

## Communication and Media Relations Policy

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# Communication and Media Relations Policy

## 1. Policy Statement

- 1.1. This policy will focus on the communication efforts of the council and ensure it to be effective and efficient and committed to the provision of accurate information in its activity to serve the people of Tacolneston and the wider community.
- 1.2. This policy explains how the Council may work with the media and the public to meet the objective in accordance with the legal requirements and restrictions that apply.
- 1.3. This policy is advised by the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity as well as the National Guidance (The Good Councillors Guide 2018).
- 1.4. This policy is supported by the Councils Communication Procedure and Model Publication Scheme.
  - The Parish Council is accountable to members of the public and has a duty to convey its decisions and actions through various media.
  - All communication will be conveyed in an open and straightforward manner.
  - The Parish Clerk is the Proper Officer of the Parish Council and is responsible for all formal communication between the Council, the press and members of the public.
- 1.5. Normal Parish Council meetings are meetings held in public but not public meetings. The Annual Parish meeting, held in May, is a public meeting.
- 1.6. No individual Councillor shall be the sole custodian of any correspondence named/intended for the Parish Council or Working Party.
- 1.7. These guidelines apply to everyone, whether or not they have read them.
- 1.8. If at all possible virtual meeting to be held during the Covid – 19 pandemic
- 1.9. As of 4<sup>th</sup> July 2020 Covid-19 guidelines are to be followed when doing face to face meetings where virtual meetings are not possible. Checklist to be completed and Risk assessment completed.

## 2. Legal Requirements

- 2.1. This policy is subject to the Council's obligations which are set out in the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the Local Government Act 1972, the Local Government Act 1986, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018 the General Data Protection Regulation 2018, other legislation which may apply and the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.
- 2.2. The Council cannot disclose confidential information or information the disclosure of which is prohibited by law.
- 2.3. The Council cannot disclose confidential information if this is prohibited under the terms of a court order.
- 2.4. Councillors are subject to additional restrictions about the disclosure of confidential information which arise from the Code of Conduct.

## 3. Community Engagement

- 3.1. The Council will facilitate community engagement with the electorate by:

- Publishing its meeting dates, times and venues
- Providing an allocated period of time for Public Participation in meetings
- Consulting with the electorate to gauge public opinion
- Maintaining an up to date website

#### **4. Methods of Communication**

The Council will use the following media to communicate its activities:

<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>METHOD OF COMMUNICATION</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>
Approved minutes	Website / Notice boards	Parish Clerk
Draft minutes	Website	Parish Clerk
Agendas	Website / Notice boards	Parish Clerk
Council policies/procedures	Website	Parish Clerk
Annual external audit	Website	Parish Clerk
Adopted Annual Accounts	Website	Parish Clerk
Councilor vacancies	Website / Notice boards / Local Newspapers	Parish Clerk
Financial information	Website	Parish Clerk

Other information will be provided in accordance with the Council's adopted Publication Scheme.

#### **5. Protocol**

- 5.1. The Parish Clerk is solely responsible for the preparation of notices of Council meetings, agendas and minutes.
- 5.2. The Parish Clerk is responsible for the development and maintenance of the Council's website so that it remains current.
- 5.3. All correspondence addressed to the Parish Council will be actioned by the Parish Clerk.
- 5.4. Information that needs to be considered by the Parish Council will be placed on the first agenda after its receipt.
- 5.5. Agendas for Council meetings will be accompanied with sufficient written reports and information to enable Members to make an informed decision.
- 5.6. Agendas will be issued electronically so that they are received by Members at least 3 clear days before all meetings of the Council.
- 5.7. Agendas and minutes for all meetings of the Council will be published on the Council's website.
- 5.8. Other relevant information will be emailed to Members in between meetings.

#### **6. Requests for Information**

- 6.1. In accordance with the relevant Standing Order; requests for information held by the Council shall be handled in accordance with the Council's policy in respect of handling requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- 6.2. Correspondence from, and notices served by, the Information Commissioner shall be referred by the Parish Clerk to the Council.
- 6.3. The Council shall have the power to do anything to facilitate compliance with the current Freedom of Information Legislation.
- 6.4. In accordance with Standing Order neither the Parish Clerk, nor Members, will disclose confidential information that is exempt under the Freedom of Information Act.

- 6.5. The agenda and its supporting papers, and the minutes from a meeting where confidential or sensitive information is discussed, shall not disclose or otherwise undermine such information which, for special reasons, is not in the public interest.

## **7. Tacolneston Parish Council's Communication Aim**

### **7.1. Will be to:**

- Always use the agreed Council style.
- Keep sentences and paragraphs short.
- Keep to plain English, avoiding jargon and acronyms.
- Always give the Parish Clerk's contact details, e-mail address and website if applicable.
- Always use the correct name of the Council.

## **8. Meetings of the Council.**

In the likelihood of not being able to hold in person council meetings, virtual meetings to be considered and NALC guidelines to be followed to May 2021.

### **8.1. Agenda – General**

- 8.1.1. The agenda should be clear and concise.
- 8.1.2. It should contain sufficient information for both members and the public to understand what matters are being considered and what decisions are to be taken at a meeting.
- 8.1.3. Items for information should be kept to a minimum on an agenda. They may contain supporting information such as letters, minutes from other bodies, and so on.
- 8.1.4. Items for decisions or recommendations will have supporting information such as reports, applications, and letters. These will be circulated with the Agenda.
- 8.1.5. All this documentation will be made available to the public, on the website,
- 8.1.6. Agenda for meetings of the Council will be circulated and made available to the public a minimum of 3 clear days before the day of the meeting.  
Current best practice is distribution 5 or 7 clear days before the meeting. A clear day does not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting and excludes weekends and bank holidays.
- 8.1.7. Spare copies of the agenda should be available for the public attending meetings.
- 8.1.8. Agenda items will be numbered consecutively for ease of reference.
- 8.1.9. The agenda for meetings can be divided between procedural items and business items.

### **8.2. Agenda – Public Involvement**

- 8.2.1. There is no mechanism for the public to directly place matters onto the Agenda.
  - 8.2.1.1. However, the Council has arrangements for public questions, comments or representations in "Public Participation".
  - 8.2.1.2. This is limited to five minutes per person (unless agreed otherwise).
  - 8.2.1.3. The matter may be placed on the agenda of the next meeting, responded to by the Parish Clerk, or simply noted.

8.2.1.4. There is no discussion at the meeting on a matter for which there has been no prior notice on the agenda.

### **8.3. Agenda – Procedural Items**

8.3.1. Procedural items normally include:

- Apologies for absence.
- Declarations of interest and requests for dispensations.
- Include standard items in accordance with the latest regulations or guidance concerning Councillor's interests.
- An item to enable the Chair to authorize the minutes of the previous meeting as a true record. This item is purely for recording corrections and amendments for accuracy purposes, not for raising matters arising from the minutes. See section on Minutes below.
- Subject to the Council's Standing Orders, custom or practice, there may be other procedural items, by way of receiving information that are not to be the subject of discussion or debate at the meeting.

### **8.4. Agenda – Business Items**

- 8.4.1. These will be determined by the Council's activities.
- 8.4.2. Some items will recur from previous meetings, and in such cases it is good practice to provide a reference to the previous minutes.
- 8.4.3. Each matter should be given a clear heading as to what the agenda item is about and a brief indication of what the meeting is going to consider.
- 8.4.4. More complicated items may require a written report (see below). If there are reports or supporting information this must be clearly identified on the Agenda so that Councillors and the public know to refer to them. The agenda item should refer to the report by its title and other documentation by some suitable reference.
- 8.4.5. A draft agenda should be prepared in advance of the publication date and shared with the Chair. The Chair has responsibility for the proper conduct of the meeting and needs to be involved in planning the meeting.
- 8.4.6. The order of business items is important. For example, it might be appropriate to include controversial items, or items for which there is likely to be public interest and attendance, early in the agenda. Items where the press and public are likely to be excluded should be put at the end.

## **9. Reports**

- 9.1. Those making the decision must have the full relevant information. Council's decisions can be set aside by a court if due regard has not been given to relevant information or irrelevant considerations have been applied.
- 9.2. The best way of providing this is through a report with accompanying documentation.
- 9.3. Reports may be prepared by the Parish Clerk, by other officer, or on occasions by Councillors themselves:
  - Especially when reporting back to the Council
    - on an event attended.
    - research done at the request.
    - as a result of a Working Party meeting.

- They should contain sufficient information to enable Councillors to make an informed decision.
- 9.4. Reports and information will be circulated at the same time as the agenda and made available to the public, unless they include confidential matters that would justify the exclusion of the press and public at the meeting thus enhancing the transparency of the Council's decision making and improves local knowledge of its activities.
- 9.5. Even if the documentation has been circulated before (either at a previous meeting, or in the run up to a meeting) it should be included again for ease of reference.

## 10. Minutes

10.1. The minutes of a Council meeting are a public record of the decisions of the Council and great care should be taken in their format and production. The minutes can be produced in court and other judicial processes as evidence of decisions of the Council. They confirm the resolutions made, and form part of the Council archives which must be preserved.

### 10.1.1 Minutes should be:

- As brief as is consistent with accuracy.
- Precise and concise.
- Self-contained (that is: complete in themselves and understandable without reference to other documents).
- Decisive (so that there is no doubt about the decision made).

### 10.1.2. Minutes should not:

- Be a verbatim record of the meeting.
- Document opinions or views that were expressed at the meeting.

## 11. Guidance on Minute writing

- 11.1. Use plain English using full sentences and appropriate grammar.
- 11.2. Use the house style with a clear heading containing the status of the meeting, the place and date.
- 11.3. Include the time the meeting starts and ends and any adjournments.
- 11.4. Start with an alphabetical list of the Councillors present at the meeting.
- 11.5. Number them consecutively for ease of reference.
- 11.6. This should be in the past tense and should include reference to any written reports submitted.
- 11.7. It is not necessary to refer to individual speakers by name unless this is significant.
- 11.8. It may be appropriate to record the fact that an applicant, supporter or an objector addressed the Council on a planning application or that the Parish Clerk, or an Officer of the district or County Council reported on a matter.
- 11.9. Abbreviations should be avoided and acronyms only used after having written the title in full at the first mention.
- 11.10. The decision should be separately highlighted for ease of identification and words used to show that it is a decision, for example;

**RESOLVED 1) That----**

**2) That----**

- 11.11. The wording of the proposal should be included in full.
- It is necessary to note the name of the proposer and seconder in the minutes
  - The result of the vote in the minutes that was taken (unless a recorded vote is requested).
- 11.12. The order of the minutes will follow the order of the agenda.
- 11.13. Declarations of interest must be carefully recorded in the minutes,
- Naming the Councillor.
  - Clearly indicating which item the interest referred to.
  - Whether the interest is a pecuniary interest or other interest.
  - Giving the nature of the interest and whether the member left the meeting during the discussion and decision on the item.
- 11.14. Where Standing Orders provide for the submission by notice of formal written Council Meeting, it is appropriate to record the names of the Councillors proposing and seconding the motion in the minutes.
- 11.15. Where Standing Orders make provision for a recorded vote to be taken, or when a Councillor asks for votes to be recorded in the minutes, the minutes should record the names of Councillors voting for and against the matter or the individual Councillor's vote accordingly.
- 11.16. Where Standing Orders provide for a special procedure (other than routine arrangements) to be followed at a meeting it is generally appropriate to include a reference in the minutes to the procedure being followed as evidence to that effect.
- 11.17. Decisions to exclude the press and public should be fully recorded in the minutes, making it absolutely clear to which matter or part of it the exclusion applied.
- 11.18. Resolutions that are confidential or for some other special reason are not in the public interest to disclose must be recorded in the minutes, without undermining or disclosing the confidential or other sensitive information.

## **12 Process**

- 12.1. Minutes will be written up as soon as possible so that the minute taker's memory is fresh and interpretation of the information available from handwritten notes of the meeting is easier.
- 12.2. Minutes in draft form should therefore record that fact clearly (at the top and bottom) to the effect: "Minutes subject to approval at the next meeting" or by using a "draft" watermark.
- 12.3. Once prepared they will be submitted to the Chair of the meeting concerned to check. This is an opportunity to pick up any mistakes in the content or identify typing errors, but it is not to be used by the Chair as a means of re-writing the minutes.
- 12.4. The draft minutes will then be circulated, within ten clear working days after the meeting, for information only to all Councillors.
- This gives Councillors the chance to comment upon minor accuracy issues (spelling and so on) before formal publication of the draft minutes.
- 12.5. The draft minutes will be published on the website within one month, as per Local Government Transparency code 2015.
- 12.6. The draft minutes will be considered at the next meeting for acceptance and signing by the Chair as a true record.
- If changes are made to the minutes by the Council or committee before acceptance and signing, the wording changes should be recorded in the minutes of the meeting



that agreed the changes and the original minutes must be amended to reflect the changes.

- The copy signed by the Chair will contain the alterations, recorded in longhand, with the changes signed and dated.

12.7. After the draft minutes are approved, the contemporaneous notes or the recording of the meeting shall be destroyed, along with all copies of the draft minutes.

12.8. The signed minutes shall replace the draft minutes on the website.

12.9. The signed minutes shall be retained in the Councils archives. A separate set of signed minutes will be kept for public inspection and for reference at meetings or other purposes.

**Note** - The resolutions made at a meeting have immediate effect. They are not subject to the preparation of draft minutes or the approval of minutes of that meeting at a later meeting.

## **13 Other Communication Methods:**

### **13.1. The Parish Notice Board**

13.1.1. The Council may identify locations for community notice boards, seek the relevant permissions and install notice boards to promote the Council's activities.

13.1.2. The notice boards when in place, will be updated regularly and will display:

- The full title of the Council.
- The name, address, telephone number and email address of the Parish Clerk.
- The Council's website address.
- Election notices.
- Notice of public rights.
- Relevant insurance certificates.
- A list of Members of the Council.
- Venues, dates and times of meetings set out for the year.
- Agenda for forthcoming meetings.
- If practicable, minutes of meetings or a summary of recent decisions.
- Where the minutes, the code of conduct and other public documents may be inspected.

### **13.2. Website**

13.2.1.. All council agenda, reports, policies ,financial statements and minutes will be placed on a dedicated website, with appropriate archive facilities.

13.2.2. This will kept up to date on a regular basis.

### **13.3 Community Newsletter**

Clerk to submit to Editor of Community Newsletter and article to be publicized quarterly

## **14. Parish Council Correspondence**

14.1. All official correspondence will be from the Parish Clerk in the name of the Council using Council letter headed paper.

- 14.2. Responses to correspondence received will be given within ten working days of receipt, where possible, if not an acknowledgement will be sent, and the letter will be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting.
- 14.3 Where correspondence is copied to another person, the addressee should be made aware that a copy is being forwarded to that other person (for example copy to XX).

## **15 Councillors**

### 15.1 Correspondence with external parties

- 15.1.1. Written correspondence (letters or e-mails) from Councillors to other parties on Council matters should be sent through the Clerk, unless agreed otherwise. The Parish Clerk will make clear that it is written in their official capacity and the Council has authorized it.
- 15.1.2. A copy of all outgoing correspondence relating to the Council or a Councillor's role within it, should be sent to the Clerk, and the writer should note on the correspondence, e.g. "copy to the Clerk" so that the recipient is aware that the Clerk has been advised.
- 15.1.3. Councillors must use their judgement when communicating with others in a personal capacity as to how the correspondence will be received. If there is any risk of the recipient considering that the Councillor is speaking on behalf of the Council, then it Councillor's responsibility to make it clear that they are not.

### 15.2. Communication between Councillors and Parish Clerk

- 15.2.1. Councillors must not give instructions to any member of staff, unless authorized to do so.
- 15.2.2. No individual Councillor, Chair or otherwise, may give instructions to the Clerk or to another employee inconsistent or conflicting with Council decisions or arrangements for delegated power.
- 15.2.3. Telephone calls should be appropriate to the work of the Council.
- 15.2.4. E-mails:
- Instant replies should not be expected from the Clerk.
  - Reasons for urgency should be stated.
  - Information to Councillors should normally be directed via the Clerk.
  - E-mails from Councillors to external parties (on Council matters) should be copied to the Clerk.
  - Councillors should acknowledge their e-mails when requested to do so.
  - Clerks and Councillors are not required to send read receipt acknowledgements of emails
  - All correspondence received by the clerk on behalf of the council shall be forwarded to all Councillors. Unless of a significant sensitive or confidential matter.

## 16 Vexation Conduct and Communications

- 16.1. The Parish Council's adopted definition of vexatious correspondence is "correspondence that is, *by nature, manifestly unjustified, inappropriate or improper use of a formal procedure*" (adapted from the ICO. Dealing with Vexatious requests).
- 16.2. It shall be for the Parish Clerk, where necessary, in conjunction with the Chairman, to determine any correspondence as being "vexatious". The Parish Clerk will use the indicators as below when considering email traffic that is potentially vexatious and consider any legal or statutory obligations placed upon the council to respond.

(Taken from Dealing with Vexatious requests (section 14) Freedom of Information's Act version 1.3 2015)

### **Indicators (not listed in any order of importance)**

#### **Abusive or aggressive language**

The tone or language of the requester's correspondence goes beyond the level of criticism that a public authority or its employees should reasonably expect to receive.

#### **Burden on the authority**

The effort required to meet the request will be so grossly oppressive in terms of the strain on time and resources, that the authority cannot reasonably be expected to comply, no matter how legitimate the subject matter or valid the intentions of the requester.

#### **Personal grudges**

For whatever reason, the requester is targeting their correspondence towards a particular employee or office holder against whom they have some personal enmity.

#### **Unreasonable persistence**

Authority, or otherwise subjected to some form of independent scrutiny.

#### **Unfounded accusations**

The request makes completely unsubstantiated accusations against the public authority or specific employees.

#### **Intransigence**

The requester takes an unreasonably entrenched position, rejecting attempts to assist and advise out of hand and shows no willingness to engage with the authority.

#### **Frequent or overlapping requests**

The requester submits frequent correspondence about the same issue or sends in new requests before the public authority has had an opportunity to address their earlier enquiries.

#### **Deliberate intention to cause annoyance**

The requester has explicitly stated that it is their intention to cause disruption to the public authority, or is a member of a campaign group whose stated aim is to disrupt the authority.

#### **Scattergun approach**

The request appears to be part of a completely random approach, lacks any clear focus, or seems to have been solely designed for the purpose of 'fishing' for information without any idea of what might be revealed.

#### **Disproportionate effort**

The matter being pursued by the requester is relatively trivial and the authority would have to expend a disproportionate amount of resources in order to meet their request.

#### **No obvious intent to obtain information**

The requester is abusing their rights of access to information by using the legislation as a means to vent their anger at a particular decision, or to harass and annoy the authority, for example, by requesting information which the authority knows them to possess already.

#### **Futile requests**

The issue at hand individually affects the requester and has already been conclusively resolved by the authority or subjected to some form of independent investigation.

#### **Frivolous requests**

The subject matter is inane or extremely trivial and the request appears to lack any serious purpose. The request is made for the sole purpose of amusement. The requester is attempting to reopen an issue which has already been comprehensively addressed by the public.

- 16.3. If an Individual is determined by the Clerk to have requested information vexatiously, then the Parish Clerk shall issue the individual with a formal refusal notice in line with the Freedom of Information Act.

- 16.4. If an individual is entering into more general vexatious correspondence with the

Council, then the Clerk shall notify them that their correspondence is considered

- vexatious and the Council will not entertain any further correspondence with them.
- 16.5. If an individual continues to engage with the Council on matters where the Parish Clerk has already indicated they are acting vexatiously or is repeatedly raising a range of issues with the Council that appear to have no serious purpose or value, then the Parish Clerk may refer the matter to the next Council meeting. The Council can then determine whether any additional measures can and should be taken.

## **17. Communication with the Press and Public**

### **17.1. Minutes and Freedom of information**

- 17.1.1. Draft minutes are a qualified exemption under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, as they are classed as 'information intended for future publication'.
- 17.1.2. Therefore, the Council may refuse to provide the information. However there is a duty to consider whether disclosure of the information requested is in the Public Interest. If, for example, a person wants to know whether something concerning them was supported or opposed by a Council and needs this information urgently, then it may not be reasonable in all the circumstances to make the person wait until the approved minutes are available. In any case, the resolutions have already taken effect. In other situations too it will not be in the public interest to withhold information in the handwritten notes, or draft minutes of the meeting.
- 17.1.3. There are other qualified exemptions in the 2000 Act that enable a Council to refuse to provide information in handwritten notes or draft minutes if disclosure is not in the public interest. If, for example, disclosure would breach one of the statutory data protection principles, the request can be refused.

If the information requested carries an absolute exemption in the 2000 Act, then there is no duty to consider the public interest. For example, if the information requested concerns information that was provided in confidence, a Council can refuse disclosure.

### **17.2. Press Releases**

- 17.2.1. The Parish Clerk will clear all press reports, or comments to the media, with the Chairman of the Council.
- 17.2.2. Press reports from the Council or working parties should be from the Clerk or through the reporter's own attendance at a meeting.
- 17.2.3. Unless a Councillor has been authorized by the Council to speak to the media on a particular issue, if asked for comment by the press they should make it clear that it is a personal view and ask that it be clearly reported as their personal view.
- 17.2.4. The press and public are invited to all full Council, and receive an agenda through the website and public notice boards.
- 17.2.5. Unless a Councillor is absolutely certain that he/she is reporting the view of the Council, they must make it clear to members of the public that they are expressing a personal view.
- 17.2.6. If Councillors receive a complaint from a member of the public, this should be dealt with under the Council's adopted complaints procedure, or via a Council agenda item.

### **17.3. Talking to the Media**

17.3.1. In response to a Council press release:

- Any media enquiry is to be referred to the Parish Clerk and the author of the press release.
- No-one else should offer any comment without prior discussion, except to confirm basic matters of fact (dates of events, spelling of name ect.).

17.3.2. In response to an unsolicited approach from a journalist or reporter (this includes enquires about press releases issued by other organizations).

### **17.4. Monitoring**

17.4.1. It is important to monitor the media for items (reports, articles, letters) about the Council in order to know:

- Whether press releases and statements issued by the Council are picked up and used effectively.
- What members of the community are saying about the Council.
- Councillors and Parish Clerk are encouraged to look out for items referring to the Council in the media; original press cuttings, where obtainable, should be sent to the Clerk.
- Anyone taking part in a radio or television broadcast should try to arrange for it to be recorded and a copy sent to the Clerk. In the absence of a recording, a note of the broadcaster's comments should be provided.

## Annexure 1

### CHECKLIST FOR HOLDING AN IN-PERSON COUNCIL MEETING

Following the government announcement of further easing of lockdown restrictions from 4 July, both NALC and SLCC strongly advise local councils to continue to meet remotely, without the need for face-to-face contact.

If the council wishes to consider returning to face-to-face meetings then there are a range of issues that will need to be addressed before this can take place. This checklist will help the council ensure this decision is made in accordance with relevant regulations and requirements.

Further guidance related to COVID-19 can be found on the NALC and SLCC websites.

	Item	Confirmed
<b>1</b>	<b>There is no way for the council to conduct business except through a face-to-face meeting.</b>	
	The council staff and councillors are unable to conduct business without a face-to-face meeting. <i>Note: The <u>government rules</u> still state that we should all work from home if we can.</i>	Yes
	The council is unable to make use of telephone or online technology to conduct quorate council meetings. <i>Note: Local councils <u>have the powers</u> to hold public meetings remotely by using video or telephone conferencing technology until May 2021. Parish meetings do not have such powers to meet remotely</i>	Not all Councillors have access to facilities to run a virtual meeting
	The council has a reasonable business need, or legal need to meet in person at this time. <i>Note: The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No.2) (England) Regulations 2020 state that a public authority can only hold a gathering of over 30 people if certain conditions are met</i>	Yes
<b>2</b>	<b>Action has been taken to seek a number of options for an appropriate venue for the council meeting.</b>	
	These venues comply with normal council meeting requirements. <i>Note: NALC members can access <u>Legal Topic Note 5 – Parish and community council meetings</u>.</i>	Yes
	The venues allow the public to observe council meetings with social distancing without placing restrictions on the number attending.	Yes. Hall size is 130mt <sup>2</sup> Only expecting maximum of 15 people
	The venues conform with the government guidance for <u>multi-purpose community facilities</u> and for <u>council buildings</u> .	Yes
	If the venue is not owned/managed by the council the owners have been asked for their risk assessment and what actions they are taking to reduce risk.	N/A
<b>3</b>	<b>There is a potential venue the council can use in compliance with the above requirements.</b>	Current venue satisfactory
<b>4</b>	<b>The council understands and is acting in compliance with 'safer workplaces' guidance.</b>	Yes
<b>5</b>	<b>The council has checked if there are councillors or staff that will be unable to attend face-to-face meetings due to health, disability or other reasons.</b>	Yes
	The council has considered how it will make reasonable adjustments to allow individuals with disabilities or other needs to take part in the meeting.	Yes
	The council has considered a <u>hybrid approach</u> to meetings.	Yes (Virtual meeting)
<b>6</b>	<b>A risk assessment has been conducted.</b>	

	<p>Consideration has been taken towards what the council can do to reduce risk to councillors, staff and public including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Providing hand sanitiser to those entering the meeting room and making sure hand sanitiser is readily available in the room itself.</li> <li>2. Staggering arrival times for staff, councillors and members of the public.</li> <li>3. Ensuring seating is placed at least 2-metre apart.</li> <li>4. Asking people to wear face masks.</li> <li>5. Holding paperless meetings.</li> <li>6. If papers are provided, people should be discouraged from sharing with others and asked to take the papers with them at the end of the meeting to minimise how many people handle the papers.</li> <li>7. Arranging seating so people are not facing each other directly.</li> <li>8. Choosing a venue with good air flow, including opening windows and doors where possible</li> </ol> <p><i>Note: The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No.2) (England) Regulations 2020 require that the person responsible for organising the gathering has carried out a risk assessment and the organiser has taken all reasonable measures to limit the risk of transmission taking into account the risk assessment.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Yes</li> <li>2. Yes</li> <li>3. Yes</li> <li>4. Yes</li> <li>5. Attempt</li> <li>6. Yes</li> <li>7. Yes</li> <li>8. Yes</li> </ol>
<b>7</b>	<b>The council has decided, based on the risk assessment and with risk management actions that it is safe and appropriate to meet.</b>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Approved by the Chairman</p>
<b>8</b>	<b>All risk mitigating actions identified by the risk assessment have taken place.</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The following to be put in place: Hand sanitizers at entrance and exit. Extra cleaning products in bathrooms</li> <li>2. Posters reminding all to sanitize on entering and leaving</li> <li>3. Spacing as required</li> <li>4. Attempt to use projector to make meeting paperless</li> <li>5. Ensuring windows are open</li> <li>6. Cleaning of tables and chairs with antiviral surface cleaner before and after meeting.</li> <li>7. Anyone currently having symptoms or having been in contact with anyone has been asked not to attend meeting</li> <li>8. Participants requested to wear masks if required</li> <li>9. Kitchen facilities closed</li> <li>10. One way traffic flow with arrows and signs</li> <li>11. Maximum of 2 in bathroom at any time</li> </ol>

This checklist has been conducted to the council's satisfaction and it has been agreed that the council will hold a face-to-face (or hybrid) meeting.

The council will re-evaluate this decision following the first council meeting held, and where necessary the risk assessment and risk management activities will be updated. Following this, the council will review this checklist [quarterly/after each council meeting/at times to be agreed by the council/delete as appropriate].

<b>Date</b>	
<b>Signature</b>	

This document was produced by NALC and SLCC and all due care has been taken that it is accurate and reflects current government guidance and legislation at the time of writing (July 2020). This document is designed as an aid to council decision-making, it does not constitute legal advice and neither organisation is responsible for the actions of councils who use this document.

The council is responsible for the health and safety of staff, councillors and others attending council meetings. The council must take care to check it is working to the most up-to-date government guidance and legislation.

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