Shinfield Parish Council

Clerk: Bruce Winton
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To all members of the Finance and General Purposes Committee

Notice is hereby given, and you are summoned to attend a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee on Wednesday 18th June 2025 at School Green Centre, at 19.30

Bruce Winton, Clerk
12th June 2025

Members: L James (Ch), B Johnson, N Masseron, Z Matic, I Montgomery, D Peer & R Tatla

Agenda

1. **Confirmation of Chair of Committee**
   - 1.1 To **CONFIRM** Cllr James, Vice-Chair (Finance & Staffing) as Chair of the Finance & General Purposes Committee for 2025/26
   - 1.2 To **SIGN A DECLARATION** of acceptance of office as Chair of the Committee

2. **Election of Vice-Chair of Committee**
   - 2.1 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** nominations for the election of Vice-Chair for 2025/26
   - 2.2 To **ELECT** the Vice-Chair for 2025/26
   - 2.3 To **SIGN A DECLARATION** of acceptance of office as Vice-Chair of the committee

3. **Public Questions**
   - 3.1 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** public questions.

4. **Apologies and declarations of members' interests**
   - 4.1 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** approval of apologies for absence
   - 4.2 To **RECEIVE** members' declarations of interest

5. **Minutes of the meeting on 16th April 2025**
   - 5.1 To **APPROVE** the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting. On 16th April 2025 as a correct record of the meeting*
   - 5.2 To **CONSIDER** matters arising from the meeting on 16th April 2025

6. **Annual Accounts and Annual Governance and Accountability Return for Year Ending 31st March 2025**
   - 6.1 To **RECEIVE** and **NOTE** the report from the Internal Auditor*
   - 6.2 To **RECEIVE** and **NOTE** the notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2025*
   - 6.3 To **APPROVE** Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25*

6.4 To **APPROVE** Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25*
6.5 To **NOTE** the Notice of Public Rights and Publication of Unaudited Annual Governance & Accountability Return - Exercise of Public Rights for accounts, year ended 31st March 2025*
6.6 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** the reappointment of Claire Connell as Internal Auditor for the coming year
6.7 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** a new assertion for accounts relating to 2025/26 onwards*

7. Terms of Reference

7.1 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** the Terms of Reference of the Finance & General Purposes Committee for 2025/26*

8. Risk Register

8.1 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** a verbal update from the Clerk on the Shinfield Parish Council Risk Register

9. Financial reports

9.1 To **RECEIVE** and **NOTE** a report on the bank reconciliation as at 31st May 2025*
9.2 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** a verbal update on current financial position for Financial Year 2025/26

10. Financial Reserves and CIL

10.1 To **RECEIVE** and **NOTE** an update on CIL*
10.2 To **RECEIVE** and **NOTE** an update on Reserves*
10.3 To **RECEIVE** and N**OTE** a verbal update on the Major Repairs Reserve
10.4 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** long-term planning options for CIL including options for the acquisition of freehold titles

11. Draft Revised Standing Orders

11.1 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** draft revised Standing Orders from the Corporate Governance Working Party* (issued earlier)

12. Draft Fraud Policy

12.1 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** tasking the Corporate Governance Working Party to review the draft Fraud Policy alongside their review of Financial Procedures*

13. S106 Funds

13.1 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** SPC's involvement in the development of major S106 agreements
13.2 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** an update on WBC's move to allow S106 records to be viewed via a portal on their website

14. Shinfield North Consultation

To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** proposals for formal consultation with Shinfield North residents*

15. Land Issues

15.1 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** a verbal update on the following items

15.1.1 Land Registrations including list of properties

15.1.2 Lease of Ryeish playing fields and Deardon Way Fields

15.1.3 Provision of community space in the north of the parish

15.1.4 Ryeish Green Pavilion

15.1.5 Parish Hall Lease

15.1.6 Assets of Community Value

15.1.7 Millworth Lane

15.2 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** any areas of land potentially suitable for acquisition.

16. Live Project Teams

16.1 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** a summary of the current position of live project teams/working parties*

17. Public Art

17.1 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** a update on the Public Art project

18. Microgeneration

18.1 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** a verbal update from the Clerk regarding microgeneration

19. Dates of future Meetings

19.1 To **NOTE** the date of the next scheduled meeting which is 15th October 2025

* Paper attached/** Paper to follow

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Minutes of a meeting of Finance & General Purposes Committee Held on Wednesday 16th April 2025 At School Green Centre commencing at 19.30

Present: Cllrs Clarke, Grimes, James (Chair), Masseron, Montgomery & Peer

Attending: B Winton (Clerk), J Mason (Finance Manager)

25/FGP/17 **Public Questions**

17.1 There were no public questions.

25/FGP/18 **Apologies and declarations of Members' Interest**

18.1 Apologies had been received from Cllr Matic

18.2 There were no declarations of members' interests.

25/FGP/19 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

19.1 The minutes of the committee meeting of 19th February 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by Cllr James as Chairman of the Committee

Proposed: Cllr Peer
Seconded: Cllr Clarke
Approved: Unanimously

19.2 **Actions and Matters Arising**

62.4 Facilities Manager to create a Long-Term Maintenance plan for the Council estate

This was ongoing.

66.3 Facilities Manager to arrange installation of defibrillators

This was ongoing.

76.3 Cllrs Montgomery and Matic to report back post the meeting with RBC councillors

Cllr Montgomery provided an update of the most recent meeting with RBC councillors.

Members **NOTED** the update.

25/FGP/

7.2 Cllr Matic and the Clerk to review potential suitable options and consider the form of a survey of local residents in Shinfield North

This was on the Agenda at 9.1

7.3 Clerk to ensure that the contributions to the Major Repairs Reserve are reviewed when the Facilities Manager has completed his review

This will be done.

7.4 Clerk to arrange the meeting with Cllr James and WBC Officers to discuss the historic S106 funds generated within the parish

The meeting took place on 4th March. WBC had indicated that in future all details of S106 would be available via a portal and provided a link to Milton Keynes equivalent. Most of the apparent shortfall has been identified as expenditure on the Sports Hub and housing elsewhere in Wokingham. A reconciliation schedule will be prepared for the next F&GP meeting. The Chair advised that there would be a future meeting with WBC on the subject.

ACTION – Clerk to arrange a reconciliation schedule for S106 historic funds to be presented to the June committee meeting

8.1 Clerk to include such a discussion in the July committee cycle to allow consideration of the issue and sufficient time to be fed into the budget process

This will be to ensure that each committee has an agenda item to consider what specific provisions they wish to see in the next budget cycle

ACTION – Clerk to include an agenda item for each July committee to allow the committee to consider what items they would like to see included in the next budget round

10.2 Clerk to continue to chase WBC for progress on the reciprocal leases for Ryeish Green playing fields and Deardon

The Clerk had spoken to SPC's solicitor prior to the meeting and asked her to pick up again with WBC.

ACTION – Clerk to continue to chase WBC for progress on the reciprocal leases for Ryeish Green playing fields and Deardon

10.4 Clerk to follow up potential interest in Ryeish Green Pavilion with the Army Cadet Force

The Clerk was awaiting a formal response from ACF on this issue.

ACTION – Clerk to follow up potential interest in Ryeish Green Pavilion with the Army Cadet Force

10.5 Clerk to ensure the completion of the process to extinguish the Parish Hall lease

There was no further update on this.

ACTION – Clerk to ensure the completion of the process to extinguish the Parish Hall lease

10.6 Clerk to request that WBC provide a formal decision with respect to the Asset of Community Value application submitted in respect of Hyde End Lane

Having assigned this role to Richard Alexander, he was now reporting that there was "some ongoing discussion at WBC re where that may finally site within teams/structures – once that resolved, then I will, as promised, aim to get the responsible officer along to meet with you and advise/guide re way forward"

ACTION – Clerk to request that WBC provide a formal decision with respect to the Asset of Community Value application submitted in respect of Hyde End Lane

12.1 Finance Manager to set aside £300k of CIL reserves for Microgeneration projects

This had been done (Item 7.1 on the agenda relates)

13.1 Clerk to notify the contractor to proceed with the installation of hybrid cricket strips

This had been done, and the work had taken place.

13.2 Facilities Manager to arrange the completion of the installation of the toilet block at the tennis club

Arrangements were in place for the final elements of work to take place by the mid-May.

14.1 Finance Manager to notify the energy provider regarding the new fixed-term electricity contract

This had been done.

15.1 Clerk to identify potential invitees and arrange a date for the reception

This was in respect of a fundraising business breakfast for the public art project. Once the timeline was confirmed for the overall project it is expected that this date will be confirmed at the next working party meeting.

ACTION – Clerk to identify potential invitees and arrange a date for the reception

25/FGP/20 Corporate Governance

20.1 The working party was now meeting weekly to meet the target of tabling at the draft to Full Council in May. As stated previously, there were no significant policy changes coming forward, rather the work was aimed at removing ambiguity from the document.

We are now nearly at the end of the process of considering every word in the document. Following that the remaining steps are:

- Ensure consistency in style, font, layout, use of terminology
- Ensure that all items are in the most logical place within the overall document
- Add a glossary for additional clarity
- Add references to relevant legislation again for clarity
- Circulate a marked-up draft for consideration by F&GP with special attention to any recommended changes to the intent of the Standing Orders (most changes are however clarifying language)
- Subject to F&GP approval, the draft will be included with the Agenda for May Full Council

Members **NOTED** the update

25/FGP/21 Risk Register

21.1 The Clerk advised that he had no recommendations for any changes to the risk register. As agreed by Full Council, the Annual Council meeting has a standing item to formally review the risk register

25/FGP22 **Financial Reports**

22.1 Bank Reconciliations

The Chair of the Committee confirmed that he had reviewed the bank reconciliations as at the end of March 2025 on 15th April 2025 and that all was in order. A copy of the signed reconciliation was presented to members.

Members **NOTED** the report.

22.2 Current Year Financial Performance (2024/2025)

The Chair and Finance Manager provided an update on the final outturn for the Financial Year ending 31st March 2025 and answered questions from members on the figures provided.

Members **NOTED** the report.

25/FGP/23 **Financial Reserves & CIL**

23.1 CIL update

The Chair and Clerk took members through the current position on CIL and noted receipt of an additional CIL receipt of £23,147 for April 2025.

Members **NOTED** the report.

23.2 Long-term planning options for CIL

The Chair introduced a summary of items identified as potential uses of CIL funds and also potential future CIL receipts from developments currently under consideration.

Members considered the items on the list and agreed to include a provision for the proposed community garden at High Copse.

The University of Reading had proposed some parcels of land that SPC may wish to consider purchasing.

There were no decisions on the items on the list

ACTION – Community Garden to be included on the list and also added to the items for consideration at the next joint meeting with the University of Reading

23.3 Reserves

The Chair provided an update on reserves as at 31st March 2025.

£43,538 had been added to the General Reserve. Earmarked Reserves (up £17,716 from £1,921,194 to £1,938,909). This included £10,000 for allotment clearances to be carried out in April 2025 and £7,500 to a named reserve for the Defibrillator project

Members **NOTED** the report.

23.4 Major Repairs Reserve

The Major Repairs Reserve included a £7,500 reimbursement from WBC for a Bus Shelter on Hollow Lane.

Members **NOTED** the report.

25/FGP/24 Millworth Sports Park and High Copse

24.1 Redevelopment of Millworth Sports Park

The Clerk summarised the discussions which had followed the planning application submitted for Millworth Lane. These had resulted in a modified set of proposals for the site. The changes recommended were:

- Delete the 3G 5aside court and return to a proposal with four rather than two multi-use sports courts
- Move the Fitness Centre to the north of the site and expedite delivery through a separate planning application

Any loss of pitches at Millworth would require compensating provision of facilities elsewhere which realistically meant a full sized 3G pitch at High Copse in addition to the two grass pitches due to be available in September.

This would lead to a strategy of "court sports" at Millworth and major team sports at High Copse.

Members discussed the proposals and asked that:

- The risks set out in the document tabled include a risk rating using the Corporate Risk Register criteria
- While the costings were correct at current rates, the contingency be set at 10% of the project cost
- There should also be an element of future proofing against further cost increases by increasing an additional provision within the total project cost
- The total project cost including the 3G pitch at High Copse and both contingency and future proofing provision should be set at £1,500,000 (VAT ex)
- There should be a clear requirement in the proposal that once all permissions and consents had been achieved the matter would

need to receive further approval from Full Council before appointing any contractors

It was agreed that the Fitness Centre element should proceed as a standalone project while the remainder of the work at Millworth Lane and the 3G pitch were pursued as two linked projects.

Proposed: Cllr Clarke
Seconded: Cllr Peer
Approved: Unanimously

ACTION – Clerk to update the proposals on the basis of discussions and submit an Outline Business Case to the April Full Council meeting

25/FGP/25 **Facilities for Shinfield North**

25.1 Shinfield North – potential sites for facilities

There were no obvious sites within the means of SPC presenting themselves within Shinfield North.

25.2 Shinfield North – consultation with residents

There was a brief discussion on how effective consultation with residents in Shinfield North could be carried out and it was agreed to table draft proposals at the next meeting.

ACTION – Clerk to add Shinfield North consultation to the agenda for the June meeting

25/FGP/26 **Minibus**

26.1 Members noted the potential costs associated with the potential acquisition of a minibus for the council. It was agreed however to defer any further consideration until the Shinfield North consultation with residents had been carried out and the results considered.

ACTION – Clerk to schedule further discussion regarding acquiring a minibus at an appropriate future meeting

25/FGP/27 **Annual Grant Scheme**

27.1 Scope and priorities for the 2025 Annual Grant Scheme

Members agreed the proposed timetable for the 2025 Annual Grant Scheme which would see applications considered in early July.

ACTION – Clerk to add to agenda for Full Council for formal approval of the timetable

27.2 Awards to Private Individuals

The Clerk reported that a request to consider making an award to a young sportsperson had been received. Grants to private individuals were currently not allowed under the rules of the scheme. After discussion, members agreed to recommend to Full Council a limited scheme of up to five awards not to exceed £150 each for residents under the age of 18 in support of sporting or cultural activities.

ACTION – Clerk to add to agenda for Full Council for formal approval of the proposal to allow a limited number of grants to private individuals

25/FGP/28 Land Issues

28.1 There were no updates on the Land Issues listed on the agenda.

25/FGP/29 Live Project Teams

29.1 The Clerk provided an updated list of the live project teams.

Members **NOTED** the report**.**

25/FGP/30 Public Art

30.1 The Clerk advised that there is now an established pattern of internal meetings (SPC) and external (with Arts4Wokingham). A timetable had been established with a target to launch on the on 31st May and formal unveiling of the finished artwork exactly two years later.

Members **NOTED** the update**.**

25/FGP/31 Microgeneration

31.1 Microgeneration

It had not been possible to make arrangements to work with WBC on this project. The Clerk was now following up possible assistance from the Centre for Sustainable Energy who may be able to help.

The Clerk had also identified other professional institutions that may be able to help, and he would follow these up.

ACTION – Clerk to report further on microgeneration at the next meeting

25/FGP/32 Date of Next Meeting

32.1 Next meeting was scheduled for 18th June 2025

The meeting ended at 21.30

List of Actions

25/FGP/7.4	Clerk to arrange a reconciliation schedule for S106 historic funds to be presented to the June committee meeting	Clerk
25/FGP/8.1	Clerk to include an agenda item for each July committee to allow the committee to consider what items they would like to see included in the next budget round	Clerk
25/FGP/10.2	Clerk to continue to chase WBC for progress on the reciprocal leases for Ryeish Green playing fields and Deardon	Clerk
25/FGP/10.4	Clerk to follow up potential interest in Ryeish Green Pavilion with the Army Cadet Force	Clerk
25/FGP/10.5	Clerk to ensure the completion of the process to extinguish the Parish Hall lease	Clerk
25/FGP/10.6	Clerk to request that WBC provide a formal decision with respect to the Asset of Community Value application submitted in respect of Hyde End Lane	Clerk
25/FGP/15.1	Clerk to identify potential invitees to a business breakfast and arrange a date for the reception	Clerk
25/FGP/23.2	Clerk to ensure Community Garden is included on the long-term CIL items list and also added to the items for consideration at the next joint meeting with the University of Reading	Clerk
25/FGP/24.1	Clerk to update the proposals or Millworth Lane and High Copse pavilion on the basis of discussions and submit an Outline Business Case to the April Full Council meeting	Clerk
25/FGP/25.2	Clerk to add Shinfield North consultation to the agenda for the June meeting	Clerk
25/FGP/26.1	Clerk to schedule further discussion regarding acquiring a minibus at an appropriate future meeting	Clerk
25/FGP/27.1	Clerk to add Annual Grant Scheme timetable to agenda for Full Council for formal approval of the timetable	Clerk
25/FGP/27.2	Clerk to add to agenda for Full Council for formal approval of the proposal to allow a limited number of grants to private individuals	Clerk
25/FGP/31.1	Clerk to report further on microgeneration at the next meeting	Clerk

Claire Connell MA, ACA, CTA

Chartered Accountant and Chartered Tax Adviser

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The Members of Shinfield Parish Council
c/o Mr Bruce Winton
Clerk to Shinfield Parish Council
Shinfield Parish Hall
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Shinfield
Berkshire RG2 9EH

6th June 2025

Ladies and Gentlemen

Internal Audit report for the year ended 31st March 2025 - final review

I have now completed my review of the financial systems and internal controls for the year ended 31st March 2025. My audit has been carried out with reference to the 2024 edition of "Governance and Accountability for Local Councils: A Practitioners' Guide".

My final work concentrated on fixed assets, risk management and the final accounts. A summary of my findings for the year is attached in Appendix 1.

There are no matters of significance that I need to draw to your attention.

Overall conclusion

The financial records have been well maintained during the year and appear complete and fit for purpose. I did not identify any significant weaknesses in the control systems and procedures and it is clear that the council takes governance, policies and procedures seriously.

Signing of the audit report

The external auditors have stated that my internal audit report gives important evidence for the Council to consider when completing assertions 2 and 6 on the on the governance statement. My two audit reports this year should therefore enable the Council to approve the Annual Return in the knowledge that the internal audit for the year is complete. I have also signed my section of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return with no adverse findings.

Additional governance statement in 2025-26 AGAR

Appendix 2 gives some details regarding the new assertion which will appear in next year's annual governance statement and the guidance that the Council will need to have followed in order to give a positive response to it. This is purely for information and does not affect the 2024-25 audit in any way.

Yours faithfully

Claire Connell.

Claire Connell

Appendix 1: Summary of internal audit work covered in 2024-25

Annual Return Section	Objective met?	Comments
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	Yes	Rialtas software (which is designed for local councils) is used for the accounting records and is kept up to date. This has an integrated sales and purchase ledger together with allotment and fixed asset modules.
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	Yes	Testing and review of systems shows that expenditure is properly incurred, payments approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	Yes	Minutes, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, the Risk Register and insurance cover were all reviewed and it is clear that risks are appropriately assessed and reviewed, with regular updates to the Risk Register provided to the F&GP committee and a Full Council review undertaken in May each year. I understand that the Standing Orders have been thoroughly reviewed during 2024-25 and will shortly be brought to Council for approval. The Financial Regulations are also due to be reviewed in 2025-26.
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	Yes	Budgeting and reporting are carried out in a thorough and robust manner. The budget process includes a review of earmarked reserve balances and a five year budget forecast.
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	Yes	The following areas were checked: • The precept was agreed to Council minutes and bank statements • CIL income was reviewed and agreed to bank statements • Hall hire, rental income and allotment income were reviewed and test checks carried out Other income streams such as the cinema, youth club and electric vehicle charging were also reviewed No issues were found during the testing and review of income systems.
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	Yes	Petty cash transactions are low in number and value.

G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	Yes	Payroll is operated in-house and no problems were identified during the testing of payroll.
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	Yes	The fixed assets register is maintained in the Rialtas package and was updated for changes in the year.
I. Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.	Yes	Monthly reconciliations are performed and reviewed by a Councillor on a bi-monthly basis. This is reported to the F&GP committee. The year end reconciliations were checked to bank statements.
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	Yes	These assertions have been met. The accounting statements are prepared on an income and expenditure basis and debtors and creditors are properly recorded.
K If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2023/24, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt.	N/A	Not covered – the Council had a limited assurance review of its 2024/25 AGAR
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation	Yes	The AGARs for the previous five years are available on the Council website as required by the Audit & Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. The Council endeavours to comply with the Transparency Code and has now added a Transparency Page to the website which makes the information more easily identifiable.
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations *(evidenced by the notice published on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).*	Yes	The exercise was advertised on the website in advance of the period commencing and it covered the first 10 days of July as required. The exercise was carried out for 31 days rather than 30 days specified by the legislation. The electors are only able to raise a formal objection to the external auditors within 30 days of the period commencing so care should be taken to ensure that the period set in the summer of 2025 is exactly 30 days.
N The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2023-24 AGAR *(see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).*	Yes	Yes, the relevant documents were published at the correct time

O. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	N/A	Not applicable - Shinfield Parish Council is not a trustee of any trust funds

* *

Appendix 2 – New Assertion on the 2025-26 Annual Governance Statement

When the Council completes the Annual Governance Statement for the year ended **31st March 2026**, it will need to respond to a new assertion regarding digital and data compliance.

The Practitioners' Guide issued in March 2025 states that to warrant a positive response to this assertion, the authority needs to have taken the following actions:

> 1.47 Email management - every authority must have a generic email account hosted on an authority owned domain, for example clerk@abcparishcouncil.gov.uk or clerk@abcparishcouncil.org.uk rather than abcparishclerk@gmail.com or abcparishclerk@outlook.com.
>
> 1.48 All smaller authorities (excluding parish meetings) must meet legal requirements for all existing websites regardless of what domain is being used.
>
> 1.49 All websites must meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.2 AA and the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.
>
> 1.50 All websites must include published documentation as specified in the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Transparency code for smaller authorities (where applicable).
>
> 1.51 All smaller authorities, including parish meetings, must follow both the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2016 and the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018.
>
> 1.52 All smaller authorities, including parish meetings, must process personal data with care and in line with the principles of data protection.
>
> 1.53 The DPA 2018 supplements the GDPR and classifies a parish council as both a Data Controller and a Data Processor.
>
> 1.54 All smaller authorities (excluding parish meetings) must also have an IT policy. This explains how everyone - clerks, members and other staff - should conduct authority business in a secure and legal way when using IT equipment and software. This relates to the use of authority-owned and personal equipment.

Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25

Shinfield Parish Council

www.shinfieldparish.gov.uk

During the financial year ended 31 March 2025, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2024/25 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2023/24, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. *(If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2023/24 AGAR tick "not covered")*			✓
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	✓		
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations *(during the 2024-25 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2023-24 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).*	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2023/24 AGAR *(see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).*	✓		

	Yes	No	Not applicable
O. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.			✓

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken: 11/02/2025 12/02/2025 04/06/2025

Name of person who carried out the internal audit: Claire Connell

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit: Claire Connell

Date: 06/06/2025

***If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).**

**Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

Item 6.2

Financial Statement (unaudited)

for the

Year Ended 31st March 2025

[Type here]

Shinfield
Parish Council

1. Accounting Policies

The Council's accounts are prepared in accordance with the guidance for local councils as set out in the Practitioners Guide to Governance and Accountability, which is regarded as proper accounting practice for these purposes.

These financial statements (from which the statutory accounts are prepared) are therefore prepared on the accruals basis but do not include the value of fixed assets or indebtedness in respect of loans to purchase those assets.

2. Parish Council Administration Income.

The Council has invested in a range of products to take advantage of more beneficial interest rates. The largest sum of £1m is invested in National Savings Income Bonds. During the year, an additional £30k was deposited with CCLA to bolster the reserve earmarked for future major building repairs. The Council received £421k from developer's contributions and this has been invested so that it will accrue interest until it is needed to pay for capital projects.

Source of Interest	**2023/2024**	**2024/2025**
	£	**£**
National Savings Income Bonds	33,570	37,080
CCLA Investment	59	5,913
Lloyds Bank - Fixed Term Deposit		14,241
Lloyds Bank Instant Access Account	3,382	9,437
Lloyds Bank - 95 day Notice		5,452
Total Interest Received in Year	**37,011**	**72,123**

3. Pension Scheme Contributions

During the year, the council's eligible staff were members of the NEST scheme. The employer pension contributions amounted to £12,600 in 2024/025 a minor increase of £200 over the previous year. These costs are accounted for with staff costs.

4. Grants

The Council awarded grants in the year under its legislative powers. The grant scheme provides financial support to enable other organisations to provide services to residents of the Parish. The total value of grants awarded in 2024/2025 amounted to £19,470 compared to the previous year when the Council funded a total of £53,370. However, the allocation in 2023/2024 included one off capital grants of £35k which were funded out of developer contributions.

Beneficiary	2023/2024 £	2024/2025 £
Community Based Voluntary Groups	6,200	8,965
Local Sports Clubs		1,000
Local School Projects	12,210	3,600
Community Transport Schemes	7,058	5,905
St Mary's Community Hall	7,902	
Shinfield Players Theatre Group	20,000	
	53,370	19,470

5. Additions to Fixed Assets in the year

The Council signed a 60-year lease for the High Copse Pavilion in January 2025. The facility was built by the University of Reading to meet demand for additional sports facilities directly resulting from the large-scale development in the parish, on land previously owned by the University. The Council paid for essential equipment on site to ensure the building was operational.

Additions to Assets in the Year	2023/2024 £	2024/2025 £
Manor Pavilion & Sports Ground - New Lease	1	
Orchard Rise Allotment Site - New Lease	1	
High Copse Pavilion - New Lease		1
New Bus Shelter & Safety Bollards	26,994	
Outdoor Picnic Furniture - Deardon Way	4,240	
MUGA - Spencers Wood	16,537	
Manor Ground - Cricket Equipment	25,371	
Security Measures - CCTV	5,668	
Water Troughs - Allotment Sites	30,915	
Allotment Sites - Gates & Fencing & Shed	17,229	
Furniture & Equipment School Green Open Space	3,032	7,265
Fit Out - High Copse Pavilion		16,724
	129,988	23,990

6. Fixed Assets as at 31st March 2025

The council has a range of fixed assets which are listed below:-

Land & Buildings	£
School Green Centre	3,282,410
School Green Centre Land Owned (South Building)	163,000
School Green Centre Land Lease (North Building)	1
Shed & Base School Green Centre	5,044
Ryeish Pavilion	241,060
Spencers Wood Pavilion	708,392
The Manor Pavilion & Sports Ground	1
The High Copse Sports Pavilion	1
	4,399,909
Recreation Land	5
Allotments	48,152
War Memorial	1
	48,158
Other Operational Assets	
Playgrounds	345,818
Street Furniture	155,771
Bus Shelters	30,945
Furniture & Equipment	222,893
Gates and Fences	19,957
IT Equipment & Systems	50,658
Civic Regalia	600
	826,642
Total Assets	**5,274,709**

7. Earmarked Reserves

At the beginning of the financial year, the Council held earmarked reserves of £1.528million. This figure increased to £1.939million as of 31st March 2025. The increase was mainly due to the receipt of £421k of developer contributions and a contribution of £50.4k made to the Repairs Fund. During the year the Council funded £84.1k of capital works from the Community Infrastructure Levy Reserve.

Two new reserves were approved in the year to set aside funds for future planned expenditure; see table below and notes (8 & 9).

Ref	Earmarked Reserve	March 2024 £	Released in Year £	Added In Year £	March 2025 £
1	Community Infrastructure Levy	1,302,282	84,116	420,593	1,638,758
2	Allotments	70,000		10,000	80,000
3	Major Repairs	103,059		50,376	153,435
4	Planning	25,068			25,068
5	Website	10,000			10,000
6	Youth Initiatives	10,090		5,086	15,176
7	Parish Election	8,000			8,000
8	Grants - new in year	0		7,500	7,500
9	Public Art Reserve - new in year	0		972	972
	Total Earmarked Reserves	1,528,499	84,116	494,526	1,938,909

<u>Purpose of Earmarked Reserves</u>

1	Infrastructure required to support new development in the parish. Almost £1.4million is already committed to ongoing approved projects.
2	Sum deposited by Reading University if demand for allotments requires an extension to Deardon Way site (£70k) plusa sum of £10k set side for clearing allotments so they can be relet.
3	Funds set aside for planned future major repairs and refurbishments.
4	Set aside for unexpected costs incurred for planning advice and contribution to appeals
5	Set aside for technical support or upgrade to the council’s website.
6	To fund one-off initiatives to educate and support the youth population.
7	For any future contested election
8	Monies earmarked for Installation of defibrillators in 2024/2025 which is delayed until 2025/2026
9	To accumulate funds raised for the Public Art Project.

Shinfield Parish Council
Year Ended 31st March 2025
Statement of Fixed Assets

	31/03/24	Repaid or deleted	Additions	31/03/25	
Land & Buildings					
School Green Centre	3,282,410			3,282,410	
School Green Centre Land Owned (South Building)	163,000			163,000	
School Green Centre Land Lease (North Building)	1			1	*Note 1*
Shed & Base School Green Centre	5,044			5,044	
Ryeish Pavilion	241,060			241,060	
Spencers Wood Pavilion	708,392			708,392	
The Manor Pavilion & Sports Ground	1			1	*Note 2*
The High Copse Sports Pavilion			1	1	*Note 3*
	4,399,908	0	1	4,399,909	
Community Land & Assets					
Recreation Land	5			5	*Note 4*
Allotments	48,152			48,152	
War Memorial	1			1	
	48,158	0	0	48,158	
Other Operational Assets					
Playgrounds	345,818			345,818	
Street Furniture	148,506		7,265	155,771	*Note 5*
Bus Shelters	30,945			30,945	
Furniture & Equipment	208,343		14,550	222,893	*Note 6*
Gates and Fences	19,957			19,957	
IT Equipment & Systems	48,482		2,176	50,658	*Note 7*
Civic Regalia	600			600	
	802,651	0	23,991	826,642	
Long term assets					
	5,250,717	0	23,992	5,274,709	

Note 1 - Lease with Reading University (115 years remaining)

Note 2 - Lease with Reading University (48 years remaining)

Note 3 -Lease with Reading University (60 years remaining)

Note 4 - Includes Council owned Land and Millworth Recreation Ground - Lease with Reading University (20 years remaining)

Note 5 - Decorative Screen - Provides a Safety Barrier between Open Space and Car park

Note 6 - Fit Out High Copse Pavilion with Tables and Chairs and Office Fit Out

Note 7 - New Promithean Screen at High Copse for Presentations

Shinfield Parish Council
Year Ended 31st March 2025
Reconciliation Balance Sheet - Net Assets to Reserves

Financial Year	2025 £	2024 £		Notes for 2024/2025
DEBTORS				
Rent and Hire of Facilities	15,527	13,157		*Sales Ledger - Invoices raised for regular and adhoc hirers for future bookings and allotment tenancies - outstanding at 31st March.*
Debtors	8,399	12,116		*Interest due (£7.5k) and other rechargeable expenditure not invoiced*
VAT Claimed	6,811	3,446		*Reimbursement of Vat Claimed for March 2025*
Prepayments	15,497	12,799		*Insurance (6mths - £10.5k) & other services paid for in advance but not yet used such as event in May*
	46,234	41,518		
BANK AND CASH BALANCES				
Lloyds Bank Current Account	24,245	53,530		*Minimal sum left in current account to meet immediate cashflow requirement*
Lloyds Bank Instant Access	387,711	648,177		*Low interest balance sufficient to meet known future payments such as salaries*
National Savings Bank	1,000,000	1,000,000		*Maintain balance*
CCLA Public Sector Deposit	133,000	103,000		*Annual contributions and interest to be transferred to future repairs fund and reinvested*
Petty Cash	118	147		
Lloyds Fixed Term Deposit	350,000	0		*Fixed term deposit - higher interest rate until funds required for major projects*
Lloyds Notice Account 95 day	355,452	0		*Higher interest rate will be maintained until funds required for capital projects*
	2,250,526	1,804,854		
CREDITORS				
Unpaid Invoices	7,978	8,835		*Invoices processed for services received but payment not due until 25/26*
Other Creditors	11,491	9,497		*Balance owed on credit cards for March and income raised in advance for 25/26 bookings*
Accruals	22,431	13,415		*Estimated Electricity, Waste Services, Overtime, Gas, Water*
Payroll Holding Account	0	8,207		*All Employer and Employee Contributions cleared in March 2025*
Deposits Held	3,376	2,978		*Damage, Key and Holding Deposits*
	45,276	42,932		
NET ASSETS	2,251,484	1,803,440		
RESERVES AND BALANCES				
General Fund	312,576	274,941	*Note 1*	*One off savings in year transferred to General Fund after review and assessment of future commitments(47% of precept)*
Earmarked Reserves	1,938,909	1,528,499	*Note 2*	*Committed to ongoing projects (CIL) and aligned to future plans.*
	2,251,485	1,803,440		
Note 1 - General Reserve	37,635			*The increase in year will help cushion any unexpected costs arising out of new facility at High Copse*
Note 2 - Earmarked Reserve	1,638,758			*Community Infrastructure Levy (time limited)*
	153,435			*Reserve for Future Programmed Refurbishments*
	80,000			*Allotments Reserve - Potential for Deardon Extension*
	66,716			*Other Earmarked Reserves*
Total Earmarked Reserves	1,938,909			

Shinfield Parish Council

Year Ended 31/3/2025

Detailed Movement in Reserves

Item 6.2 c

A/C		31/03/24	Year I&E	Released	Transfers	Added	31/03/25	
A/C	Earmarked Reserves							
311	New Website	10,000					10,000	*Set aside for technical support for future upgrades*
320	Repairs & Renewals	103,059				50,376	153,435	*Future maintenance reserve, increasing over the next 10 years in the long term financial plan bolstered by interest received from CCLA Deposit Fund and a one off S106 contribution in 2024/2025*
325	Contested Elections	8,000					8,000	*Set aside for one contested Parish Election*
335	Youth Initiatives	10,090				5,086	15,176	*Set aside for Awareness Campaigns and Events for Local Youths and Adults - particularly in deprived areas*
336	General Planning Issues	25,068					25,068	*For Future (unknown)Planning Appeals*
337	Allotments Reserve	70,000			10,000		80,000	*Contribution from University to extend Deardon Way allotment site if demand requires plus a carry forwrad for works ordered but delayed until May 2025*
338	Public Art Project Reserve	0				972	972	*Initial funds raised for a new Public Art Installation*
339	Grants Reserve	0			7,500		7,500	*Project in progress at 31/3/2025 but grants to be paid out on satisfactory completion*
		226,217	0	0	17,500	56,434	300,151	
331	Community Infrastructure Levy							
	Unallocated B/fwd	92,145			-275,900	420,596	236,841	
	Earmarked for Projects							
	School Green Improvements	54,867		-8,135	-25,000		21,732	*Ongoing project final phase still to be approved*
	Millworth Sports Park	913,270		-12,897			900,373	*Initial Costs in 2023/24 - Surveyor and Plans only*
	Tennis Club Toilets	0		-28,784	48,000		19,216	*Installation of Tennis Club Toilets - ongoing project completed in May 2025*
	Transport Strategy	242,000			-150,000		92,000	*F & GP Agreed to reduce the level of funding due to no feasible projects coming forward*
	Fit Out - High Copse			-29,304	39,000		9,696	*Balance available for completion of fit-out.*
	Public Art	0		-5,000	50,000		45,000	*New project for public art to bolster S106 funds*
	Microregeneration	0			300,000		300,000	*New Project - enaging with professionals to establish suitable projects for long term energy provision*
	Artificial Cricket Pitch - the Manor	0			13,900		13,900	*New installation in April 2025*
		1,302,282	**0**	**-84,120**	**0**	**420,596**	**1,638,758**	*Agrees to Regulation 121B Monitoring Report*
	TOTAL EARMARKED RESERVES AT 31st MARCH	1,528,499	0	-84,120	17,500	477,030	1,938,909	
310	General Fund	274,941	0	84,120	-17,500	-477,030		
	Income		1,361,733					***Line 2 & 3 Annual Return***
	Expenditure		-913,689					***Line 4 & 6 Annual Return***
		274,941	448,044	84,120	-17,500	-477,030	312,575	*General Fund Reserve*
		1,803,440	448,044	0	0	0	2,251,484	***Line 7 Annual Return***
	Net addition to Earmarked Reserves					**410,410**		*Agrees to income and expenditure account*

Item 6.3

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

We acknowledge as the members of:

Shinfield Parish Council

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2025, that:

	Agreed – Yes	Agreed – No*	N/A	*'Yes' means that this authority:*
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓			*prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.*
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓			*made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.*
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	✓			*has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.*
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.		✓		*during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.*
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✓			*considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.*
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓			*arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.*
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓			*responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.*
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	✓			*disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.*
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes:	No:	N/A: ✓	*has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.*

***Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.**

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

DD/MM/YYYY

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by the Chair and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chair SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk SIGNATURE REQUIRED

www.shinfieldparish.gov.uk

Item 6.4

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 for

Shinfield Parish Council

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2024 £	31 March 2025 £	*Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records.*
1. Balances brought forward	1,898,868	1,803,440	*Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.*
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	599,570	642,122	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts	408,332	719,611	*Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.*
4. (-) Staff costs	327,364	348,845	*Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.*
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	*Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).*
6. (-) All other payments	775,966	564,844	*Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cash-book less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).*
7. (=) Balances carried forward	1,803,440	2,251,484	*Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).*
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	1,804,854	2,250,526	*The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March –* ***To agree with bank reconciliation.***
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	5,250,717	5,274,709	*The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.*
10. Total borrowings	0	0	*The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).*

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)		✓		*The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.*
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)			✓	*The figures in the accounting statements above exclude any Trust transactions.*

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2025 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date DD/MM/YYYY

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

DD/MM/YYYY

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by Chair of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Analytical Review - Explanations of Significant Variations

Shinfield Parish Council Analytical Review of the Accounts 31st March 2025	2023/2024 £	2024/2025 £	Variance £	Explanation	Variance £
Line 2 - Precept	599,570	642,122	**42,552**	***See Note 2 - for detailed explanation***	
Line 3 - Total Other Receipts	408,332	719,611	**311,279**	Community Infrastructure Levy - Income - see separate note comparing receipts to previous year	244,376
				Additional Interest on investments and balances at bank	35,111
				External Contributions towards Council Expenditure	9,727
				Youth Club Tuck Sales & Subs (new service)	8,387
				Income from Hiring Facilities - 1 new site and increased number of hirers	5,669
				Rent Review - Chapel Lane Pre School	4,603
				Income from increased charges on allotments	1,361
				Income from new cinema room	1,099
				Other Income	946
					311,279
Line 4 - Staff Costs	327,364	348,845	**21,481**		
Line 5 - Loan Interest & Repayment - not applicable	0	0	0		
Line 6 - Other Expenditure	775,966	564,844	-211,122	Retention monies in 23/24 School Green Centre - contract signed off	-145,125
				One off projects in 23/24 (Cricket Equipment, Street Furniture & Allotment Improvements)	-107,580
				No capital grants awarded in 24/25	-33,900
				Footpath 11 improvement paid in 23/24 (one off)	-33,121
				School Green Centre snagging costs to Council in 23/24	-18,209
				Spencers Wood Rec - new MUGA completed in 23/24	-16,537
				Final architects and mechanical engineers fees on School Green Centre paid in 24/25	-9,360
				Vauation & Marketing Costs Ryeish Pavilionin 23/24 only	-8,455
				New Allotment Site Transfer Costs in 23/24 only	-3,516
				Cricket roller hire in 23/24 before permanent equipment delivered	-2,145
				Reduced cost of van rental and repiars to mowers compared to previous year	-1,125
				No election cost in 24/25	-1,125
				In-house IT costs of accommodating cinema equipment in 2024/2025	1,016
				Increase in number of mobile phones for staff	1,063
				Additional Cost of Commercial Waste on sites and servicing two new litter bins	1,132
				Responsive repairs and maintenance increase over 2023/24	1,653
				Planning Fees in 24/25 - Millworth Sports Park Project	1,656
				New in 24/25 - purchase of films and film licence fees for public showings	1,680
				Consumables such as toilet rolls and hand towels across all sites (inc new ones) increased since 23/2	1,770
				Increased Surveors costs on developing capital projects	2,084
				HR support for staff matter in 24/25	2,203
				Additional cost of all risks insurance in 24/25	2,508
				Targetted training and conferences in 2024/2025	2,923
				Additonal cost of Gas & Electricity due to new pavilion at High Copse	3,232
				One off fees in 24/25 for new lease and rent agreements	4,175
				Business Rates in 24/25 for new property and loss of transitional rates for School Green Centre	4,193
				Setting up new property with wifi and cabling for CCTV	5,399
				Additional cost of Grounds Maintenance in 24/25	6,221
				Surveyors fees - Millworth Sports Park Project and Tennis Club Toilets in 24/2025	8,253
				New Community Events including Arts Showcase in 24/25	9,333
				Planned Preventive maintenance in bulding including Grazeley Room wall linings	11,884
				One off IT costs in 2024/2025 transferring to cloud based systems	13,372
				Additional cost of Water in 2024/2025 - new properties and pitch maintenance	16,094
				Fit out costs of new High Copse Pavilion in 24/25	20,353
				Installation Tennis Club Toilets in 24/25	20,703
				One off cost of recruitment and agency staff facilities team in 2024/2025	25,737
				Other minor variations (net)	439
					-211,122
7 - Balances carried forward	1,803,440	2,251,484	**448,044**	***See Movement in Reserves***	
8 - Bank Balances	1,804,854	2,250,526	**445,672**	***See overall bank reconciliation***	
9 - Fixed Assets & Long Term Investments	5,250,717	5,274,709	**23,992**	***See separate statement of movement in fixed assets***	
10 - Borrowings	0	0	0		

Explanation of Increase in Income from Precept

Precept	2024/2025	2023/2024	Increase
Precept	642,122	599,570	**42,552**
Increase in Income Explained by ;			
2023/24 Tax Base	7,613.2		
Council Tax Increase for a Band D Equivalent - 24/25 over 23/24		3.54	26,950.73
Increase in Tax Base *	189.6	82.29	15,602.18
	Roundings		**42,553**

Notes :

Large Scale Development in the Parish, continued.

Council decision increase Band D Tax by 5%

Item 6.4 ©

NOTE COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE RECEIPTS

Community Infrastructure Receipts (CIL) - Explanation of Variation Between Years

2023/2024 CIL Receipts	
Stanbury House 25% (First Payt)	140,197.54
44 Falcon Avenue	26,585.03
Whitley Wood Lane	7,123.77
Service Station - ByPass	2,310.76
Received as one sum in October 2023	176,217.10
2024/2025	
Stanbury House 50%	280,395.08
Stanbury House 25% (Final)	140,197.53
	420,592.61
Variation - More Receipts in Year	244,375.51

Item 6.4(d)

Explanation of Interest Received in Year - Additional Interest

Source of Interest	2023/2024 £	2024/2025 £	Variance £	Explanation
National Savings Income Bonds	33,570	37,080	3,510	Interest rates more favourable
CCLA Investment	59	5,913	5,854	First full year of investment - Repairs Reserve
Lloyds Bank - Fixed Term Deposit		14,241	14,241	First Year of investing in more preferential rates
Lloyds Bank Instant Access Savings	3,382	9,437	6,055	Less preferential rate so moved funds
Lloyds Bank 95 day Notice		5,452	5,452	First Year of investing in more preferential rates
Total Interest Received in Year	**37,011**	**72,123**	**35,112**	Funds available increased via CIL

WHAT SMALLER AUTHORITIES NEED TO DO TO ADVERTISE THE PERIOD DURING WHICH ELECTORS AND INTERESTED PERSONS MAY EXERCISE RIGHTS RELATING TO THE ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require that:

1) The accounting records for the financial year to which the audit relates and all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers, receipts and other documents relating to those records must be made available for inspection by any person interested, during a period of 30 working days set by the smaller authority and including the first 10 working days of July.
2) The period referred to in paragraph (1) starts with the day on which the period for the exercise of public rights is treated as having been commenced i.e. the day following the day on which all of the obligations in paragraph (3) below have been fulfilled.
3) The responsible financial officer for a relevant authority must, on behalf of that authority, publish (**which must include publication on the authority's website**):
   a) the Accounting Statements (i.e. Section 2 of either Form 2 or 3, whichever is relevant, of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR)), accompanied by:
      i) a declaration, signed by that officer to the effect that the status of the Accounting Statements are unaudited and that the Accounting Statements as published may be subject to change;
      ii) the Annual Governance Statement (i.e. Section 1 of either Form 2 or Form 3, whichever is relevant, of the AGAR); and
   b) a statement that sets out—
      i) the period for the exercise of public rights;
      ii) details of the manner in which notice should be given of an intention to inspect the accounting records and other documents;
      iii) the name and address of the local auditor;
      iv) the provisions contained in section 26 (inspection of documents etc.) and section 27 (right to make objections at audit) of the Act, as they have effect in relation to the authority in question;

HOW DO YOU DO IT?

1) You will meet statutory requirements if you fully and accurately complete the notice of public rights pro forma in this document, and publish (**including publication on the smaller authority's website**) the following documents, the day before the public rights period commences:
   a) the approved Sections 1 and 2 of either Form 2 or 3, whichever is relevant to your smaller authority, of the AGAR; and
   b) the completed Notice of Public Rights and Publication of Unaudited Annual Governance & Accountability Return. Please note that we have pre-completed it with the following suggested dates: Tuesday 3 June – Monday 14 July 2025. (The latest possible dates that comply with the statutory requirements are Tuesday 1 July – Monday 11 August 2025); and
   c) the notes which accompany the Notice (Local authority accounts: a summary of your rights).

Where the authority has answered 'No' to any assertions on Section 1, as stated on the face of Section 1 of the AGAR, a sufficiently detailed explanation of the reasons must be published with the AGAR on the authority's website.

SHINFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

NOTICE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS AND PUBLICATION OF UNAUDITED ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 Sections 26 and 27
The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/234)

NOTICE	NOTES
1. Date of announcement 26th June 2025	(a) Insert date of placing of the notice which must be not less than 1 day before the date in (c) below
2. Each year the smaller authority's Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) needs to be reviewed by an external auditor appointed by Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Ltd. The unaudited AGAR has been published with this notice. As it has yet to be reviewed by the appointed auditor, it is subject to change as a result of that review. **Any person interested has the right to inspect and make copies of the accounting records for the financial year to which the audit relates and all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers, receipts and other documents relating to those records must be made available for inspection by any person interested. For the year ended 31 March 2025, these documents will be available on reasonable notice by application to:**	
Mr B Winton Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer, School Green Centre Reading RG2 9EH Tel 0118 9888220 e mail clerk@shinfieldparish.gov.uk	(b) Insert name, position and address/telephone number/ email address, as appropriate, of the Clerk or other person to which any person may apply to inspect the accounts
commencing on **Friday 27th June 2025**	(c) Insert date, which must be at least 1 day after the date of announcement in (a) above and at least 30 working days before the date appointed in (d) below
and ending on **Thursday 7th August 2025**	(d) The inspection period between (c) and (d) must be 30 working days inclusive and must include the first 10 working days of July.
3. Local government electors and their representatives also have: • The opportunity to question the appointed auditor about the accounting records; and • The right to make an objection which concerns a matter in respect of which the appointed auditor could either make a public interest report or apply to the court for a declaration that an item of account is unlawful. Written notice of an objection must first be given to the auditor and a copy sent to the smaller authority. The appointed auditor can be contacted at the address in paragraph 4 below for this purpose between the above dates only.	
4. The smaller authority's AGAR is subject to review by the appointed auditor under the provisions of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and the NAO's Code of Audit Practice 2015. The appointed auditor is: **PKF Littlejohn LLP (Ref: SBA Team)** **15 Westferry Circus** **Canary Wharf** **London E14 4HD** (sba@pkf-l.com)	
5. This announcement is made by Mr B Winton Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer for Shinfield Parish Council	(e) Insert name and position of person placing the notice – this person must be the responsible financial officer for the smaller authority

LOCAL AUTHORITY ACCOUNTS: A SUMMARY OF YOUR RIGHTS

Please note that this summary applies to all relevant smaller authorities, including local councils, internal drainage boards and 'other' smaller authorities.

The basic position

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (the Act) governs the work of auditors appointed to smaller authorities. This summary explains the provisions contained in Sections 26 and 27 of the Act. The Act and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 also cover the duties, responsibilities and rights of smaller authorities, other organisations and the public concerning the accounts being audited.

As a local elector, or an interested person, you have certain legal rights in respect of the accounting records of smaller authorities. As an interested person you can inspect accounting records and related documents. If you are a local government elector for the area to which the accounts relate you can also ask questions about the accounts and object to them. You do not have to pay directly for exercising your rights. However, any resulting costs incurred by the smaller authority form part of its running costs. Therefore, indirectly, local residents pay for the cost of you exercising your rights through their council tax.

The right to inspect the accounting records

Any interested person can inspect the accounting records, which includes but is not limited to local electors. You can inspect the accounting records for the financial year to which the audit relates and all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers, receipts and other documents relating to those records. You can copy all, or part, of these records or documents. Your inspection must be about the accounts, or relate to an item in the accounts. You cannot, for example, inspect or copy documents unrelated to the accounts, or that include personal information (Section 26 (6) – (10) of the Act explains what is meant by personal information). You cannot inspect information which is protected by commercial confidentiality. This is information which would prejudice commercial confidentiality if it was released to the public and there is not, set against this, a very strong reason in the public interest why it should nevertheless be disclosed.

When smaller authorities have finished preparing accounts for the financial year and approved them, they must publish them (including on a website). There must be a 30 working day period, called the 'period for the exercise of public rights', during which you can exercise your statutory right to inspect the accounting records. Smaller authorities must tell the public, including advertising this on their website, that the accounting records and related documents are available to inspect. By arrangement you will then have 30 working days to inspect and make copies of the accounting records. You may have to pay a copying charge. The 30 working day period must include a common period of inspection during which all smaller authorities' accounting records are available to inspect. This will be 1-14 July 2025 for 2024/25 accounts. The advertisement must set out the dates of the period for the exercise of public rights, how you can communicate to the smaller authority that you wish to inspect the accounting records and related documents, the name and address of the auditor, and the relevant legislation that governs the inspection of accounts and objections.

The right to ask the auditor questions about the accounting records

You should first ask your smaller authority about the accounting records, since they hold all the details. If you are a local elector, your right to ask questions of the external auditor is enshrined in law. However, while the auditor will answer your questions where possible, they are not always obliged to do so. For example, the question might be better answered by another organisation, require investigation beyond the auditor's remit, or involve disproportionate cost (which is borne by the local taxpayer). Give your smaller authority the opportunity first to explain anything in the accounting records that you are unsure about. If you are not satisfied with their explanation, you can question the external auditor about the accounting records.

The law limits the time available for you formally to ask questions. This must be done in the period for the exercise of public rights, so let the external auditor know your concern as soon as possible. The advertisement or notice that tells you the accounting records are available to inspect will also give the period for the exercise of public rights during which you may ask the auditor questions, which here means formally asking questions under the Act. You can ask someone to represent you when asking the external auditor questions.

Before you ask the external auditor any questions, inspect the accounting records fully, so you know what they contain. Please remember that you cannot formally ask questions, under the Act, after the end of the period for the exercise of public rights. You may ask your smaller authority other questions about their accounts for any year, at any time. But these are not questions under the Act.

You can ask the external auditor questions about an item in the accounting records for the financial year being audited. However, your right to ask the external auditor questions is limited. The external auditor can only answer 'what' questions, not 'why' questions. The external auditor cannot answer questions about policies, finances, procedures or anything else unless it is directly relevant to an item in the accounting records. Remember that your questions must always be about facts, not opinions. To avoid misunderstanding, we recommend that you always put your questions in writing.

The right to make objections at audit

You have inspected the accounting records and asked your questions of the smaller authority. Now you may wish to object to the accounts on the basis that an item in them is in your view unlawful or there are matters of wider concern arising from the smaller authority's finances. A local government elector can ask the external auditor to apply to the High Court for a declaration that an item of account is unlawful, or to issue a report on matters which are in the public interest. You must tell the external auditor which specific item in the accounts you object to and why you think the item is unlawful, or why you think that a public interest report should be made about it. You must provide the external auditor with the evidence you have to support your objection. Disagreeing with income or spending does not make it unlawful. To object to the accounts you must write to the external auditor stating you want to make an objection, including the information and evidence below and you must send a copy to the smaller authority. The notice must include:

- confirmation that you are an elector in the smaller authority's area;
- why you are objecting to the accounts and the facts on which you rely;
- details of any item in the accounts that you think is unlawful; and
- details of any matter about which you think the external auditor should make a public interest report.

Other than it must be in writing, there is no set format for objecting. You can only ask the external auditor to act within the powers available under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

A final word

You may not use this 'right to object' to make a personal complaint or claim against your smaller authority. You should take such complaints to your local Citizens' Advice Bureau, local Law Centre or to your solicitor. Smaller authorities, and so local taxpayers, meet the costs of dealing with questions and objections. In deciding whether to take your objection forward, one of a series of factors the auditor must take into account is the cost that will be involved, they will only continue with the objection if it is in the public interest to do so. They may also decide not to consider an objection if they think that it is frivolous or vexatious, or if it repeats an objection already considered. If you appeal to the courts against an auditor's decision not to apply to the courts for a declaration that an item of account is unlawful, you will have to pay for the action yourself.

For more detailed guidance on public rights and the special powers of auditors, copies of the publication Local authority accounts: A guide to your rights are available from the NAO website.	If you wish to contact your authority's appointed external auditor please write to the address in paragraph 4 of the *Notice of Public Rights and Publication of Unaudited Annual Governance & Accountability Return*.

ITEM 6.7

SMALLER AUTHORITIES PROPER PRACTICES PANEL
PRACTIONERS' GUIDE 2025 CHANGES

This year's Practitioners' Guide has the following changes (page and paragraph numbers are shown as they appear in the 2024 guide and in the new 2025 guide).

Throughout the document

- All references to JPAG have been amended to SAPPP.
- References to government departments updated to reflect any changes in name.
- All references to Parish Council(s) have been amended to smaller authority/ authorities.
- References to Chairman amended to Chair.
- All references to councillor(s) have been amended to member(s).
- Hyperlinks to legislation and guidance added.
- All references to 'should' in Proper Practices (Sections 1 - 3) amended to 'must'.
- Dates updated or changed to 20XX.

SECTION ONE - PROPER PRACTICES ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

Introduction

2024 guide	2025 guide
Page 5	Page 5

Panel Membership updated.

Assertion 1 - Financial management and preparation of accounting statements

2024 guide	2025 guide
Page 9	Page 9
Paragraph 1.9	

Paragraph amended to include:

The proper segregation of duties means that the Chairman of the authority or of the Finance Committee should never be appointed (even on a short-term basis) either as Clerk or as RFO; other members may perform these roles, unpaid, on a short-term basis providing appropriate safeguards are in place or if their appointment is unavoidable to ensure statutory functions continue to be fulfilled.

2024 guide	2025 guide
Page 9	Page 9
Paragraph 1.11	

References to DLUHC changed to government or removed.

Assertion 3 - Compliance with laws, regulations and proper practices

2024 guide	2025 guide
Page 12	Page 14
Paragraph 1.26 - Email Management	Paragraph 1.47

Paragraph amended and moved to Assertion 10.

Assertion 9 – Trust Funds

2024 guide	2025 guide
Page 14	Page 14

Assertion amended to state:

Trust funds (including charitable). The council is a sole managing trustee and has discharged its accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.

2024 guide	2025 guide
N/A	Page 14
N/A	Paragraphs 1.43-1.44

New paragraphs added:

1.43 If a local council is a sole managing trustee and has not discharged all of its responsibilities it must tick 'No'.

1.44 If a local council is not a sole managing trustee, it must tick 'N/A'.

2024 guide	2025 guide
Page 14	Page 14
Paragraph 1.44	Paragraph 1.45

Reference amended to 2.31

Assertion 10 - Digital and data compliance

2024 guide	2025 guide
N/A	Pages 14-15
N/A	1.47 - 1.54

*Assertion 10 added to clarify data compliance, previously covered under Assertion 3. **Note: Assertion 10 will not appear on the AGAR until 2025-26:***

SA
PPP

Assertion 10 - Digital and data compliance

To warrant a positive response to this assertion, the authority needs to have taken the following actions:

1.47 Email management - every authority must have a generic email account hosted on an authority owned domain, for example clerk@abcparishcouncil.gov.uk or clerk@abcparishcouncil.org.uk rather than abcparishclerk@gmail.com or abcparishclerk@outlook.com.

1.48 All smaller authorities (excluding parish meetings) must meet legal requirements for all existing websites regardless of what domain is being used.

1.49 All websites must meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.2 AA ? and the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018. ?

1.50 All websites must include published documentation as specified in the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Transparency code for smaller authorities (where applicable).

1.51 All smaller authorities, including parish meetings, must follow both the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2016 and the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018.

1.52 All smaller authorities, including parish meetings, must process personal data with care and in line with the principles of data protection.

1.53 The DPA 2018 supplements the GDPR and classifies a parish council as both a Data Controller and a Data Processor.

1.54 All smaller authorities (excluding parish meetings) must also have an IT policy. This explains how everyone - clerks, members and other staff - should conduct authority business in a secure and legal way when using IT equipment and software. This relates to the use of authority-owned and personal equipment. Comp Gov

<u>SECTION TWO — PROPER PRACTICES THE STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS</u>

Introduction

2024 guide	2025 guide
Page 16	Page 17
Paragraph 2.9 (a)	Paragraph 2.9.1
Unnumbered	Paragraph 2.9.2
N/A	Paragraph 2.10.1

Paragraph 2.9 (a) renumbered as 2.9.1.

Paragraph titled 'Treatment of amounts refunded/reimbursed' numbered as 2.9.2.

Paragraph 2.10.1 added:

For a 'lead' authority operating a joint committee, whose accounts are prepared on a receipts and payments basis, all transactions both in and out must be recorded gross in the accounts without netting off. If the 'lead' authority is holding balances belonging to the other authorities at the 31 March, these must be held in Ear-marked Reserves.

Line 8 - **Total value of cash and short-term investments**

2024 guide	2025 guide
Page 20	Page 20
Paragraph 2.22 b)	Paragraph 2.23 b.

Paragraph amended to:

be realisable at full value on demand or have a maturity end date of not more than 12 months;

Line 9 - **Total fixed assets plus long-term investments and assets**

2024 guide	2025 guide
Page 20	Page 20
Paragraph 2.25	Paragraph 2.26

First sentence amended to:

This cell shows the value of all the fixed assets, long-term investments and debtor long-term loans the authority owns.

Line 11 - **Disclosure note re trust funds (local councils only)**

2024 guide	2025 guide
Page 21	Page 21
Paragraphs 2.30-2.32	Paragraphs 2.31-2.33

Paragraphs amended to state:

2.31 Cell 11 requires a local council to answer 'Yes' or 'No' to whether the figures in Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return exclude any trust transactions or balances (see paragraph 1.46 above).

2.32 Where a body is NOT a sole managing trustee, it must answer 'Yes'.

2.33 Information for authorities on a receipts and payments basis can be found in Section 5, paragraphs 5.106 – 5.116.

2024 guide	2025 guide
Page 21	Page 21
Line 11	

Text added:

These Changes to Box 11 apply to the AGAR for 2025-26 and not 2024-25

Accompanying information

2024 guide	2025 guide
Page 22	Pages 21-22
Paragraph 2.36	Paragraph 2.37

Paragraph amended to:

There is no provision in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for additional notes to provide a narrative on the cause of any variance in the figures shown in the accounting statements. To address this, authorities need to provide the following accompanying information to the external auditor, where Form 3 of the AGAR is subject to review by the external auditor.

Explanation of variances

2024 guide	2025 guide
Page 22	Page 22
Paragraph 2.37	Paragraph 2.38

Paragraph amended to:

Authorities need to understand the changes in income and expenditure from year to year and their significance. The RFO needs to produce explanatory figures with a written narrative on the amount and cause of significant variances in annual levels of income, expenditure and balances shown in Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return that provides a sufficiently detailed and meaningful analysis and explanation of the reasons for the change.

SECTION FOUR — BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE FOR INTERNAL AUDIT

Internal Audit Checklist

2024 guide	2025 guide
Page 31	Page 31
H. Borrowing and Lending	

DMO changed to UK Debt Management Office

Bullet point 4 amended to:

Ensure that the outstanding loan liability as at 31 March each year is correctly recorded in the AGAR at section 2, line 10 (value should be verified from the lender and verification provided to the IA by the clerk/RFO).

SECTION FIVE — SUPPORTING INFORMATION FOR OFFICERS

AGS Assertion 3 — Compliance with laws, regulations and proper practices

2024 guide	2025 guide
Page 43	Page 47
Paragraphs 5.74-5.77	5.125-5.128

Paragraphs updated and moved to Assertion 10.

AGS Assertion 4 — Exercise of public rights

2024 guide	2025 guide
Page 43	Page 42
Paragraph 5.83	Paragraph 5.79

Bullet point 4 amended to state:

it must give a day's notice of commencement and be published together with sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR.

AGS Assertion 7 — Reports from auditors

2024 guide	2025 guide
Page 46	Page 44
Paragraph 5.105	Paragraph 5.101

Word 'external' added before 'auditors'.

AGS Assertion 9 — Trust funds (local councils only)

2024 guide	2025 guide
Page 46-47	Page 45
Paragraph 5.116	Paragraph 5.112

Additional text added to the end of the paragraph:

Where the authority finds itself in this position, it should give a 'No' response in Cell 11 which will trigger a qualification in relation to accounts preparation and a 'No' response to Assertion 9 on the Annual Governance Statement.

2024 guide	2025 guide
Page 47	Page 46
Paragraph 5.118	Paragraph 5.114

Paragraph amended to:

Meetings of the authority when it is acting as charity trustee must take place separately from those of the authority acting as the authority; it is suggested that a separate committee is established. Separate minutes must be kept. In order to avoid confusion, trust business should always be minuted separately from authority business. Separate notices and agendas for meetings should be issued.

AGS confirmation – Website

2024 guide	2025 guide
Page 47	N/A
Paragraphs 5.121 – 5.124	N/A

Section replaced.

AGS Assertion 10 — Digital and data compliance

2024 guide	2025 guide
N/A	Pages 46-47
N/A	Paragraphs 5.117 – 5.128

Section added:

5.117. Data protection and security - Using authority-owned email accounts ensures that sensitive information is handled in a controlled environment with appropriate security measures. This aligns with GDPR principles such as data minimisation, integrity and confidentiality.

5.118. Accountability and transparency - authority-owned email accounts provide a clear record of communications, which is essential for transparency and accountability. This helps in maintaining an audit trail and ensures all council-related communications are accessible for review if needed.

5.119. Consistency, trust and professionalism - it is best practice to use .gov.uk domains for smaller authorities' emails and websites (excluding parish meetings). This helps maintain a consistent and professional image for the authority and ensures all communications are easily identifiable as coming from the authority. This is increasingly important as cyber scams are on the rise. For support on setting up a gov.uk domain for your smaller authority you can follow the guidance on moving your parish council to a .gov.uk domain.

5.120. Having authority-owned email accounts also makes Data Subject Access and Freedom of Information Requests easier to manage.

5.121. Compliance with policies - All authorities should have an IT policy that mandates the use of authority-owned email accounts for official business. These policies are designed to ensure that all communications are conducted in a manner that is consistent with the authority's standards and legal obligations

5.122 IT Policies - An IT policy prevents misunderstandings when using IT equipment for authority business and makes sure that there can be no excuses for anyone in your authority not protecting their data or working safely. If your authority does not have a policy, you might like to use this IT policy template. It is important to personalise the template for the specific use of your authority and add links to guidance where needed. It is important to personalise the template for the specific use of your authority and add links to guidance where needed.

5.123. Website accessibility - Where a smaller authority is subject to the requirements of website accessibility it does not have to buy a new website to comply with accessibility law if it places a disproportionate burden on the authority. At a minimum all authorities' websites must include an accessibility statement on their website and keep it under regular review. This statement should include reasons for not meeting accessibility requirements, ways to source alternative copies of non-accessible documents and a point of contact.

5.124. Data Protection - To ensure compliance with data protection regulations, smaller authorities must:

- Appoint a Data Protection officer to oversee data protection and ensure compliance with GDPR.
- Conduct regular data audits to identify what personal data is held, how it is used and make sure it is processed lawfully.
- Implement a Data Protection policy on data handling, storage and sharing.
- Provide regular training to ensure all staff and members are trained on data protection principles and practices.
- Secure data using appropriate technical and organisational measures to protect personal data from breaches

5.125 The Freedom of Information Act places a duty on every public authority to adopt and maintain a publication scheme which details the publication of information by the authority and is approved by the Information Commissioner; adoption of the Information Commissioner's Office model publication scheme meets this requirement.

5.126 In addition to this the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities requires parish councils, internal drainage boards, charter trustees and port health authorities with an annual turnover not exceeding £25,000 to publish certain information set out in the code. This enables local electors and local taxpayers to access relevant information about the authority's accounts and governance.

5.127 Smaller Authorities with total turnover or expenditure greater than £25,000 should as best practice comply with the Local Government Transparency Code 2015; the government believes that in principle all data held and managed by local authorities should be made available to the public unless there are specific sensitivities to doing so.

5.128 Monitoring an authority's compliance with the relevant transparency code is not part of the external auditor's limited assurance review of the AGAR. It would however be expected that internal auditors would review this control area.

AGAR Accompanying information

2024 guide	2025 guide
Page 56	Page 56
Paragraph 5.204	Paragraph 5.208

Paragraph amended to state:

As authorities have no legal powers to hold revenue reserves other than those for reasonable working capital needs, or for specifically earmarked purposes, whenever an authority's year-end general reserve is less than three months or more than twelve months of net revenue expenditure an explanation should be provided to the external auditor.

Terms of Reference

2024 guide	2025 guide
Pages 70-74	Pages 69-74

Replaced with updated version.

Shinfield Parish Council
Finance & General Purposes Committee
Terms of Reference

Status

- This is a standing committee of Shinfield Parish Council

Purpose

- The Finance & General Purposes (F&GP) Committee is responsible for
  - Management and control of
    - Council finances
    - Council Corporate Governance
  - Making recommendations to Full Council on such matters
  - Any matters not falling within the Purpose of any other council committee
    - Unless the matter is reserved for Full Council

Membership

- The Committee shall comprise of
  - Chair of the Council
  - Vice-Chair(s) of the Council as determined each year at the Annual Council Meeting
  - The chairs of all other council standing committees which are
    - Facilities
    - Arts, Culture & Events
    - Children & Young Adults
    - Planning & Highways
      - If the Chair of any of these standing committees is unable to attend then the Vice-Chair of the relevant committee may attend in their place
  - Up to two other members
    - Ideally appointees should have experience in one or more of the following areas
      - Financial management,
      - Accountancy
      - Other relevant skills as identified by the committee
      - Appropriate training agreed by the Council
- The quorum for the committee is three members.
- The Chair of the committee shall be the Vice-Chair of the Council with designated responsibility for Finance & Staffing
- The Committee shall elect a Vice-Chair annually at the first meeting of the committee held after the Annual Council Meeting in May each year
- The Clerk shall attend these meetings as clerk to the committee and produce minutes
- The Finance Manager shall also attend meetings of this committee

Meetings

- The committee will normally meet at least FIVE times per annum
- Meetings will normally be held on the third Wednesday of each even numbered month (February, April, June, August, October & December)

Aims and Objectives

- Making Budget recommendations to Full Council including
  - Making budget planning assumptions and identifying required outputs
  - Preparation of the Annual Operating Plan and 5 Year business model for the council
  - Precept setting
- Ensuring effective in year management of financial resources including
  - Ensuring Management of cash flow including receipts and payments
  - Reviewing income and expenditure against budget
  - Management of fidelity, confirming bank balances and reserves
  - Management of deposits
- Ensuring effective management of year end audit including
  - Preparation of annual accounts
  - Management of audit and audit services
- Management of the council's policy and procedures including
  - Review of Standing Orders
  - Review of financial policy and financial regulations
  - Review of Terms of Reference for standing committees and sub-committees
  - Review of procurement policy and management
  - Review of Member's Code of Conduct
- Effective management of risks to the council
  - Production and Management of Council Risk Register
  - Reviewing Risk Register at each meeting
  - Recommending the Risk Register at each Annual Council Meeting
- Allocation and monitoring of the council's annual grants budget and grant application process for the benefit of the community
- Administration of CIL monies for reporting to Council and external bodies as required; and in liaison with the council's standing committees, to make recommendations to Full Council for the use of CIL receipts

Delegated powers

- The committee has the following delegated powers:
  - Delegation of work to the Clerk
  - Delegation of work to the Responsible Finance Officer (where someone other than the Clerk)
  - Delegation of work to a Sub-Committee
  - The power to spend within its budget
    - Any proposed expenditure in excess of the budget limit for this committee must be approved by Full Council prior to the expenditure being incurred

Reporting on the activities of the Committee

- The following reporting shall take place
  - The DRAFT minutes of each meeting of the committee will be tabled at the next Full Council meeting
  - The Chair, Clerk and Finance Manager shall provide additional information on the committee's activities as requested by members

Training Recommendations

- It is **recommended** that each member of this committee attends training as arranged through Hampshire Association of Local Councils on
    - “Local Council Finance for Councillors”
    - “Budgeting for Councillors”
- Alternative courses covering the same syllabus would also be suitable training for members of the committee

Review

- The Committee shall review these terms of reference annually at the first meeting after the annual meeting of the council.

Shinfield Parish Council - Reconciliation Cashbook to Accounts

Item 9.1

As at 31st May 2025

Account	Statement Date	Balance Statement	Uncleared Payments	To be Banked	Reconciled Balance	Financial System Omega	Signed Off (Initials)
Lloyds Bank Current	31/05/2025	23,148			23,148	23,148	
Lloyds Bank Notice Account	31/05/2025	357,263			357,263	357,263	
Lloyds Instant Access Account	31/05/2025	885,796			885,796	885,796	
NS&I	31/03/2025	1,000,000			1,000,000	1,000,000	
CCLA Public Sector Deposit	31/05/2025	200,000			200,000	200,000	
Petty Cash/Cash In Hand	31/05/2025	53			53	53	
Barclaycard Commercial	31/05/2025	-766			-766	-766	
Trade UK	31/05/2025	-1,697			-1,697	-1,697	
	Total "Cash"	2,463,797	0	0	2,463,797	2,463,797	

Signed L James (Chairman F & GP)

....

Dated 11/6/25

Reconciliation to Reserves

Debtors	23,328
VAT Claim	6,500
Prepayments	240
Creditors	-15,604
Hire Deposits	-4,901
Allotment Key Deposits	-290
Net Current Assets	2,473,070
Balance on Reserves	2,473,070

Notes;

Debtors

Debtors is Sales Ledger, Interest Payable and Allotments

Sales- VAT inclusive

Prepayments - Insurance and Service Contracts

VAT - March 2025

Creditors

Suppliers (Invoices), Income in Advance

Update CIL Reserve - 31/5/2025

Item 10.1

											Funding Received								Spent	UnSpent	Anticipated Future Funding					
Date Paid to SPC	May-17	Oct-17	Apr-18	Oct-18	Apr-19	Oct-19	Apr-20	Oct-20	Apr-21	Oct-21	Pre Apr 22	Apr-22	Oct-23	Apr-24	Oct-24	Apr-25	TOTAL				**Oct-25**	Apr-26	Oct-26	TOTAL		TOTAL
Previously Received	33,854	315,098	315,709	246,209	79,810	25,000	45,644	35,849	985,328	1,094,192	3,176,693	115,915	176,217	280,395	140,198	23,147	3,912,565									
Other Minor Developments																					0	109,246	109,246	218,492		WBC CIL Report Estimate
TOTAL CIL RECEIPTS	**33,854**	**315,098**	**315,709**	**246,209**	**79,810**	**25,000**	**45,644**	**35,849**	**985,328**	**1,094,192**	**3,176,693**	**115,915**	**176,217**	**280,395**	**140,198**	**23,147**	**3,912,565**	<A			0	**109,246**	**109,246**	**218,492**	<C A+C>	**4,131,056**
Millworth Lane Playground	33,854	63,660									97,514						97,514		97,514	0						
Spencers Wood Pavilion		251,438	147,157								398,595						398,595		398,595	0						
School Green Centre			168,552	246,209	79,810	25,000	45,644	35,849	724,003	38,765	1,363,832						1,363,832		1,363,832	0						
Lap Tops									12,916		12,916						12,916		12,916	0						
Bollards									19,966		19,966						19,966		19,966	0						
Spencers Wood Recreation Grd									140,998		140,998						140,998		140,998	0						
The Manor Cricket Ground									34,782		34,782						34,782		34,782	0						
Allotments									35,172		35,172						35,172		35,172	0						
St Marys Community Hall										7,902	7,902						7,902		7,902	0						
Shinfield Players - Grant									17,491	2,509	20,000						20,000		20,000	0						
Millworth Lane										852,098	865,016	54,984					920,000		19,627	900,373						
Tennis Club Toilets										30,000	30,000	18,000					48,000		31,600	16,401						
School Green										58,063	50,000						50,000		28,268	21,732	After proposed reduction of £25,000					
Transport Strategy										104,855	100,000						100,000		8,000	92,000	After proposed reduction of £150,000					
Public Art												42,931	7,069				50,000		5,000	45,000						
High Copse													39,000				39,000		32,082	6,918						
Microregeneration													130,148	169,852			300,000		0	300,000						
Artificial Cricket Pitches - The Manor														13,900			13,900		0	13,900						
TOTAL ALLOCATIONS	**33,854**	**315,098**	**315,709**	**246,209**	**79,810**	**25,000**	**45,644**	**35,849**	**985,328**	**1,094,192**	**3,176,693**	**115,915**	**176,217**	**183,752**	**0**		**3,652,577**	B>	**2,256,253**	**1,396,324**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**		**3,652,577**
UNALLOCATED TO ANY SPECIFIC PROJECT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	96,643	140,198		259,988	<X			0	109,246	109,246	218,492	<Y X+Y>	478,479
Expires										Oct-26		Apr-27	Oct-28	Apr-29	Oct-29						Apr-30	Oct-30	Apr-31			
BALANCE ON CIL CASH RESERVE (A-B)											**31/05/2025**		1,656,311.00					A-B>	1,656,311							

When funding was received

What future funding is expected

What has been spent and is left to be spent on individual projects

Theoretical balance of CIL available for new projects

777.96
165
1900
2556.43
50
312.93
1395.83
447.93
1600
9206.08

Update Reserves - Balances Held at 31st May 2025

Item 10.2

Reserve	Balance B/Fwd 1st April 2025	Expenditure in Year	Income in Year	Movement Between Reserves	Balance as at 31st May 2025	Committee	Purpose	Estimated Life	Source of Funds -
General Reserve	312,575	191,261	349,806		471,120	F & GP	Set aside for any extraordinary or unplanned expenditure and revenue deficit		Accumulated revenue savings. 5 yr plan assumes will be called on in 2025/2026. The balance will change in line with expenditure incurred and income received throughout the year.

Earmarked Reserves

Reserve	Balance B/Fwd 1st April 2025	Expenditure in Year	Income in Year	Movement Between Reserves	Balance as at 31st May 2025	Committee	Purpose	Estimated Life	Source of Funds -
Community Infrastructure Levy	1,638,758	5,593	23,147		1,656,312	F & GP	Infrastructure required to support new development	5 years after receipt	Developers Contributions - Community Infrastructure Levy
Deardon Allotments (Extension)	80,000				80,000	Facilities	Sum deposited by Reading University if demand for allotments requires an extension to Deardon Way site	10 Years	University £70,000 (2022) additional £10,000 for clearance in April 2025
Sinking Fund	153,435		45,488		198,923	F & GP	Funds set aside for planned future major repairs / refurbishments	Ongoing	Annual Contribution from Revenue and Interest on Accumulated Investment (CCLA) added monthly & S106 Contribution to Bus Shelter Hollow Lane (£7.5k)
Planning	25,068				25,068	P & H	Set aside for unexpected costs incurred for planning advice and contribution to appeals	Ongoing	Revenue Underspend 2020/21
Website	10,000				10,000	F & GP	Further Development of Website required for expanding the Parish and rebranding.	1 Year	Revenue Underspend 2020/21
Youth Initiatives	15,176				15,176	C & YA	To fund one off initiatives to educate and support the youth population - paid for coach trip	1 Year	Revenue Underspend in 2019/20 plus Transfer of Accumlated Funds in Youth Club Bank Account 31/1/2025 - closed.
Parish Election	8,000				8,000	Full Council	To be reviewed as part of the final accounts process	Ongoing	Increased in 2022/2023 based on Estimated Cost - Review at Year End
Grants	7,500				7,500	F & GP	Monies earmarked for Installation of Defibrillators in 2024/2025		Project delayed due to staff shortages - to be complated by July 2025
Public Art Reserve	972				972	ACE	Funds raised for Public Art		Public Art to be funded through S106 and fund raising.
Total Earmarked Reserves	1,938,909	5,593	68,635	0	2,001,951				
TOTAL RESERVES	2,251,484	196,854	418,441	0	2,473,071				

Shinfield Parish Council – Standing Orders – Review 2024/2025

Guidelines to the review of the current standing orders

Each individual standing order was reviewed to:

1. Ensure clear intention & meaning.
2. Enhance ease of understanding.
3. Reflect current practices.

Current standing orders (approved 19 April 2021)

The current standing orders have been referenced (in red) to indicate the following;

1. Recommended new standing order number.
2. Recommended deletion of a standing order/statement with an explanation.

There are six recommended deletions as follows;

1. Statement on page 1 – no longer required.
2. Colour coding – no longer required.
3. 1(i) – no longer required.
4. 14(d.vi) – no longer required due to new recommendation 11(b.i).
5. 17 – no longer required due to new recommendation 11(b.i).
6. 31(b) – no longer required as this is not current practice.

Revised standing orders (2024/2025)

The recommendation is that standing orders NOT highlighted remain unchanged.

The recommendation for highlighted standing orders fall within the following categories;

1. Revision of wording only, for ease of understanding.
2. Revision of wording for ease of understanding with an added recommendation.
3. Recommended new standing order.

Appendix – as referenced in the revised standing orders.

- Terms of Reference for committees – as approved by the Council.
- Financial Regulations – to be reviewed
- Code of Conduct – to be reviewed in line with upcoming NALC review.
- Data Protection Policy (including record of breaches) – to be reviewed
- Press & Media Policy – to be reviewed
- Social Media Policy – to be reviewed
- Travel & Subsistence Policy – to be reviewed

Required Registers – as referenced in the revised standing orders.

- Register of dispensations – to be reviewed.
- Register of interests – to be reviewed.
- Register of motions – to be reviewed.
- Register of planning application summary of responses – to be reviewed.
- Register of councillor training – to be reviewed.
- Register of borough councillors' attendance and reports – to be reviewed.

2025

Standing Orders

Shinfield Parish Council

LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME FOUNDATION

Shinfield Parish Council

6/25/2025

INDEX

1. Standing Orders

a) Standing orders for the organisation and transaction of the Council's business are decided by the Council.

b) The standing orders use as a base document the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) Model standing orders latest update issued 31st March 2025. Standing orders in **bold** type contain legal and statutory requirements. It is recommended that councils adopt them without changing them or their meaning.

c) Standing orders not highlighted in bold do not incorporate statutory requirements and are aimed at;

   I. Highlighting matters that merit regulation by standing order.
   II. Encourage use of standing orders to regulate routine administrative arrangements.

d) The Council, committees and sub-committees can only act within the law and in accordance with the Council's approved standing orders and financial regulations.

e) The Council has not adopted standing orders which undermine, override or conflict with any requirements imposed by legislation.

f) Any reference in the standing orders to financial matters is a reference to the Council's standing orders for the regulation of its financial affairs.

g) The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the Council's standing orders to a councillor upon delivery of their declaration of acceptance of office.

2. General Power of Competence

a) Subject to any statutory prohibitions, restrictions and limitations, and provided it meets the eligibility criteria, the Council will seek to exercise the General Power of Competence as defined in the 2011 Localism Act.

b) Eligibility for General Power of Competence is set out in the General Power of Competence (Prescribed Conditions) order 2012 s8;

   I. The number of members of the council that have been declared to be elected is equal to or greater than two-thirds of the total number of members of the council.

   II. The Clerk to the parish council holds an appropriate qualification as a Clerk.

3. Suspension of Standing Orders

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

b) A motion to permanently add or vary or revoke one or more of the Council's standing orders shall be proposed by a special motion, the written notice by at least two councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with the standing orders.

4. Proper Officer & Responsible Financial Officer

4.1 Proper Officer

a) The Council's Proper Officer shall be the Clerk. In the Clerk's absence the Deputy Clerk shall act as the Proper Officer. In the absence of both Clerk and Deputy Clerk, another staff member, nominated by the Council, shall act as the Proper Officer.

b) The Council's Proper Officer shall;

I. **At least three clear days before a meeting of the council or a committee;**
   - **Serve on councillors by delivery or post to their residences or by email authenticated in such a manner as the Proper Officer thinks fit (provided the Councillor has consented to service by email), a signed summons confirming the time, place and the agenda of the meeting, and**
   - **Provide in a conspicuous place, public notice of the time, place and agenda (provided that the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the Council convened by councillors is signed by them).**

II. Set the agenda for all Full Council and committee meetings in accordance with standing order 12, and include on the agenda all motions in the order received unless a councillor has given written notice at least three days before the meeting confirming their withdrawal of it.

III. **Convene a meeting of the Council for the election of a new Chair of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in this office.**

IV. **Facilitate inspection of the minute book by local government electors.**

V. **Receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities.**

VI. Hold acceptance of office forms from councillors.

VII. Hold a copy of every councillor's register of interests.

VIII. Assist with responding to requests made under the freedom of information legislation and rights exercisable under data protection legislation, in accordance with the Council's relevant policies and procedures.

IX. Liaise as appropriate with the Council's Data Protection Co-Ordinator in accordance with standing order 23(g).

X. Receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the Council except when there is a resolution to the contrary.

XI. Assist in the organisation of, storage of, access to, security of and destruction of information held by the Council in paper and electronic form subject to the requirements of data protection and freedom of information legislation and other legitimate requirements.

XII. Arrange for legal deeds to be executed in accordance with standing order 25.

XIII. Arrange and manage the prompt authorisation, approval and instruction regarding any payments to be made by the Council in accordance with its financial regulations (see appendix).

XIV. Circulate every planning application notified to the Council to the members of the Planning & Highways committee, and submit the Council's response to the local planning authority portal, and maintain a summary of planning applications considered and the Council's response.

XV. If a planning application requires consideration before the next Planning & Highways committee meeting OR Full Council meeting, refer this planning application to the Chair, or in their absence Vice-Chair, of the Planning & Highways committee OR Chair of the Council, or in their absence a Vice-Chair of the Council within two working days of receipt in order to facilitate an extraordinary meeting if required.

XVI. Manage access to information about the Council via the publication scheme.

4.2 Responsible Financial officer

a) The Clerk is the Responsible Financial Officer for the Council. The Council shall in the absence of the Clerk appoint appropriate staff member(s) to undertake the work of the Responsible Financial Officer.

5. Meetings of the Council and Committees

5.1 Location of Meetings

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

5.2 Notice of Meetings

a) **The minimum three clear days notice of a meeting does not include the day on which the 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.**

5.3 Public Attendance at Meetings

a) **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 of for other special reasons. The public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by resolution which shall give the reason for the public's exclusion.**

5.4 Representation by members of the public

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

b) The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting, in accordance with standing order 5.4(a), shall not exceed 30 minutes unless directed by the Chair of the meeting.

c) Subject to standing order 5.4(a), a member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes unless allowed by the Chair of the meeting.

d) In accordance with standing order 5.4(a), all questions will receive a response; this may be either at or after the meeting and either in writing or verbally. The Chair may permit a short discussion of the matter at the meeting or defer discussion to a future meeting.

5.5 Chairing the Meeting

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

b) **Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chair of the Council may in their absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chairs(s) of the Council.**

c) Subject to the provisions of section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, if the Chair is unable to continue in office, for example, on the grounds of ill-health, then a new Chair may be elected in accordance with standing order 6(d.i).

5.6 Reporting on the Meeting

a) **Subject to standing order 5.6(b) a person who attends a meeting is permitted to report on the meeting whilst the meeting is open to the public. To "report" means to film, photograph, make an audio recording of meeting proceedings, use any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear the meeting as it take place or later to report or to provide oral or written commentary about the meeting so that the report of commentary is available as the meeting takes place or later to people not present.**

b) **A person present at the meeting may not provide an oral report or oral commentary about a meeting as it take place without permission.** Such permission may be granted by the Chair of the meeting.

c) **The press shall be provided reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of all or part of the meeting at which they are entitled to be present.** Members of the press should be asked by the Chair to identify themselves at the start of the meeting.

d) The Council may make its own recordings of proceedings in Full Council and committee meetings for the purpose of ensuring the accuracy of the minutes. Any such recordings will be destroyed after the minutes of the meeting have been signed as accurate.

5.7 Apologies for Absence

a) Councillors should normally submit their apologies and reason for absence in advance of the meeting to the Clerk. The Clerk shall report these to the meeting and record apologies in the minutes. Any circumstances where the Council or committee is not prepared to accept the reason for the apology for absence should be done by a formal resolution and vote of the Council or committee.

5.8 Attendance

a) If a councillor fails to attend three consecutive ordinary Full Council meetings, without a reason accepted by the Council, the Clerk will be instructed to formally write to that councillor regarding their future attendance. If the councillor is absent for six consecutive meetings without a reason accepted by the Council, their membership of the Council will be terminated, and the Clerk will write to inform them accordingly. If a councillor fails to attend for more than six consecutive meetings with an accepted reason for absence, the Council will no longer accept their reason for absence and the six month period until termination shall begin and the Clerk shall inform them accordingly.

b) If a member fails for three consecutive ordinary meetings to attend a meeting of a committee, they shall be given an opportunity of making an explanation. Unless the explanation is accepted by the committee they shall no longer be a member of that committee.

c) Standing order 5(8.a) and 5(8.b) shall not apply to a councillor whose absence is due to attendance of a meeting of some other body or organisation to which they have been appointed as the Council's accredited representative.

5.9 Dispensations

a) **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 limitation or restrictions under the code on their right to participate and vote on that matter.**

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

c) **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.

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

e) A dispensation request shall confirm;

I. The description and the nature of the disclosable pecuniary interest or other interest to which 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. An explanation as to why the dispensation is sought.

IV. The Council or committee shall determine the appropriate duration of any dispensation granted.

V. The Council or committee can withdraw the dispensation at any time.

VI. Details of all dispensations shall be recorded in a dispensation register held by the Clerk.

f) **A dispensation may be granted in accordance with standing order 5.9(d) if having regard to all relevant circumstances any of the following apply;**

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

II. Granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the Council's area; or

III. It is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.

5.10 Meeting Quorums

a) **No business may be transacted at a meeting of the Council unless at least one third of the whole number of members are present and in no case shall the quorum of a meeting be less than three. There should be no less than three members appointed to a committee. The quorum of a committee should also be three.**

b) **If no quorum exists when the meeting begins of if during a meeting the number of councillors present and not debarred by reason of a prejudicial declared interest falls below the quorum, no business shall be transacted, and the meeting shall be closed.** The business not transacted at that meeting shall be transacted at the next meeting or on such other date as the Proper Officer may set, to be no more than 3 months from the original motion.

5.11 Voting at Meetings

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

b) **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.**

c) **Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on a question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave their vote for or against that question.** A councillor present at the meeting may request their individual vote to be recorded in the minutes. Any requests to have a recorded vote shall be made before moving on to the next item on the agenda.

d) Any councillor or non-councillor with voting rights or the Clerk of the meeting may request that any matter or motion is moved by a show of hands. If there is no show of hands a matter or motion may move forward by a general agreement of the meeting.

e) The following matters and related motions must be resolved by a show of hands;

   I. Election of the Chair and Vice-Chair(s) of the Council and committees.
   II. Financial matters
   III. New council policy or changes to existing policy
   IV. Approving minutes of a meeting.
   V. Receiving audit reports.
   VI. Approval of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR).
   VII. Approval of the Annual Governance Statement.
   VIII. Disposal of assets.
   IX. Action against a councillor or member of public.
   X. Entering into a lease.

5.12 Voting on Appointments

a) Where there are more than two candidates nominated for a position to be filled by the Council and none of those candidates has received an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the candidate 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 candidate. In the event of a tie the casting vote will be made of the Chair of the meeting.

5.13 Meeting Start Time & Duration

a) Meetings will normally start at 19.30, but other start times are permitted where agreed by the Chair.

b) Meetings should not exceed a period of 2.5 hours. If a meeting has not closed after 2.5 hours or continues to 22.00 the Chair of the meeting shall at this time propose the motion “That this meeting continue.” The motion must be seconded and a vote shall be taken without discussion. If any meeting is adjourned before its business has finished, the business not transacted at that meeting shall be transacted at the next meeting or on a date as the Proper Officer may set, to be not more than three months from the original meeting.

5.14 Confidential Business

a) **In accordance with s.1(2) Public Bodies (admission to meetings) Act 1960, the public may not be excluded from council meetings unless there are special reasons to justify such exclusion.**

b) The agenda, papers that support the agenda and the minutes of the meeting shall not disclose or otherwise undermine confidential or sensitive information which for special reasons would not be in the public interest.

c) Councillors should not disclose any confidential or sensitive information unless relying on a public interest or whistleblowing defence.

d) A councillor failing to observe requirements of standing order 5(14.c) relating to confidential business may, subject to resolution by the Council be excluded or suspended from the membership of the relevant committee.

5.15 Minutes of Meetings

a) The minutes of a meeting shall include an accurate record of the following;

   I. The time and place of the meeting.

   II. The names of councillors who are present and the names of councillors who are absent.

   III. Interests that have been declared by councillors and non-councillors with voting rights.

   IV. The grant of dispensations (if any) to councillors and non-councillors with voting rights.

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

   VI. If there was a public participation session.

   VII. The resolutions made.

   VIII. Other decisions made by the meeting.

5.16 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. Any inaccuracies should be reported to the Clerk in advance of the meeting. The Clerk shall notify the meeting of any amendments.

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 13(a.ii).

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) Subject to the publication of draft minutes in accordance with standing order 5.14 and standing order 5.15 and following a resolution which confirms the accuracy of the minutes of a meeting, the approved minutes will become the formal record of the meeting.

5.17 Conduct at Meetings

a) All councillors and non-councillors with voting rights shall observe the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council (see appendix). **The Code of Conduct adopted by the Council shall apply to councillors and non-councillors with voting rights in respect of the entire meeting.**

b) A person shall raise their hand when requesting to speak. The Chair of the meeting may require speakers to stand (except when a person has a disability or is likely to suffer discomfort).

c) Any person speaking at a meeting shall address their comments to the Chair of the meeting.

d) Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wishes to speak, the Chair shall direct the order of speaking.

5.18 Disorderly Conduct at Meetings

a) No person shall obstruct the transactions 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, should be put to the vote without discussion.

c) Should the motion in standing order 5(16.b) refer to the Chair of the meeting, then if so resolved, the Vice-Chair or another nominated councillor shall chair the rest of the meeting.

d) If the resolution made in accordance with standing orders is ignored, the Chair of the meeting may take further steps to restore order or to progress the meeting. This may include temporarily suspending or closing the meeting.

6. Annual Meetings

a) In an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held or within 14 days following the day on which the new councillors elected take office. Election years are 2027, 2031 and every four years thereafter.

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

c) If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the Council shall take place at 18.00.

d) The election of the Chair of the Council shall be the first business completed at the annual meeting of the Council.

I. The position of Chair shall be open to all members of the council. Nominations for the position of Chair should be submitted on an official nomination form. Completed and signed nomination forms should be submitted to the Clerk at least seven clear working days before the annual meeting of the Council. The election of the Chair shall be either by a show of hands or by a ballot if there is more than one candidate.

II. The election of two Vice-Chairs shall be the second business completed at the annual meeting of the Council. The delineated roles shall be Vice-Chair of Finance & Staffing and Vice-Chair of Corporate Governance. Nominations for a position of Vice-Chair should be submitted on an official nomination form. Completed and signed nomination forms should be submitted to the Clerk at least seven clear working days before the annual meeting of the Council. The election of the Vice-Chairs shall be either by a show of hands or by a ballot if there is more than one candidate. If no nominations are received for a Vice-Chair position it shall remain vacant until such time as a valid nomination is received, and the election shall take place at the next Full Council meeting.

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

f) The Vice Chair(s) of the Council, unless they resign or they become disqualified shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chair of the Council at the next annual meeting of the Council.

g) In an election year, if the current Chair of the Council has not been re-elected as a member of the Council, they shall preside at the 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.

h) **In an election year, if the current Chair of the Council has been re-elected as a member of the Council, they shall preside at the annual meeting until a new Chair of the Council has been elected. They may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of a new Chair of the Council and shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**

i) Following the election of the Chair of the Council and Vice-Chairs of the Council at the annual meeting, the order of business shall be as follows;

I. **In an election year, delivery by councillors of their declaration of 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 and Vice-Chairs of acceptance of office forms unless the Council resolves to do this at a later date.**

II. In an election year, to re-attest that the Council is eligible to exercise the General Power of Competence.

III. Appoint committee members to the standing committees.

IV. Agree the next twelve months meeting schedule for Full Council and committee meetings.

V. Review the Council's standing orders and take recommendations for any amendments and updates to the document.

VI. Appoint representatives to outside bodies.

VII. Review the Council's Risk Register.

VIII. Review and approve the schedule of annual subscriptions.

IX. Receive and review the schedule of annual licenses.

X. Further business shall be as for ordinary meetings.

7. Ordinary Meetings

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

b) The order of business at ordinary meetings shall be as follows;

I. Public questions.

II. Apologies.

III. Declaration of member's interests.

IV. Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting.

V. Matters arising.

VI. Reports from Borough Councillors.

VII. Reports from committees & sub-committees.

VIII. Other council business & motions as set out on the agenda in accordance with standing order 4.1(b.ii)

IX. Invoices for payment.

X. Correspondence.

XI. Confidential items.

XII. Date of next meeting.

c) The draft minutes of committees that have sat during the month are noted at that month's Full Council meeting. Any matters raised should be referred back to the relevant committee.

8. Extraordinary Meetings

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 7 days of having been requested to do so by two councillors, those two councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council. The statutory public notice giving the time, venue and agenda for such a meeting must be signed by the two councillors.**

c) The Chair of a committee or a sub-committee may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee or sub-committee at any time.

d) If the Chair of the committee or a sub-committee does not or refuses to call an extraordinary meeting of the committee or sub-committee within 7 days of having been requested to do so by two councillors, those two councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee or sub-committee. The statutory public notice giving the time, venue and agenda for such a meeting must be signed by the two councillors.

9. Delegation

a) The legal basis of the delegation conferred by this document is contained in the following provisions of the Local Government Act 1972.

b) Subject to any legislation to the contrary, the Council may delegate any matter to a committee, a sub-committee or an officer of the authority, or to any other local authority. Unless the Council decides otherwise, a committee may further delegate to a sub-committee or officer.

c) The membership of committees is fixed by the Council, and of sub-committees/working parties by the appointing committee. In constituting such groups the Council or committee shall have full regard to the implications on the officer and member workload when creating sub-committees.

d) The Council should respect the decisions of committees and sub-committees where those decisions have been duly delegated and made within the appropriate terms of reference. Matters of concern should be referred back to the relevant committee or sub-committee.

e) It is the intention that decisions should be taken at the most suitable level. Officers are given power over the day-to-day administration of the Council, committees to decide matters within their terms of reference, and matters of major policy should be decided by the Council.

f) The Council reserves the right to decide on any matter it has previously delegated to a committee, sub-committee, officer or local authority.

g) Committees can only exercise delegated powers where there is budgetary provision for any proposed expenditure. They can spend within their total allocated budget to enable smaller projects, but larger variations must be referred to the Finance & General Purposes (F&GP) committee. If no budgetary provision is available, delegated powers may only be exercised subject to obtaining approval for a supplementary estimate. This must be done through referring the matter firstly to the F&GP committee which can provide the approval for the expenditure and the recommendation can proceed to a Full Council meeting.

h) In the event that there is a disagreement between committees regarding which one has delegated powers to deal with a particular matter, it shall be referred to a Full Council meeting for resolution.

i) In making any decisions or recommendations, each committee should consider the implications in relation to;

I. Best practice.
II. Council objectives/policies.
III. Crime & disorder.
IV. The environment.
V. Finance and staffing implications.
VI. The impact on the parish.
VII. Potential impact on the Council's Risk Register.

10. Delegation to Committees

a) The Council may appoint standing committees or sub-committees as may be necessary and;

   I. Shall determine their terms of reference (see appendix), including meeting schedule, composition and quorum.

   II. Shall permit committees to recommend to the Council the number, date and times of their meetings up until the date of the next annual meeting.

   III. Shall permit a committee to vary dates and times of meetings for operational reasons without reference to the Council.

   IV. Subject to standing order 11(c), shall appoint and determine the terms of office of councillor and non-councillor members of a committee. Membership of committees shall be determined at each annual meeting.

   V. Dissolve a committee at any time.

b) The delegated powers of each committee are approved by the Council and are set out in their terms of reference.

c) The terms of reference may be amended at any time by the Council with or without any recommendation from a committee, or other body.

d) The following matters are reserved to the Council;

   I. The making of standing orders and financial regulations.

   II. The appointment of permanent representatives to outside bodies.

   III. The making of byelaws.

   IV. The dismissal of the Clerk and Deputy Clerk.

   V. To determine policies and monitor their application.

   VI. Approval of final accounts and AGAR statement.

   VII. Setting the Council's budget and precept.

   VIII. Approval of terms of reference for committees.

   IX. Final arbitration of any matter.

11. Committees and Sub-Committees

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

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

   I. The Council has determined that each sub-committee including advisory committees shall include a minimum of one councillor.

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

d) The standing committees of the Council are;

   I. Arts, Culture and Events committee
   II. Children & Young Adults committee
   III. Facilities committee
   IV. Planning & Highways committee
   V. Finance & General Purposes (F&GP) committee
   VI. Staffing committee

e) Each committee shall have a Chair and Vice-Chair. The Chair and Vice-Chair of a committee are normally elected at the first meeting of the committee after the annual meeting.

f) The Vice-Chair of Finance of the Council shall be the Chair of the F&GP committee and the Staffing committee.

g) The Chair of the Council will not be a member of the Staffing committee.

h) Members of the Staffing committee should have relevant current experience in employment law and best practice or be prepared to attend appropriate training as agreed by the Staffing Committee.

i) It is expected that all councillors will take an active role in the Council's activities and sit on a least one committee.

j) A councillor who has not been appointed a member of a committee may attend meetings of that committee as a member of the public in accordance with standing order 5.4(a).

12. Motions requiring written notice to be given to the Proper Officer

a) A motion will require written notice unless it is a motion specified in standing order 13.

b) A motion may be submitted by a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights and shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting for which it is tabled and shall relate to the performance of the Council's statutory functions, powers and obligations of an issue which specifically affects the Council's area or its residents.

c) In accordance with standing order 4(b.ii), no motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is included in the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Council's Proper Officer at least 7 clear days before the next meeting.

d) The Proper Officer may not make any changes to a motion received in accordance with standing order 12(b), other than to correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording.

e) If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance to standing order 12(b) is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it in writing to the Proper Officer in clear and certain language at least 7 clear days before the meeting.

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

g) Having consulted the Chair or councillors pursuant to standing order 12(f), the decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion in the agenda shall be final.

h) Notice of every motion received in accordance with the Council's standing orders shall be numbered in the order received and shall be recorded in a register of motions, which shall be open to inspection by all councillors.

i) Every motion rejected in accordance with the Council's standing orders shall be duly recorded in the register of motions with a note by the Proper Officer giving the reasons for its rejection, which shall be open to inspection by all councillors.

13. Motions not requiring written notice

a) Motions in respect of the following matters may be moved without written notice to the Proper Officer;

I. To appoint a person to preside at a meeting.

II. To correct an inaccuracy in the minutes of the previous meeting.

III. To alter the order of business on the agenda for reasons of urgency or expedience.

IV. To proceed to the next business on the agenda.

V. To defer consideration of a motion.

VI. To require a written report.

VII. To move to a vote.

VIII. To close or adjourn debate.

IX. To refer a motion or a matter to a committee or a sub-committee or an employee if it falls within their terms of reference. If urgent or expedient the Chair may direct the motion to be dealt with at the present meeting.

X. To appoint a committee or sub-committee or any councillors thereto.

XI. To amend a motion relevant to the original or substantive motion under consideration which shall not have an effect of nullifying it.

XII. To extend the time limit for speaking.

XIII. To not hear further from a councillor or member of public.

XIV. To exclude from the meeting a councillor or member of the public for disorderly conduct.

XV. To give the consent of the council if such consent is required by the council.

XVI. To suspend any standing order except those which are mandatory by law.

XVII. To adjourn or temporarily suspend the meeting.

XVIII. To answer questions from councillors.

XIX. To close the meeting.

b) Reports may be submitted and included with meeting agendas to support the furtherance of council business. Late reports will be permitted only by exception and with the agreement of the Chair.

14. Rules of Debate

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

b) A motion (including an amendment) shall not be taken to a vote 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 the motion. It shall not negate the motion.

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

g) An amendment shall not be considered unless early verbal notice of it is given at the meeting. If requested by the Chair, a member present or the Clerk of the meeting, the amendment shall be set down in writing before the vote is taken.

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

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

j) Subject to standing order 14(k) only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the Chair of the meeting.

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

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

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

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

o) Unless permitted by the Chair of the meeting, a councillor may speak only 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.
   V. To exercise a right of reply.

p) During the debate a councillor may interrupt only on a point of order or to provide clarification and the councillor who was interrupted shall stop speaking.

q) 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.

r) A point of order shall be decided by the Chair of the meeting and the decision of the Chair shall be final.

s) 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 the 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.
IX. To suspend particular standing order(s) excepting those which reflect mandatory or legal requirements.

t) 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.

u) Excluding motions moved under 14(s) the contributions or speeches by a councillor shall relate only to the motion under discussion and shall not exceed 5 minutes without the consent of the Chair of the meeting.

15. Previous Resolutions

a) A resolution (whether affirmative of negative) of the Council shall not be reversed within 6 months except by a special motion, which requires written notice and is proposed by at least two members of the council, or by a motion moved in pursuance of a report or recommendation of a committee.

b) When a special motion according to standing order 15(a) has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved within a further 6 months.

16. Urgent Decisions of the Council

a) Urgent decisions required between scheduled Council meetings are delegated to the Clerk (or in their absence the Deputy Clerk) in consultation with the Chair or, in the absence of the Chair, a Vice-Chair.

b) Decisions made under this delegation will be reported to and included in the minutes at the next Council meeting.

c) Where appropriate, the Clerk may decide that an extraordinary meeting of the Council be called to deal with the urgent matter.

d) The Clerks may incur expenditure on behalf of the Council which is necessary to carry out any repairs or replacement or other work which is of such extreme urgency that it must be done at once, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £5,000, with the counter signature of the Finance Manager.

17. Becoming a Councillor

17.1 Legislation

a) For the election of councillors, the standard rules apply in accordance with the current legislation governing the election of councillors, casual vacancies and co-option of suitable persons, where appropriate.

17.2 Resignations

a) When a councillor tenders their resignation, the Clerk shall notify the Head of Electoral Services at Wokingham Borough Council of the vacancy.

b) Wokingham Borough Council shall advertise the vacancy and if one of more applications are received Wokingham Borough Council will organise an election.

c) If no applications are received, then in accordance with s.87(2) of the Local Government Act 1972 the Council will give public notice of the casual vacancy. The public notice will invite applications from candidates who satisfy the eligibility criteria for being a councillor.

17.3 Casual Vacancy Co-Option

a) A person is eligible to be co-opted provided they are;

I. Qualified to be a councillor pursuant to s.79 of the 1972 act.
II. Not disqualified pursuant to s.80 of the 1972 act.

b) A Council may need to investigate or obtain evidence about a candidate's eligibility to be a councillor if standing order 17.3(a) is challenged.

c) The co-option procedure is as follows;

I. The Clerk shall invite applicants to an initial discussion and establish they meet the statutory requirements to become a councillor.

II. Applicants are required to attend at least two Council and two committee meetings within a three month period.

III. The Clerk shall offer an informal meeting between the applicant and the Chair of the Council.

IV. Applicants shall provide a personal profile for consideration of the Council and be interviewed by the Council at a mutually agreed Full Council meeting.

V. The Council will need to consider fairly and objectively if candidates are suitable for co-option.

d) The public will be excluded from any discussion of the co-option of a candidate under the s.1(2) Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

e) Any decision made by the Council regarding co-option should be transparent. Any decisions to not co-opt, and the reasons behind that decision, shall be conveyed in writing, by the Clerk, to any unsuccessful candidate

17.4 Restrictions on Councillor Activities

a) No individual councillor shall in the name of or on behalf of the Council, a committee or a sub-committee issue orders, instructions or directions unless authorised by a resolution of the Council or the relevant committee.

b) Unless duly authorised, no councillor shall inspect any land/or premises which the Council has a right or duty in inspect.

17.5 Councillor Training & Development

a) Continuous training and development is recommended for all councillors, this will include;

I. Induction training for new councillors.
II. Committee specific training as set out in the terms of reference for the committee.
III. Training in respect of chairing the Council/committees as required.
IV. Additional training provided by the Council for councillor development.

b) A register will be kept by the Clerk recording all training undertaken by councillors.

c) The Council shall ensure that adequate funds for training of councillors are provided for in the annual budget.

18. Canvassing of and Recommendations by Councillors

a) Canvassing councillors or the members of a committee or sub-committee, directly or indirectly, for appointment to or by the Council shall disqualify the candidate from such an appointment. The Proper Officer shall disclose the requirements for this standing order to every candidate.

b) A councillor or a member of a committee or sub-committee shall not solicit a person for appointment to or by the Council or recommend a person for such appointment or promotion; but nevertheless any such person may give a written testimonial of the candidate’s ability, experience or character for submission to the Council with an application for appointment.

c) This standing order shall apply to tenders as if the person making the tender were a candidate for an appointment.

19. Code of Conduct

a) All councillors and non-councillors with voting rights shall observe the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council (see appendix).

b) Councillors shall also observe the Nolan Principles for Public Life, as follows;

I. Selflessness
II. Integrity
III. Objectivity
IV. Accountability
V. Openness
VI. Honesty
VII. Leadership

20. Code of Conduct Complaints

a) Upon notification by Wokingham Borough Council that it is dealing with a complaint that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the Council's Code of Conduct, the Proper Officer shall report this to the Council.

b) Where the notification in standing order 20(a) relates to a complaint made by the Proper Officer, the Proper Officer shall notify the Chair of the Council of this fact, and the Chair shall nominate another staff member to assume the duties of the Proper Officer in relation to the complaint until it has been determined and the Council has agreed what action, if any, to take in accordance with standing order 20(d).

c) The Council may;

I. Provide information or evidence where such disclosure is necessary to investigate the complaint or is a legal requirement.
II. Seek information relevant to the complaint from the person or body with statutory responsibility for investigation of the matter.

d) **Upon notification by Wokingham Borough Councillor that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the Code of Conduct, the Council shall consider what, if any, action to take against them. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office.**

e) Where a notification relates to a complaint made by an employee (not being the Proper Officer), the Proper Officer shall ensure that the employee in question does not deal with any aspect of the complaint.

f) Where disclosure of information relating to a complaint is necessary to deal with the complaint or is required by law, the standing orders shall not prohibit any member of the Council or the Proper Officer from disclosing such information to members, officers or other persons.

21. Management of Information

a) The Council shall have in place and keep under review, technical and organisational measures to keep secure information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. Such arrangements shall include deciding who has access to personal data and encryption of personal data.

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

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

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

22. Responsibilities to Provide Information

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

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

23. Responsibilities under Data Protection Legislation

a) **The Council shall appoint a Data Protection Officer (although currently this is not a legal requirement).** (Data Protection Act 25 May 2018).

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

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

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

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

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

g) Until standing order 21(a) becomes a legal requirement, the Council shall appoint a Data Protection Co-ordinator to fulfil the responsibilities in standing order 21.

24. Right to Inspect Documents

a) A councillor may, for the sole purpose of their official duties inspect any document in the possession of the Council or a committee or a sub-committee, and request a copy for the same purpose.

b) A councillor may not inspect any documents which are restricted by any provision in the standing orders for reasons of confidentiality, determined by the Clerk.

c) The Council may overrule any determination made by the Clerk in relation to standing order 24(b).

25. Execution and Sealing of Legal Deeds

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

b) In accordance with a resolution made under standing order 25(a), any two members of the Council may sign, on behalf of the Council, any deed required by law and the Proper Officer shall witness their signatures.

c) Under normal circumstances the members signing any deed in relation to standing order 25(b) will be the Chair of the Council and Chair of the committee to which the deed is related.

26. Accounts and Accounting Statements

a) “Proper Practices” in standing orders refer to the most recent version of “Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioners Guide.”

b) All payments by the Council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the law, proper practices and the Council’s financial regulations (see appendix).

c) At each Full Council meeting the Responsible Financial Officer shall provide the following;

I. Expenditure made since the previous meeting.
II. Proposed expenditure requiring approval of the Council.

d) At each F&GP committee meeting the Responsible Financial Officer shall provide the following;

I. Updates to the Risk Register
II. Financial reports to include bank reconciliations, forecasts and reserves.
III. Reports on CIL budget and forecasts.

e) At the first meeting after the annual meeting the Responsible Financial Officer shall provide for consideration and approval by the Council the following;

   I. Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR).

f) The year-end accounting statements shall be prepared in accordance with proper practices and apply in the form of accounts determined by the Council for the year to 31st March. The AGAR, which is subject to external audit, including the Annual Governance Statement, shall be presented to the Council for consideration and formal approval before 30th June.

27. Financial Controls and Procurement

a) The Council shall consider and approve financial regulations drawn up by the Responsible Financial Officer which will be reviewed annually.

b) The financial regulations will include the following;

   I. Keeping of accounting records and systems of internal control.
   II. Financial risk assessment and management.
   III. The annual reports from the internal auditor.
   IV. Allowing the inspection and copying by councillors and local electors of the Council's accounts.

c) A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 with an estimated value in excess of £25,000 but less than the relevant thresholds in standing order 25(f) is subject to Regulations 109-114 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 which include a requirement on the Council to advertise the contract opportunity on the Contracts Finder website regardless of what other means it use to advertise the opportunity.

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

I. A specification for the goods, materials, services or the executions of the works shall be drawn up.
II. An invitation to tender shall be drawn up to the (i) the Council's specification, (ii) the time, date and address for the submission of tenders, (iii) the date of the Council's written response to the tender, (iv) the prohibition on prospective contractors contacting councillors or staff of the Council to encourage support for their tender outside the prescribed process.
III. The invitation to tender shall be advertised in a local newspaper and in any other manner that is appropriate.
IV. Tenders are submitted in writing in a sealed, marked envelope addressed to the Proper Officer.
V. Tenders shall be opened by the Proper Officer in the presence of a least one councillor after the deadline for submission on tenders has passed.
VI. Tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate meeting of the Council or a committee or a sub-committee.

e) Any tender failing to comply with standing order 21(c) regarding canvassing of councillors to obtain a tender shall be disqualified.

f) Neither the Council or a committee or a sub-committee with delegated responsibility for considering tenders, is bound to accept the lowest value tender.

g) **A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 with an estimated value in excess of £181,302 for a public service of supply contract or in excess of £4,551,413 for a public works contract shall comply with the relevant procurement procedures and other requirements in the Public Contracts regulations 2015 which included advertising the contract opportunity on the Contracts Finder website.**

h) **A public contract in connection with the supply of gas, heat, electricity, drinking water, transport services, or postal services to the public; or provision of a port or airport; or the exploration for or extraction of gas, oil or solid fuel with an estimated value in excess of £363,424 for a supply, services or design contract; or in excess of £4,551,413 for a works contract; or £820,370 for a social and other specific services contract shall comply with the relevant procurement procedures and other requirements in the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016.**

28. Annual Budget, Precepts and Capital Projects

a) **The Council shall approve its budget for the forthcoming financial year at a meeting before the end of January.**

b) In each budget cycle individual committees should identify their revenue income and expenditure for the upcoming year and consider any capital projects they want to put forward. Draft budgets will be considered by the F&GP committee at their December meeting and recommendations will be made to the Council at the Full Council meeting in January.

c) Capital projects arising outside of the budget cycle shall be considered by the relevant committee prior to referral to the F&GP committee to provide, if within the budget, the approval for the expenditure. The capital project can then proceed for consideration by the Council.

29. Chair's Allowance

a) The Council will pay the Chair a reasonable allowance to enable them to meet the expenses of their office. The amount should be fixed in advance and represent reasonable reimbursement to the Chair for the general duties of their office, for example: communicating with the Clerk and other Council employees, travel within the parish, attending events and meetings in their public figure role to represent the Council.

b) The Chair's allowance will be paid in quarterly instalments and will be in addition to the Council's Travel and Subsistence policy for members.

c) The spending of the Chair's allowance is at the Chair's discretion. The Chair shall provide an annual statement to the F&GP committee that any allowance paid has been used to meet the expenses of their office.

d) The F&GP committee shall review the use and sufficiency of the Chair's allowance annually.

30. Handling Staff Matters

a) Only the Staffing committee or the Council shall consider matters personal to a Council employee.

b) In accordance with standing order 5(14), the public and press may be excluded from meetings where matters personal to a Council employee are considered.

c) The Clerk shall notify the Chair of the Staffing committee, or in their absence the Vice-Chair of Corporate Governance, where the Clerk is or expects to absent from work for more than three working days.

d) The Chair of the Staffing committee, or in their absence the Vice-Chair of Corporate Governance, shall conduct the Clerk's annual performance and development review. The review shall be reported in writing and is subject to approval by the Staffing committee.

e) Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, the following shall apply;

   I. Employee grievances shall be managed by the Clerk and reported to the Staffing committee.
   II. Employee grievances relating to the Clerk shall be reported to and managed by the Chair of the Staffing committee.
   III. Employee grievances relating to the Chair of the Staffing committee shall be reported to and managed by the Vice-Chair of Corporate Governance.
   IV. In the events of any disputes the Chair of the Council shall act as an independent arbiter.

f) The Council shall retain access to dedicated HR support.

g) Anyone responsible for all or part of the management of staff shall treat as confidential all matters relating to meetings and records of employee performance, capabilities, grievance or disciplinary matters as confidential.

h) Line managers shall have access to the records relating to the performance, capabilities, grievance or disciplinary matters of any member of their team.

i) Members of the Staffing committee shall have access to any employee records required to fulfil the terms of reference for the committee.

j) The Council shall keep any data relating to employees secure. All paper records shall be secured under lock and electronic records shall be password protected. The Clerk shall, in accordance with standing order 24(b) and GDPR legislation, determine who may have access to such records.

k) Only persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to employee records including medical history where necessary for the effective management of the employee.

31. Relations with the Press/Media/Social Media

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

b) In accordance with the Council's policy in respect to dealing with the press and/or other media, councillors shall not, in their official capacity, provide oral or written statements or written articles to the press or other media.

c) In accordance with the Council's policy on social media, councillors shall not, in their official capacity, provide oral, written, visual statements or express any opinion via social media platforms unless authorised to do so.

32. Liaison with Wokingham Borough Councillors

a) An invitation to attend all Full Council meetings shall be sent, together with the agenda, to the ward councillor(s) of Wokingham Borough Council representing the area of the Council.

b) A register of attendance at Full Council meetings and reports submitted by Borough Councillors shall be maintained by the Clerk.

Standing Orders for Shinfield Parish Council

Approved 19 April 2021

Minute ref: 21/FC/51.1 and 51.2

LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME FOUNDATION

Review date: October of each election year

Shinfield Parish Council Standing Orders

Standing orders for the organisation and transaction of Councils' business are decided by full Council. The standing orders in **bold type** reflect statutory requirements. – 1(a)

Standing orders, not highlighted in bold type, do not incorporate statutory requirements. They are aimed at (i) highlighting matters that merit regulation by standing orders and (ii) encouraging use of standing orders to regulate routine administrative arrangements. The council has not adopted standing orders which undermine, override or conflict with any requirements imposed by legislation. 1(b)(c)

Any reference in the standing orders to financial regulations is a reference to the Council's standing orders for the regulation of its financial affairs. 1(f)

References to he, his, him or Chair and Vice Chair are made for ease of use by the reader and also mean he or she, his or hers, him or her and Chairman, Chairwoman in recognition that serving councillors and staff may be either gender. – deleted as revised SOs have been reviewed for consistency.

Index of Standing Orders

1 Meetings 5

Mandatory for full Council meetings
Mandatory for committee meetings
Mandatory for sub-committee meetings

Deleted, no longer required

a **Meetings shall not take place in premises, which at the time of the meeting, are used for the supply of alcohol unless no other premises are available free of charge or at a reasonable cost. 5.1(a)**

b **The minimum three clear days for notice of a meeting does not include the day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a day of the Christmas break, a day of the Easter break or of a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning. 5.2(a)**

c **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. 5.3(a)**

d Members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda.5.4(a)

e The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with standing order 1(d) above shall not exceed 30 minutes unless directed by the Chair of the meeting.5.4(b)

f Subject to standing order 1(e) above, a member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes. 5.4 (c)

g In accordance with standing order 1(d) above, a question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The Chair of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given. 5.4(d)

h A person shall raise his hand when requesting to speak and stand when speaking (except when a person has a disability or is likely to suffer discomfort). The Chair of the meeting may at any time permit a person to be seated when speaking. 5.17(b) i Any person speaking at a meeting shall address his comments to the Chair of the meeting. 5.17(c)

j Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wishes to speak, the Chair shall direct the order of speaking. 5.17(d)

k **The Chair of the Council, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chair is absent from a meeting, the appropriate Vice-Chair, if present, shall preside. If both the Chair and the Vice-Chair(s) are absent from a meeting, a councillor as chosen by the councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting. 5.5(a)**

l **Subject to standing order 1(m), a person who attends a meeting is permitted to report on the meeting whilst the meeting is open to the public. To "report" means to film, photograph, make an audio recording of meeting proceedings, use any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear the meeting as it takes place or later or to report or to provide oral or written commentary about the meeting so that the report or commentary is available as the meeting takes place or later to persons not present.** 5.6(a)

m **A person present at a meeting may not provide an oral report or oral commentary about a meeting as it takes place without permission.** 5.6(b)

n **The press shall be provided reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present**. 5.6(c)

o Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be to or be done by, to or before the Chair of the Council may in his absence be done by, to before or before the Vice-Chair(s) of the Council. 5.5(b)

p Subject to a meeting being quorate, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the councillors and non-councillors with voting rights present and voting. 5.11(a)

q The Chair of a meeting may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise his casting vote whether or not he gave an original vote. 5.11(b)

Note: There are different rules that apply in the election of the Chair of the Council at the annual meeting of the Council.

r **Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on a question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a Councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave 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.5.11(c)

s The minutes of a meeting shall include an accurate record of the following: 5.15(a)

i. The time and place of the meeting;
ii. The names of councillors who are present and the names of councillors who are absent;
iii. Interests that have been declared by councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
iv. The grant of dispensations (if any) to councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
v. Whether a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights left the meeting when matters that they held interests in were being considered;
vi. If there was a public participation session; and
vii. The resolutions made.

t If prior to a meeting a Councillor has submitted reasons for his absence at the meeting which is then approved by a resolution, such resolution shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting at which the approval was given.5.7(a)

u All councillors and non-councillors with voting rights shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the council**. The code of conduct adopted by the Council shall apply to councillors in respect of the entire meeting. 5.17(a)**

v **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.** Unless he has been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which he has another interest if so required by the council's code of conduct. He may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which he had the interest. 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. A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by the Proper Officer or by a meeting of the council or committee or sub-committee for which the dispensation is required, and that decision is final. **5.9**

w **No business may be transacted at a meeting of full Council 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. There should be no less than three members appointed to a committee. The quorum of a committee should also be three 5.10(a)**

x **If no quorum exists when the meeting begins or if during a meeting the number of councillors present and not debarred by reason of a prejudicial declared interest falls below the quorum, no business shall be** transacted and the meeting shall be closed. The business not transacted at that meeting shall be transacted at the next meeting or on such other as the Chair may fix. 5.10(b)

y Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, short reports may be submitted with meeting agendas to support the furtherance of council business. Late reports will be permitted only by exception and with the agreement of the Chair. 14(b)

z Meetings shall not exceed a period of 2.5 hours. If a meeting continues to 22.00 pm the Chair shall at this time propose the motion “That this meeting continue”. The motion must be seconded and a vote shall be taken without discussion. If any meeting is adjourned before its business has finished, the meeting shall stand adjourned until its next ordinary meeting or a date to be determined by the Chair or in his absence the appropriate Vice-Chair.5.13(b)

i. For reasons of public health and as per the COVID 19 Contingency work Plan SPCv1 17 March 2020, APPROVED 24 March 2020, the Shinfield Parish Council can hold virtual meetings to where the public are invited to participate. Deleted as no longer required.

2 Ordinary Council meetings 6

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. 6(a)**

b **In a year which is not an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on such day in May as the Council decides. 6(b)**

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

d **In addition to the annual meeting of the Council, at least three other ordinary meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times as the Council decides. 7(a)**

e **The election of the Chair** and either 1 or 2 Vice-Chair(s) **of the Council shall be the first business completed at the annual meeting of the Council.** The position of Chair shall be open to all members of the Council. Nominations for the position of Chair should be submitted in writing at least three clear working days before the annual meeting of the Council. The election of the Chair shall be by show of hands. 6(d.i)

f The position of Vice-Chair shall be open to all members of the Council. Nominations for the position(s) of Vice-Chair(s) should be submitted in writing at least three clear working days before the annual meeting of the Council. At the annual meeting of the Council the newly elected Chair of Council shall indicate their rationale for 1 or 2 Vice Chair(s) and their delineated roles and the council shall decide by vote for that forthcoming year whether to appoint 1 or 2 Vice-Chair(s). The council shall then elect by show of hands the approved number of Vice-Chair(s) for the year.6(d.ii)

g **The Chair of the Council, unless he has resigned or becomes disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until his successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the Council. 6(e)**

h **The Vice-Chair(s) of the Council, unless he 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. 6(f)**

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. 6(g)**

i. **In an election year, if the current Chair of the Council has been re-elected as a member of the Council, he shall preside at the annual meeting until a new Chair of the Council has been elected. He may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chair of the Council and shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes. 6(h)**

j Following the election of the Chair of the Council and Vice-Chair (if there is one) of the Council at the annual meeting of the Council, the order of business shall be as follows. 6(i)

i. **In an election year, delivery by councillors of their declarations of 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 (and Vice-Chair(s) if there is one) of his acceptance of office form unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date.**
ii. Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the Council;
iii. Receipt of the minutes of the last meeting of a committee;
iv. Consideration and determination of the recommendations made by a committee;
v. Review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, employees and other local authorities.
vi. Appointment of members to existing committees.
vii. Appointment of any new committees, the number of members (including, if appropriate, substitute councillors) and appointment to them.
viii. Review of representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back.
ix. In an election year, to re-attest that the Council is eligible to exercise the General Power of Competence.

<u>Attendance</u>

k. Subject to the provisions of section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, if the Chair is unable to continue in office, for example, on the grounds of ill-health, then a new Chair may be elected. 5.5(c)

l. Apologies and reasons for not attending meetings must be notified to the Clerk in advance of the meeting, with an explanation, and must be accepted by Council, Committee, Sub-Committee or Working Party as appropriate. 5.7(a)

Committees

m. Each committee shall have a Chair and Vice-Chair. The Chair and vice-Chair of a committee are normally elected at the first meeting of the committee after the Annual Meeting. The role of the vice-Chair of a committee is to support the Chair of the committee in dealing with the committee's business; chair committee meetings in the absence of the Chair; and represent the committee in the absence of the committee Chair. 11(e)

n. If a Member fails for three consecutive ordinary meetings to attend a meeting of a Committee, he shall be given an opportunity of making an explanation. Unless the explanation is accepted by the Committee he or she shall cease forthwith to be a member of that Committee. However, this Standing Order shall not apply to a member whose absence is due to attendance at a meeting of some other body or organisation to which he/she has been appointed as the Council's accredited representative. 11(j)

o. Following a further period of three months absence from the Council or Committee, if the Chair or Vice-Chair, or any Member of the Council or Committee is likely to be incapacitated for a further period, it is anticipated they will stand down from office to allow the Council to continue its business. 5.8(a)

3 Proper Officer 4

a The Council's Proper Officer shall be either (i) the clerk or (ii) other staff member(s) nominated by the Council to undertake the role of the Proper Officer during the Proper Officer's absence. 4.1(i)

b The Council's Proper Officer shall: 4.1(b)

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

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

ii. subject to standing order 4, include on the agenda all motions in the order received unless a councillor has given written notice at least 3 days before the meeting confirming his withdrawal of it;

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

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

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

vi. hold acceptance of office forms from councillors;

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

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

ix. liaise, as appropriate, with the Council's Data Protection Officer;

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

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

xii. arrange for legal deeds to be executed (*see also Standing Order 13);*

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

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

xv. refer a planning application received by the Council to the Chair or in his absence the Vice-Chair of the Council OR Chair or in his absence Vice-Chair of the Planning and 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 Council OR Planning and Highways committee; and

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

3a 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. 4.2(a)

4 Motions requiring written notice to be given to the Proper Officer 12

a A motion shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting for which it is tabled and, in any event, shall relate to the performance of the Council's statutory functions, powers and obligations or an issue which specifically affects the Council's area or its residents. 12(b)

b In accordance with standing order 3(b) (iii) above, no motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is included in the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Council's Proper Officer at least 7 clear days before the next meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting. 12(c)

c The Proper Officer may, before including a motion on the agenda received in accordance with standing order 4(a) above, correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion. 12(d)

d If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with standing order 4(a) 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 in clear and certain language at least 7 clear days before the meeting. 12(e)

e If the wording or nature of a proposed motion is considered unlawful or improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the Chair of the forthcoming meeting or, as the case may be, the Councillors who have convened the meeting, to consider whether the motion shall be included or rejected in the agenda. 12(f)

f Having consulted the Chair or councillors pursuant to standing order 4(e -) above, the decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion in the agenda shall be final. 12(g)

g Notice of every motion received in accordance with the Council's standing orders shall be numbered in the order received and shall be entered in a book, which shall be open to inspection by all councillors. 12(h)

h Every motion rejected in accordance with the Council's standing orders shall be duly recorded with a note by the Proper Officer giving reasons for its rejection in a book for that purpose, which shall be open to inspection by all councillors. 12(i)

5 Motions not requiring written notice 13

a Motions in respect of the following matters may be moved without written notice to the Proper Officer: 13(a)

i. To appoint a person to preside at a meeting.
ii. To correct an inaccuracy in the minutes of the previous meeting.
iii. To alter the order of business on the agenda for reasons of urgency or expedience.
iv. To proceed to the next business on the agenda.
v. To defer consideration of a motion.
vi. To require a written report
vii. To move to a vote.
viii. To close or adjourn debate.
ix. To refer a motion or a matter to a committee or to a sub-committee or an employee.
x. To appoint a committee or sub-committee or any councillors (including substitutes) thereto.
xi. To amend a motion relevant to the original or substantive motion under consideration which shall not have the effect of nullifying it
xii. To extend the time limit for speaking
xiii. To not hear further from a councillor or a member of the public
xiv. To exclude from the meeting a Councillor or a member of the public for disorderly conduct.
xv. To give the consent of the Council if such consent is required by standing orders.
xvi. To suspend any standing order except those which are mandatory by law
xvii. To adjourn or temporarily suspend the meeting.
xviii. To answer questions from councillors
xix. To close the meeting.

b If a motion falls within the terms of reference of a committee or sub-committee or within the delegated powers conferred on an employee, a referral of the same may be made to such committee or sub-committee or employee provided that the Chair may direct for it to be dealt with at the present meeting for reasons of urgency or expedience. 13(a.ix)

6 Rules of debate 14

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

h A councillor may move an amendment to 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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

iii. to make a point of order;

iv. to give a personal explanation; or

v. to exercise a right of reply.

p During the debate on a motion, a councillor may interrupt only on a point of order or a personal explanation and the councillor who was interrupted shall stop speaking. A councillor raising a point of order shall identify the standing order which he considers has been breached or specify the other irregularity in the proceedings of the meeting he is concerned by. 14(p) & 14(q)

q A point of order shall be decided by the Chair of the meeting and his decision shall be final. 14(r)

r When a motion is under debate, no other motion shall be moved except: 14(s)

i. to amend the motion;

ii. to proceed to the next business;

iii. to adjourn the debate;

iv. to put the motion to a vote;

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

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

vii. to exclude the public and press;

viii. to adjourn the meeting; or

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

s Before an original or substantive motion is put to the vote, the Chair of the meeting shall be satisfied that the motion has been sufficiently debated and that the mover of the motion under debate has exercised or waived his right of reply. 14(t) t Excluding motions moved under standing order 1(r), the contributions or speeches by a councillor shall relate only to the motion under discussion and shall not exceed **?5** minutes without the consent of the Chair of the meeting. 14(u)

7 Code of conduct and dispensations 5.9

a All councillors and non-councillors with voting rights shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the Council. 5.17(a)

b Unless he has been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which he has a disclosable pecuniary interest. He may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which he had the interest. 5.9(b)

c Unless he has been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which he has another interest if so required by the council's code of conduct. He may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which he had the interest. 5.9(b)

d **Dispensation requests shall be in writing and submitted to the Proper Officer** as soon as possible before the meeting, or failing that, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required. 5.9(c)

e A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by the Proper Officer or a meeting of the council, or committee or sub-committee for which the dispensation is required and that decision is final. 5.9(d)

f A dispensation request shall confirm: 5.9(e)

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

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

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

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

g Subject to standing orders 7 (d) and (f) 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. 5.9(c)

h A dispensation may be granted in accordance with standing order 7(e) above if having regard to all relevant circumstances any of the following apply: 5.9(f)

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

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

iii. **it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.**

8 Code of Conduct Complaints 20

a Upon notification by Wokingham Borough Council that it is dealing with a complaint that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the Council's code of conduct, the Proper Officer shall report this to the Council. 20(a)

b Where the notification in standing order 8(a) relates to a complaint made by the Proper Officer, the Proper Officer shall notify the Chair of Council of this fact, and the Chair shall nominate another staff member to assume the duties of the Proper Officer in relation to the complaint until it has been determined and the Council has agreed what action, if any, to take in accordance with standing order 8(d). 20(b)

c The Council may: 20(c)

i. provide information or evidence where such disclosure is necessary to investigate the complaint or is a legal requirement;

ii. seek information relevant to the complaint from the person or body with statutory responsibility for investigation of the matter;

d **Upon notification by Wokingham Borough 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. 20(d)**

e Where a notification relates to a complaint made by an employee (not being the Proper Officer) the Proper Officer shall ensure that the employee in question does not deal with any aspect of the complaint. 20(e)

f Standing orders should not be taken to prohibit the Council (whether through the Proper Officer or the Chair of the Finance and General Purposes committee or otherwise) from disclosing information to members and officers of the Council or to other persons where such disclosure is necessary to deal with the complaint or is required by law.20(f)

9 Draft Minutes 5.16

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. 5.16(a)

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 5(a)(iii).5.16(b)

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. 5.16(c)

d If the Chair of the meeting does not consider the minutes to be an accurate record of the meeting to which they relate, he shall sign the minutes and include a paragraph in the following terms or to the same effect: 5.16(d)

"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 his view was not upheld by the meeting and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings."

Subject to the publication of draft minutes in accordance with standing order 10(e) and standing order 28(a) and following a resolution which confirms the accuracy of the minutes of a meeting, the draft minutes or recordings of the meeting for which approved minutes exist shall be destroyed. 5.16(e)

10 Disorderly conduct at meetings 5.14

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. 5.14(a)

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. 5.14(b) c If a resolution made in accordance with standing orders is ignored, the Chair of the meeting may take further steps to restore order or to progress the meeting. This may include temporarily suspending or closing the meeting.

11 Previous resolutions 15

a A resolution (whether affirmative or negative) of the Council shall not be reversed within 6 months except either by a special motion, the written notice whereof bears the names of at least two councillors of the Council, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the report or recommendation of a committee. 15(a)

b When a special motion or any other motion moved pursuant to standing order 12(a) above has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved within a further 6 months. (15(b)

12 Voting on appointments 5.12

a Where more than 2 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. 5.12(a)

13 Execution and sealing of legal deeds 25

See also standing order 3(b)(xii)

a A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the Council unless the same has been authorised by a resolution. 25(a)

b **In accordance with a resolution made under standing order 13(a) any two members of the Council, may sign, on behalf of the Council, any deed required by law and the Proper Officer shall witness their signatures. 25(b)**

14 Committees and Sub-Comittees 10 & 11

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. 11(a)**

b **The members of a committee may include non-councillor unless it is a committee which regulates and controls the finances of the council. 11(b)**

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. 11(c)**

d The Council may appoint standing committees or other committees as may be necessary, and: 10(a)

i. shall determine their terms of reference; 10(a.i)

ii. may permit committees to determine the number, date and times of their meetings up until the date of the next annual meeting of the Council; 10(a.ii)

iii. shall subject to standing orders 14(a) and 14(c) appoint and determine the term of office of councillor or non-councillor members of such a committee so as to hold office no later than the next annual meeting of full council; 6(i.ii)

iv. shall permit a committee, other than in respect of the ordinary meetings of a committee, to determine the number and time of its meetings; 10(a.iii)

v. shall appoint and determine the terms of office of members of such a committee; 10(a.iv)

vi. may subject to standing orders 14(a) and 14(c) appoint and determine the terms of office of the substitute members to a committee whose role is to replace the ordinary members at a meeting of a committee if the ordinary members of the committee confirm to the Proper Officer 7 days before the meeting that they are unable to attend; deleted due to recommendations in 11(b.i)

vii. shall permit a committee other than a standing committee, to appoint its own Chair at the first meeting of the committee; 11.(e)

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; 5

ix. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a committee; 5

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; an ordinary member of a committee who has been replaced at a meeting by a substitute member (in accordance with standing orders) shall not be permitted to participate in debate or vote on business at that meeting and may only speak during any public participation session during the meeting; 5.3(a)

xi. may in accordance with standing orders, dissolve a committee at any time; 10(a.v)

e The standing committees of the council are as follows: 11(d)

i. Full Council
ii. Finance and General Purposes Committee
iii. Staffing Committee
iv. Planning and Highways Committee;
v. Recreation and Amenities Committee
vi. Development Board

f. The approved terms of reference for the standing committees are attached as appendix 1 to these standing orders. 10(a.i)

g. The Vice-Chair of the Council should chair the Finance and General Purposes Committee and also the Staffing Committee. The Chair of the Council will not be a member of the Staffing Committee. 11(f) & 11(g)

h. In order to demonstrate the Council as a good employer, members of the Staffing Committee should have relevant current experience in employment law and best practice or be prepared to attend appropriate training agreed by the Staffing Committee. 11(h)

i. It is expected that all Members of the Council will take an active role in the Council's activities and sit on a least two Committees. 11(i)

15. Schedule of Delegation to committees 9

a. Legislation allows local Councils to appoint one or more Committees or Sub-Committees/Working Parties to discharge any of its function. It is not necessary for the Council to ratify Committee decisions where delegation applies. The membership of Committees is fixed by the Council, and of Sub Committees/Working Parties by the appointing Committee. In constituting such groups the Council or Committee as appropriate shall have full regard to the implications on the Officer and Member workload of such creation. 9(c)

b. The schedule outlined below may be amended at any time by the Council with or without any recommendation from a Committee, or other body. 10(c)

c. The intention of the delegation scheme is, therefore, that the Council should act with all reasonable speed. Decisions should be taken at the most suitable level. Thus officers are given power over the day to day administration of the Council, committees to decide matters within their Terms of Reference, and matters of major policy should be decided at Full Council. 9(e)

DELEGATION

a. The legal basis of the delegation conferred by this Document is contained in the following provisions of the Local Government Act 1972:Section 101 Arrangements for discharge of function by local authorities 9(a)

b. Subject to any express provision contained in this Act or any Act passed after this Act, a local authority may arrange for the discharge of any of their functions: by a Committee, a sub-committee or an officer of the authority, or by any other local authority 9(f)

c. Where by virtue of this section any functions of a local authority may be discharged by a committee of theirs, then, unless the local authority otherwise direct, the committee arrange for the discharge of any of those functions of a local authority and where by virtue of this section any functions of a local authority may be discharged by a sub-committee of the authority, then, unless the local authority or the committee otherwise direct, the sub-committee may arrange for the discharge of any of those functions by an officer of the authority. 9(d)

d. Any arrangements made by a local authority or committee under this section for the discharge of any functions by a committee, sub-committee, officer or local authority shall not prevent the authority or committee by whom the arrangements are made from exercising those functions. 9(f)

e. It is desirable that in the interests of certainty in decision making and to avoid lengthy discussions in Council meetings, Standing Orders should discourage, so far as is legally possible, action being taken by the Council after the matter has been ‘decided’ by a Committee, Sub Committee/Working Party. If the Council feel, however, that action is necessary then normally it should refer the matter back to the Committee concerned 9(d) 9(e)

URGENT DECISIONS OF THE COUNCIL 16

a. Urgent decisions required between scheduled Council meetings are delegated to the Clerk in consultation with the Chair or in his/her absence the Vice-Chair(s). 16(a)

b. Decisions made under this delegation will be reported to and minuted at the next Council meeting. 16(b)

c. Where appropriate, the Clerk may decide that an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council be called to deal with the urgent matter. 16(c)

d. The Clerk may incur expenditure on behalf of the Council which is necessary to carry out any repair or replacement or other work which is of such extreme urgency that it must be done at once, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £2,000 with the counter signature of the Finance Manager. The Clerk shall report the action to the Council as soon as practicable thereafter. 16(d)

GENERAL TERMS FOR DELEGATION OF POWERS

a. Approval of minutes: Committee meeting minutes are approved at the next meeting of that committee. The minutes are received by members up to 6 days prior to the meeting and any clarification or errors should be requested/notified to the Committee Chair or Clerk before the meeting where approval will be sought. This will reduce review time at the meeting. 5.16(a)

b. For openness and communication, the draft minutes of committees that have sat during the month are noted at that months Full Council. Approval is not sought at the Full Council meeting; the purpose is to inform the Full Council of what is being discussed at committee meetings. If, following discussion on a point raised, further discussion is required then that can be added to the agenda of the next committee meeting. 7(c)

c. Compliance with the law: The Council Committees and Sub-Committees can only act within the law and in accordance with the Council's approved Standing Orders and Financial regulations. 1(d)

d. Budgets: Committees can only exercise delegated powers if there is budgetary provision for any proposed expenditure. They can vire monies within their overall budget to enable smaller projects, but large variations must be referred to the F&GP committee. If no budgetary provision is available, delegated powers may only be exercised subject to obtaining approval for a supplementary estimate, and this must be done through referring the matter firstly to the Finance and General Purposes Committee, which will then make a recommendation to the full Council. 9(g)

e. Committee Conflict: there may be occasions, particularly when there is conflict between Committees regarding which one has powers to deal with a particular matter. In such cases, the matter shall be referred to the Council. The Council shall then determine the matter. 9(h)

f. Committee Overlap: Where a Committee is considering a matter involving Committee overlap, it may only resolve such matters subject to the agreement of all the other relevant Committees. Where any Committee disagrees with another in these circumstances the matter shall be referred to the Council. The Council shall then determine the matter. 9(h)

g. Matters for Council: where Committees are considering Council matters they shall not have delegated powers to determine such matters but shall report or make recommendations to Council. Examples of such are: 10(d)

    a. Matters of major importance which have not previously been before the Council;

    b. Matters which have arisen in other Committees or Sub-committees but which cannot be resolved by them in the absence of settled Council policy; or

    c. In cases of doubt where a major policy is involved, the Chair of the Council or the Chair of any other Committee or Sub-committee, or in their absence the appropriate Vice-Chair may, before a decision is taken by the committee or sub-committee, state that a matter of major policy is involved.

h. Concurrent powers: The Council may at any time exercise any of the duties and powers within the scheme which are delegated to the Council's Committees or Sub-Committees. A Committee may at any time exercise any of the duties and powers of its Sub-Committees. 9(f)

i. Considerations with regard to decision-making: In making any decisions or recommendations each Committee should consider the implications in relation to: 9(i)

    a. Best Practice
    b. Corporate and Service objectives/policies
    c. Crime and Disorder
    d. The environment
    e. Finance and staffing implications
    f. The impact on the Parish.

DELEGATION TO COMMITTEES

The following matters are reserved to the **FULL COUNCIL 10(d)**

a. The making of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.
b. The appointment of permanent representatives to outside bodies.
c. The making of bye-laws.
d. The dismissal of officers.
e. The overall review of rents and charges.
f. To order, regulate and generally supervise the Council's actions through policy provision and monitoring.
g. Approval of Final Accounts.
h. Final arbitrator of any issue
i. Notwithstanding the powers delegated to committees, the Council retain the right to exercise such powers when necessary. 9(f)

Terms of reference for committees are now in the appendix.

The following matters are delegated to the **FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

a. Delegation of work to the Clerk
b. Delegation of work to the Responsible Financial Officer of the council
c. The power to spend within its budget alone, and not being required to recommend to Full Council, as set annually and detailed in the Committee Report "Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading produced by the Finance Manager.
d. Management of cash flow including receipts and payments, reviewing quarterly
e. Review of income and expenditure against budget
f. Management of fidelity, confirming bank balances and reserves
g. Management of deposits
h. Review of financial policy and financial regulations and procurement policy and management
i. Management of audit and audit services
j. Management of risk
k. Preparation of annual accounts
l. Preparation of annual budget and precept setting for council approval
m. Review of larger grant applications to the parish council /loans over £5,000 and up to £10,000. For grants/loans of over £10,000 then they make a recommendation to Full Council to decide.
n. Working with some of the borough wide bodies that can assist with reviewing local organisations for their suitability to receive a grant, and for the Council itself to apply for community funding;
o. Administration of CIL monies for reporting to Council and external bodies as required; and in liaison with the council's standing committees, to make recommendations to full Council for the use of CIL receipts
p. Review of the Council's Standing Orders
q. Implementation of the Members' Code of Conduct
r. Review and consideration of Council Communication

s. Council policy review

The following matters are delegated to the **RECREATION & AMENITIES COMMITTEE**

a. Delegation of work to the Clerk
b. The power to spend within its budget alone, and not being required to recommend to Full Council, as set annually and detailed in the Committee Report "Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading produced by the Finance Manager.
c. Review of grant applications to the parish council/loans up to £5,000.
d. Operational decisions
e. Management, security and repair of council properties
f. Management, security and repair of parish council land and buildings
g. Management and security of allotment sites
h. Management of community competitions relating to amenity and leisure
i. Management of parish council bus shelters
j. Management of allocated Section 106 or Community Infrastructure Levy funds awarded for leisure and play
k. Development of youth provision across the parish
l. Review and consideration of Community Services provision

The following matters are delegated to the **PLANNING & HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE**

a. Delegation of work to the Clerk
b. The power to spend within its budget alone, and not being required to recommend to Full Council, as set annually and detailed in the Committee Report "Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading produced by the Finance Manager.
c. Operational decisions
d. Submission, to the LPA, of considered comments on a schedule of planning applications in or affecting the parish
e. Submission, to the LPA, of considered comment on planning issues, planning policy and planning consultation documents
f. Reviewing and monitoring of S106 and C.I.L. monies in relation to planning applications
g. Submission, to the LHA, of highway wish list items
h. Notification, to the LHA, of highway concerns and highway requirements in or affecting the parish
i. Reporting of footpath issues
j. Management of street light installations, maintenance and repairs belonging to the Parish Council
k. Reviewing of Neighbourhood Development Plan, reporting to council at regular stages
l. The chair of the committee should report on its activities at meetings of the full council

The following matters are reserved to the **DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

a. Delegation of work to the Clerk
b. Operational decisions
c. To appoint representatives from the Board as appropriate for communications with external bodies on development matters. This will include attendance at external meetings. The Board will report to full Council.
d. To manage the Neighbourhood Plan and monitor its implementation;

e. In liaison with the Finance and General Purposes Committee, to review and monitor s 106 and CIL monies in relation to all large development within the parish, and make recommendations to the Planning and Recreation and Amenities Committees, for decision by full Council;
f. To appoint four parish councillors to the SPC/WBC Joint Committee for the new Shinfield Community Centre
g. To appoint members to joint working parties with WBC as they arise
h. The Board will delegate projects to Working Groups or appropriate committees of the Council.

The following matters are reserved to the **STAFFING COMMITTEE**

a. To review and approve the job descriptions and grades, objectives and performance targets for all staff for the delivery of the Council's vision and make recommendations to the Council.
b. To agree contractual terms such as level on the pay scale, pensions, annual leave;
c. To monitor the Clerk's work in accordance with objectives and performance targets agreed for the Clerk for the municipal year;
d. To review the Council's staffing structure in consultation with the Finance and General Purposes Committee on staffing related expenditure and make recommendations to the Council;
e. To oversee the processes for staff recruitment, induction and appraisals, and contribute where appropriate;
f. To oversee the Council's policies for training and development consistent with Quality Parish status - staff and councillors – and make recommendations to the Council;
g. To oversee the Council's policies in relation to health and safety matters for the staff and equal opportunities;
h. To monitor the Council employment policies and processes as listed in the Council's Employee Handbook and give guidance and make recommendations to Council;
i. To oversee staff grievances and disciplinary matters in conjunction with the Clerk. This includes: to provide resources for grievance and disciplinary processes and appeal panels as and when needed (unless the grievance or disciplinary matter relates to the Clerk), and to receive training on these two policies on a regular basis;
j. To uphold standards of confidentiality, in particular any information covered by Data Protection requirements.

16. Extraordinary meetings 8

a **The Chair of the Council may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council at any time. 8(a)**

b **If the Chair of the Council does not or refuses to call an extraordinary meeting of the Council within 7 days of having been requested to do so by two councillors, those two councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council. The statutory public notice giving the time, venue and agenda for such a meeting must be signed by the two councillors. 8(b)**

c The Chair of a committee (or a sub-committee) may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee or sub-committee at any time. (8.c)

d If the Chair of a committee (or a sub-committee) does not or refuses to call an extraordinary meeting within 7 days of having been requested by to do so by 2 councillors, those 2 councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of a committee (or a sub-committee). The statutory public notice giving the time, venue and agenda for such a meeting must be signed by 2 councillors. (8.d)

17. Advisory committees - deleted

Advisory committees are included in the glossary term sub-committees. This SO is also in conflict with standing order 11(b.i).

a The Council may appoint advisory committees comprised of a number of councillors and non-councillors.

b Advisory committees may consist wholly of persons who are non-councillors.

c An advisory committee may be appointed to advise the council on matters relating to the performance of its statutory functions, powers and related responsibilities. An advisory committee does not make decisions about the performance of the statutory functions and powers of the council, including financial matters. Its role is to research or investigate, consider and report to the council on them.

18. Accounts and Accounting Statements

26

a "Proper practices" in standing orders refer to the most recent version of "Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioners' Guide" 26(a)

b All payments by the Council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the law, proper practices and the Council's financial regulations. 26(b)

c The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to each committee as soon as practicable after 30 June, 30 September and 31 December in each year a statement to summarise: 26(c)

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

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

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

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

d As soon as possible after the financial year end at 31 March, the Responsible Financial Officer shall provide: 26(d)

i. To the Finance and General Purposes Committee a statement summarising the Council's receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for the last quarter and the year to date for information; and

ii. To the Council the accounting statements for the year in the form of Section 1 of the annual governance and accountability return, as required by proper practices, for consideration and approval.

e The year-end accounting statements shall be prepared in accordance with proper practices and apply the form of accounts determined by the Council (receipts and payments, or income and expenditure) for the year to 31 March. A completed draft annual governance and accountability return shall be presented to all councillors prior to anticipated approval by the Council. The annual governance and accountability return of the Council, which is subject to external audit, including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to the Council for consideration and formal approval before 30 June. 26(f)

19. Financial Controls and Procurement 27

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: 27(b)

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

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

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

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

   v. whether contracts with an estimated value below **£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. 27(a)

c. **A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 with an estimated value in excess of £25,000 but less than the relevant thresholds in standing order 18(f) is subject to Regulations 109-114 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 which include a requirement on the Council to advertise the contract opportunity on the Contracts Finder website regardless of what other means it uses to advertise the opportunity. 27(c)**

d. Subject to additional requirements in the financial regulations of the Council, the tender process for contracts for the supply of goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall include, as a minimum, the following steps: 27(d)

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

   ii. an invitation to tender shall be drawn up to confirm (i) the Council's specification (ii) the time, date and address for the submission of tenders (iii) the date of the

Council's written response to the tender and (iv) the prohibition on prospective contractors contacting councillors or staff to encourage or support their tender outside the prescribed process;

iii. the invitation to tender shall be advertised in a local newspaper and in any other manner that is appropriate;

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

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

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

e. Neither the Council, nor a committee or a sub-committee with delegated responsibility for considering tenders, is bound to accept the lowest value tender. 27(f)

f. **A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 with an estimated value in excess of £181,302 for a public service or supply contract or in excess of £4,551,413 for a public works contract shall comply with the relevant procurement procedures and other requirements in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 which include advertising the contract opportunity on the Contracts Finder website. 27(g)**

g. **A public contract in connection with the supply of gas, heat, electricity, drinking water, transport services, or postal services to the public; or the provision of a port or airport; or the exploration for or extraction of gas, oil or solid fuel with an estimated value in excess of £363,424 for a supply, services or design contract; or in excess of £4,551,413 for a works contract; or £820,370 for a social and other specific services contract shall comply with the relevant procurement procedures and other requirements in the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016. 27(h)**

20. Estimates/precepts 28

a **The Council shall approve its budget for the coming financial year at a meeting before the end of January. 28(a)**

b Prior to the Council's annual budget setting meeting, any estimates for projects must be made available to the Finance and General Purposes Committee prior to the Council's first budget preparation meeting for the coming financial year. Any committee desiring to incur expenditure shall give the Proper Officer a written estimate of the project and the expenditure recommended for the coming year no later than the end of November, accompanied by a justification. 27(b) & 27(c)

c

21. Canvassing of and recommendations by councillors 18

a Canvassing councillors or the members of a committee or sub-committee, directly or indirectly, for appointment to or by the Council shall disqualify the candidate from such an appointment. The Proper Officer shall disclose the requirements of this standing order to every candidate. 18(a)

b A councillor or a member of a committee or sub-committee shall not solicit a person for appointment to or by the Council or recommend a person for such appointment or for promotion; but, nevertheless, any such person may give a written testimonial of a candidate's ability, experience or character for submission to the Council with an application for appointment. 18(b)

c This standing order shall apply to tenders as if the person making the tender were a candidate for an appointment. (18(c)

22. Inspection of documents 24

Subject to standing orders to the contrary or in respect of matters which are confidential, a councillor may, for the purpose of his official duties (but not otherwise), inspect any document in the possession of the Council or a committee or a sub-committee, and request a copy for the same purpose. The minutes of meetings of the Council, its committees or sub-committees shall be available for inspection by councillors. 24(a) & 24(b) & 24(c

23. Unauthorised activities 17.4

Unless authorised by a resolution, no individual councillor shall in the name or on behalf of the Council, a committee or a sub-committee issue orders, instructions or directions. 17.4(a)

24. Confidential business 5.14

a **In accordance with s. 1(2) Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the public may not be excluded from council meetings unless there are special reasons to justify such exclusion**. 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. 5.14(a) & 5.14(b)

b A councillor in breach of the provisions of standing order 25(a) above may be removed from a committee or sub-committee by a resolution of the Council. 5.14(d)

25. Handling Staff Matters 30

a If a meeting considers any matter personal to a Council employee, it shall not be considered until the Council or the Staffing Committee has decided whether or not the press and public shall be excluded pursuant to standing order 27 Managing Information. 30.(b)

b Subject to the Council's policy regarding absences from work, the Council's most senior employee shall notify the Chair of the Staffing Committee or, in his absence, the Vice-Chair of the Finance and General Purposes committee of any absence occasioned by illness or other reason and that person shall report such absence to the Staffing Committee at its next meeting. 30(c)

c The Chair of the Staffing Committee or in his absence, the vice-Chair shall conduct a review of the performance and annual appraisal of the work of the Clerk. The reviews and appraisal shall be reported in writing and is subject to approval by the Staffing Committee. 30(d)

d Subject to the council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, the council's most senior employee (or other employees) shall contact the Chair of the Staffing Committee or in his absence, the vice-Chair of the Finance and General Purposes committee or the Staffing Committee in respect of an informal or formal grievance matter, and this matter shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the Staffing Committee. In the event of a dispute the Chair of the Council will act as independent arbiter. 30(e)

e Subject to the council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, if an informal or formal grievance matter raised by the employee relates to the Chair or vice-Chair of the Staffing Committee, this shall be communicated to another member of the Staffing Committee, which shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of a Committee formed for this purpose. In the event of a dispute the Chair of the Council will act as independent arbiter. 30(e)

f 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. 30(g)

g Any persons responsible for all or part of the management of Council employees shall have access to staff records relating to their performance and capabilities, grievance and disciplinary matters. 30(h) 7 30(i)

h The Council shall keep written records relating to employees secure. All paper records shall be secured under lock and electronic records shall be password protected. 30(j)

i Records documenting reasons for an employee's absence due to ill health or details of a medical condition shall be made available only to those persons with responsibility for the same. 30(k)

j Only persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to employee records referred to in standing orders if so justified. 30(h)

k Access and means of access by keys and/or computer passwords to records of employment referred to in standing orders shall be provided only to the Clerk and/or the Chair of the Council or the Chair of the Finance and General Purposes committee or the Chair of the Staffing Committee. 30(j)

26. Management of Information 21

a. **The Council shall have in place and keep under review, technical and organisational measures to keep secure information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. Such arrangements shall include deciding who has access to personal data and encryption of personal data. 21(a)**

b. **The Council shall have in place, and keep under review, policies for the retention and safe destruction of all information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. The Council's retention policy shall confirm the period for which information (including personal data) shall be retained or if this is not possible the criteria used to determine that period (e.g. the Limitation Act 1980). 21(b)**

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. 21(c)**

d. **Councillors, staff, the Council's contractors and agents shall not disclose confidential information or personal data without legal justification. 21(d)**

27. Responsibilities to Provide Information 22

a **In accordance with freedom of information legislation, the Council shall publish information in accordance with its publication scheme and respond to requests for information held by the Council. 22(a)**

b **The Council, shall publish information in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015**. 22(b)

28. Responsibilities under Data Protection legislation 23

a **The Council shall appoint a Data Protection Officer (although currently this is not a legal requirement[1]).**

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

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

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

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

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

29. Relations with the press/media 31

a all requests from the press or other media for an oral or written statement or comment from the Council, its councillors or staff shall be processed in accordance with the Council's policy in respect of dealing with the press and/or other media. 31(a)

b In accordance with the Council's policy in respect to dealing with the press and/or other media, councillors shall not, in their official capacity, provide oral or written statements or written articles to the press or other media. 31(b)

[1] Data Protection Act 25 May 2018

30. Recording meetings by the Parish Council 5.6

a In addition to the Standing Order 1(l) and 1(m) the council may make its own recordings of proceedings in Council and Committee meetings for the purposes of ensuring the accuracy of the minutes. Any such recording will be destroyed after the minutes of the meeting have been signed as accurate. 5.6(d)

31. Liaison with Wokingham Borough Councillors 32

a An invitation to attend a meeting of the Council shall be sent, together with the agenda, to the ward councillor(s) of Wokingham Borough Council representing the area of the Council. 31(a)

b Unless the Council determines otherwise, a copy of each letter sent to Wokingham Borough Council shall be sent to the Wokingham Borough Councillor representing its electoral ward. – Deleted as this is no longer a requirement

32. Standing Orders Generally

a All or part of a standing order, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory or legal requirements, may be suspended by resolution in relation to the consideration of an item on the agenda for a meeting. 3(a)

b A motion to add to or vary or revoke one or more of the Council's standing orders, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory or legal requirements, shall be proposed by a special motion, the written notice by at least 2 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing orders. 3(b)

c The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the Council's standing orders to a councillor as soon as possible. 1(g)

d The decision of the Chair of a meeting as to the application of standing orders at the meeting shall be final. 14(r)

33. Miscellaneous Provisions

33.1 Chair's Allowance

a. The Council will pay the Chair a reasonable allowance to enable him/her to meet the expenses of his/her office. The amount should be fixed by the Council in advance, and represent reasonable reimbursement to the Chair for the general duties of his office, for example: communicating with the Clerk and other Council employees, travel within the Parish, attending events and meetings in his public figure role to represent the Council, entertainment in the course of Council business, etc.

b. The Chair's Allowance will be paid in quarterly instalments and will be in addition to the Council's Travel and Subsistence policy for Members.

c. The spending of the Chair's allowance is not usually subject to annual audit and, unless the Council otherwise directs, it may be spent or used at the Chair's discretion and without his/her having to account for it to the Council.

d The Chair's Allowance will be reviewed annually.

33.2 Member Training/Continuous Professional Development

Continuous Professional Development and training is compulsory for all Members of the Council, to include attendance at "New Councillor Training". A register will be kept to record all training events undertaken by councillors in any one year.

33.3 Co-option of Councillors

a. For the election and co-option of Councillors, the standard rules apply in accordance with current legislation governing the election of councillors, casual vacancies and co-option of suitable persons, where appropriate. In accordance with s..87(2) of the Local Government Act 1972 the Council will give public notice of casual vacancies. The public notice will invite applications from candidates who satisfy the eligibility criteria for being a councillor.

b A person is eligible to be co-opted provided he is qualified to be a councillor pursuant to s. 79 of the 1972 Act and is not disqualified pursuant to s.80 of the 1972 Act. A council may need to investigate or obtain evidence about a candidate's eligibility to be a councillor if this is challenged.

c Where applicable, prior to commencement of the co-option procedure, interested parties qualified to serve as a councillor should first complete a self-certification confirming he/she meets the statutory requirements to be a member of a local council, and personal profile for consideration by Council, and be available for interview with the Chair and/or other members at a mutually convenient date and time. It is anticipated that interested parties will attend a number of council meetings before seeking office, suggested to be at least two. The Council will need to consider fairly if candidates are suitable for co-option. Candidates may be assessed by whether or not they meet the criteria in a person specification agreed by the council.

d The decisions made by a local council about (i) whether or not to co-opt when vacancies remain unfilled after an ordinary election and (ii) who to co-opt when vacancies remain unfilled after an ordinary election and when casual vacancies arise should be transparent. There may be special reasons for excluding the public during a council meeting under (s.1(2) Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960) when the council is making decisions about a matter of public interest such as co-option. However, these must be defined, and decisions about co-option which are made at council meetings when the public have been excluded will not eliminate the need for a council to explain, for example to unsuccessful candidates, the reasons for its decisions.

33.4 General Power of Competence

Subject to any statutory prohibitions, restrictions and limitations, and provided it meets the eligibility criteria, the Council will seek to exercise the General Power of Competence as defined in the 2011 Localism Act.

34. Standing orders to be given to councillors

a The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the Council's standing orders to a councillor upon delivery of his declaration of acceptance of office.

b The Chair's decision as to the application of standing orders at meetings shall be final.

c A councillor's failure to observe standing orders more than 3 times in one meeting may result in him being excluded from the meeting in accordance with standing orders.

35. Restrictions on councillor activities

a. Unless duly authorized, no councillor shall:

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

   ii. issue orders, instructions or directions.

Item 12.1

SHINFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy and Procedure

1. Background

Shinfield Parish Council is committed to dealing with fraud and corruption and will deal equally with perpetrators from inside (Councillors and employees) and outside the Council. No distinction is made in investigation and action between cases that generate financial benefits and those that do not.

This policy and procedure will not compromise the Council's Equalities Policy or any obligations as an employer.

2. Definitions

FRAUD Criminal deception or the use of false representations to gain an unjust advantage.

CORRUPTION Offering, giving and soliciting or acceptance of an inducement or reward which may influence the action of any person or the failure to disclose an interest in order to gain financial or other pecuniary gain.

Concerns must be raised when Councillors or employees reasonably believe that one or more of the following has occurred, is in the process of occurring or is likely to occur:

- a criminal offence
- a failure to comply with a statutory or legal obligation
- improper unauthorised use of public or other funds
- a miscarriage of justice
- maladministration, misconduct or malpractice
- endangering an individual's health and safety
- damage to the environment
- deliberate concealment of any of the above.

3. Culture

The culture of the Council has always been one of openness and the core values of fairness, trust and value support this. The Council is therefore committed to working to prevent fraud and corruption.

The prevention/detection of fraud/corruption and the protection of the public purse are the responsibility of all councillors and employees.

The Council's members and employees play an important role in creating and maintaining this culture. They are positively encouraged to raise concerns regarding fraud and corruption, regardless of the seniority, rank or status, in the knowledge that such concerns will, wherever possible, be treated in confidence. Please see the Confidential Reporting Policy for more information in this respect.

4. Prevention

The role of Councillors:
As elected representatives, all members of the Council have a duty to protect the Council from all forms of abuse.

This is undertaken through the Anti-fraud Policy and Procedure and compliance with the Code of Conduct, the Council's Financial Procedure Rules, Standing Orders and relevant legislation.

Elected members sign to the effect that they have read and understood the Code of Conduct when they take office. These conduct and ethical matters are specifically brought to the attention of councillors during induction and include the declaration and registration of interests.

The Council recognises that a key preventative measure in dealing with fraud and corruption is to take effective steps at the recruitment stage to establish, as far as possible, the honesty and integrity of potential employees, whether for permanent, temporary or casual posts.

The role of employees:
Each employee is governed in their work by the Parish Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and relevant policies such as Health and Safety.

Employees are responsible for ensuring that they follow the instructions given to them by Council, particularly in relation to the safekeeping of the assets of the Council.

Employees are expected always to be aware of the possibility that fraud, corruption or theft may exist in the workplace and be able to share their concerns with their line manager. If for any reason, they feel unable to speak to their manager they must refer to the Confidential Reporting Policy and Procedure.

Conflicts of Interest
Both elected members and employees must ensure that they avoid situations where there is a potential for a conflict of interest. Such situations can arise with externalisation of services, tendering, planning and land issues, etc. Effective role separation will ensure decisions made are clearly based upon impartial advice and avoid questions about improper disclosure of confidential information.

Role of Internal Audit
It is not the Internal Auditor's function to prevent fraud and irregularity, but the Internal Auditor plays a vital preventative role in trying to ensure that systems and procedures are in place to prevent and detect fraud and corruption.

The Role of External Audit
Independent external audit is an essential safeguard in the stewardship of public money. This role is delivered through the carrying out of specific reviews that are designed to test (amongst other things) the adequacy of the council's financial systems, and arrangements for preventing and detecting fraud and corruption. It is not the external auditor's function to prevent fraud and irregularity, but the integrity of public funds is at all times a matter of general concern. External auditors are always alert to the possibility of fraud and irregularity and will act without undue delay if grounds for suspicion come to their notice.

Co-operation with Others

5. Deterrence

Disciplinary Action
Theft, fraud and corruption are serious offences against the Council and employees will face disciplinary action if there is evidence that they have been involved in these activities. Disciplinary action will be taken in addition to, or instead of, criminal proceedings, depending on the circumstances of each individual case, but in a consistent manner, after relevant consultation.

Councillors will face appropriate action under this Policy if they are found to have been involved in theft, fraud or corruption against the Council. Action will be taken in addition to, or instead of, criminal proceedings, depending on the circumstances of each individual case, but in a consistent manner.

6. Detection and Investigation

Internal Audit plays an important role in the detection of fraud and corruption.

In addition to internal audits, there are numerous systems controls in place to deter fraud and corruption, outlined in the Financial Risk Assessment, but it is often the vigilance of Councillors, employees and members of the public that aids detection.

In some cases, frauds are discovered by chance or 'tip-off' and arrangements are in place via the Confidential Reporting Policy and Procedure to enable such information to be properly dealt with, in accordance with the requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998.

Investigations will apply to all the following:

- fraud/corruption by Councillors
- fraud/corruption by Council employees
- fraud by contractors or their employees
- external fraud (the public) impacting on the Parish Council.

Any decision to refer a concern to the Police will be taken by the Parish Clerk and/or Chair of the Finance & General Purposes Committee (F&GP) (or the Chair of the Council to the concern relates to one or both of these individuals), The Council will normally wish the Police to be made aware of, and investigate independently, potential offenders where financial impropriety is discovered.

Depending on the nature of the allegation, the Parish Clerk and Chair of F&GP will normally work closely with the relevant members of staff to ensure that all allegations are thoroughly investigated and reported upon.

The Parish Council's Disciplinary Procedures will be used to facilitate a thorough investigation of any allegations of improper behaviour by employees.

The Council will deal firmly with those who defraud the Council, or who are corrupt, or where there has been financial malpractice. There is, of course, a need to ensure that any investigation process is not misused and, therefore, any abuse (such as malicious allegations) may be dealt with as a disciplinary matter.

When fraud or corruption occurs because of a breakdown in the Council's systems or procedures, the Council will ensure that appropriate improvements in systems of control are implemented to prevent a recurrence.

7. Awareness and training

The Council recognises that the continuing success of this Policy and its general credibility will depend in part on the effectiveness of training and awareness of Councillors and employees.

To facilitate this, positive and appropriate provisions have been made via induction training for employees and their annual appraisals. A copy of the confidential reporting policy and this Anti-fraud Policy and Procedure is placed on the website.

8. **Conclusion**

The Council believes in setting and maintaining high standards and a culture of openness, with core values of fairness, trust and value. This strategy fully supports the council's desire to maintain an honest council, free from fraud and corruption.

The Council has in place a network of systems and procedures to assist it in dealing with fraud and corruption when it occurs. It is determined that these arrangements will keep pace with any future developments in techniques to both prevent and detect fraudulent or corrupt activity that may affect its operation.

Consultation with Shinfield North residents

- Define area for consultation
  - East of A327 and North of M4 within the parish boundary?
- Deliver Survey door to door
  - If possible, canvas them when at the door
    - If not leaflet through door with QR code to respond
  - All entries in a draw to encourage participation
- In person public meetings
  - Include existing organisations active in the area in these conversations
  - Hire space in the area (St Barnabas or Crosfields)
    - To promote conversation on the issues for these residents
  - Tent on the Green
    - Include on the leaflet dates and times where the SPC gazebo will be up so people can come and have a chat with us about anything but in particular the survey
- Visits to School Green Centre
  - Establish links with the rest of the parish by inviting residents in the area to an event aimed particularly at them
- Residents Association
  - Part of exercise might be to see if there was any desire to establish a residents Association in the area
    - This could then act as a point of liaison between residents and SPC
    - Could be supported by free access to rooms for meetings as required
- Push survey on social media to get as much take up as possible
  - Keep using the same channels to feedback the findings and what the council intended to do with it

Questions in the Survey

- About the Parish
  - Prior to this survey did you know you lived in the parish of Shinfield
  - How closely do you associate yourself with the parish of Shinfield
  - Have you ever used the Shinfield Parish Council website
- General Questions
  - Demographic Information
    - Age
    - Gender
    - Household size
    - Length of residence in the parish
- Facilities and Services
  - Current Usage
    - Which existing parish facilities do you use regularly?
      - SGC
      - SGC Cinema
      - SWP
      - Manor Ground
      - Millworth Lane
      - High Copse
    - How often do you use these facilities?
    - How satisfied are you with the current facilities provided by the parish council?
- What improvements would you like to see in the existing facilities?
  - What new facilities would you like to see in the parish?
  - More of existing sports
    - Please specify
  - New sports
    - Please specify
  - Culture
    - Please specify
  - Events
    - Please specify
  - Are there any accessibility issues with the current facilities?
  - What can be done to improve accessibility?

- Specific Facilities for the area
    - How important is it to you to have a parish council facility within walking distance?
    - What kind of facilities would you like to have?
        - Meeting rooms big enough for parties and activities such as gymnastics, badminton etc
        - Meeting Rooms for smaller groups
        - Micro-Library
            - Self-service library similar to that in School Green Centre
        - Café
    - What kind of activities would you (or someone in your household) like to take part in if we were able to provide a facility in this area
- Community Events
    - What types of community events would you like the parish council to organize? (e.g., festivals, workshops, sports events)
    - How likely are you to attend these events?
- Communication
    - How do you prefer to receive information about parish council activities?
        - Newsletters
        - Social media
        - Community meetings
        - Other channels
- Do you have any other suggestions for improving the parish facilities?
- Are there any specific issues or concerns you would like to address?

Project Team Summary report
As At 11th June 2025

Project Team	Membership	Last Mtg	Next Mtg	Assigned Budget £	Comments (Full Council Actions in **purple**)
Art Exhibition	I Montgomery D Peer S Herring B Winton D Cotton	07/05/2025	TBC	10,000 (Revenue Budget)	
Education	R Tatla R Hoyle L James D Lias I Montgomery S Herring B Winton P Bray A Gray M Zhang A Lamping Oakbank parent Barbara Stanley, Swallowfied PC	27/02/2024	03/07/2025	N/A	Next Meeting arranged for Teams, 3rd July at 10.00 Clerk to issue invite Items for Agenda: Hyde End Lane School Site Aldergrove extension GLT and Oakbank School
Traffic	L James B Johnson D Lias D Peer R Tatla B Winton	09/05/2025	TBC	250,000 (£8k to Oakbank cycle shelters)	Last meeting was with M Alder, L James and B Winton. Need to arrange a meeting with the new lead for Transport & Highways (Adrian Betteridge)
Shinfield North Options	C Fernandes L James Z Matic I Montgomery R Tatla B Winton	06/02/25 (ACE Meeting)	TBC	None assigned (bus circa £100k if approved)	Discussion on engagement with Shinfield North is on the agenda for this meeting
Sports	I Clarke L James B Winton T Grover	23/04/2025	TBC	920,000 22,000 spent - balance 898,000	Revised proposals approved by Full Council in April 2025. Progressing plans for Fitness Centre
School Green	P Jahromi L James R Tatla S Herring	03/08/2023	TBC	75,000 46,372 remaining	No further meetings required unless there is a desire to consider formal footpath across School Green. Facilities Manager has arranged a site visit with a contractor to identify what, if anything, may be viable.
Engagement	B Johnson N Masseron I Montgomery S Herring L Hope B Winton	13/3/2025 (Public Speaking training session)	TBC	N/A (From General Training Budget)	Clerk to draft outline Marketing Strategy as "Aunt Sally" document
Public Art	TBC TBC Arts4Wokingham	04/04/2025	Various	N/A (FC agreed to under-write to £42k)	Arranging next meeting - potentially 27/6/25
Film Programming	P Jahromi Z Matic 12 Members of Public	01/03/2025	TBC	N/A	Film selections to be made in house for June. Working with UoR students on potential programmes
Corporate Governance	N Masseron B Winton S Herring J Mason (Finance) L Hope (Transparency)	09/06/2025	TBC		Work on draft Revised Standing Orders on this agenda. Next steps to look at Financial Procedures