for any dog waste bins that are owned, managed or controlled by the council. | **SR** |  |
| Green space audit | To ensure compliance under the Natural  Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006 | **BP** |  |
| Lighting Policy new | For the provision and operation of street lighting | **BP** |  |
| Trees Policy new | Detailing inspection method and frequency etc | **BP** |  |
| Parish Map new | To be clear where all boundaries lie | **BP** |  |
| Sustainability Policy new | Recycling, green energy, waste | **BP** |  |
| Snow risk assessment new | To outline what the council will do | **BP** |  |
| ***Buildings & Facilities*** |  |  | |
| Letting Charges and Hiring Policy new | To be open and transparent | **BP** |  |
| Asbestos Risk Register new | Owners and occupiers of premises have a duty to manage asbestos | **SR[[4]](#footnote-4)** |  |
| COSHH Risk Assessment new | To cover any chemicals used or other hazardous materials. All councils in control of buildings or facilities must carry out a risk assessment and those employing five or more employees must also record significant findings. | **SR[[5]](#footnote-5)** |  |

22

Pensions Act 2008 Chapter 30

23 The Pensions Acts 1995, 2004, and 2008

24

Equality Act 2010

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| Security new | To highlight procedures when securing buildings | **BP** |  |
| ***Council Management*** |  |  | |
| Controller documentation (Article 30  GDPR) new | Template available from NALC | **SR** |  |
| List of personal data consents new | Template available from NALC | **SR** |  |
| Business Plan new | Sample available from NALC | **BP** |  |
| Partnership agreements new | Outlining the relationship between the parties | **BP** |  |
| Parish Charter with principal councils  new | Northamptonshire Councils Charter | **BP** |  |
| Member/Officer Protocol new | Sample available from NALC | **BP** |  |
| Byelaws – copies of new | Should retain copies of all byelaws | **BP** |  |
| Child Protection / Vulnerable Person Policy / DBS new | When using staff or volunteers that will have direct access to vulnerable or potentially vulnerable people | **BP** |  |
| Customer Service Charter new | Setting out what standards members of the public can expect from the council | **BP** |  |
| Document Management & Retention  Policy new | Example available from NALC | **BP** |  |
| List of passwords new | Should be held securely by the Clerk and Chair | **BP** |  |

The current version of All UK legislation, including Acts of Parliament, Regulations and Statutory Instruments can be found at [https://www.legislation.gov.uk.](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/)

This is a working document and is not intended to be a definitive list. We welcome feedback and suggestions as to what else should be included. Also, if you spot any error or omission please do let us know. Please contact info@northantscalc.com.

1. Local Government Act 1972, s.135, Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015, reg.4 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Local Government Act 1972, Sch 12, para 41 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Localism Act 2011 s27 (3a), 28 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 (Regulation 4) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)