

## **STANDING ORDERS FOR WEST BLETCHLEY COUNCIL**

### **1 Rules of debate at meetings**

- a Motions on the agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear unless the order is changed at the discretion of the chair of the meeting.
- b A motion (including an amendment) shall not be progressed unless it has been moved and seconded.
- c A motion on the agenda that is not moved by its proposer may be treated by the chair of the meeting as withdrawn.
- d If a motion (including an amendment) has been seconded, it may be withdrawn by the proposer only with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
- e An amendment is a proposal to remove or add words to a motion. It shall not negate the motion.
- f If an amendment to the original motion is carried, the original motion becomes the substantive motion upon which further amendment(s) may be moved.
- g A councillor may move an amendment to his 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.
- h 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.
- i Subject to standing order 1(j) 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.
- j 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.
- k The mover of a motion or the mover of an amendment shall have a right of reply, not exceeding (4) minutes.
- l Subject to standing order 1(k) above, a councillor may not speak further in respect of any one motion except to speak once on an amendment moved by another councillor or to make a point of order or to give a personal explanation.
- m Subject to standing order 1(l) above, when a councillor's 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 silent or for him 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;
  - ix. to suspend any standing order, except those which are mandatory.

### **2 Disorderly conduct at meetings**

- a No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly. If this standing order is ignored, the chair of the meeting shall request such

person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.

- b If person(s) disregard the request of the chair of the meeting to moderate or improve their conduct, any councillor or the chair of the meeting may move that the person be no longer heard or 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 Full Council meetings shall not take place in premises which at the time of the meeting are used for the supply of alcohol, unless no other premises are available free of charge or at a reasonable cost.
- b The minimum three clear days for notice of a Full Council meeting does not include the day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a day of the Christmas break, a day of the Easter break or of a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning.
- c The minimum three clear days' public notice for a Committee meeting does not include the day on which the notice was issued or the day of the meeting unless the meeting is convened at shorter notice.
- d Full Council & Committee meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. The public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion.
- e Subject to standing order 3(d) above, members of the public are permitted to make representations, answer questions and give evidence in respect of any item of business included in the agenda.
- f In accordance with standing order 3(e) above, a question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The chairman of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.
- g A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct his comments to the chair of the meeting.
- h Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the chair of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.
- i The press shall be provided with reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of all or part of a Full Council & Committee meeting at which they are entitled to be present.
- j Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chair of the Council may in his absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chair of the Council.
- k The Chair, if present, shall preside at a Full Council 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.
- l Subject to a meeting being quorate, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the councillors or councillors with voting rights present and voting.
- m 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 his casting vote whether or not he gave an original vote.

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

- n Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on a question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave his vote for or against that question. Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.
- o The minutes of a meeting shall record the names of councillors present.
- p A councillor or a non-councillor with voting rights who has a disclosable pecuniary interest or another interest as set out in the council's code of conduct in a matter being considered at a meeting is subject to statutory limitations or restrictions under the code on his right to participate and vote on that matter.
- q No business may be transacted at a meeting unless at least one-third of the whole number of members of the council are present and in no case shall the quorum of a meeting be less than three.
- r If a meeting is or becomes inquorate no business shall be transacted.

#### **4 Committees and sub-committees**

- a Unless the council determines otherwise, a committee may appoint a sub-committee whose terms of reference and members shall be determined by the committee.
- b The members of a committee may include non-councillors unless it is a committee which regulates and controls the finances of the council.
- c Unless the council determines otherwise, all the members of an advisory committee and a sub-committee of the advisory committee may be non-councillors.
- d The council may appoint standing committees or other committees as may be necessary, and:
  - i. shall determine their terms of reference;
  - ii. shall determine the number and time of the ordinary meetings of a standing committee up until the date of the next annual meeting of 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(b) and (c) above, appoint and determine the terms of office of members of such a committee;
  - v. may dissolve a committee.

#### **5 Ordinary council meetings**

- a In an election year, the annual meeting of the council shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the new councillors elected take office.
- b In a year which is not an election year, the annual meeting of a council shall be held on such day in May as the council may direct.
- c The annual meeting of the Council shall take place at 7.30pm unless the Council decides otherwise at a previous meeting.
- d In addition to the annual meeting of the Council, ordinary meetings shall be held on the fourth Monday of the months of February, April, June and October and on the third Monday of August and December at 7.30pm unless the Council decides otherwise at a previous meeting.
- e The first business conducted at the annual meeting of the council shall be the election of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council.

- f The Chair of the Council, unless he/she has resigned or becomes disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until his/her successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the council.
- g The Vice-Chair of the Council, if any, unless he/she resigns or becomes disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chair of the Council at the next annual meeting of the council.
- h In an election year, if the current Chair of the Council has not been re-elected as a member of the council, he shall preside at the meeting until a successor Chair of the Council has been elected. The current Chair of the Council shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chair of the Council but must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.
- i In an election year, if the current Chair of the Council has been re-elected as a member of the council, he/she shall preside at the meeting until a new Chair of the Council has been elected. He/she may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chair of the Council and must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.
- j Following the election of the Chair of the Council and Vice-Chair (if any) of the Council at the annual meeting of the council, the business of the annual meeting shall include:  
In an election year, delivery by the Chair of the Council and councillors of their acceptance of office forms unless the council resolves for this to be done at a later date.  
In a year which is not an election year, delivery by the Chair of the Council of his/her acceptance of office form unless the council resolves for this to be done at a later date.

## **6 Extraordinary meetings of the council and committees and sub-committees**

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

## **7 Previous resolutions**

- a A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least 6 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9 below, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the recommendation of a committee or a sub-committee.
- b When a motion moved pursuant to standing order 7(a) 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 council and none of those persons has received an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. A tie in votes may be settled by the casting vote exercisable by the chair of the meeting.

## **9 Motions for a meeting that require written notice to be given to the Proper Officer**

- a A motion shall relate to the council's statutory functions, powers and obligations or an issue which specifically affects the council's area or its residents.
- b No motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is on the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least 5 clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.

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

## **10 Motions at a meeting that do not require written notice**

- a The following motions may be moved at a meeting without written notice to the Proper Officer;
- i. to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes of a meeting;
  - ii. to move to a vote;
  - iii. to defer consideration of a motion;
  - iv. to refer a motion to a particular committee or sub-committee;
  - v. to appoint a person to preside at a meeting;
  - vi. to change the order of business on the agenda;
  - vii. to proceed to the next business on the agenda;
  - viii. to require a written report;
  - ix. to appoint a committee or sub-committee and their members;
  - x. to extend the time limits for speaking;
  - xi. to exclude the press and public from a meeting in respect of confidential or 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 Handling confidential or sensitive information**

- a The agenda, papers that support the agenda and the minutes of a meeting shall not disclose or otherwise undermine confidential or sensitive information which for special reasons would not be in the public interest.
- b Councillors and staff shall not disclose information given in confidence or which they believe, or ought to be aware is of a confidential nature.

## **12 Code of conduct and dispensations**

*See also standing order 3(q) above.*

- a All councillors and non-councillors with voting rights shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the council.
- b Dispensation requests shall be in writing and submitted to the Proper Officer
- c A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by a meeting of the council, or committee or sub-committee for which the dispensation is required and that decision is final.
- d A dispensation may be granted in accordance with standing order 12(c) 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 council's area or
  - iii. it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.

## **13 Code of conduct complaints**

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

#### **14 Proper Officer**

- a The Proper Officer shall be either (i) the clerk or (ii) other staff member(s) nominated by the council to undertake the work of the Proper Officer when the Proper Officer is absent.
- b The Proper Officer shall:
  - i. at least three clear days before a meeting of the council, a committee and a sub-committee serve on councillors, by e-mail, delivery or post at their residences, a signed summons confirming the time, place and the agenda.
  - ii. give public notice of the time, place and agenda at least three clear days before a meeting of the council or a meeting of a committee or a sub-committee (provided that the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the council convened by councillors is signed by them);
  - iii. convene a meeting of full council for the election of a new Chair of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in his office;
  - iv. receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities;
  - v. retain acceptance of office forms from councillors;
  - vi. retain a copy of every councillor's register of interests;
  - vii. manage the organisation, storage of, access to and destruction of information held by the council in paper and electronic form;

#### **15 Responsible Financial Officer**

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

#### **16 Financial controls and procurement**

- a The council shall consider and approve financial regulations drawn up by the Responsible Financial Officer, which shall include detailed arrangements in respect of the following:
  - i. the keeping of accounting records and systems of internal controls;
  - ii. the assessment and management of financial risks faced by the council;
  - iii. the work of the independent internal auditor in accordance with proper practices and the receipt of regular reports from the internal auditor, which shall be required at least annually;
  - iv. the inspection and copying by councillors and local electors of the council's accounts and/or orders of payments; and
  - v. procurement policies (subject to standing order 16(c) below) including the setting of values for different procedures where a contract has an estimated value of less than £25,000. (NB: Procedures for the procurement and award of contracts covered by the 2015 Regulations which have an estimated value of £25,000 or more must satisfy the requirements of the 2015 Regulations which include use of the Contracts Finder website.)
- b Financial regulations shall be reviewed regularly and at least annually for fitness of purpose.
- c Financial regulations shall confirm that a proposed contract for the supply of goods, materials, services and the execution of works with an estimated value in excess of £25,000 shall be procured on the basis of a formal tender as summarised in Financial Regulations and that the procurement and award of contracts covered by the 2015 Regulations which have an estimated value of £25,000 or more must satisfy the requirements of the 2015 Regulations which include use of the Contracts Finder website.
- d Neither the council, nor a committee or a sub-committee with delegated responsibility for considering tenders, is bound to accept the lowest value tender.
- f Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed £138,893 (or other threshold specified by the Office of Government Commerce from time to time) the council must consider whether the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 (SI No. 5, as amended) and the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2006 (SI No. 6, as amended) apply to the contract and, if either of those Regulations apply, the council must comply with EU procurement rules.

**17 Execution and sealing of legal deeds**

- a A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the council unless authorised by a resolution.
- b Subject to standing order 17(a) above, any two councillors may sign, on behalf of the council, any deed required by law and the Proper Officer shall witness their signatures.

**18 Communicating with District and County or Unitary councillors**

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

**19 Standing orders generally**

- a All or part of a standing order, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory requirements, may be suspended by resolution in relation to the consideration of an item on the agenda for a meeting.
- b A motion to add to or vary or revoke one or more of the council's standing orders, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory requirements, shall be proposed by a special motion, the written notice by at least 2 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9 above.
- c The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the council's standing orders to a councillor as soon as possible after he has delivered his 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.