



Seaford Town Council Full Council Agenda – Thursday, 25th July 2024

To the Members of the Full Council

Councillors S Adeniji, S Ali, L Boorman, C Bristow, R Buchanan, R Clay, S Dubas, F Hoareau, O Honeyman, R Honeyman, J Lord, S Markwell, O Matthews, J Meek, G Rutland, L Stirton, R Stirton, I Taylor, L Wallraven and M Wearmouth

A meeting of the **Full Council** will be held at **Cross Way Church, Clinton Place, Seaford, BN25 1NP** on **Thursday, 25th July 2024** at **7.00pm**, which you are summoned to attend.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Chugg', written over a faint circular stamp.

Adam Chugg,

Town Clerk

19th July 2024

PLEASE NOTE:

- **The meeting will be recorded and uploaded to the Town Council's YouTube channel shortly after the meeting.**
- **See the end of the agenda for further details of public access and participation.**
- **Ahead of the meeting, the Mayor has requested that a short poem is read before the meeting. Anyone not wishing to take part in this poem reading is invited to wait until 6.55pm before attending the meeting.**

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

To consider apologies for absence.

2. Disclosure of Interests

To deal with any disclosure by Members of any disclosable pecuniary interests and interests other than pecuniary interests, as defined under the Seaford Town Council Code of Conduct and the Localism Act 2011, in relation to matters on the agenda.

3. Public Participation

To deal with any questions, or brief representations, from members of the public in accordance with relevant legislation and Seaford Town Council Policy.

4. Petitions

In accordance with the Town Council Petitions Policy, this is a standard agenda item to facilitate any public petitions being presented to, and noted by, Full Council. Please note, that this would not prompt a discussion on the petition at this meeting.

5. Minutes

To note the following minutes, approving or not approving recommendations as required:

5.1	Full Council	9 th May 2024	<u>09.05.24 Full Council Draft Minutes</u>
5.2	Planning & Highways	27 th June 2024	<u>27.06.24 Planning & Highways Draft Minutes</u>

6. [Mayor's Update Report](#)

To consider report 49/24 presenting the Mayor's update and details of engagements attended (pages 6 to 8).

7. Town Council Working Group Reports

A standard agenda item to accommodate reports from active Town Council Working Groups.

8. Outside Body Representative Reports

A standard agenda item to enable Town Councillors appointed as representatives of outside bodies of the Town Council to give brief verbal updates on relevant business / activities of the outside body, for noting only.

9. District & County Councillor Update Report

To give an opportunity for an update from councillors at a District or County level on business and activities that effect Seaford and the local area.

10. [Town Clerk's Update Report](#)

To consider report 56/24 providing an update on key Town Council work and work priorities for the Town Council (pages 9 to 16).

11. [Seaford Health Stakeholders Working Group](#)

To consider report 46/24 recommending that a Seaford Health Stakeholders Working Group is established (pages 17 to 25).

12. Task & Finish Group Review of Complaints Procedure

To consider report 41/24 presenting the revised and retitled Concerns and Complaints Policy (pages 26 to 53).

13. Internal Communications Procedure

To consider report 48/24 presenting the draft Internal Communications Procedure. (pages 54 to 69).

14. Standing Orders Review from Finance & General Purposes Meeting

To consider report 50/24 presenting the recommendation from the Finance & General Purposes Committee to adopt the revised Standing Orders policy document (pages 70 to 104).

AGENDA NOTES

For further information about items on this Agenda please contact:

Adam Chugg, Town Clerk, 37 Church Street, Seaford, East Sussex, BN25 1HG

Email: meetings@seafordtowncouncil.gov.uk

Telephone: 01323 894 870

Circulation:

All Town Councillors and registered email recipients.

Public Access:

Members of the public looking to access this meeting will be able to do so by:

1. Attending the meeting in person.

Due to health and safety restrictions, the number of public in attendance will be limited. The Town Council therefore asks that you contact

meetings@seafordtowncouncil.gov.uk or 01323 894 870 to register your interest in attending at least 24 hours before the meeting.

Spaces will be assigned on a first come, first served basis.

Please note that if you don't register and just attempt to turn up at the meeting, this could result in you not being able to attend if there is no space.

OR

2. Watching the recording of the meeting on the [Town Council's YouTube channel](#) , which will be uploaded after the meeting has taken place.

Public Access to the Venue:

If you are attending the meeting in person, please arrive from 6.45pm ready for a 7pm meeting start.

Public Participation:

Members of the public looking to participate in the public participation section of the meeting must do so in person, by making a verbal statement during the public participation section of the meeting.

Below are some key points for public participation in the meeting:

1. Your statement should be relevant to the activities of the Town Council.
2. You will only be able to speak at a certain point of the meeting; the Chair of the meeting will indicate when this is.

3. You do not have to state your name if you don't want to.
4. If you are unsure of when best to speak, either query this with an officer/councillor ahead of the meeting or raise your hand during the public participation item of the meeting and ask the Chair – they will always be happy to advise.
5. When the Chair has indicated that it is the part of the meeting that allows public participation, raise your hand and the Chair will invite you to speak in order.
6. Statements by members of the public are limited to four minutes and you don't automatically have the right to reply. The Chair may have to cut you short if you overrun on time or try to speak out of turn – this is just to ensure the meeting stays on track.
7. Where required, the Town Council will try to provide a response to your statement but if it is unable to do so at the meeting, may respond in writing following the meeting.
8. Members of the public should not speak at other points of the meeting.
9. A summarised version of your statement, but no personal details, will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

Public Comments

Members of the public looking to submit comments on any item of business on the agenda can do so in writing ahead of the meeting and this will be circulated to all councillors.

Comments can be submitted by email to meetings@seafordtowncouncil.gov.uk or by post to the Town Council offices.

Health & Safety Measures:

While Covid restrictions are no longer mandated the Town Council wishes to stay vigilant and mindful of the health and safety of its meeting participants by upholding the requirement that you should not attend the meeting if you are displaying any Covid-19 symptoms (or have tested positive) as identified on the [NHS website](#) or symptoms of any similarly contagious illness



Report No:	49/24
Agenda Item No:	6
Committee:	Full Council
Date:	25th July 2024
Title:	Mayor's Report July 2024
By:	Isabelle Mouland, Assistant Town Clerk
Purpose of Report:	To present the mayor's update report and details of engagements

Recommendations
Full Council is recommended:
1. To note the content of the report.

1. Information

- 1.1 The Mayor's update report can be found at Appendix A.
- 1.2 Details of mayoral engagements between 20th June and 25th July meeting can be found below.
- 1.3 The Mayor of Seaford has attended the following:
 - (a) Concentus Choir Summer Concert
 - (b) Sussex Day
 - (c) Seahaven FM Radio Interview
 - (d) Chyngton School Summer Fair
 - (e) Seaford Rotary's Young Musician of the Year
 - (f) Mayor's Civic Reception
 The Deputy Mayor of Seaford has attended:
 - (a) Telscombe Summer Fayre
 - (b) Seahaven FM Radio Interview
 - (c) Towards Zero Carbon, Peacehaven

2. Financial Appraisal

2.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.

3. Contact Officer

3.1 The Contact Officer for this report is Isabelle Mouland, Assistant Town Clerk.

Report 49/24 Appendix A

Mayor's Report to 25th July 2024 Town Council

I have been delighted to continue a busy diary of events, meeting so many committed groups and organisations across Seaford over the past month.

I have also been investing considerable time in updating our Town Council policies alongside councillors and officers as well as steering specific interests in health and well-being.

I continue to feel an enormous privilege in this role and as we have just launched the Mayor's community picnic pack on our website* I look forward to a summer full of picnics!

Councillor Sally Markwell, Mayor of Seaford 2024 to 2025

* Community Picnic Packs available online here:

<https://www.seafordtowncouncil.gov.uk/mayors-page/>



Report No:	56/24
Agenda Item No:	10
Committee:	Full Council
Date:	25th July 2024
Title:	Town Clerk's Update Report – July 2024
By:	Adam Chugg, Town Clerk
Purpose of Report:	To update Full Council on key Town Council work and work priorities for the Town Council

Recommendations
Full Town Council is recommended:
1. To note the contents of the report.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 It remains a very busy time for the Town Council, but also an exciting one with a number of key areas of work being taken forward. I want to thank councillors and officers for all their hard work in this period that has made a real difference.
- 1.2 It has been an especially busy time operationally as the Town Council has taken on maintenance of the urban verges, is finishing the Martello toilet and café project, and undertaking the review of the staff structure.
- 1.3 It has been positive to see officers and councillors working together on the new Complaints Policy and Internal Communications Policy, both of which appear elsewhere on this agenda.
- 1.4 Please find below the following:
 - Key performance indicators including motions passed, complaints and Freedom of Information requests
 - Forward planning summary

2. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

2.1 Please find below information on motions passed, complaints received, Freedom of Information (FOI) requests received and appeals submitted since the last report in May 2024

2.2 *Motions Table*

Please note that the motions listed below are those where actions after the meeting were required by the Town Council (STC).

DATE	MOTION	UPDATE
May 2024	Election of Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs, Appointment of Memberships of Committees	Changes enacted
May 2024	Changes to Outside Body Arrangements and Appointment of Councillor representatives	Changes enacted
May 2024	Annual Subscriptions	List agreed and being enacted Unfortunately, the Survey Monkey subscription renewal had already taken effect, so this subscription is live for a further year This will be avoided going forwards by reviewing subscriptions as part of the budget setting process rather than in May (this is covered in the revision of the Standing Orders elsewhere on the agenda)
May 2024	25 th Anniversary	The measures agreed are being taken forward

DATE	MOTION	UPDATE
		including logos, publicity, signage, expanded Seaford Town Forum meeting and obtaining a Town Council flag
May 2024	Youth Ambassador Board	Plans for the first meeting of the new board are progressing
May 2024	Complaints Procedure Review	The task & finish group is bringing its recommendations to July Full Council
May 2024	Councillor Training	Sessions are being arranged
May 2024	Civility and Respect – Councillor Officer Protocol	Adopted and being implemented
May 2024	Leases	Work is underway on the leases that require review in 2024 - 2025, as listed in the May Full Council report
May 2024	Policies Schedule of Work	Reviews and implementation ongoing – further update was provided at July Finance & General Purposes Committee
June 2024	Annual Governance Statement [AGAR]	Signed off by June Full Council. Public notice period published accordingly.

DATE	MOTION	UPDATE
		Arrangements for external audit in place
June 2024	Tree planting in Crouch	Arrangements agreed with Trees for Seaford being taken forward
June 2024	Internal Communications Procedure	The task & finish group is reporting to Full Council in July
June 2024	Bönningstedt Steps Concession	Temporary Concession agreed with Skipper watersports. External review of procurement, tenders and concessions taking place in the autumn

2.3 *Complaints Table*

Please find below details of the formal complaints received in accordance with the Town Council's Complaints Policy.

DATE	COMPLAINT	UPDATE
July 2024	The Crouch – Football Club Working Group arrangements	Complaint under investigation

2.4 Please note that this is the reporting that is possible in a public document. Any complaints relating directly to employees are handled confidentially in accordance with the Town Council's Complaints Policy and are not included in this update.

2.5 *FOI Requests Table*

DATE	FOI REQUEST	UPDATE
March 2024	Concessions Tender Process	Response sent
April 2024	The View Lease	In progress

DATE	FOI REQUEST	UPDATE
May 2024	Seaford Head Land Management Agreement	Response sent
May 2024	Grass Verge Cutting and Recreation Grounds Maintenance Contracts	Response sent

2.6 Appeals

The Town Council has received one appeal, relating to a complaint about how the adverts on the Crouch were treated. This appeal is being considered.

3. Forward Planning

3.1 The Town Council is very busy – please find below an update against 11 key priorities for this year that form part of the implementation of the Town Council’s Strategic Plan.

No	Priority	Update
1	Complete and implement staff review, structure and committee reviews	Staff review and structure review are progressing well and there will be a report to August Full Council.
2	D-Day celebrations / Updated Christmas Magic	The successful D-Day event was held in June as the nation came together to mark the 80 th anniversary. Christmas Magic will take place on 30 th November 2024, with Seaford Trader’s Group and Seaford Chamber of Commerce working together to bring events to the town on the same day.
3	Golf Course Longer Term Plan / 17 th green project	A new, long term plan for the golf course will be developed this year

		Reports on proposals are being presented to the Golf & The View Committee
4	The View 'year one'	The Town Council is meeting the new tenants regularly and dealing with any operational issues that arise
5	Projects and Tenders – Martello toilet café and Changing Places; urban verges; toilet cleaning	<p>The public opening for Martello toilet, café and changing places facility is in July.</p> <p>The team are working with contractors and others on snagging issues and responding to some public queries.</p> <p>The Town Council has appointed a contractor for the urban verges and this work is underway. The Town Council has also issued publicity and map to help guide the public on which verges it manages with the hope this will reduce queries in time</p>
6	25 th Anniversary	The measures agreed are being taken forward including logos, publicity, signage, expanded Seaford Town Forum meeting and obtaining a Town Council flag
7	Seaford Head – South Hill Barn; National Nature Reserve (NNR) Proposals	<p>The South Hill Barn Working Group is expected to report to Full Council in September.</p> <p>Work is also taking place behind the scenes on the NNR proposals that will come to Full Council in due course.</p>

8	Climate Action	The Town Council's Climate Emergency Policy took effect on 30 th June 2024 and the Town Council is now working on its Climate Delivery Plan, through the Climate Change Sub-Committee, to support the implementation of this policy.
9	Camper Van Parking	The Town Council is waiting for East Sussex County Council to confirm when enforcement can start on the new restrictions
10	Youth Ambassador Board	The first meeting of the new board is being planned.
11	Lewes District Council and South Downs National Park Authority Local Plans	The relevant stages of each plan will be considered by the Town Council's Planning & Highways Committee. The Town Council will also make sure that any public consultation opportunities are publicised and maximised.

3.2 The Crouch Working Group

3.3 The intention had been that the group would report back to this Full Council meeting but this has been delayed. There has been a related complaint received that should be dealt with before this report can be finalised and presented. At the same time, the Town Council will also be making sure that sufficient consideration and scrutiny has been given to the matters the group were asked to consider. A report is now being prepared for the September Full Council meeting. The temporary arrangements agreed last autumn in relation to the gates, adverts and floodlighting will remain in place during this period.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 I trust this provides an overview of key Town Council business for Councillors and residents, showing the mix of operational and strategic activities.

5. Financial Appraisal

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.

6. Contact Officer

- 6.1 The Contact Officer for this report is Adam Chugg, Town Clerk.



Report No:	46/24
Agenda Item No:	11
Committee:	Full Council
Date:	25th July 2024
Title:	Seaford Health Stakeholders Working Group
By:	Isabelle Mouland, Assistant Town Clerk
Purpose of Report:	To establish a Seaford Health Stakeholders Working Group.

Recommendations
Full Council is recommended:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To establish a Seaford Health Stakeholders Working Group. 2. To note the Working Group's Stakeholder invite list. 3. To agree the Working Group's Terms of Reference. 4. Appoint up to four town councillors to the Working Group.

1. Introduction

- 1.1** Since 2004, Seaford Town Council has hosted meetings with stakeholders on health services in Seaford.
- 1.2** The group started as a liaison committee and then became one of the Town Council's outside bodies.
- 1.3** At the Town Council's Annual Meeting on 9th May 2024, it was agreed, due to the group being managed internally at the Town Council, to remove the group from the outside bodies list with a view to establishing it as a working group.
- 1.4** The most recent Seaford Health Stakeholders Group meetings have discussed health statistics for Seaford such as loneliness, mental health and access to healthcare. The Group has welcomed presentations from organisations

carrying out research and projects such as Wave Active and East Sussex County Council.

2. Seaford Health Stakeholder Working Group

2.1 Over the years, the Town Council has built and maintained a stakeholders list, these stakeholders are invited to quarterly, daytime meetings to discuss health matters in Seaford and connect groups and services.

2.2 The current list of stakeholders is below:

Citizens Advice Bureau

Wave Leisure

Seafriends

Access Seaford

East Sussex County Council

Lewes District Council

NHS Midwifery

NHS Sussex

NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board

Old School Surgery

Seaford Downs Syndrome and Special Needs Support Group

Seaford Medical Practice

Seaford Osteopathic Clinic

Seaford Seniors Forum

Seaford Town Council

Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

2.3 The group's meetings are arranged and minuted by Seaford Town Council officers.

2.4 The current Chair of the group, appointed by the group, is Councillor Markwell.

2.5 For continuity the group met on Wednesday 22nd May 2024 and the minutes of this meeting can be found at Appendix A. Please note that the scheduled meeting on 17th July has been postponed to September.

2.6 The group has drafted a Terms of Reference which can be found at Appendix B for Full Council consideration.

2.7 It should be noted that the group has no decision-making powers and that should the group wish to share information or make any recommendations,

these will be formally presented at a relevant Committee or Full Council meeting.

- 2.8** The Town Council is recommended to establish the Seaford Health Stakeholders Group as a working group and confirm its Terms of Reference.

3. Seaford Town Council Representation

- 3.1** When the group was an outside body, the Town Council appointed four town councillor representatives to the group.
- 3.2** It is recommended that the Town Council appoints up to four town councillors to the group.
- 3.3** Councillor Markwell and Councillor Taylor have indicated that they wish to continue on the group.
- 3.4** Following this appointment to the group, appointment will be made annually at the Town Council Annual Meeting.

4. Financial Appraisal

- 4.1** There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.

5. Contact Officer

- 5.1** The Contact Officer for this report is Isabelle Mouland, Assistant Town Clerk.



Seaford Town Council

Seaford Health Stakeholders Group

Council Chamber, 37 Church Street, Seaford

Wednesday 22nd May 2024 at 2pm

Attendees

Cllr Sally Markwell (**SM**), Seaford Town Councillor (Chair of Health Stakeholders)

Isabelle Moulard (**IM**), Assistant Town Clerk, Seaford Town Council (minute taker)

Sarah Archer (**SA**), CEO, Lewes District Citizens Advice

Ben Brown (**BB**), Consultant in Public Health MSc FFPH, ESCC

Zena Gibbs (**ZG**), Access Seaford

Nicola Hone (**NH**), PCN Transformation Manager, Seaford Medical Practice

Duncan Kerr (**DK**), CEO, Wave Active

Cllr Imogen Taylor (**IT**), Seaford Town Councillor

Sarah Tye (**ST**), Community, Engagement and Stakeholder Manager, Property and Development, LDC

Marion Wilyman (**MW**), NHS Midwifery

Apologies

Karen Hoskin, Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

Cllr Carolyn Lambert, East Sussex County Council

Mary Lumley, Seafriends

Barry Smith, Seaford Seniors Forum

Minutes

1. Apologies for Absence

1.1. Noted, recorded above.

2. Introductions

2.1 **SM** welcomed all to the meeting and attendees introduced themselves.

3. Minutes of Meeting: 17th January 2024

3.1. Noted.



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3.2. Matters arising:

SM reported that since their introduction at the last meeting, Seafriends and Wave Active have joined forces and a local chat group has been established.

IM reported that the Group's disabled parking question is still with LDC and she will continue to chase for a response.

4. Presentation: *Connected People and Places, Ben Brown*

4.1. The Connected People and Places project started at the end of the Covid pandemic to research and implement systems to tackle loneliness.

4.2. The presentation is attached.

5. Questions

5.1. **IT** shared information about research relating to 'kindness' and why/how we are sometimes programmed to either not offer or be scared to offer kindness to others. Friends of Bishopstone Station was discussed as a brilliant example of a community hub.

***BB** explained that meetings have been and will continue to be held to decide what is needed from Stewards.*

5.2. **ZB** discussed how the physicality of a place of residence can have a huge effect on a person's interaction with others, for example being in a block of flats with on-site facilities and shops gives a sense of community.

***BB** responded that the project hopes to feed into the planning system suggestions to support connectivity.*

5.3. The Group asked about where funding will come from.

***BB** responded that ESCC is funding some of the project and research, but then it is hoped that collaboration from others will share the work, using funding already in place.*

5.4. The Group asked if Stewards would be volunteers or paid.

***BB** responded that there would be some and some, it is a very broad role and no expectation to devote a certain amount of time. They would be seen more as knowledge providers, however the project is still figuring out how to monitor the interest and sharing of information.*



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6. Updates from Participants

- 6.1. **DK** – Looking to recruit more people into Wave Health, especially clinical support to expand offer.

The second cohort have started the hypertension programme, 28 have signed up and it is going well so far.

Wave Active and South Downs Health and Care have teamed up to run a health and wellbeing 'hub' at the Denton Road site in Meads – this is being transferred from the University of Brighton.

IT to set up a meeting between the University of Brighton and **DK**.

ZG commented that people would love to see the return of the Seahaven Paralympics.

- 6.2. **ST** reported that the Newhaven Health Hub is coming along well. Nothing in the design has been particularly designated yet. The group discussed locality/boundaries and the possibility of Seaford/Bishopstone residents using Newhaven Health Hub, however it was explained that this is down to the commissioning body as they set the funding boundaries. **MW** asked about whether a midwife clinic might be considered within Newhaven Health Hub, **ST** advised for her to contact Newhaven GP practices.

ST reported that the NHS is still exploring properties for a Seaford Health Hub, but that there is no further information at present.

- 6.3. **NH** suggested that the Group's Terms of Reference should include an item relating to Seaford Health Hub and estates.

The Group discussed and it was acknowledged that it would not be necessary to specifically note this topic within the Terms of Reference as the agenda is 'open' but confirmed that the topic of Seaford Health Hub and estates can be discussed by the group at meetings if necessary.

- 6.4. **IT** expressed the need for GP surgeries to support from cradle to grave.

- 6.5. **ZG** discussed need for Lifetime Homes and for consideration in the planning system.



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- 6.6. **MW** discussed the recent report, highlighting national shortage of midwives. Questions have been raised to Richard Watson, Head of Health, Wellbeing, Partnerships and Integration – East Sussex NHS Sussex.
- 6.7. **SA** gave updated statistics for Seaford, attached to the minutes. The Group discussed funding shortfalls, volunteers and paid staff.

7. Presentation: Understanding our local health and wellbeing

- 7.1 Deferred to next meeting.

8. Questions

- 8.1. Deferred to next meeting.

9. Seaford Health Stakeholder Group Terms of Reference

- 9.1. Discussed at 6.3 – **IM** reported that the Terms of Reference will be presented to Seaford Town Council at a Full Council meeting when the Working Group is considered.

10. Plans for next Meeting

- 10.1. Presentation: Understanding our local health and wellbeing
- 10.2 Local Updates

11. AOB

- 11.1. N/A

12. Date of Next Meeting

- 12.1. Date: **17th July 2024 2-4pm** at Seaford Town Council Offices.



Seaford Town Council

SEAFORD HEALTH STAKEHOLDERS GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Purpose

Facilitation through Seaford Town Council of communications and engagement between stakeholders across health, social care, and health-related services across local communities including local people; to consider Seaford's health needs and assets with a view to identifying and improving health and wellbeing. This is an ongoing working group with no specific end date.

2. Membership

The membership of the Group will comprise of representatives from Seaford Town Council, East Sussex County Council, Lewes District Council, the Sussex Integrated Care Board, and other organisations delivering primary care, community health and social care, mental health and housing support, voluntary health and social support, and community and social enterprises.

The Town Council will keep a list of organisations invited to send representation to the Group. Any new organisation wishing to send representation to the Group can request so in writing to Seaford Town Council where it will be considered, in consultation with the Group's Chair.

Seaford Town Council representatives on the Group will be appointed annually at the Town Council's Annual Meeting.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Members of the group will work together to ensure:

- Representation at meetings
- Identification of local needs and assets
- Fostering of collaboration
- Consideration of realistic solutions
- Championing of the network.

4. Meetings

- Quarterly, daytime meetings
- Chair is elected by the group, by consensus
- Meeting agendas are provided by the Chair through Seaford Town Council officers
- Minute taking is provided by Seaford Town Council officers.

5. Reporting

From time to time, it will be necessary for the Group to report information or make recommendations to Seaford Town Council.

Seaford Town Council representatives on the Group will be invited at each Town Council Full Council meeting to provide any updates or share information on current Group activities.

The Working Group will be invited by Seaford Town Council officers to submit an annual report at the Seaford Town Council Annual Meeting.

6. Amendment

This Terms of Reference may be amended, varied or modified in writing after consultation and agreement by members of the group and Seaford Town Council.



Report No:	41/24
Agenda Item No:	12
Committee:	Full Council
Date:	25th July 2024
Title:	Task & Finish Group Review of Complaints Procedure
By:	Georgia Raeburn, Governance Manager
Purpose of Report:	To adopt the revised and retitled Concerns & Complaints Policy as presented

Recommendations
Full Council is recommended:
1. To adopt the Concerns & Complaints Policy as presented.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In May 2024, Full Council established a task & finish group to review the Complaints Procedure and present a revised version back to July Full Council for consideration.
- 1.2 This report provides details of the process undertaken by the task & finish group and presents the recommended policy documents for consideration and adoption by Full Council.

2. Review Process

- 2.1 When establishing the group in May, Full Council discussed:
 - (a) looking at other authorities policies,
 - (b) ensuring dedicated timescales within the procedure,
 - (c) ensuring the process facilitates non-digital complaints,
 - (d) the inclusion of an independent panel member,
 - (e) how to differentiate a complaint, concern or information request, and

(f) a flow diagram or other mediums to help guide the user through the process.

2.2 The task & finish group consisted of Cllrs R Buchanan, O Honeyman, S Markwell and R Stirton, supported by the Governance Manager, Assistant Town Clerk and HR & Governance Assistant.

2.3 The task & finish group met initially in June to:

(a) review the current procedure,

(b) discuss the approach taken by other councils / authorities,

(c) discuss the accessibility and user-friendliness of the process,

(d) identify how to expand this process to provide an option for 'concerns' and not just formal complaints,

(e) identify how councillors may work alongside officers to be involved in supporting with the handling of concerns or complaints,

(f) identify where timescales could and should be included,

(g) discuss how to test the proposed new process, and

(h) consider how to aid the transition to the new process.

2.4 Following the above, the group worked together to review the complaints documentation and processes for submitting and handling these.

2.5 The draft documents and process were then trialled on a live complaint. The group wishes to extend its gratitude to those involved in this trial run, as this provided key insight and learning into the proposals that could not otherwise have been known.

2.6 The task & finish group then met again in July to:

(a) receive an update on the trial run of the proposed process,

(b) review and finalise the revised documents,

(c) discuss and agree the process for presenting these to Full Council, and

(d) consider how to successfully implement the revised process.

3. Revised Documents

3.1 Attached as appendices are the following documents:

2024 Concerns & Complaints Policy

Appendix A – Concerns & Complaints Flowchart

Appendix B – Concerns & Complaints Form

Appendix C – Personnel Complaints Panel Terms of Reference

- 3.2** Due to the significant change in its content, the Concerns & Complaints Policy has been presented as a new document, rather than as tracked changes on the previous document.
- 3.3** The revised policy has been revamped with clear principles (aligning with the Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman's complaints processes) and relying on its appendices, rather than delving too heavily into the procedural matters in the policy document itself.
- 3.4** Councillors wishing to see the current Complaints Procedure can find this on the [Town Council's website](#).

4. Referencing

4.1 When working on this review, the following have been reviewed by officers:

- [National Association of Local Councils Legal Topic Note – Handling Complaints](#)
- [Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman's Good Complaint Handling resources](#)
- [Local Government Ombudsman's Good Complaint Handling Guide](#)
- [Lewes District Council's Complaints Management Policy](#)
- [Lewes District Council's Complaints Against Councillors resources](#)
- Other town council's complaints procedures:
 - [Frome](#)
 - [Hailsham](#)
 - [Newhaven](#)
- Those relevant other Town Council policies (as listed within the appended policy document itself)

5. Implementation

- 5.1** The intention is that the new policy would become live with immediate effect.
- 5.2** Any live complaints will migrate over to the new Concerns & Complaints process, following a discussion with the complainant to ensure they understand any impacts of the revised process and are happy with this.
- 5.3** The concerns or complaints will be able to be submitted online, via electronic or paper form. For emailed forms, these will be received through a shared mailbox, ensuring that this is monitored every day.

- 5.4 Support, training or guidance needs for those involved in complaint handling will be considered

6. Monitoring / Review

- 6.1 As a heavily revised policy, with new supporting documents, it is intended to review this initially 12 months after adoption i.e. July 2025.
- 6.2 The task & finish group will be reconvened – liaising with those involved in handling concerns and complaints – to review the new policy and supporting documents and present its findings back to Full Council.
- 6.3 After that point, the policy would then be due for review every three years.

7. Summary

- 7.1 The task & finish group is recommending that Full Council adopts the new policy and supporting documents as presented.
- 7.2 The group has undertaken a thorough review of the needs with regards to concern and complaint submission and handling – supported by a trial run of the proposed scheme – and believe that the proposals now presented will enable good, open and fair concern and complaint handling.

8. Financial Appraisal

- 8.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.

9. Contact Officer

- 9.1 The Contact Officer for this report is Georgia Raeburn, Governance Manager.



Seaford Town Council

Concerns & Complaints Policy

Policy Ref.	XX
Date Last Adopted	July 2024
Date of Next Review	July 2025, then 3 yearly after that
Possible Prompts for Earlier Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is important that policy documents are monitored for effectiveness and practicality. Where there are amendments required (whether from an internal review or change in legislation or best practice, for example) that cannot or should not wait until the next scheduled review date, this shall prompt an earlier review
Previous Adoption Dates	TBC
Author	Governance Manager

Concerns & Complaints Policy

Seaford Town Council aims to provide the best possible service to the residents of Seaford but recognises that from time to time, users of our services may feel that the quality or level of service is less than they could reasonably expect.

This policy sets out the Town Council's statement around receiving and handling concerns or complaints, supported by relevant procedural documents to ensure complete clarity for all involved as to the process and timescales to be followed.

1. Contents

This policy document presents:

Section 2 – confirming the scope of the policy

Section 3 - the Town Council's principles for good complaint handling

Section 4 – the procedure for submitting a concern or complaint and an overview of the key parts of the internal procedure for handling this

Section 5 – details of supporting appendices

2. Scope

This policy applies to members of the public and other third parties looking to raise a concern or complaint.

A councillor or officer looking to raise an internal concern or complaint should refer to the Town Council's Internal Communications procedure or Grievance Procedure (officers only).

3. Principles

Whilst not under its jurisdiction, the Town Council has aligned itself with the Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman¹ and, as such, identifies and commits to the below as the underlining principles of good complaint handling:

a. Getting it right

- *acting in accordance with law and relevant guidance,*
- *ensuring good leadership and well equipped and trained staff,*

¹ Source: <https://www.ombudsman.org.uk/about-us/our-principles/principles-good-complaint-handling>

- *having clear governance arrangements, and*
 - *focussing on outcomes for the complainant and council*
- b. Being customer focussed
- *ensuring clear and simple procedures,*
 - *ensuring good two-way communication channels with complainants,*
 - *dealing with complainants promptly and sensitively,*
 - *listening to the complainant to understand the complaint and outcome sought, and*
 - *responding flexibly and helpfully*
- c. Being open and accountable
- *publishing a clear process*
 - *publishing clear service standards for complaint handling*
 - *providing honest, evidence-based explanations and giving reasons for decisions, and*
 - *keeping full and accurate records*
- d. Acting fairly and proportionately
- *treated all complainants impartially,*
 - *ensuring complaints are investigated thoroughly and fairly to establish the facts,*
 - *ensuring that decisions are proportionate, fair and appropriate,*
 - *ensuring that complaints are reviewed by someone not involved in the events leading to the complaint, and*
 - *acting fairly towards staff complained about as well as towards complainants*
- e. Putting things right
- *acknowledging mistakes and apologising where appropriate,*
 - *providing prompt, appropriate and proportionate remedies,*
 - *considering all relevant factors of the case when offering remedies, and*
 - *taking account of any injustice or hardship that results from pursuing the complaint as well as from the original dispute*
- f. Seeking continuous improvement
- *using feedback and lessons learned to improve service design and delivery,*

- *having systems in place to record, analyse and report on learning from complaints,*
- *regularly reviewing lessons to be learnt from complaints, and*
- *where appropriate, telling the complainant about the lessons learnt and changes made to services, guidance or policy*

4. Procedure

This policy covers concerns, complaints and appeals.

4a – Definitions

Concerns are defined as *a worry or doubt over something important enough to need some reassurances.*

Complaints are defined as *dissatisfaction over actions taken - or not taken - with a resolution sought.*

Appeals are defined as *dissatisfaction of a complaint outcome where you wish to have this revisited.*

4b – Supporting Documents

The Concerns and Complaints Flowchart guides you through the process for:

- Identifying whether you have a concern, complaint or appeal into the outcome of a complaint
- Submitting your concern, complaint or appeal
- The process to expect for handling your concern, complaint or appeal and the related timescales
- What to do if you are not happy with the outcome

The Concerns and Complaints Form will be used to:

- Submit your issue, providing enough detail to ensure the Town Council can triage this
- Enable the Town Council to consider who best to handle your concern or complaint
- Enable the Town Council to ensure good record-keeping and reporting of appropriate concerns and complaints

The form can be submitted online, via email or in paper format.

N.B. As per the flowchart, appeal requests are submitted separately in writing (by email or post), not using the Concerns & Complaints Form.

4c – Internal Process

Due to the breadth of Town Council services and potential nature of concerns or complaints submitted, there will be differing approaches to handling these. These are summarised below:

Type	Area	Responsible for handling*
Concern	Service Delivery	Relevant councillor or officer
Concern	Officer Conduct	Line manager or Mayor/Chair of Personnel
Concern	Councillor Conduct	Town Clerk and Mayor
Complaint	Service Delivery	Head of service
Complaint	Officer Conduct	Line manager or Personnel Complaints Panel (see 4d below)
Complaint	Councillor Conduct	Handled externally by District Council's Monitoring Officer (see 4e below)
Appeal	Service Delivery	Appeals Committee (see 4f below)

* If the individual postholder cannot handle the concern or complaint, a suitable alternative will be identified.

There may also be times when a revised process has to be followed to ensure that the principles within this policy can be met. In that case, any change to process will be discussed with the complainant and those involved, to ensure all parties are in understanding.

If a submission is a request for information, this will be handled in accordance with the Town Council Freedom of Information Request procedure.

4d – Officer Conduct

Complaints about an individual employee of the Town Council would be dealt with as an employment matter and with the necessary sensitivity.

The complaints will be handled by the line manager or, in the case of the Town Clerk or other officers where deemed appropriate, the Personnel Complaints Panel shall be convened to handle the complaint.

The terms of reference of the Personnel Complaints Panel are appended to this policy.

4e – Councillor Conduct

Complaints about a councillor are handled by Lewes District Council's Monitoring Officer.

Email complaints marked for the attention of 'The Monitoring Officer' can be sent to: committees@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk

For more information on the process, please visit Lewes District Council's website at: <https://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/article/1409/Complaints-against-councillors> or contact Lewes District Council on 01273 471600.

4f – Appeals

If you feel that a complaint outcome is unsatisfactory then an appeals process may also be available.

Appeals can be submitted in relation to the outcome of all complaints EXCEPT those relating to the conduct of an officer or councillor.

Appeals are handled by the Town Council's Appeals Committee, the process of which is set out within the Concerns and Complaints Flowchart.

The Committee's decision on an appeal is final.

4g – Reporting

All concerns and complaints received through the above process will be entered on to the Town Council's Concerns & Complaints Log (unless regarding a member of staff or councillor).

The Town Clerk will produce a report for Full Council meetings providing an overview of any concerns and complaints received and outcomes – this will include any appeals against general complaint outcomes. All personal details will be excluded when reporting the complaint to Full Council to ensure confidentiality is maintained.

5. Appendices

The following are appendices to this policy, supporting the concern and complaint submission and handling:

Appendix A – Concerns & Complaints Flowchart

Appendix B – Concerns & Complaints Form

Appendix C – Personnel Complaints Panel Terms of Reference

6. Other Relevant Policy Documents

The Town Council has other policy documents that may be relevant to be read alongside this document. This includes:

Councillor Officer Protocol

Dignity at Work Policy

Freedom of Information Request Procedure

Internal Communications Procedure

Grievance Policy

Member's Code of Conduct

All Town Council policy documents can be found online at:

<https://www.seafordtowncouncil.gov.uk/council-policies/>

Seaford Town Council

Concerns and Complaints Flow Chart

It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage.

This flowchart demonstrates how at Seaford Town Council we will respond to a concern or a complaint and identifies both the actions residents can take in raising a concern or a complaint (or subsequent appeal) and the timelines that are involved.

Some key definitions:

Concerns: A concern may be defined as a worry or doubt over something important enough to need some reassurances

Complaints: A complaint may be defined as dissatisfaction over actions taken - or not taken - with a resolution sought

Appeals: If you feel a complaint outcome is unsatisfactory then an appeals process may also be available

Within this document you will find:

To begin with: Helping you to define if you have a concern, complaint or appeal

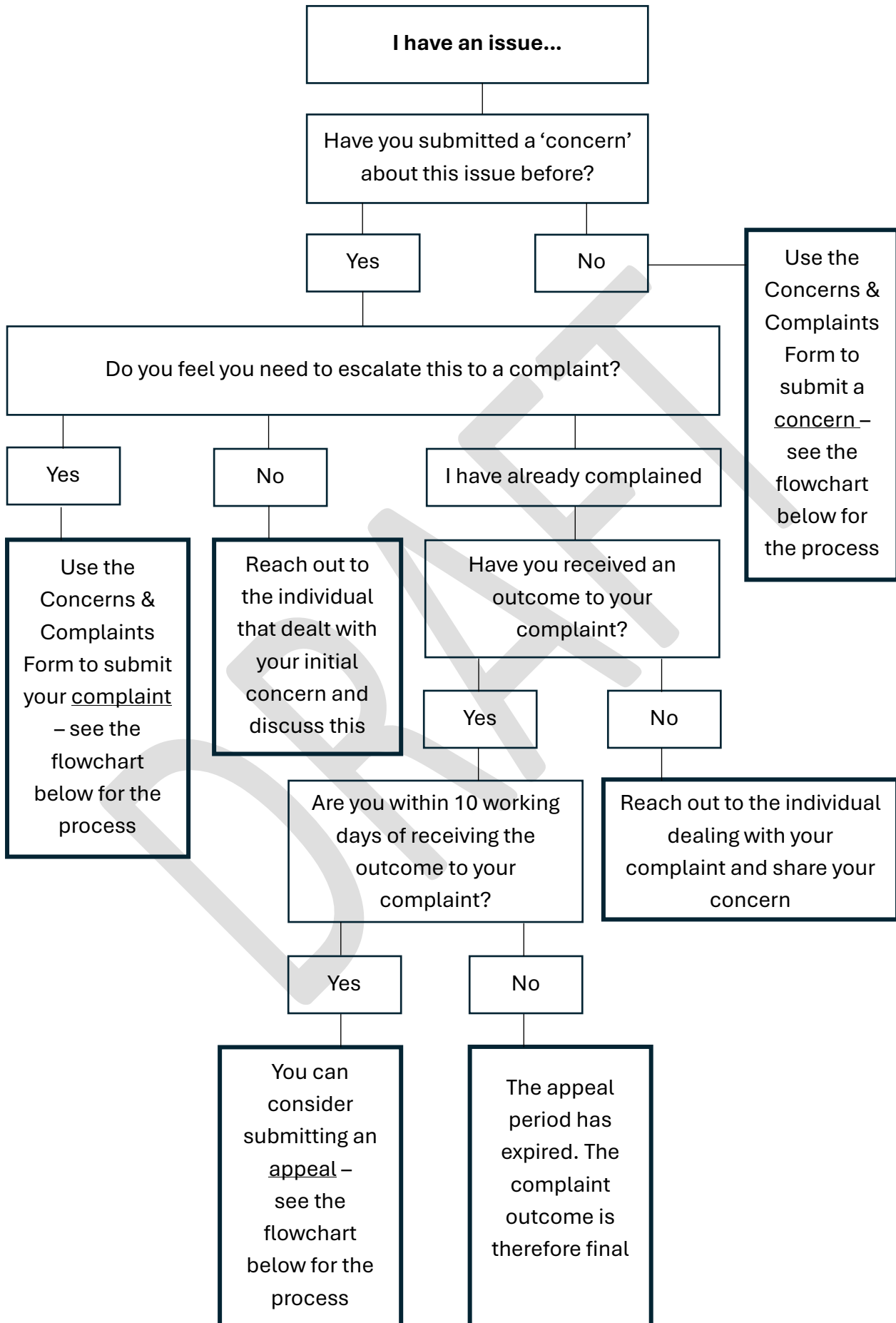
Concerns: Setting the process for submitting a concern

Complaints: Setting out the process for submitting a complaint

Appeals: Setting out the process for submitting an appeal

If you need any guidance with this, please contact admin@seafordtowncouncil.gov.uk or 01323 894 870

To begin with: Define if you have a concern, complaint or appeal



CONCERNS

A concern may be defined as a worry or doubt over something important enough to need some reassurances

Access the Form

- Online at [[WEB LINK](#)]
- Request by email to concerns@seafordtowncouncil.gov.uk
- Call to request a form on 01323 894 870

Complete the Form

- Either online, electronically in the Microsoft Word document or on a paper version
- If you need any additional help with the form, please get in contact by email at concerns@seafordtowncouncil.gov.uk or phone on 01323 894 870

Submit the Form

- Online at [[WEB LINK](#)]
- By email to concerns@seafordtowncouncil.gov.uk
- By post to Seaford Town Council, 37 Church Street, Seaford, East Sussex, BN25 1HG

Initial Response

- You will receive an initial response within **3 working days** of your submission
- This initial response will invite you to take part in the next stage of the process, providing you with a number of options (see below)

Discussion

- You will be invited to discuss your concern ideally by phone call, face-to-face meeting or video meeting, but by email if this is your chosen method
- This may be with an officer or councillor, depending on the nature of your query
- This discussion will be offered within **10 working days** of your initial response

Outcome

- An outcome to your concern will be provided in writing within **5 working days** of the discussion / email exchange at the above stage
- If longer is required to provide you with an outcome, you will be informed of an expected timescale. We will touch base with you weekly to inform you of progress against this

Follow On

- If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your concern, you may wish to consider taking this forward to a complaint
- The flowchart overleaf sets out details of the complaints process

COMPLAINTS

A complaint may be defined as dissatisfaction over actions taken
- or not taken - with a resolution sought

Access the Form

- Online at [[WEB LINK](#)]
- Request by email to complaints@seafordtowncouncil.gov.uk
- Call to request a form on 01323 894 870

Complete the Form

- Either online, electronically in the Microsoft Word document or on a paper version
- If you need any additional help with the form, please get in contact by email at complaints@seafordtowncouncil.gov.uk or phone on 01323 894 870

Submit the Form

- Online at [[WEB LINK](#)]
- By email to complaints@seafordtowncouncil.gov.uk
- By post to Seaford Town Council, 37 Church Street, Seaford, East Sussex, BN25 1HG

Initial Response

- You will receive an initial response within **3 working days** of your submission
- This initial response will invite you to take part in the next stage of the process, providing you with a number of options (see below)

Discussion

- You will be invited to discuss your complaint ideally by phone call, face-to-face meeting or video meeting, but by email if this is your chosen method
- This may be with an officer or councillor, depending on the nature of your query
- This discussion will be offered within **10 working days** of your initial response

Investigation

- Following the initial discussion, the investigation will take place
- This may include information gathering and/or meeting with other individuals and, as such, cannot have a specific timescale assigned to it. Investigations should not however take longer than **15 working days** to complete, unless they are particularly complex

Outcome

- An outcome to your complaint will be provided in writing as soon as possible following the conclusion of the investigation

Appeal

- If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you may be able to appeal against its outcome
- You will need to submit your wish to appeal in writing **within 10 working days** of receiving the complaint outcome
- The flowchart overleaf sets out details of the Appeals process

APPEALS

An appeal may be defined as dissatisfaction of a complaint outcome where you wish to have this revisited

Can you appeal?

- Appeals can be submitted in relation to the outcome of all complaints EXCEPT those relating to the conduct of an officer or councillor

Appeal Request

- An appeal should be requested in writing:
- By email to appeals@seafordtowncouncil.gov.uk
- By post to Seaford Town Council, 37 Church Street, Seaford, East Sussex, BN25 1HG

Initial Response

- You will receive an initial response within **3 working days** of your request to appeal
- This initial response will confirm the status of your appeal and set out the exact process to follow given the nature of your appeal

Appeals Committee

- A meeting of the Appeals Committee will be convened to hear and determine your appeal
- The committee meeting will take place within **15 working days** of the initial response to your request to appeal
- You will be invited to present your appeal to the committee
- If the appeal is expected to overrun its timescale, you will be informed of this and the reasons why

Outcome

- The outcome of your appeal will be notified to you in writing within **2 working days** of the committee meeting

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Seaford Town Council

Concerns & Complaints Form

Please use this form to let us know about an issue that you are experiencing – we will initially respond within three working days and then take the necessary steps to look into your issue, communicating with you as we do so.

For further information on the concern and complaint handling process, please see the flowchart at the end of this form.

Additional Help

Complaints must be submitted in writing. This includes electronic submissions. However, in line with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2000, we can make reasonable adjustments to assist you if you have a disability that prevents you from making your complaint in writing.

We can also help if English is not your first language or you require this form in **large print**.

If you need any support in completing this form, please let us know as soon as possible by email to admin@seafordtowncouncil.gov.uk or by phone on 01323 894 870.

1. Contact Details

Please provide us with your contact details to enable us to come back to you once you have submitted the details of your issue.

1a. Name: (Required)	
1b. Email or Postal Address – please enter your preferred method of communication: (Required)	
1c. How would you describe yourself? (Required) (tick the boxes as appropriate)	<input type="checkbox"/> A resident of Seaford <input type="checkbox"/> A visitor to Seaford <input type="checkbox"/> Representing an organisation or group
1d. If representing an organisation or group at 1c above, please provide the name of the organisation or group in box below: (Required) <i>By providing the organisation or group name, you confirm that you have authority to submit this on their behalf.</i>	
Organisation/group name:	

2. Nature of Issue

This section enables us to better understand the issue being experienced and assign this to the correct person to take forwards.

<p>2a. Please select from options below to let us know the area of Seaford Town Council responsibilities your issue relates to: (Required) (tick however many are appropriate)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <u>Governance</u> i.e. Town Council meetings, policies or procedures</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <u>Facilities and Services</u> i.e. open spaces, public toilets, grass cutting, beach huts</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <u>Finance and Transparency</u> i.e. budgets, accounts, contracts and tenders</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <u>Civic</u> i.e. Mayoral and civic events</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <u>Seaford Head Golf Course</u></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <u>Councillor Conduct</u></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <u>Officer Conduct</u></p>
<p>2b. Please identify if your issue is a concern or a complaint, considering the definitions provided below: (Required) (tick the box as appropriate)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> My issue is a CONCERN</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> My issue is a COMPLAINT</p>
<p>We have defined a CONCERN as a worry or doubt over something important enough to need some reassurances.</p> <p>We have defined a COMPLAINT as dissatisfaction over actions taken - or not taken - with a resolution sought.</p>	

2c. Please provide a statement around the issue you are experiencing, with specific details such as:

- When it became personal to you
- What the specific issue is
- Relevant dates
- Confirm if there are any witnesses
- Confirm any background

(Required – 250 words maximum)

There will be an opportunity to expand on this at a later stage of this process

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3. Communication with the Town Council

This section allows us to understand any previous communications you have had with the Town Council on your issue.

Please provide the details as best you can, as this enables us to better understand the background relating to your issue.

3a. Have you raised your issue with anyone at the Town Council before? (Required)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
3b. If yes to 3a above, please use the boxes below to provide us with an overview of: (Required)	
Who you dealt with:	
When this was (date):	
How you communicated (email, phone, face-to-face):	

4. Outcome

This section is crucial for enabling us to better understand how you would like to see your issue be resolved.

4a. How do you envisage Seaford Town Council resolving this issue for you? (Required – 250 words maximum)

5. Declaration

I believe that the facts stated in this complaint form are true.

Signed*..... Date.....

**If you are submitting this form by email and do not have a digital signature, please just type your name instead.*

If you need any support in completing this form, please let us know as soon as possible by email to admin@seafordtowncouncil.gov.uk or by phone on 01323 894 870.

##END OF FORM##

SUBMISSION:

Please now submit your form one of two ways:

- 1) By email to concerns@seafordtowncouncil.gov.uk or complaints@seafordtowncouncil.gov.uk
- 2) By post to Seaford Town Council, 37 Church Street, Seaford, East Sussex, BN25 1HG

CONFIDENTIALITY:

Your contact details will be used to communicate with you about your complaint, being shared with the relevant officer / councillor to enable this communication to take place.

The general content of your form will need to be shared with those responsible for handling your issue.

Where your issue relates to a councillor or officer, we will not share your identity with the councillor or officer without your permission.

The nature of your issue may be summarised in reports to the Town Council but will not include any of your personal data.

For more information on how the Town Council handles personal data, please see the Privacy Policy available online at <https://www.seafordtowncouncil.gov.uk/privacy-policy/>

INTERNAL USE ONLY:

Internal Ref:	
Type:	
Category:	Process / Officer / Councillor
Date submitted:	
Date initial response: (+ 3 working days)	<i>Due by DATE</i>
Date discussion:	
Investigation:	
Outcome given: (+ 10 working days)	<i>Due by DATE</i>
Appeal deadline: (+ 5 working days)	<i>Date TBC</i>

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Seaford Town Council

Personnel Complaints Panel Terms of Reference

Purpose

The Personnel Complaints Panel is a key part of the Town Council's framework for ensuring that complaints relating to officers are handled impartially, discreetly and fairly.

Scope

In accordance with the Town Council's Complaints Procedure, the Personnel Complaints Panel is primarily responsible for two areas:

- handling complaints relating to the actions of the Town Clerk, and
- handling complaints relating to the actions of other officers, where referred to the panel by the Town Clerk.

Panel Status

The Personnel Complaints Panel is not a formal committee of the Town Council and as such, there is no public right to access these meetings or legislative requirements for agendas or minutes.

Suitable records of the panel's meetings and activities will be maintained and will be stored centrally on the Town Council's systems.

Appointment

- The panel is Chaired by the Mayor or Deputy Mayor in their absence
- The members of the Personnel Committee will automatically be members of the panel

Quorum & Substitutes

- The panel's quorum shall be three
- Absent panel members can arrange for another Town Councillor to substitute in their absence (excluding members of the Disciplinary Sub-Committee or Appeals Committee)

- Substitute panel members would have full access to any documentation provided to panel members
- A Town Council officer or external support officer must be in attendance to facilitate a panel meeting and create appropriate notes

Meeting Frequency & Notice

- As and when required – no pre-arranged meeting dates
- The panel may choose to meet face-to-face or by Microsoft Teams
- There are no notice requirements for calling panel meetings – this will be agreed with the Chair. However, due consideration will always be given to the specifics of the complaint being considered and allowing reasonable time for this

Panel Decision-Making & Reporting

- The outcome of the complaint will be determined by the panel by majority vote
- An update on matters handled by the Personnel Complaints Panel will be provided at each Personnel Committee meeting

Panel Support

- When handling complaints against the actions of the Town Clerk, the panel will be supported by an external professional.
- The Town Council's HR & Governance Team will be responsible for providing the following support to the panel:
 - assisting with acknowledging the complaint,
 - convening panel meetings,
 - arranging appropriate external support,
 - attending relevant panel meetings,
 - providing access to any relevant Town Council records / documents and / or advising on Town Council policy or procedures,
 - if required, convening Disciplinary Sub-Committee meetings,
 - ensuring adequate records are stored on relevant personnel files.



Report No:	48/24
Agenda Item No:	13
Committee:	Full Council
Date:	25th July 2024
Title:	Internal Communications Procedure
By:	Isabelle Mouland, Assistant Town Clerk
Purpose of Report:	To present the draft Internal Communications Procedure for consideration

Recommendations
Full Council is recommended:
1. To adopt the Internal Communications Procedure.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At the Full Council meeting on 20th June 2024, the Town Council created a task and finish group to draft and present to this meeting an Internal Communications Procedure.
- 1.2 The task and finish group consisted of five town councillors, the Mayor of Seaford and the Assistant Town Clerk.
- 1.3 The group met on Thursday 27th June where it discussed good practice for communication, the roles within the Town Council, and reflected on experiences and methods to strengthen the Town Council's internal communication.
- 1.4 The Assistant Town Clerk created a first draft of the Internal Communications Procedure and presented it to the group which met again to share final thoughts on Monday 8th July.
- 1.5 The final draft Internal Communications Procedure can be found at Appendix A.

2. Internal Communications Procedure

- 2.1** As explained within report 32/24 presented at Full Council on 20th June, the Internal Communications Procedure is the first phase or ‘chapter’ of the Town Council’s Communications Strategy which will continue later in the year.
- 2.2** This Internal Communications Procedure sets out the Town Council’s standards and aspirations for internal communications (across councillors and officers), including what methods of communications should be.
- 2.3** This will aid greatly with a shared understanding and expectations across the whole Town Council team (councillors and officers).
- 2.4** The Internal Communications Procedure sets out 12 key principles for town councillors and officers to follow:
- To respect and understand the roles within the Town Council
 - To not expect communication from officers outside of the Town Council’s core hours which are between Monday and Friday 9.30am – 4.30pm
 - To communicate via email as the preferred method of communication
 - To ensure all communication is in line with Town Council policies
 - To always communicate using a professional and respectful tone both with and about town councillors and officers
 - To carefully consider who you are emailing, and whether it is necessary to copy in other roles
 - To not use ‘BCC’ when emailing as a way of ‘silently’ copying other roles into discussions
 - To have trust in the Town Council’s employees, their professional advice, experience, and delegated decision making
 - To utilise the Town Council’s structure by discussing ideas and/or concerns with committee chairs prior to taking further
 - If involved with specific projects and activities of the Town Council, to stay within the agreed scope
 - To respond to communication within the advised or suggested timeframe
 - To respect the workload of the Town Council and consider the impact on all roles

- 2.5 The Internal Communications Procedure introduces a streamlined method for town councillors to ask questions, including a new email address dedicated to receiving and responding to town councillor queries.
- 2.6 Questions from town councillors will also be logged to support officers in the creation of a Frequently Asked Questions list which will be shared with town councillors and officers to support all roles in understanding the Town Council's functions and when communicating with members of the public.
- 2.7 It also details the process for putting forward ideas and/or raising concerns, utilising the Town Council's structure.
- 2.8 The Internal Communications Procedure encourages professional and respectful communication between town councillors and officers, to foster good relationships within the Town Council and aid in the successful delivery of services to the town.
- 2.9 It is recommended that the Town Council adopts the Internal Communications Procedure.

3. Financial Appraisal

- 3.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.

4. Contact Officer

- 4.1 The Contact Officer for this report is Isabelle Mouland, Assistant Town Clerk.



Seaford Town Council

Internal Communications Procedure

Procedure Ref.	TBC
Date Last Adopted	
Date of Next Review	January 2025 / as part of the creation of Communications Strategy
Possible Prompts for Earlier Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Changes in staff structure• Additions/changes to technology and/or Town Council communication software
Previous Adoption Dates	N/A
Author	Assistant Town Clerk

Internal Communications Procedure

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1. [Introduction & 12 Key Internal Communication Principles](#)
2. [Roles and Relationships](#)
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4. [Questions and Feedback from Town Councillors](#)
5. [Town Councillors' Access to Documents and Information](#)
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7. [Town Councillors Raising Concerns](#)
8. [Town Councillor Involvement on Specific Projects](#)
9. [Communications from Officers to Town Councillors](#)
10. [Respectful Communication](#)
11. [Data Protection](#)
12. [Other Relevant Policy Documents](#)

1. Introduction & 12 Key Internal Communication Principles

Councillors and officers are indispensable to one another and mutual respect and communication between both is essential for good local government. Together, they bring the critical skills, experience and knowledge required to manage an effective council. Town councillors provide a democratic mandate to the Town Council, whereas officers contribute the professional and managerial expertise needed to deliver the strategy agreed by town councillors. The roles are very different but need to work in a complementary way¹.

Good communication between town councillors and officers is therefore vital to ensure the successful running of Seaford Town Council.

There are two methods of communicating:

- Proactive – telling people information to influence and change attitudes
- Reactive – giving people information they have requested.

Various roles within the Town Council must regularly communicate on matters relating to the Town Council's duties and functions as and when appropriate.

The purpose of this procedure is to set out the ways in which town councillors and officers will communicate, being clear on how and when to communicate, in order to promote good practice and support all roles within the Town Council.

Key Internal Communication Principles

Following discussions with town councillors and officers, the following 12 key principles have been identified as the underlining principles of good internal communication. All roles within the Town Council will commit:

¹ LGA 2024, *A Councillor's Workbook on Effective Councillor/Officer Relationships*, available at <https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/councillors-workbook-effective-councillor-officer-relationships#constructive-challenge> (accessed July 2024)

- 1.1. To respect and understand the roles within the Town Council
- 1.2. To not expect communication from officers outside of the Town Council's core hours which are between Monday and Friday 9.30am – 4.30pm
- 1.3. To communicate via email as the preferred method of communication
- 1.4. To ensure all communication is in line with Town Council policies
- 1.5. To always communicate using a professional and respectful tone both with and about town councillors and officers
- 1.6. To carefully consider who you are emailing, and whether it is necessary to copy in other roles
- 1.7. To not use 'BCC' when emailing as a way of 'silently' copying other roles into discussions
- 1.8. To have trust in the Town Council's employees, their professional advice, experience, and delegated decision making
- 1.9. To utilise the Town Council's structure by discussing ideas and/or concerns with committee chairs prior to taking further
- 1.10. If involved with specific projects and activities of the Town Council, to stay within the agreed scope
- 1.11. To respond to communication within the advised or suggested timeframe
- 1.12. To respect the workload of the Town Council and consider the impact on all roles

2. Roles and Relationships

In order for the business of Seaford Town Council to be conducted effectively, it is necessary for there to be a close working relationship between the town councillors and officers. It is important not to create a culture of 'us' and 'them'.

The Town Council has adopted a Councillor-Officer Protocol which underpins best practice for building and maintaining good working relationships between town councillors and officers.

Mutual respect, trust and good communication are key to establishing good councillor and officer relations. Officers and town councillors are encouraged to think

about each other's area of work. It helps for officers and town councillors to be more aware of what each do and how they can work with them.

When communicating with town councillors, officers are encouraged to 'think councillor' by observing the following six principles:

- a) To recognise the needs and expectations of town councillors;
- b) Keep councillors suitably informed;
- c) Provide a high standard of service and show respect to councillors at all times, and remain political neutral;
- d) Support councillors to carry out their roles;
- e) Find out what councillors need and respond to it; and
- f) Work positively with councillors to continually improve services for the people of Seaford

In turn, when communicating with officers, town councillors are encouraged to 'think officer' by observing the following six principles:

- g) Trust and respect the officers' professional advice;
- h) Understand the staff structure and different areas of officer responsibility;
- i) Support officers when communicating with members of the public;
- j) Respect officer time, work prioritisation and working hours;
- k) Show respect to officers at all times; and
- l) Work positively with officers to continually improve services for the people of Seaford

3. Communication Methods

The preferred method of communication is via email. The use of email not only keeps a record of the communication for future reference, but it also supports officers and town councillors in managing workload and helps bridge the gap in usual working hours i.e. officers are generally working daytime weekdays whereas town councillors in evenings or at weekends.

Officers and town councillors have been provided with a Town Council email account which is to be used for all Town Council communication, in line with the Town Council's [Acceptable Use of Computer, Internet & Email Facilities](#) policy.

As per the Town Council's Councillor/Officer Protocol, it is important that officers and town councillors use a professional and respectful tone in emails and that emails between an individual town councillor and an officer should not normally be copied to any other town councillors or officers. Where exceptionally it is necessary to copy the email to another town councillor or officer, this should be made clear to the original sender.

Where a town councillor or officer is copied in using the "CC" system, this indicates for information purposes only. Responses will only be expected from recipients in the "TO" system, between those directly emailed in the "TO" system and the original sender. It is not advisable to use 'reply all' as this can not only put a strain on inboxes, but can also risk information being shared where it should not.

A system of "silent copies" should not be used at all. However, acknowledging that the "BCC" system (a system where an email address put in the BCC box is hidden when the email is sent) is available on Seaford Town Council email accounts, if used, it should be made clear at the foot of any e-mails if another town councillor or officer has received the email by adding "this email has been sent to" and list all recipients without contact information.

It will sometimes be necessary for officers and town councillors to speak on the telephone or face to face, but to continue with workload support it will be essential to start initial communication via email and then for a telephone or face to face appointment to be agreed.

4. Questions and Feedback from Town Councillors

It is to be expected that town councillors will have questions about a variety of subjects relating to their role as an individual town councillor, and the running of the Town Council.

You may feel that when you read Town Council documents that you are not getting the whole picture or that you would like further information on past decisions or

actions. The questions that you ask can often be the most valuable way to solicit further information.

There are different types of questions, and it is worth considering which you may wish to deploy in different situations:

Closed questions – short factual answer, often resulting in a yes/no answer;

Open – deliberately seeks longer answers;

Probing – seeks further information in an investigative way;

Clarifying – seeks to clarify an opinion;

Opinion finding – asks for an opinion.²

Town councillors will also receive feedback and questions from members of the public and will want to seek answers from officers to enable them to respond appropriately.

The Town Council employs a number of officers, all working within different parts of the Town Council's functions, with diverse areas of expertise. Officers work from various locations, and within different working hours.

To ensure that questions from town councillors can reach the appropriate officer to be dealt with efficiently, an email account has been created specifically for town councillor questions - councillorquestions@seafordtowncouncil.gov.uk this account is monitored daily, Monday-Friday.

Once received, the email will be logged and acknowledged, and an officer will respond to the question appropriately and within five clear working days (not including the day of the email and day of response). The acknowledgement email to the town councillor will advise of the response date. In order to support officers in managing workload, in extreme circumstances (such as staff illness) it might be necessary to advise the town councillor of a slight delay in response, should this be the case, the officer will indicate as best they can a likely response date.

² LGA 2024, *A Councillor's Workbook on Effective Councillor/Officer Relationships*, available at <https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/councillors-workbook-effective-councillor-officer-relationships#constructive-challenge> (accessed July 2024)

Town Councillors are also encouraged to speak to the Town Council's committee chairs. Committee chairs will have good knowledge of past, current and future Town Council activities relating to their committee and town councillors may find it useful to approach the relevant committee chair before emailing the office.

5. Town Councillors' Access to Documents and Information

Town councillors may request that officers provide them with such information, explanation and advice as they may reasonably need to assist them to discharge their roles as town councillors.

This may range from general information about some aspect of the Town Council's services to specific information on behalf of a member of the public. Where information is requested on behalf of a third party, it will only be provided if it is in the public domain and not subject to General Data Protection Regulations.

Every town councillor of a committee has a right to inspect documents about the business of that committee.

A town councillor that is not a member of a specific committee may have access to any document of that specific part of the Town Council provided:

- they can demonstrate clearly within their request, a reasonable need to see the documents in order to carry out their role as a town councillor; and
- the documents do not contain "confidential" or "exempt" information as defined by law.

Disputes as to the validity of a town councillor's request to see a document, on a need-to know basis, will be determined by the Town Clerk and the town councillor will receive a written justification for refusal.

6. Town Councillors Putting Forward Ideas

One of the responsibilities of a town councillor is to bring items to the Town Council for consideration. Items will vary in their subject and will require input from officers to

research governance, finance and delivery requirements. All ideas should be in line with the Town Council's [Strategic Plan](#).

In the first instance, town councillors should discuss ideas with the relevant committee chair and if suitable to go further, the committee chair will discuss with the Town Clerk or appropriate officer to consider bringing the idea to the relevant committee for consideration, reporting such action back to the town councillor. Another route may be for the committee chair to bring the idea to a CCMG meeting for wider discussion with other committee chairs and the Town Clerk before reporting any future action or next steps to the town councillor.

In order to support officers in managing both individual workload and the overall workload of the Town Council and its committees, in some circumstances it might be necessary to delay new ideas. Should this be the case, the Town Clerk or appropriate officer, with the chair of committee, will let the town councillor know the reasons for this and indicate likely dates with an action plan.

If the idea is unsuitable, the Town Clerk or appropriate officer, with the chair of committee, will respond to the town councillor feeding back the reasons for unsuitability or suggesting possible alterations to comply with governance, finance, and/or delivery needs.

7. Town Councillors Raising Concerns

Seaford Town Council defines a concern as a worry or doubt over something important enough to need some reassurances.

Occasionally, town councillors will have concerns about the operations of the Town Council.

Concerns relating to the Town Council's functions, such as projects, services, meetings, and community engagement should be directed via the Town Clerk using adam.chugg@seafordtowncouncil.gov.uk.

The Town Clerk will then review the concern(s) raised, in communication with the town councillor and appropriate officer(s), to take appropriate action(s). Should it be necessary, the concern(s) and appropriate action(s) will be discussed with relevant chairs of committees and/or the Mayor of Seaford.

For concerns relating to an officer, these should be raised with the Town Clerk. Concerns relating to the Town Clerk should be raised with the Mayor of Seaford and Chair of Personnel as set out in the [Town Council's Grievance Policy and Disciplinary Procedures](#).

8. Town Councillor Involvement in Specific Projects

Seaford Town Council is lucky to have a wealth of experience and expertise in its officers and town councillors. From time to time, officers will write to town councillors to seek involvement in specific projects where town councillors have proposed the project and/or are willing to share specific expertise. Past examples include the Martello Toilets design, the future of South Hill Barn, and meeting with stakeholders to improve partnership working to name a few.

It will be made clear, in writing from the leading officer of the project, what level of involvement is expected from the town councillor(s).

The Town Council may also create working groups, these will always have a terms of reference agreed by the Town Council which will include terms such as how many members are on the working group, how many officers, regularity and timing of meetings and when reporting is required.

9. Communication from Officers to Town Councillors

In order to support town councillors in their role, officers will need to communicate with town councillors regularly. These communications will come from various officers from different areas within the Town Council via email using the Seaford Town Councillor email addresses.

Some emails will be for information only, some will be important information for noting or briefings to inform councillors on projects, and some will require response. To support town councillors in managing busy inboxes, officers will use the subject heading of each email to determine the intention of the email:

- a) **FOR INFORMATION** – An email being circulated that might be of interest, for information purposes only. For example, an email from Lewes District Council about bank holiday bin collection, or an email from Sussex Police giving an update on recent briefings.
- b) **IMPORTANT INFORMATION** – An email being circulated which officers have identified as information town councillors should be aware of. For example, upcoming meeting/training/event dates, office Christmas closure dates, details of a project the Town Council has launched.
- c) **RESPONSE REQUIRED** – An email containing information which requires a response, and within the email officers will give a date that town councillors are expected to respond by. This supports officers in moving forward with projects. For example, confirming attendance to an upcoming meeting/training/event, or responding with views on outside body representative changes.
- d) **AGENDA/MINUTES** – An email containing the agenda for an upcoming, or the minutes of a recent, full council or committee meeting.

Officers will build and maintain a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) comprising of frequent questions from members of the public, town councillors and officers with their answers. These FAQs will be shared regularly with town councillors and officers to support them in understanding Town Council projects and services, and to help town councillors and officers when communicating with members of the public.

10. Respectful Communication

Mutual respect, trust and good communication are key to establishing good councillor and officer relations³.

³ LGA 2024, *A Councillor's Workbook on Effective Councillor/Officer Relationships*, available at <https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/councillors-workbook-effective-councillor-officer-relationships#constructive-challenge> (accessed July 2024)

As stated in the Town Council's [Dignity at Work Policy](#), Seaford Town Council will not tolerate bullying or harassment by, or of, any of its officers or town councillors. A definition of bullying and harassment, as well as the penalties, can be found in the policy.

Communication between councillors and officers that could be deemed bullying or harassment will be subject to the Town Council's [Grievance Policy](#), [Disciplinary Procedure](#), and [Member's Code of Conduct](#).

Examples of unacceptable behaviour are as follows; (this list is not exhaustive) spreading malicious rumours, insulting someone, ridiculing or demeaning someone, exclusion or victimisation, unfair treatment, overbearing supervision or other misuse of position or power, unwelcome sexual advances, making threats about job security, deliberately undermining a competent worker by overloading work and/or constant criticism, preventing an individual's promotion or training opportunities.

11. Data Protection

Town councillors will receive emails from members of the public. These emails will contain personal data such as email addresses, residential addresses, names and health information. Town councillors are reminded that they have a responsibility to protect personal data.

It is advised that town councillors should refrain from forwarding such emails containing personal data to officers, colleagues, and partner organisations. Should town councillors need to obtain advice on how to respond to questions from members of the public, this should be done by sending a new email to councillorquestions@seafordtowncouncil.gov.uk with the question, containing no personal data.

If it is thought completely necessary to forward an email from a member of the public containing personal data to officers, colleagues, and/or partner organisations, consent must be obtained in writing from the member of the public before forwarding.

Town councillors are reminded that the Town Council as a whole is open to Subject Access Requests (SARs). This is where a person can request that all documentation, emails etc. containing their personal data is sent to them. Please keep this in mind when communicating with officers, colleagues, and/or partner organisations.

It is also advised that once the communication with a member of the public is complete, correspondence is not stored and is deleted or destroyed appropriately.

Should a town councillor be concerned that they have breached data protection regulations, they must email admin@seafordtowncouncil.gov.uk at the earliest convenience to obtain advice from the Town Council's Data Protection Officer as soon as possible.

12. Other Relevant Policy Documents

The Town Council has other policy documents that may be relevant to be read alongside this document. This includes:

- Concerns & Complaints Policy
- Councillor Officer Protocol
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Freedom of Information Request Procedure
- Grievance Policy
- Member's Code of Conduct

All Town Council policy documents can be found online at:

<https://www.seafordtowncouncil.gov.uk/council-policies/>



Report No:	50/24
Agenda Item No:	14
Committee:	Full Council
Date:	25th July 2024
Title:	Standing Orders Review from Finance & General Purposes Meeting
By:	Georgia Raeburn, Governance Manager
Purpose of Report:	To present the recommendation from the Finance & General Purposes Committee to adopt the revised Standing Orders policy document

Recommendations
Full Council is recommended:
1. To adopt the Standing Orders Policy document.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 As a core part of a local council's governance documents, it is considered best practice that local councils review their Standing Orders annually.
- 1.2 As the first step of this review, the Finance & General Purposes (F&GP) Committee met and considered the revised Standing Orders at its meeting on 16th July 2024.
- 1.3 This report is now presenting the proposed Standing Orders for consideration and adoption by Full Council, as recommended by the F&GP Committee.

2. Information

- 2.1 Report 29/24 to the F&GP Committee provided:
 - (a) An introduction to the policy document that is the Standing Orders
 - (b) Details of the review process, and
 - (c) An overview of the changes being recommended by officers

- 2.2** Should members wish to revisit the report presented to the F&GP Committee, this can be viewed on the [Town Council's website](#) (page 60 onwards).
- 2.3** The Committee reviewed the revised Standing Orders and discussed some points for clarity but also the opportunity for further additions to aid the usability of the document.
- 2.4** Officers have carried out the additional work and attached at Appendix A to this report is the proposed Standing Orders with tracked changes. Please take note of the following though:
- (a)** Red text are the changes presented to the F&GP Committee
 - (b)** Blue text are the additions requested by the F&GP Committee
- 2.5** The additions requested by the Committee are:
- (a)** Greater clarity around the definition of 'notice' when discussing notice given ahead of meetings (new section 3d)
 - (b)** Acknowledgement of how agendas are prepared (revised section 9) and the three ways in which motions are brought to the meeting (revised sections 9.1, 9.2 and 9.3)
- 2.6** Full Council is asked to consider the proposed Standing Orders and recommended by the F&GP Committee to adopt these.

3. Financial Appraisal

- 3.1** There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.

4. Contact Officer

- 4.1** The Contact Officer for this report is Georgia Raeburn, Governance Manager.



Seaford Town Council

Standing Orders

2024 Review Version

Policy Ref.	C7	
Date Last Adopted	29 th June 2023 (addition made in March 2023)	
Date of Next Review	June 2024	
Possible Prompts for Earlier Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in national model Standing Orders 	
Previous Adoption Dates	May 2022 August 2021 June 2020 June 2019 May 2018 May 2017	May 2016 November 2014 June 2013 June 2012 March 2011
Author	Town Clerk	

Standing Orders

Introduction

Standing Orders are the written rules of Seaford Town Council. They are used to confirm the Town Council's internal organisation, administrative procedures, procedural matters for meetings and enable good and effective working relationships between officers and members.

Meetings of Full Council and its committees, councillors, the Proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer are subject to many statutory (legal) requirements. The Standing Orders confirm those statutory requirements.

These Standing Orders are based on the national model produced by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC). Standing orders that are within bold type contain statutory requirements and it is therefore recommended that councils adopt them without changing them. Other standing orders not in bold are designed to help the Town Council operate effectively but do not contain statutory requirements so they may be drafted or amended to suit the Town Council's needs.

The Town Council has a suite of other policies that may be made mention to in the Standing Orders. The Town Council has its adopted Financial Regulations which regulate and control the financial affairs and accounting procedures of the Town Council.

*** THIS CONTENTS PAGE AND THE NUMBERING / REFERENCING WITHIN THE DOCUMENT WILL BE FINALISED PRIOR TO THE FINAL VERSION BEING PUBLISHED***

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1 Rules of debate at all meetings

General Debate

- a Councillors shall address the presiding Chair.
- b A councillor shall indicate that they wish to speak by raising a hand and councillors shall be heard in the order in which they indicated. If two or more councillors indicate at once, the presiding Chair shall call upon one of them to speak before the other.
- c When given permission by the Chair of the meeting to speak councillors shall stand whilst addressing the Chair (except when a councillor has a disability or is likely to suffer discomfort). The Chair of the meeting may at any time permit a councillor to be seated when speaking.
- ed Whenever the presiding Chair speaks during a debate all other councillors shall be silent.
- de These rules apply to Full Council as well as committee and sub-committee meetings.

Motions

- ef Debate on an agenda item can and usually will take place prior to any motion being made.
- fg Reports, and 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.
- gh A motion (including an amendment) shall not be progressed unless it has been moved-proposed and seconded.
- hi A motion on the agenda that is not moved by its proposer proposed and seconded may be treated by the Chair of the meeting as withdrawn.
- ij 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.

Amendments

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

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

lm 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.

mn 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.

no 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.

op Subject to Standing Order 1(**qp**) below, only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the Chair of the meeting.

pq 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.

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

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

st 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 of the first amendment or at the very end of debate on the final substantive motion immediately before it is put to the vote.

Debate on Motions

t 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. in exercise of a right of reply.

u With the exception of 1(t) above, the Chair will only allow a councillor to speak again if the councillor is introducing new information.

v 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 requirements.

w 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.

y Excluding motions moved under Standing Order 1 (~~wv~~) above, the contributions or speeches by a councillor shall relate only to the motion under discussion and shall not exceed three minutes without the consent of the Chair of the meeting.

Voting

z 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(i) and (j)** below for the different rules that apply in the election of the Chair of the Town Council at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council.

aa **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 how each councillor present voted. Such a request shall be made before or after the vote but certainly before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.**

Point of Order

*bb During the debate of 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.

yc A point of order shall be decided by the Chair of the meeting and their decision shall be final.

2 Disorderly conduct at meetings

- a No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly – this includes councillors, officers, members of the public or other third parties present. 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~~ propose that the person be no longer heard or 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) above 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

- 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 suitable premises are available free of charge or at a reasonable cost.**
- b **A minimum of three clear days' notice of Full Council meetings must be given to councillors and the public. The minimum three clear days for notice of a meeting must not include:**
 - 1. **the day on which notice was issued**
 - 2. **the day of the meeting**
 - 3. **a Sunday**
 - 4. **a day of the Christmas break, a day of the Easter break, a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning**

- c A minimum of three clear days' notice of a committee or sub-committee meeting must be given to councillors and the public. The minimum three clear days for notice of a meeting must not include:
1. the day on which notice was issued
 2. the day of the meeting
- d [The notice referred to at 3b and 3c above refers to the public notice of the meeting and the summons served upon councillors to attend said meeting \(the front sheet of the agenda pack\). The Town Council also issues supporting reports with the agenda, in order to ensure that councillors have at least three clear days to consider the proposed motions.](#)
- e **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.**
- f Members of the public who are present at meetings during public participation 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, subject to the Town Council's Public Participation policy.
- g A person present at a meeting may not create an oral report or oral commentary (such as, for example, using an audio recorder to record that person's commentary on the meeting, or to take that person's verbal notes of the meeting) about a meeting as it takes place without permission [from the meeting Chair](#). This is so as to prevent disruption to or confusion at the meeting.
- h **Subject to Standing Order 3 (f), a person attending the meeting is permitted to film, photograph, make an audio recording of the meeting, or other means, in order to enable those not present to see or hear an accurate account of the meeting as it takes/took place or later in order to give them an accurate oral or written account of the meeting.**

i 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.

~~j A councillor shall indicate that they wish to speak by raising their hand and councillors shall be heard in the order in which they indicated. When given permission by the Chair of the meeting to speak councillors shall stand whilst addressing the Chair (except when a councillor has a disability or is likely to suffer discomfort). The Chair of the meeting may at any time permit a councillor to be seated when speaking.~~

~~k A councillor who speaks at a meeting shall direct their comments to the Chair of that meeting.~~

lj Subject to Standing Orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chair of the Town Council may in their absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chair of the Town Council (if any).

mk The Chair, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chair is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chair, 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.

nl Subject to a meeting being quorate, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the councillors or non-councillors with voting rights present and voting.

~~o 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(i) and (j) below for the different rules that apply in the election of the Chair of the Town Council at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council.~~

~~p~~ ~~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 either, show how each councillor present voted or show how the individual councillors voted – it will be up to the councillor requesting the recorded vote to state which record they are requiring. Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.~~

em 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 present and absent, noting those that have given apologies;
- 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.

fn **A councillor or a non-councillor with voting rights who has a disclosable pecuniary interest or another interest as set out in the Town 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.**

so **No business may be transacted at a meeting unless at least one-third of the whole number of members of the Full Council or committee are in attendance at the meeting (regardless of if they have declared an**

interest and abstained from voting or exited the meeting for an agenda item) and in no case shall the quorum of a meeting be less than three.

See **Standing Order 4d(viii)** below for the quorum of a committee or sub-committee meeting.

tp **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.

uq A meeting shall not exceed a period of three hours, except where a motion is passed by the meeting to extend beyond three hours.

vr In the event that a larger number of people than that which can be accommodated are present for a single item, it must be decided by Full Council (or committee) on whether to proceed with the item or adjourn or defer the matter for subsequent debate at a larger venue.

ws All formal meetings of Full Council and its committees must be administered by an appropriate Town Council Officer or, where that is not deemed appropriate, by an officer sourced from another local authority or authorised local government body.

4 Committees, sub-committees and working groups

- a The Town Council can operate two different types of committee or sub-committee;
 - i. Standing committees/sub-committees, which have ongoing responsibilities concerning the performance of the statutory powers and functions of the Town Council and related work.
 - ii. Advisory committees/sub-committees, which are usually created with short-term responsibilities or where the terms of reference do not fall within those of an existing committee.

- b Reference to a 'committee' or 'sub-committee' within the Standing Orders document refers to both standing and advisory committees/sub-committees.
- c **Unless Full Council determines otherwise, a committee may appoint a sub-committee whose terms of reference and members shall be determined by the committee.**
- d **The members of a committee may include non-councillors unless it is a committee which regulates and controls the finances of the Town Council.**
- e **Unless Full Council determines otherwise, all the members of an advisory committee and a sub-committee of the advisory committee may be non-councillors.**
- f Councillors who cannot attend a committee or sub-committee can appoint any councillor to attend in their absence as a voting ex-officio member (a 'substitute'). The absent councillor must advise the Town Clerk or Committee Clerk of the nomination.
- g All councillors who are not members of a committee (save for those attending as a substitute as per Standing Order 4f above) are entitled to attend the said meeting and participate but not vote and will leave for any confidential items of business.
- h Exempt committee papers for all committees and sub-committees will be issued to committee members and any substitutes but not non-committee or non-sub-committee councillors.
- i Any exception to the 4(g) or 4(h) above would be determined by the Proper Officer in consultation with Chair of the relevant committee, but councillors must understand that some matters will be ~~absolutely~~ confidential to the members of the meetings.
- j Full Council may appoint standing committees or advisory 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 Full 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(c) above, appoint and determine the terms of office of members of such a committee;
 - v. may, subject to Standing Orders 4(f) to (i) above, 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 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 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 sub-committee.
- k Full Council or one of its committees or sub-committees may appoint a working group to undertake a specific task.

- l Working groups are not subject to those Standing Orders relating to committees/sub-committees. For clarity, working group meetings are not public meetings; there are no notice or minutes requirements and no right for the public to access the meetings.
- m When a working group is established, its parent committee will determine clearly defined terms of reference, including whether or not the group has the ability to co-opt its own members, whether councillors or non-councillors.
- n Working groups will not have any decision-making powers beyond the ability to co-opt their own members, whether councillors or non-councillors. A working group will usually report back to its parent committee, making recommendations for decisions to be made.
- o Working groups are not usually subject to being re-established at each annual meeting (as committees/sub-committees are), save for in an ordinary election year where a change in councillors may mean this is required.
- p A working group will dissolve when its terms of reference have been completed or its parent committee determines the group's work has finished.

5 Ordinary Full Council meetings

- a In an election year, the annual meeting of the Town Council shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the new councillors elected take office.**
- b In a year which is not an election year, the annual meeting of the Town Council shall be held on such day in May as the Town Council may direct.**
- c If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the Town Council shall take place at 7pm.**
- d In addition to the annual meeting of the Town Council, at least three other ordinary meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times as the Town Council directs.**
- e The first business conducted at the annual meeting of the Town Council**

- shall be the election of the Chair and Vice-Chair (if any) of the Town Council.
- f** The Chair of the Town 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 Town Council, if any, unless they resign or become disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chair of the Town Council at the next annual meeting of the Town Council.
 - h** In an election year, if the current Chair of the Town Council has not been re-elected as a member of the Town Council, they shall preside at the meeting until a successor Chair of the Town Council has been elected. The current Chair of the Town Council shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chair of the Town Council but must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.
 - i** In an election year, if the current Chair of the Town Council has been re-elected as a member of the Town Council, they shall preside at the meeting until a new Chair of the Town Council has been elected. They may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chair of the Town Council and must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.
 - j** Following the election of the Chair of the Town Council and Vice-Chair (if any) of the Town Council at the annual meeting of the Town Council, the business of the annual meeting shall include:
 - i.** In an election year, delivery by the Chair of the Town Council and councillors of their acceptance of office forms unless the Town 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 Town Council of their acceptance of office form unless the Town Council resolves for this to be done at a later date;
 - ii.** Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of Full

- Council;
- iii. Receipt of the minutes of the last meeting of a committee;
 - iv. Consideration of the recommendations made by a committee;
 - v. Appointment of members to existing committees;
 - vi. Appointment of any new committees in accordance with Standing Order 4 above;
 - vii. Review of representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back;
 - viii. In an election year, to make arrangements with a view to the Town Council becoming eligible to exercise the general power of competence in the future;
 - ix. Review of inventory of land and assets including buildings and office equipment;
 - x. ~~Review of the Town Council's and/or staff Subscriptions to other bodies.~~

6 Extraordinary meetings of Full Council and committees and sub-committees

- a An extraordinary meeting can be defined as a meeting that has not been previously agreed by Full Council (a committee or sub-committee) and is scheduled on a needs basis during a municipal year.
- b **The Chair of the Town Council may convene an extraordinary meeting of Full Council at any time.**
- c **If the Chair of the Town Council does not or refuses to call an extraordinary meeting of Full 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 Full Council. The public notice giving the time, place and agenda for such a meeting must be signed by the two councillors.**
- d The Chair of a committee or a sub-committee may convene an extraordinary

meeting of the committee or the sub-committee at any time.

e If the Chair of a committee or a sub-committee does not or refuses to call an extraordinary meeting within seven days of having been requested by to do so by two members of the committee or the sub-committee, any two members of the committee or the sub-committee may convene an extraordinary meeting of a committee or a sub-committee.

f The convening of extraordinary meetings (whether under 6a - d above) will be done in collaboration with the Proper Officer. If this is not possible, this will be undertaken in collaboration with the officer that will administer the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 3r.

eg The Proper Officer looking to arrange an extraordinary meeting will do so in consultation with the relevant meeting Chair and where there is a clear justification for an additional meeting.

7 Previous resolutions

a A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except either by:

- i. a special motion, which requires written notice by at least 50% plus one of those in attendance at the meeting where the original decision took place, to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with Standing Order 9 below, or
- ii. 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) above has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved within 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 Town 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 Preparation of agendas

- a The Town Council's Agendas & Minutes Policy sets out information and processes relating to agendas for Full Council, committee and sub-committee meetings.
- b With regards to motions that are considered at these meetings, these will come about in one of three ways:
 - i) motions presented within a report accompanying the agenda (see section 9.1 below)
 - ii) motions that a councillor wishes to include on an agenda and that required written notice (see section 9.2 below)
 - iii) motions that can be raised in the meeting by a councillor and require no written notice (see section 9.3 below)

9.1 Motions within reports

- a The most common method for motions being presented at a meeting are those included within the written report accompanying the agenda for that meeting. The suggested motions are listed at the start of the report, in the 'recommendations' section.
- b The meeting clerk will liaise with the Chair in advance of the meeting to discuss the reports that are scheduled to be presented at the upcoming meeting, and the motions within the report i.e. the decisions that meeting is being asked to consider.

9.2 Motions for a meeting that require written notice to be given to the Proper Officer

- a The preferred operation of the Town Council is for councillors and officers to work in partnership to prepare reports for motion at meetings where this is necessary ([as per motions at 9.1 above](#)). However, if a councillor wishes to prepare a report alone the procedure below has to be followed.
- b A motion shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting which it is tabled for and in any event, shall relate to the performance of the Town Council's statutory functions, powers and obligations or an issue which specifically affects the Town Council's area or its residents, such as national policies or those of a principal authority, waste services, anti-social behaviour, transport / education / health infrastructure etc.
- c 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 14 clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.
- d The Proper Officer may, before including a motion on the agenda received in accordance with Standing Order 9(b) above, correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.
- e [The motion shall be included on the agenda with a brief covering report from the Proper Officer, appending the councillor motion.](#)
- f If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with Standing Order 9(b) above is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it in writing to the Proper Officer so that it can be understood at least seven clear days before the meeting.
- g If the wording or subject of a proposed motion is considered to be improper by the Proper Officer, 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.

- h Subject to Standing Order 9(f) above, the decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.
- i Motions received shall be recorded and numbered in the order that they are received.
- j Motions rejected shall be recorded with an explanation by the Proper Officer for their rejection, which will have been informed to the proposer of the motion.

9.3 Motions at a meeting that do not require written notice

- a **Only** 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 sensitive 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 requirements);
- xvi. to adjourn the meeting; or
- xvii. to close a meeting.

11 Management of information

See also Standing Order 20.

- a **The Town 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 Town 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 Town 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 Town Council's contractors and agents shall not disclose confidential information or personal data without legal justification.**

12 Draft minutes

- 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) above.

- 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 their view was not upheld by the meeting and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.”
- e Upon 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(o) above.

- a All councillors and non-councillors with voting rights shall observe the Code of Conduct adopted by the Town Council.
- b Unless they have been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from the meeting room when it is considering a matter in which they have a prejudicial interest (whether pecuniary or non-pecuniary). They may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which they had the interest.
- bc When declaring a non-prejudicial interest, the councillor or non-councillor with voting rights will inform the meeting if they intend to remain in the meeting room, take part in the discussion and / or take part in the vote. A councillor may wish to seek the advice of the meeting Clerk or Chair on this, ideally ahead of the meeting or alternatively, as soon as the interest is realised and declared.
- ed **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.

de Dispensation requests raised before a meeting shall be determined by the Proper Officer. Where a dispensation request is raised at the start of the meeting, this shall be determined by the Council / committee itself under the guidance of the Proper Officer or meeting clerk.~~A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by a meeting of Full Council, or committee or sub-committee for which the dispensation is required and that decision is final.~~

ef 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.

fg Subject to Standing Orders 13(d) and (e) above, dispensations requests 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.

gh **A dispensation may be granted in accordance with Standing Order 13(e) above if having regard to all relevant circumstances the following applies:**

- 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 or;**
- ii. **granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the Town Council's area or;**
- iii. **it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.**

14 Code of conduct complaints

- a Upon notification by the District Council that it has deemed a complaint worthy of investigation that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the Town Council's Code of Conduct, the Proper Officer shall, subject to Standing Order 11 above, report this to Full Council.
- b Where the notification in Standing Order 14(a) above relates to a complaint made by the Proper Officer, the Proper Officer shall notify the Chair of the Town Council of this fact, and the ~~Chair shall nominate another staff member to assume the duties of the~~Acting Proper Officer shall assume the duties in relation to the complaint until it has been determined and Full Council has agreed what action, if any, to take in accordance with Standing Order 14(d) below.
- c The Town Council may:
 - i. provide information or evidence where such disclosure is necessary to progress an investigation of the complaint or is required by law;
 - ii. seek information relevant to the complaint from the person or body with statutory responsibility for investigation of the matter.
- d **Upon notification by the District Council that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the Council's Code of Conduct, Full Council shall consider what, if any, action to take against them. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office.** The District Council's Monitoring Officer will submit a report containing recommendations for Full Council to consider.

15 Proper Officer

- a The Proper Officer shall be either (i) the clerk or (ii) other staff member(s) nominated by the Town Council to undertake the work of the Proper Officer when the Proper Officer is absent.
- b The Proper Officer shall (either themselves or via delegation to other officers N.B. that emboldened items may not be delegated other than to the designated

Acting Proper Officer):

- i. **At least three clear days before a meeting of Full 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 councillors 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 Town Council convened by councillors is signed by them).**
- ii. Subject to Standing Order 9 above, include on the agenda all motions in the order received unless a councillor has given written notice at least seven days before the meeting confirming their withdrawal of it;
- iii. **convene a meeting of Full Council for the election of a new Chair of the Town 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. retain acceptance of office forms from councillors;
- vii. retain a copy of every councillor's register of interests;
- viii. assist with responding to requests made under the freedom of information legislation and rights exercisable under data protection legislation, in accordance with and subject to the Town Council's policies and procedures relating to the same;
- ix. receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the Town Council except where there is a resolution to the contrary;
- x. assist in the organisation of, storage of, access to, security of and

destruction of information held by the Town 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);

- xi. arrange for legal deeds to be executed;

See also Standing Order 22 below.

- xii. arrange or manage the prompt authorisation, approval, and instruction regarding any payments to be made by the Town Council in accordance with its Financial Regulations.
- xiii. record every planning application notified to the Town Council and the Town Council's response to the local planning authority in a book for such purpose;
- xiv. refer a planning application received by the Town Council to the Chair or in their absence Vice-Chair (if any) of the Planning & Highways committee 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 Planning & Highways committee;
- xv. manage access to information about the Town Council via the publication scheme; and
- xvi. retain custody of the seal of the Town Council which shall not be used without a resolution to that effect.

See also Standing Order 23 below.

16 Responsible Financial Officer

- a The Town 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 (England).
- b All payments by the Town Council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the law, proper practices and the Council’s Financial Regulations.

18 Financial controls and procurement

- a The Town 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 Town 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 Town Council’s accounts and/or orders of payments; and
 - v. whether contracts with an estimated value below £25,000 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.

19 Handling staff matters

- a A matter personal to a member of staff that is being considered by a meeting of Full Council OR the Personnel Committee or the Grievance / Disciplinary Sub-

Committee is subject to Standing Order 11 above.

- b The Town Clerk shall manage the Town Council's sickness absence in accordance with Town Council Policy.
- c ~~The Mayor of the Town Council and the Chair of the Personnel Committee (or Vice-Chair if this is the Mayor) or in their absence, the Deputy Mayor shall conduct an annual review of the performance and annual appraisal of the work of the Town Clerk. The reviews and appraisal shall be reported in writing and is subject to approval by resolution by Personnel committee. The Town Council's Appraisal Policy sets out the details of the annual review of performance, including those for the Town Clerk.~~
- d All staff grievances will be conducted in accordance with the Town Council's Grievance Policy.
- e Any persons responsible for all or part of the management of staff shall treat the written records of all meetings relating to their performance, capabilities, grievance or disciplinary matters as confidential and secure.
- f The Town Council shall keep all written records relating to employees secure. All paper records shall be secured and locked and electronic records shall ~~be password protected~~ have access restricted accordingly and be encrypted.
- g In accordance with Standing Order 11(a), unless authorised in advance by the Town Clerk, only managers with line management responsibilities shall have access to staff records referred to in Standing Orders 19(e) and (f) above if so justified.

20 Responsibilities to provide information

See also Standing Order 21.

- a **In accordance with freedom of information legislation, the Town Council shall publish information in accordance with its publication scheme and respond to requests for information held by the Town Council.**
- b **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 Town Council shall have policies and procedures in place to respond to an individual exercising statutory rights concerning their personal data.**
- b **The Town Council shall have a written policy in place for responding to and managing a personal data breach.**
- c **The Town 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.**
- d **The Town Council shall ensure that information communicated in its privacy notice(s) is in an easily accessible and available form and kept up to date.**
- e **The Town 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 Town Council, its councillors or staff shall be handled in accordance with the Town Council's Press & Media Policy, Press Release Procedure and Communications Strategy.

23 Execution and sealing of legal deeds

See also Standing Orders 15(b)(xii) and (xv) above.

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

- b Subject to Standing Order 23(a) above, the Town Council's common seal shall alone be used for sealing a deed required by law. It shall be applied by the Proper Officer in the presence of two councillors who shall sign the deed as witnesses.

24 Communicating with District and County or Unitary councillors

- a An invitation to attend a meeting of Full Council shall be sent, together with the agenda, to the ward councillors of the District and County Councils representing the area of the Town Council.
- b Where deemed necessary by the relevant officer, correspondence sent to the District or County Councils shall be copied to the relevant District or County councillor(s).

25 Councillor activities

- a [The Town Council's Councillor Officer Protocol sets out the roles and responsibilities of councillors and officers, and how both work in partnership to ensure the success of the Town Council.](#)
- b Unless authorised by a resolution, no councillor shall:
 - i inspect any land and/or premises which the Town Council has a right or duty to inspect (this does not apply to publicly accessible property); or
 - ii issue orders, instructions or directions to any member of staff or contractor carrying out work on behalf of the Town Council.
- c Subject to Standing Order 25a, councillors are encouraged to:
 - i maintain open communication with the electorate, members of public, local businesses and other routes in which to ensure they can represent the wishes and needs of the town.
 - ii sit on Town Council committees, sub-committees and/or working groups and partake in meetings and the decision-making process.

- iii. attend and support Town Council events and public activities.
- iv. represent the Town Council on identified outside bodies, maintain two-way communications for the betterment of both parties.
- v. help positively promote the work and activities of the Town Council within the local communities and wider area.
- vi. work collaboratively with officers for the benefit of the Town Council and town.
- vii. familiarise themselves with Town Council policy documents.
- viii. bring to the attention of relevant councillors, Chairs or officers, anything that they believe is relevant to the business and activities of the Town Council.
- ix. monitor their own attendance at Town Council meetings to ensure they do not automatically vacate their office as a result of six months of inactivity (officers can provide greater clarity on this requirement).
- x. commit to enacting their role and duties in accordance with the Member's Code of Conduct.

26 Standing Orders generally

- a All or part of a Standing Order, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory requirements (those in bold), 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 Town Council's Standing Orders, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory requirements, shall be proposed by a special motion, the written notice by at least ten councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with Standing Order 9 above. This provision does not apply when Full Council is carrying out a scheduled review of the Standing Orders policy document.
- c The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the Town Council's Standing Orders to a councillor as soon as possible after they have delivered their acceptance of office form.

- d The decision of the Chair of a meeting as to the application of Standing Orders at the meeting shall be final.

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