

## **Review of Standing Orders**

1. Your internal auditor has recommended that “The Council should review its Standing Orders to bring them into line with the NALC Model form, including appropriate tendering limits matched to its Financial Regulations.”
2. Councillors should make their own comparison between your existing standing orders and the model standing orders published by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), both of which I have made available.
3. There are advantages in using NALC’s Model Standing Orders as the basis for a local council’s standing orders because NALC updates its standing orders whenever the law requires it, whereas a council may overlook the need to amend its own standing orders when there is a change in legislation.
4. Notwithstanding a number of admirable characteristics of your own standing orders, I recommend you adopt NALC’s Model Standing Orders but amend them wherever you consider them appropriate.
5. One of the most important changes is that your current standing orders do not allow the public to speak during a meeting. The public may either address the Council before the meeting or the Chairman may adjourn the meeting so that they can address the Council.
6. I would draw your attention to the fact that adopting the NALC Model Standing Orders will mean the Chairman and Vice-Chair will no longer be ex officio members of all Council committees as provided by your current standing order 21.2.

### **Mind the Gaps**

7. The NALC Model Standing Orders indicate with round brackets like this “( )” where a Council needs to fill in a blank. I have listed below 11 of these:

<b>SO</b>	<b>Provision</b>	<b>Note</b>
1t	Limit on length of speeches by councillors	Your standing order 12.5 sets a limit of five minutes
2f	Limit on period of time for public participation	No equivalent provision currently

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<b>SO</b>	<b>Provision</b>	<b>Note</b>
2g	Limit on length of speeches by members of the public	No equivalent provision currently
2x	Limit on length of meetings	No equivalent provision currently
4dv	Advance notice for appointment of substitute members of a committee	No equivalent provision currently
6d	Number of days for chairman to call extraordinary meeting	No equivalent provision currently
7a	Number of councillors required to sign written notice to reverse decision	Your standing order 16.1 requires four
9b	Number of days required for advance notice of motion	Your standing order 9.1 provides for "three clear days"
9d	Number of days in advance required for resubmitted motion	No equivalent provision currently
15bii	Days in advance for withdrawal of motion	No equivalent provision currently
26b	Number of councillors required for written notice to add, vary or revoke one or more standing orders	Your current standing order 36.3 says such a resolution "shall, when proposed and seconded, stand adjourned without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council".

Take Your Pick

8. The NALC Model Standing Orders indicate with square brackets like this "[ ]" where a Council needs to choose between alternatives. I have listed below nine of these:

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<b>SO</b>	<b>Provision</b>	<b>Note</b>
2c	Option to hold meetings with less than three clear days' notice	You currently have no such provision nor, in my opinion, is it desirable
2i	Whether a person must stand or raise their hand to request to speak	Latter is your normal practice
6c&d	Options for extraordinary meetings of sub-committees	You do not have any sub-committees
13e&g	Who has power to grant dispensation	You have no standing orders regarding dispensations
15xv	Option for extraordinary meeting of Council or Planning Committee to consider planning application	You do not have a Planning Committee but your standing order 35.1 requires the Clerk to notify the whole Council of any planning application "within 48 hours of receipt".
19a-e	Options for Personnel Committee or Sub-Committee	You do not have a Personnel Sub-/Committee
20b	Relevant transparency provisions	You come under the first option
23b	Options for use of a common seal	You do not have a common seal
24a&b	Options for towns and parishes in the area of a unitary council	South Hinksey comes under both a district and a county council

Departures

- I recommend that you depart from the requirement in NALC's model standing order 2i that a person must stand when speaking unless they have a disability or are likely to suffer discomfort. This is not

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your current practice and I find it absurd for a small council of five or six members.

10. Your current standing order 12.15 says that a member “shall remain seated when speaking unless requested to stand by the Chairman”. This appears to me more appropriate for a small council and I do not recall either Maggie or Michael ever making such a request.
11. I also recommend that you do not adopt NALC’s model standing order 15xiv which requires that the Clerk “record every planning application notified to the Council and the Council’s response to the local planning authority in a book for such purpose”.
12. This seems to me a bizarre provision in this day and age and it does not match current practice.

Geoffrey Ferres  
Parish Clerk  
Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2021