

Local Council Documents & Policies

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

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

| Section | Comments | Status |
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| Basic Governance | | |
| Standing Orders | Model available from CALC – 2010 Edition – Part two available on CDALC website see members area – policies | AR/BP |
| Financial Regulations | Model available from CALC – 2004 Edition – see CDALC website see members area-policies | SR¹ |
| Minute book | Not necessarily a “book” but the council must keep all minutes as a formal record of the council’s business. | SR² |
| Council’s Code of Conduct | Councils were required to adopt a new Code in 2012 – See CDALC website members area-policies | SR³ |
| Planning register | A list of planning applications received, their status and the council’s response. | BP |
| Parish Emergency Plan | A document that describes what the council/community would do in the event of an emergency. | BP |
| Cllr Attendance register | A register of attendance, recording whether or not absence was approved by council | BP |
| Risk Assessment register | Detailed list of all risks in parish, their level, likelihood and what mitigating steps the council is taking. – See model on CDALC website members area-policies | AR |
| Deeds of all land holdings | A list of all deeds, their scope, effect and lifespan. Should include a description of the location of the physical deed and any copies. Should show purchase price for Annual Returns. | BP |
| Insurance register | A list of the insurable interests of the council, the name of insurance provider, the amount covered and the term of the policy. | BP |
| Members’ Registers of Interest | A complete set of up to date registers of interest for all current councillors – see CDALC website members area – policies (copy held by Monitoring Officer and must be displayed on your website if you have one). | SR |
| Members’ Allowances Policy | A document that shows whether or not the council has a Parish Basic Allowance Scheme, and if so, details of same. | BP |

¹ Local Government Finance Act 1990, s.50

² Local Government Act 1972, Sch 12, para 41

³ Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2007

| Openness & accountability | | |
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| Publication Scheme under the Freedom of Information ACT | Model available from CALC. See CDALC website, members area-policies. | SR ⁴ |
| Data protection/information security policy | A policy describing how the council intends to discharge its duties under the Data Protection Act 1998. | BP |
| Development control policy | A list of policies on which the council will base its responses to planning applications. May be, or include reference to a Village Design Statement, Parish Plan or Landscape Character Assessment. | BP |
| Complaints procedure | Model available from CALC. Not a statutory requirement for local councils but extremely inadvisable to operate without one. See CDALC website, members area-policies | BP |
| Play Areas (Skip section if council does not own, manage or operate play areas) | | |
| Record of play equipment inspections | A comprehensive listing of when, how and by whom play equipment was inspected including details of any defects found during weekly visual inspections. The council must ensure its record keeping is exemplary as the records will be scrutinized should there be an accident investigation. | BP |
| Record of Annual inspection and copies of inspection certificate | All play equipment should be professionally inspected on an annual basis (at least) and a certificate issued. Council has a legal duty of care towards those using the play area. | BP |
| Record of contractors' insurance, including copies of contractor's liability insurance documents | Councils should ensure that wherever contractors are engaged that they are qualified, competent and carry sufficient insurance to carry out the work. | BP |
| Burial Authorities (Skip section if council does not own, manage or operate burial grounds) | | |
| Register and record of burials | Useful for any enquiries from relatives etc | |
| Register of graves | Register of graves | |
| Map of graves/cemetery | Maps detailing grave locations etc | |
| Record of exclusive rights of burial | A definitive listing of any grants made by the council for burial rights. | SR ⁵ |
| List of Cemetery charges | Useful for giving to prospective users of your cemetery could be included on your website | |
| Allotments (Skip section if council does not own, manage or operate allotments) | | |
| Register of allotments | Records details of allotments free etc | |
| List of allotment charges | Useful information for potential users | |
| Financial | | |
| Accounts (e.g. day book) | Normally kept in electronic format, e.g. Excel spreadsheet or specialised finance software. | SR ⁶ |

⁴ Freedom of Information Act 2000, s.20

⁵ Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977, Sch 2 pt. II

⁶ Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003, SI 2003/533

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| Prior year Annual Return | | |
| Bank statements | | |
| Cheque books | | |
| Paying in books | | |
| Invoices and receipts | | |
| Insurance documents | Inc. Cert of employer's liability, public liability | |
| Notice of tax code or agreement to "code out" for each employee. | | |
| VAT reclaim record | | |
| Investment certificates / bonds | | |
| Asset register (inc. Record of deeds) | | |
| Record of grants made | | |
| Record of borrowings | | |
| Employment & Personnel | | |
| Employing people procedures | Recruitment policy, induction arrangements, appraisal procedures etc. | |
| Written statement of particulars of employment | Employers have a duty to issue, within two months of commencement of employment. See CDALC website, members area, policies | SR ⁷ |
| Job description | Not a legal requirement as such but extremely inadvisable to employ someone without one as lack of clarity around roles is the biggest cause of employment grievance. See example on CDALC website, members area - policies. | BP |
| Working from home policy | Where relevant. Covers use of home, home security, access by other members of staff, councillors and members of the public. | |
| Expenses | The level of expenses paid, including mileage rates, subsistence, telephone etc. | |
| Grievance & disciplinary procedure | Models available from CDALC website members area - policies. Guidance is provided in the form of the Acas Code of Practice on Discipline and Grievance. | BP |
| Bullying and Harassment / Dignity at Work | Required to avoid situations like this arising | |
| Equality & Diversity Policy | Very small councils with only a single employee may decide not to have a written policy but must nevertheless comply with relevant discrimination legislation (e.g. age/sex discrimination, disabled access etc). Councils with more than one employee should certainly have a written policy. | BP |
| Computer use, electronic communications and telephone Policy | Sets out how/when computers can be used, the policy for backing up data, how e-mail and | |

⁷ Employment Rights Act 1996, pt. 1, s.1

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| | telephone communications will be dealt with etc. This policy applies to anyone using computers or sending or receiving phone and/or electronic communications on behalf of the council, including individual councillors. | |
| Payroll Record | Must have employees registered with HMRC following their recent directive/guidance. | |
| Notice of tax codes | Obtain from tax office for all employees and use with your payroll software or payroll provider | |
| Holiday record | Need to calculate annual holiday entitlement and for manager/Chairman to approve and record usage throughout the year | |
| Sickness absence policy and records | Need to record any sickness absence and calculate any sickness benefits arising. Also employees need to know who to contact during periods of sickness and what obligations they need to adhere to. | |
| Health & Safety Policy | Including fire policy and procedures, computer screen usage, eye care generally, alcohol and drug policy, work station setup etc. | |
| Training Statement of Intent | Certainly required for Quality Status. An example is included on the CDALC website, members area - policies. | |
| Retirement Policy | Sets out whether the council uses the Local Government Pension Scheme. Gratuities are no longer payable. Some "old" contracts may give rise to gratuity payments. Includes details of how employees' contributions will be calculated for a pension and pension administration details. Will also include a statement in reference to working age requirements. | |
| Family friendly policy | Including details of flexible working arrangements and provision for maternity/paternity/adoption/parental leave. | |
| Disabled Access Audit | | |
| Environment | | |
| Certificate of waste disposal | Required for any dog waste bins that are owned, managed or controlled by the council. | |
| Green space audit | To ensure compliance under the Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006 | BP |