

Local Council Documents & Policies (Version 8)

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 have or consider having. If you do not have all the “must have” (red) documents, consider preparing and adopting them over time, it is not necessary to adopt them all at once. The purpose of having documents and policies is to guide the work of the council and to help it discharge its functions; they should be viewed as a help, not a hindrance. Examples of some documents can be found on the internet and/or from Lincolnshire CALC. (Helpful tip: when searching online, use quote marks to retrieve the most relevant pages. For example, if searching for example equality policies used by parish councils, search for “parish council” + “equality policy”).

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

| Section | Comments | Status | Check |
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| Basic Governance | | | |
| Standing Orders | Model available from Lincolnshire CALC – 2022 Edition | AR/BP | |
| Financial Regulations | Model available from Lincolnshire CALC – 2024 Edition | SR¹ | |
| Minute book | Not necessarily a “book” but the council must keep all minutes as a formal record of the council’s business | SR² | |
| Code of Conduct | All councils are required to adopt Code of Conduct. Examples available from Lincolnshire CALC. Also permitted to adopt District Councils Code of Conduct. | 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. Model available from Lincolnshire CALC. | BP | |
| Cllr attendance register | A register of attendance, recording whether or not absence was approved by council | BP | |
| Risk Assessment Policy | Model available from Lincolnshire CALC | BP | |
| Risk assessment register | Detailed list of all risks in parish, their level, likelihood, and what mitigating steps the council is taking. | 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 deeds and any copies. | BP | |

¹ Local Government Act 1972, s.135, Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015, reg.4

² Local Government Act 1972, Sch 12, para 41

³ Localism Act 2011 s27 (3a), 28

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| Copies of all lease agreements | Should include a description of the location of the lease agreement. | 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 (copy held by Monitoring Officer). | SR ⁴ | |
| Declarations of Acceptance of Office | Should be stored for the term of office plus one year | SR ⁵ | |
| Members' Allowances Policy | A document that shows whether or not the council has a Parish Basic Allowance Scheme, and if so, details of scheme. | BP | |
| Register of gifts and hospitality | Code of Conduct requirement | BP | |
| Contracts for the supply and receipt of services | Copies of the contracts should be securely held by the clerk | BP | |
| Co-option Procedure | Examples available from Lincolnshire CALC | BP | |
| Terms of Reference for committees | Examples available from Lincolnshire CALC | BP | |
| Delegated authority in respect of officers and committees | Examples available from Lincolnshire CALC | BP | |
| Motions book | To cover motions received and rejected as described in Model Standing Orders | BP | |
| Openness & accountability | | | |
| Publication Scheme under the Freedom of Information ACT | Model available from Lincolnshire CALC/ ICO. | SR ⁶ | |
| Data protection/information security policy | A policy describing how the council intends to discharge its duties under GDPR | BP | |
| Subject Access Request (SAR) disclosure log | Indicating the information that has been provided in response to subject access requests | SR ⁷ | |
| Data breach policy | A policy describing how the council reports data breaches | BP | |
| Data breach log | A log of all data breaches (including those not required to be reported) | SR ⁸ | |
| Complaints procedure | Model available from Lincolnshire CALC. Not a statutory requirement for local councils but extremely inadvisable to operate without one. | BP | |
| CCTV Policy | If the council owns or operates CCTV there must be a written policy in place | SR ⁹ | |
| Transparency Code compliance | Checklist to ensure compliance with the Transparency Code for councils under £25,000 turnover, or those over £200,000 turnover. For councils in between £25,000 and £200,000 there is no statutory code, but they should follow the | SR ¹⁰ SR ¹¹ | |

⁴ Localism Act 2011 s29 (5) and (7)

⁵ Local Government Act 1972 s 83(4)

⁵ Freedom of Information Act 2000, s.20

⁷ Data Protection Act 2018, Chapter 4

⁸ Data Protection Act 2018, Chapter 4

⁹ Protections of Freedoms Act 2012 (CCTV Code of Practice)

¹⁰ The Smaller Authorities (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015, SI 494

¹¹ Local Government Transparency Code 2015

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| | principles and guidelines in either or both codes as a matter of best practice. | | |
| Communications | | | |
| Web site management policy | Dependent on who is managing web site | BP | |
| Web Site Accessibility Statement | Sets out what web site content is and isn't accessible and how users can contact the council for assistance | SR ¹² | |
| Social Media Policy | Example available from Lincolnshire CALC and as part of the Civility & Respect Project | BP | |
| Press and Media Relations Policy | Example available from Lincolnshire CALC | BP | |
| Calendar of council meeting dates inc. Annual Parish Meeting | As agreed and minuted at a parish council meeting | 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 who 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. Can be organised as a checklist of contractor's competencies. | BP | |
| Play Area Management and Improvement Plan | This will help the council to plan for equipment replacement and should be considered alongside the inspection records. | BP | |
| Burial Authorities (Skip section if council does not own, manage or operate burial grounds) | | | |
| Burials Administration Policy | To be open and transparent | BP | |
| Register and record of burials | Must retain documents indefinitely | SR ¹³ | |
| Map of graves/cemetery | Must retain documents indefinitely | SR ¹⁴ | |
| Record of exclusive rights of burial | A definitive listing of any grants made by the council for burial rights. | SR ¹⁵ | |
| List of Cemetery charges | To be open and transparent | BP | |
| Allotments (Skip section if council does not own, manage or operate allotments) | | | |
| Allotments Register | Recording size, location, tenant, plot number etc | BP | |
| Allotments Plan | Visual representation of Allotment Register | BP | |
| Tenancy agreements | Including copies of those issued and a blank for new tenants | BP | |
| List of allotment charges | To be open and transparent | BP | |

¹² Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018

¹³ Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order SI 204

¹⁴ Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order SI 204

¹⁵ Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977, Sch 2 pt. II

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| Copy of allotment rules | To be open and transparent | BP | |
| Financial | | | |
| Accounts (e.g. daybook) | Normally kept in electronic format, e.g. Excel spreadsheet or specialised finance software. | SR ¹⁶ | |
| Prior year Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) | Retain for audit trail | BP | |
| Bank mandate | To list all signatories and authorisations | BP | |
| Bank statements | Retain for audit trail | BP | |
| Cheque books | Retain old books for audit trail | BP | |
| Paying in books | Retain old books for audit trail | BP | |
| Invoices and receipts | Should retain for 6 years plus current year (VAT requirement) | BP | |
| Insurance documents | Inc. Cert of employer's liability, public liability. Since 1 October 2008 there has been no legal requirement for employers to keep copies of out-of-date certificates. However, employers are strongly advised to keep, as far as is possible, a complete record of their employers' liability insurance | BP | |
| VAT reclaim record | HMRC can request to review records up to 6 years after the current financial year, so it is best to retain records for 6 years. | BP | |
| Investment Policy | Sample available from Lincolnshire CALC | BP | |
| Investment certificates / bonds | Retain indefinitely | AR | |
| Asset register (inc. Record of deeds) | Sample available from Lincolnshire CALC | AR | |
| Grant giving policy and application form | Sample available from Lincolnshire CALC | BP | |
| Record of grants made under S137 | Recorded in accounts separately | SR ¹⁷ | |
| Record of borrowings | To allow the council to fully appreciate its financial situation. | BP | |
| Financial risk assessment | Sample available from Lincolnshire CALC | BP | |
| Schedule of charges & fees for council information | Model publication scheme available from Lincolnshire CALC / ICO | SR ¹⁸ | |
| Reserves Policy | Sample available from Lincolnshire CALC | BP | |
| Internet Banking Policy | Dependent on which bank the parish uses | BP | |
| Procurement | Partly covered by Financial Regulations | BP | |
| Employment & Personnel | | | |
| Employing people procedures | Recruitment policy, induction arrangements, appraisal procedures etc. Available as part of the Civility & Respect project. | BP | |
| Written statement of particulars of employment | Model NALC employment contract(s) available from Lincolnshire CALC (2024). Employers have a duty to supply on the first day of employment. | SR ¹⁹ | |

¹⁶ Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003, SI 2003/533

¹⁷ Local Government Act 1972 s 137(4)

¹⁸ Freedom of Information Act 2000

¹⁹ Employment Rights Act 1996, pt. 1, s.1

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| Job description (Clerk) | Model available from Lincolnshire CALC. 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. | BP | |
| Job descriptions (other staff) | To be written by the council and should be as accurate as possible to prevent misunderstanding of roles. Models may be available from Lincolnshire CALC. | BP | |
| Working from home policy | Where relevant. Covers use of home, home security, lone working, access by other members of staff, councillors, and members of the public. Template available from Lincolnshire CALC. | BP | |
| Expenses Policy | The level of expenses paid, including mileage rates, subsistence, telephone etc. Template available from Lincolnshire CALC. | BP | |
| Working Time Policy | TOIL, leave, hours, should be in contract or staff handbook | BP | |
| Grievance procedures | Model available from Lincolnshire CALC. Guidance is provided in the form of the ACAS Code of Practice on Discipline and Grievance. Including provisions for whistleblowing. | BP | |
| Disciplinary procedures | Model available from Lincolnshire CALC. Guidance is provided in the form of the ACAS Code of Practice on Discipline and Grievance. | BP | |
| Bullying and Harassment / Dignity at Work | Available as part of the Civility & Respect project. | BP | |
| 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 and the concepts of equal treatment extend to councillors as well as staff. Available as part of the Civility & Respect project. | BP | |
| Computer use, electronic communications and telephone Policy | Sets out how/when computers will be used, the policy for backing up data, how e-mail and 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. | BP | |
| Flexible Working Policy | Template available from Lincolnshire CALC | BP | |
| Payroll Record | HMRC requirement – retain for 3 years | BP | |
| Notice of tax codes | HMRC requirement – retain for 3 years | BP | |
| Annual Leave Policy | Template available from Lincolnshire CALC | BP | |
| Holiday record | To ensure the correct leave is taken | BP | |
| Sickness absence policy and records | Sample available from Lincolnshire CALC | BP | |
| Emergency/dependents Leave Policy | Template available from Lincolnshire CALC | BP | |
| Business Continuity Plan | Sample available from Lincolnshire CALC | BP | |

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| Health & Safety Policy | Including fire policy and procedures, computer screen usage, eye care generally, alcohol and drug policy, work station setup, food hygiene etc. Every council must have one, but if there are fewer than 5 employees/ volunteers/ councillors this doesn't have to be written down. | SR ²⁰ | |
| Accident Book | Available to purchase, or use Excel | BP | |
| Training Statement of Intent | All councils should have a statement outlining the CPD/training requirements for councillors and staff for the year. A model is available from Lincolnshire CALC. | BP | |
| Training Record | Detailing courses each councillor / employee has been on | BP | |
| Pension & Retirement Policy | Sets out whether the council uses the Local Government Pension Scheme or another pension scheme. 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. | SR ²¹ | |
| Auto-enrolment Records | Must be kept by law | SR ²² | |
| Maternity/Paternity Leave Policy | Template available from Lincolnshire CALC | BP | |
| Disabled Access Audit | To comply with the Equality Act 2010 | SR ²³ | |
| Employee Code of Conduct | Employee Code dealing with, for example, provisions for disclosing pecuniary interests. | BP | |
| Performance Improvement Policy and Procedure | Template available from Lincolnshire CALC | BP | |
| Whistleblowing Policy | Template available from Lincolnshire CALC | BP | |
| Lone working (other staff) | To be written by the council and should be as accurate as possible. Template available from Lincolnshire CALC | BP | |
| Use of own vehicles for work | Should outline insurance provision and mileage reimbursements (if applicable) | BP | |
| Annual appraisal records | Requirement under SO 19(c) in the Model Standing Orders (2022) | BP | |
| Environment | | | |
| 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 Neighbourhood Plan, Village Design Statement, Parish Plan or Landscape Character Assessment. | BP | |
| Certificate of waste disposal | A copy is required for any dog waste bins that are owned, managed or controlled by the council. | SR ²⁴ | |
| Green space audit | To ensure compliance under the Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006 | BP | |
| Lighting Policy | For the provision and operation of street lighting | BP | |
| Trees Policy | Detailing inspection method and frequency etc | BP | |

²⁰ Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 Chapter 37

²¹ Pensions Act 2008 Chapter 30

²² The Pensions Acts 1995, 2004, and 2008

²³ Equality Act 2010

²⁴ Environmental Protection Act 1990

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| Parish Map | To be clear where all boundaries lie | BP | |
| Sustainability Policy | Recycling, green energy, waste | BP | |
| Snow risk assessment | To outline what the council will do | BP | |
| Buildings & Facilities | | | |
| Letting Charges and Hiring Policy | To be open and transparent | BP | |
| Asbestos Risk Register | Owners and occupiers of premises have a duty to manage asbestos | SR ²⁵ | |
| COSHH Risk Assessment | To cover any chemicals used or other hazardous materials. All councils in control of buildings or facilities must carry out a risk assessment and those employing five or more employees must also record significant findings. | SR ²⁶ | |
| Security | To highlight procedures when securing buildings | BP | |
| Council Management | | | |
| Controller documentation (Article 30 GDPR) | Template available from Lincolnshire CALC | SR ²⁷ | |
| List of personal data consents | Template available from Lincolnshire CALC | SR ²⁸ | |
| Business Plan | Sample available from Lincolnshire CALC | BP | |
| Partnership agreements | Outlining the relationship between the parties | BP | |
| Member/Officer Protocol | Sample available from Lincolnshire CALC issued as part of the Civility & Respect project. | BP | |
| Byelaws – copies of | Should retain copies of all byelaws | BP | |
| Child Protection / Vulnerable Person Policy / Safeguarding Policy / DBS | When using staff or volunteers that will have direct access to vulnerable or potentially vulnerable people. | BP | |
| Customer Service Charter | Setting out what standards members of the public can expect from the council | BP | |
| Document Management & Retention Policy | Example available from Lincolnshire CALC | BP | |
| List of passwords | Should be held securely by the Clerk and Chair | BP | |

The current version of All UK legislation, including Acts of Parliament, Regulations and Statutory Instruments can be found at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk>.

This is a working document and is not intended to be a definitive list. We welcome feedback and suggestions as to what else should be included. Also, if you spot any error or omission please do let us know. Please contact enquiries@lalc.co.uk

²⁵ Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 (Regulation 4)

²⁶ Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002

²⁷ Data Protection Act 2018 s55

²⁸ Data Protection Act 2018 s34