



Longridge Town Council

Full Council - Agenda

To the Mayor and Members of Longridge Town Council, you are summoned to attend a meeting of the Town Council on Wednesday 8 July 2026 at 18:30 in the Council Offices, Station Buildings, Berry Lane, Longridge.

Welcome by the Chair.

1. Apologies for Absence

To receive apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of interests.

To receive declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests for items on the agenda.

3. Public Participation.

This 30-minute session (time limit of three minutes per item/per person) provides members of the public an opportunity to indicate interests in an agenda item and put questions to the Town Council. Such questions may be answered after the meeting or become an agenda item at a future Town Council meeting.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

To approve the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 10 June 2026

5. Mayor's Announcements / Chair's Report

To receive an update from the mayor on engagements since the last meeting.

ITEMS for DECISION/DISCUSSION

6. Finance Report

To receive the latest Finance Report including bank reconciliations, budget monitoring, and approval of payments (if any).

7. Policy on the Placing of Plaques on Council-Owned Benches.

To consider and approve the Memorial Bench Plaque Policy, as amended following consideration by the Estates Committee on 24 June 2026.

8. Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

To receive and approve the Town Council's latest Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

9. Transfer of Assets from Ribble Valley Borough Council

To receive an update and agree which assets it wishes the Clerk to put forward to RVBC for initial consideration.

ITEMS for INFORMATION/DISCUSSION

10. Local Government Reorganisation Update

To receive an update on the progress of local government reorganisation in Lancashire and its implications for the Town Council.

11. Longridge Community Hospital Update

To receive an update on the current status of Longridge Community Hospital.

STANDARD ITEMS

12. Working Groups and Committees

To receive verbal updates from Working Groups and Committees.

13. Consideration of matters not on the agenda.

An opportunity for members and the Clerk to suggest items for future meetings.

14. Future Meetings.

To confirm the date of the next Full Council meetings.

2026: No meeting in August, 9 September, 14 October, 11 November 9 December.

2027: 13 January, 10 February, 10 March.

Recording of meetings:

This meeting may be recorded by Longridge Town Council to support the production of accurate minutes. Only a written transcript is generated, no voice recording is retained. The transcript is deleted once the minutes are approved. Anyone who has concerns about being recorded should raise this with the Clerk before speaking.

Note: This agenda and supporting papers are available on the Council's website and at the Council Offices. Members requiring further information on any item should contact the Town Clerk.

Mike Hill

Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to Longridge Town Council.

Longridge Town Council
Council Offices
The Station Building
Berry Lane
Longridge
PR3 3JP



clerk@longridge-tc.gov.uk
01772 782461
07495 473 845
www.longridge-tc.gov.uk

Mission Statement

Endeavour through foresight and leadership, to enhance quality of life for residents and visitors. Working to enrich and nurture opportunity to protect and improve the built and natural environment and improve community pride.



Full Council – Draft Minutes

Meeting Date:	10 June 2026		
Place:	Station Buildings, Berry Lane, Longridge.		
Present:	Councillors: R. Walker, (Chair), L. Jameson, P. Smith, J. Rogerson, M. Gornall, N. Eccles, N. Stubbs, A. Wallbank, K. Spencer, M. Gee, R. Ray and C. Hyde.		
In attendance:	Town Clerk, and one member of the public.		
Meeting started:	18:30	Meeting closed:	20:40

260610/

1. WELCOME BY THE CHAIR.

The Chair (Cllr. Walker), welcomed new Councillors: Rachel Ray, Claire Hyde, and Maria Gee and noted that council now has a full complement of councillors.

Members agreed that first names should be used in the conduct of meetings; however, the formal minutes will continue to refer to Members as “Councillor [Surname]” in accordance with usual practice.

2. DECLARATIONS OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE.

The Clerk noted that Declarations of Acceptance of Office had been received from the new Councillors and the Deputy Mayor as required.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

There were no apologies as all members were present at the meeting.

4. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY AND OTHER REGISTRABLE AND NON-REGISTRABLE INTERESTS AND WRITTEN REQUESTS FOR PECUNIARY INTEREST DISPENSATION.

A conflict of interest was noted in relation to Agenda Item 13 (Banners and Brackets Working Group), where it was reported that a Councillor’s spouse had submitted an installation quotation considered by the Working Group. (see Minute 13 below).

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

The Chair sought Council’s approval (which was given) to vary the order of business to allow Agenda Item 14 Memorial Bench Policy to be taken earlier in the meeting. The Chair explained that the member of the public was present specifically to listen to the Council’s considerations on this item.

6. APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL.

RESOLVED:

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 May 2026, with a minor amendment to note that Cllr. N. Stubbs (not Cllr. N. Walker) had apologised, were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

7. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR).

The Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer presented the report on the AGAR 2025/26, summarising the findings of the internal audit undertaken by David Swift MCIAA. Members noted that the audit had been completed with positive findings and no significant concerns raised.

Members noted that, for the first time, both gross income (£234,160) and gross expenditure (£254,247) for 2025/26 exceeded the £200,000 threshold. It was noted that if either figure remains above £200,000 for a second successive year, the Council will be required to move from receipts and payments accounting to income and expenditure (accruals) accounting from 2027/28.

Members further noted that the Council's Financial Regulations and Standing Orders are due to be updated this year, this work having been outstanding since 2024/25.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the Internal Audit Report for the year ended 31 March 2026, prepared by David Swift MCIAA, be received and noted, together with the action points set out therein.
- b. That the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1 of the AGAR 2025/26) be approved.
- c. That the Accounting Statements (Section 2 of the AGAR 2025/26) for the year ended 31 March 2026 be approved.
- d. That the Chair of the Council be authorised to sign Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR 2025/26 on behalf of the Council, with the Responsible Financial Officer completing the required certification, and that the completed AGAR, together with the Notice of Public Rights, be submitted to PKF Littlejohn the official external auditor.
- e. That the action points identified by the Internal Auditor be noted, and that the Clerk progress these during 2026/27, reporting back to the Finance Committee and Full Council as appropriate.

8. FINANCE REPORT

The Clerk and Cllr. Gornall (Chair of the Finance Committee) presented the Finance Report. Members noted that the Council remains in a strong financial position with total available funds of £161,163, that the precept had been received in full, and that expenditure is currently below profile across most categories. Members noted that some 2025/26 costs (in particular, chauffeur expenditure and certain HMRC payments) had been paid in the 2026/27 financial year, and that project expenditure on the Kestor Lane entrance and Playground/Gym upgrade UKSPF schemes is expected to increase later in the year as works progress. Bank reconciliation had been completed to 30 May 2026 with no discrepancies.

Members further noted, that an unbudgeted but explainable cost of £700 had been incurred for fence repairs at the allotment following accidental damage by a vehicle and was not considered to represent an unbudgeted risk. Members agreed that a chauffeur policy should be drafted to cover insurance, licensing and eligibility.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the Finance Report and the accounts to date be approved.
- b. That the Clerk draft a Chauffeur Policy covering insurance, licensing and eligibility, for consideration at a future meeting.

9. GRANTS – LONGRIDGE SOCIAL ENTERPRISE COMPANY (LSEC)

The Clerk presented the report on the grant application from the Longridge Social Enterprise Company (LSEC) for £4,788.75 (excluding VAT) towards the installation of thermal room-dividing and outer curtains at the Civic Hall. Members noted that the application had been considered in principle by the Finance Committee on 22 April 2026 and referred to Full Council for final decision, subject to a detailed cost breakdown, which had since been provided.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the grant application from the Longridge Social Enterprise Company (LSEC) for £4,788.75 towards thermal curtains at the Civic Hall be refused.
Members separately noted that a revised Grants Policy, placing greater emphasis on supporting smaller and first-time applicants, had been approved by the Finance Committee.
- b. That the revised Grants Policy be circulated to all Councillors after being tested by sample applicants (for example, the Heritage Centre) ahead of being brought back for Full Council ratification.

10. TERMS OF REFERENCE:

10 (a) Estates Committee – Terms of Reference and Delegated Spending Authority

The Clerk presented the report arising from the Estates Committee meeting of 19 May 2026, recommending an increase in the Committee's delegated spending authority for maintenance and emergency works from £1,000 to £2,000 per item.

Members noted that this reflected current price levels, with playground repairs in particular regularly costing in the region of £1,500–£1,600, and that the increase was considered proportionate to the Council's overall budget and asset portfolio.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the increase in the Estates Committee's delegated spending authority for maintenance and emergency works, from £1,000 per item to £2,000 per item, be approved with immediate effect.
- b. That the amended Terms of Reference of the Estates Committee be approved.
- c. That the Clerk finalise and publish the revised Terms of Reference, appending the current Asset Register, and report back to the Estates Committee on implementation.

Members separately resolved, in respect of other Estates matters, that the Council agrees to Ribble Valley Borough Council's request to remove the 'shelter' on the recreation ground, with no replacement to be provided, and that the review of utility charges be referred to the Estates Committee (see also Minute 16 below).

10(b) Community Hospital Advisory Group – Terms of Reference

The Clerk presented the report proposing the establishment of a Longridge Community Hospital Advisory Group, bringing together representatives of the Town Council, the Help Save Longridge Community Hospital campaign group, and the Parliamentary Office of the MP for Ribble Valley.

In discussion, there was a consensus among that the Council should be cautious about over-promising, recognising that Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Trust is the only body with substantive power over the relevant services, and that the campaign group already has the support of the local MP and an existing channel into the NHS consultation process.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the Terms of Reference for the Longridge Community Hospital Advisory Group be NOT approved at this meeting.
- b. That the Council's formal pledge of support to the Longridge Community Hospital Campaign Group, made on 13 May 2026, be noted, and that the existing decision of the Finance Committee to fund printed leaflets and promotional material for the campaign group, continues to stand as an appropriate level of support.

11. TOWNELEY GARDEN WORKING GROUP – PUBLIC CONSULTATION OUTCOMES AND PROCUREMENT

The Clerk presented the report summarising the outcomes of the public consultation on the proposed upgrade of the former bowling green at Towneley Garden, and the recommendations of the Towneley Garden Event Space Working Group following its meeting of 27 May 2026.

Members noted that 351 valid responses had been received, with 98.86% supporting an upgrade in some form, and a majority (56.13%) favouring Option 1 (an attractive, garden-style design).

Members approved a hybrid design, combining a central self-binding gravel event/performance circle with surrounding planted garden borders, accessible paths and seating, upgraded lighting, and new electrical infrastructure to support markets and live events, as set out in the Working Group's detailed design.

Members noted that the scheme would proceed to procurement for Stage 1 (groundworks only, with no planting in this phase), and that the current biodiversity net gain of 7–9% would need to be increased to meet the 10% target, incorporating suggestions from WG member Mr Martin Brown. Members further noted that self-binding gravel had been confirmed as the preferred surface on the grounds of wheelchair accessibility and drainage, with resin bond surfacing ruled out on grounds of cost, cracking and drainage performance. Cllrs. Gee and Hyde were invited to join the Stage 2 working group to advise on biodiversity and planting.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the outcome of the community consultation exercise, and the deliberations of the Towneley Garden Event Space Working Group, be noted.
- b. That the detailed hybrid design for the Towneley Garden Event Space, as presented, be approved as the basis for procurement.
- c. That the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Working Group Chair, be authorised to seek competitive quotes from suitably qualified contractors for Stage 1 (groundworks) of the approved design, in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations, Standing Orders and the conditions of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund grant of £90,000.
- d. That Councillors Gee and Hyde be appointed to the Stage 2 Towneley Garden working group to advise on biodiversity and planting.

12. INSTALLATION OF SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS

Councillor Walker presented the report proposing the installation of low-cost, standalone, solar-powered surveillance cameras at key locations across the town, in response to recent incidents of vandalism, including in the vicinity of the play area on the recreation ground.

Following discussion, Members deferred the proposal. Concerns raised included the risk of the Council overstepping its proper remit, the ongoing revenue costs associated with such equipment, and the need for community consultation on specific camera locations before any installation proceeds.

Members noted that funding of up to £5,000 has recently become available from the Police and Crime Commissioner for anti-social behaviour measures, including cameras, and agreed that the Clerk should pursue this funding stream, including the possibility of a model combining PCC grant funding with a Council top-up to help businesses and public spaces fund their own CCTV.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the proposal to install standalone surveillance cameras at key locations across the town be deferred, pending further community consultation on locations and consideration of available external funding.
- b. That the Clerk pursue the Police and Crime Commissioner's anti-social behaviour funding (up to £5,000), including consideration of a model combining PCC grant funding with Council top-up support, and report back to a future meeting.

13. BANNERS AND BRACKETS WORKING GROUP

The Clerk presented the recommendations of the Banners and Brackets Working Group following its meeting of 20 May 2026, covering quotations received for banner design, printing and installation, and the proposed engagement of a specialist marketing agency to manage advertising sales on the banners.

Following discussion, Members agreed that the matter should be referred back to the Working Group. It was noted that a number of issues remained unresolved, including: concerns regarding commercial advertising within a conservation area; the absence of a service level agreement covering timely installation and removal of banners; and a conflict of interest, noted under Agenda Item 4 above, in that a quotation for installation work had been submitted by the spouse of a Councillor.

Members were broadly supportive of the principle of using the brackets for community event banners but were divided on the question of selling advertising space to commercial advertisers, and it was agreed that the proposed engagement of a marketing agency should be reconsidered by the Working Group.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the recommendations of the Banners and Brackets Working Group be referred back to the Working Group for further consideration of:
 - Commercial advertising policy in a conservation area;
 - A service level agreement for banner installation and removal;
 - The proposed engagement of a marketing agency,

With the Working Group to report back to a future meeting of Full Council.

- b. That the conflict of interest concerning the installation quotation submitted by a councillor's spouse be formally documented by the Clerk.

14. MEMORIAL BENCH PLAQUE POLICY – ADOPTION

The Clerk presented the Memorial Bench Plaque Policy, as recommended by the Estates Committee on 19 May 2026, for formal adoption.

Members heard from a member of the public, attending under Public Participation, in support of an application for a memorial bench plaque to commemorate her late father, a former Town Mayor, on two occasions, a First Responder and police officer with thirty years' service.

Following discussion, Members resolved to refer the policy back to the Estates Committee for revision before formal adoption, having identified the following matters to be addressed: the inclusion of a restriction on embellishments (such as flowers, soft toys and photographs) beyond the nameplate itself; consideration of a cap on the proportion of benches in any one area that may carry memorials; clarification that benches remain public property and open to all; and a review of clause 10.3 of the draft policy, concerning the circumstances in which the Council bears the cost of replacing weathered plaques, which several Councillors questioned as drafted.

Members also raised a procedural point of wider application: that draft policies emerging from Committees should in future be circulated to all Councillors in advance of the Full Council meeting at which they are to be considered, and not only to members of the originating Committee.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the Memorial Bench Plaque Policy be referred back to the Estates Committee for revision, to address amongst other matters:
 - A restriction on embellishments beyond the nameplate;
 - A cap on the concentration of memorial benches in any one area;
 - Clarification that benches remain public property open to all;
 - Review of the clause concerning Council-funded replacement of weathered plaques.
- b. In future, draft policies emerging from Committees be circulated to all Councillors in advance of the Full Council meeting at which they are to be considered.

15. COMMITTEE AND WORKING GROUP APPOINTMENTS

Members noted the appointments made at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council on 13 May 2026, and confirmed that the newly elected Councillors Rachel Ray, Claire Hyde and Maria Gee would be allocated to Committees and Working Groups as agreed, including the appointment of Councillors Gee and Hyde to the Towneley Garden Stage 2 working group as minuted above.

16. REVIEW OF UTILITY CHARGES.

The Clerk withdrew this report, as he was in possession of additional information.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk resubmit an updated report to an early meeting of the Estates Committee.

17. COUNCILLOR REPORTS AND UPDATES FROM CHAIRS OF WORKING GROUPS

Verbal updates were received from Committee and Working Group Chairs. No specific matters were minuted for decision.

18. CONSIDERATION OF MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA

RESOLVED:

That the Chair send a letter of thanks to the Rotary Club for their work at John Smith's Park.

19. FUTURE MEETINGS

Members noted that the time of Full Council meetings would change to 6:30pm with immediate effect, to align with the timing of other Committee meetings, and that the Council’s website and all communications should be updated accordingly.

RESOLVED:

That, with immediate effect, Full Council meetings commence at 6:30pm, and that the website and all Council communications be updated to reflect this change.

The dates of future meetings were confirmed as follows:

2026: 8 July (no meeting in August), 9 September, 14 October, 11 November, 9 December.

2027: 13 January, 10 February, 10 March.

Signed:

Chair of the Council

Date:

Longridge Town Council
Council Offices
The Station Building
Berry Lane
Longridge
PR3 3JP



 clerk@longridge-tc.gov.uk
 01772 782461
 07495 473 845
 www.longridge-tc.gov.uk

Mission Statement

Endeavour through foresight and leadership, to enhance quality of life for residents and visitors.
Working to enrich and nurture opportunity to protect and improve the built and natural environment and improve community pride.

Agenda Item 6

LONGRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

Report For Decision

Meeting:	Full Council
Meeting Date:	08-Jul-26
Report Title:	Finance Report
Submitted by:	Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

Purpose of Report

To update members on the Council's financial position and to seek approval of the accounts to date and agree any payments to be made.

Recommendations

1. Approve the Finance Report and the accounts to date.
2. Approve the Schedule of Payments if any.

Workbook Contents

Payments	Schedule of payments that require Council approval
Receipts	Income for 2026-27
Expenditure	Net Expenditure by category 2026-27
Bank Summary	Banking summary – Unity Trust and NatWest accounts
NatWest Accounts	NatWest reserve account balances

Summary:

The Council remains in a strong financial position, with £185,864 available. Several grants, mostly UKSPF are expected later in the year. Spending is broadly in line with expectations for the first quarter of the financial year, with some 2025/26 prior-year costs (chauffeur and HMRC) paid in 2026/27. Overall, the Council has spent around 28% of its annual budget. Bank reconciliation has been completed to 29 June 2026 with no discrepancies.

LONGRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL — Schedule of Payments

For approval at Full Council — 8 July 2026

#	Ref.	Payee	Description	Gross £	VAT £	Net £	Due Date	Date Paid
1	inv3587	Maxi Fire & Security	2 x fire alarm manual call points (supply & fit)	£268.80	£44.80	£224.00		17/06/2026
2	inv5239	Top Marks	Annual Key Holding Fee	£326.00	£54.45	£271.55		08/05/2026
3	INV2026104199	So Plants	Bedding plants for Council planters	£84.66	£14.10	£70.56		16/06/2026
TOTAL				£679.46	£113.35	£566.11		

Note: Approval is not usually sought for expenditure already approved by Full Council, the Finance Committee, Direct Debits, or where the Council has a contractual relationship.

LONGRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL — Income 2026-27

1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027 | version 01-06-2026

Code	Income Source	Actual £ (Apr-Mar)	Remaining to Receive £	Budget Income £	Notes
200	Precept	£106,410.00	£0.00	£106,410.00	Received 08-04-2026
260	Allotment Rent	£437.00	£0.00	£437.00	£72.80 received March 2026
205	RVBC and LCC Grants	£0.00	£3,000.00	£3,000.00	
255	UK SPF Grants	£0.00	£21,597.00	£21,597.00	Kestor Lane Recreational Ground Entrance
003	Bank Interest – NatWest and Unity	£0.00	£500.00	£500.00	
220	Petty Cash	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	
290	Room Hire (Lettings)	£1,550.00	£1,990.00	£3,540.00	
295	Café Rent	£2,121.00	£6,363.00	£8,484.00	
296	Utilities Contributions	£4,150.44	£3,949.56	£8,100.00	£2,244.16 for 2025/26 Apr-Jun invoice due by 31st July 2026
486	Mayoral Fundraising (inc. Bingo)	£3,196.75	£0.00	£0.00	Not part of the general budget
298	Funds transfer from reserves(Natwest)	£40,000.00	£0.00	£0.00	Finance Committee Minues 22nd April 2026 Point 9c. Resolved: That the Chair and the Clerk be authorised to determine the specific sums to be transferred and to execute the transfers accordingly.
230	Unity Savings account	£70,000.00	£0.00	£0.00	
220	Overpayment	£90.00	£0.00	£0.00	SY Maint.
TOTAL		£227,955.19	£37,399.56	£152,068.00	

LONGRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL — Expenditure 2026-27

Actual and Projected | 1 April 2026 – 31 March 2027 | Version: 01/06/26

Community Purse

Code	Description	2026/27 Budget	2026/27 Actual (Apr–Mar)	Variance vs Budget
450	Youth Council	£0	£0	£0
460	Allotments (incl. RVBC lease payment)	£100	£700	£600
470	Civic Events incl. Remembrance Services	£5,500	£138	£5,362
471	Chauffeur 2026/27	£200	£0	£200
471	Chauffeur 2025/26	£0	£1,540.00	£1,540
479	Mayoral Allowance 2026/27	£600	£0	£600
480	Mayoral Allowance 2025/26	£0	£90	£90
485	Mayor Fundraising	£0	£348.00	£348
500	Christmas Trees and Tree Lights	£500	£0	£500
490	Community Partnership	£0	£0	£0
510	Grants and Donations	£10,000	£750	£9,250
520	Community Sponsorship	£10,000	£0	£10,000
Sub-Total: Community Purse		£26,900	£3,566	£23,334

£700 = new allotment fence

£1,540 relates to work undertaken in 2025-26

£348 2025/26. Not part of general budget

£750 part of £1,000 donation to Longridge Food Bank from the 2025/26 grant allocation.

Amenity and Asset Maintenance

Code	Description	2026/27 Budget	2026/27 Actual (Apr-Mar)	Variance vs Budget
530	Public Toilets (Towneley Gardens)	£0	£0	£0
415	Plants and Planters (purchases)	£0	£231	£231
420	Gardening Services (labour)	£2,400	£50	£2,350
410	Tree Works	£0	£0	£0
440	Caretaker/Lengthsman Services (labour)	£6,240	£814	£5,426
550	Play Area and Skatepark	£750	£0	£750
570	Litter and Waste Disposal – RVBC	£6,500	£856.00	£5,644
390	Asset Purchase	£0	£0	£0
395	Asset Replace and Refurbish	£100	£0	£100
540	Maintenance of Open Space and Misc.	£0	£0	£0
560	Station Buildings (Maintenance Purchases)	£0	£0	£0
580	Defibrillators and Bleed Kits	£630	£0	£630
Sub-Total: Amenity and Asset Maintenance		£16,620	£1,951	£14,669

Insurance, Banking and Professional Services

Code	Description	2026/27 Budget	2026/27 Actual (Apr-Mar)	Variance vs Budget
350	Insurance	£3,300	£3,323	£23
355	Bank Charges	£160	£26	£134
590	Memberships and Subscriptions	£1,425	£1,016	£409
600	Professional Services	£250	£0	£250
365	Auditor	£250	£250	£0
Sub-Total: Insurance, Banking & Prof. Services		£5,385	£4,616	£769

Station Building Maintenance and Cleaning

Code	Description	2026/27 Budget	2026/27 Actual (Apr-Mar)	Variance vs Budget
610/615	Hygiene and Cleaning	£5,000	£2,154	£2,846
620	Security Alarm System	£380	£0	£380
630	Fire Alarm	£100	£264	£164
640	General Maintenance – External Contractors	£1,000	£0	£1,000
650	CCTV	£0	£1,200	£1,200
660	IT Support	£200	£120	£80
Sub-Total: Station Building Maint. and Cleaning		£6,680	£3,738	£2,942

Maxi Fire & Security supply + fit replacement call points.

£1,000 to be claimed back from grant

Miscellaneous Expenses

Code	Description	2026/27 Budget	2026/27 Actual (Apr-Mar)	Variance vs Budget
670	Post, Stationery and Print Consumables	£300	£0	£300
680	Attendance at Conferences	£50	£0	£50
690	Councillor Expenses	£100	£0	£100
Sub-Total: Miscellaneous Expenses		£450	£0	£450

Office

Code	Description	2026/27 Budget	2026/27 Actual (Apr-Mar)	Variance vs Budget
700	Furniture	£100	£0	£100
710	Equipment	£100	£0	£100
Sub-Total: Office		£200	£0	£200

Specific Projects

Code	Description	2026/27 Budget	2026/27 Actual (Apr-Mar)	Variance vs Budget
720	Longridge in Bloom	£1,500	£0	£1,500
730	Rental – Festive Lights	£3,960	£0	£3,960
740	Community Well-Being Garden	£500	£0	£500
745	Heritage Centre Refurbishment (Earmarked)	£6,000	£3,613	£2,387
860	Kestor Lane Entrance UKSPFGrant	£40,000	£11,397	£28,603
Sub-Total: Specific Projects		£51,960	£15,010	£36,950

Staff Costs

Code	Description	2026/27 Budget	2026/27 Actual (Apr-Mar)	Variance vs Budget
300	Clerk Salary (gross includes HMRC)	£46,000	£10,725	£35,275
301	Deputy Clerk Salary (gross includes HMRC)	£5,200	£1,296	£3,904
302	HMRC Payments (salaries paid in 2025/26)	£0	£4,994	£4,994
315	Staff Training	£600	£160	£440
310	Expenses and Additional Remunerations	£0	£0	£0
305	Payroll Costs	£560	£0	£560
Sub-Total: Staff Costs		£52,360	£17,175	£35,185

£160 = Cllr. Eccles
GDPR £20.
Depty Clerk ILCA
Training £140

Telephone and Internet				
Code	Description	2026/27 Budget	2026/27 Actual £ (Apr–Mar)	Variance vs Budget
750	Telephone – Landline	£700	£251.00	£449
760	Telephone – Mobile	£450	£95.85	£354
770	Website, Web and Email Services	£1,251	£262.90	£988
780	IT and Wi-Fi Equipment	£100	£148	£48
Sub-Total: Telephone and Internet		£2,501	£758	£1,743

£148 security cameras in Clerk's Office

Utilities				
Code	Description	2026/27 Budget	2026/27 Actual (Apr–Mar)	Variance vs Budget
790	Electricity	£12,000	£1,406	£10,594
800	Gas	£1,500	£560	£940
810	Water and Waste	£3,000	£807	£2,193
Sub-Total: Utilities		£16,500	£2,773	£13,727
Budget TOTAL		£133,556	£49,585.45	£129,971
Total with earmarked reserves and grants included:		£179,556.00		

Note: The £133,556 budget for 2026/27 was agreed at Full Council on 10 December 2025, based on the recommendations of the Budget Committee of 2 December 2025.

LONGRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL — Bank Summary

Summary as at 01 June 2026

Accounting System (Unity Trust Current Accounts)

Balance carried forward 1 April 2026:	£25,584.51
Add: Total receipts to date:	£227,852.19
Less: Total payments to date:	£118,348.91
Accounting System balance at 29 Jun2 2026:	£135,087.79

Includes £70,000 transferred from Unity Current to Unity Savings accounts. Also includes £40,000 transferred from NatWest to Unity Trust Current Account.

Unity Trust Bank at 22 June 2026

Current Account - Balance	£65,087.79
32 Day Notice Savings Account - Balance	£70,000.00
Total	£135,087.79
Less: Mayoral Bingo Funds:	£3,196.75
Unity balance (excl. Mayoral Funds) at 15 04 2026:	£131,891.04

NatWest Accounts

NatWest Reserve balance at 30 April 2026 (latest statements):	£53,973.48
---	------------

Total Available Funds

Total Available Funds (Unity excl. Mayoral + NatWest):	£185,864.52
---	--------------------

LONGRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL — NatWest Accounts

Account Balances — 2026/27

NatWest Account No. 1

Balance carried forward 1 April 2025:	£88,202.46	
Balance 31 October 2025:	£68,684.92	
Balance 30 April 2026:	£48,973.48	<i>Latest Bank Statement</i>

Since 30 April, £40,000 has been withdrawn from NatWest and deposited into the Unity Trust Current Account

NatWest Account No. 2

Balance carried forward 1 April 2025:	£5,000.00	
Balance 30 April 2026:	£5,000.00	<i>Latest Bank Statement</i>

Combined NatWest Reserve Total

Combined NatWest balance (latest statements):	£53,973.48	
---	------------	--

Agenda Item 7

For Decision/Discussion



Meeting:	Full Council
Meeting Date:	8 July 2026
Title:	Memorial Plaques on a Council-Owned Bench Policy. Adoption of Revised Policy
Submitted by:	Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer
Appendix 1:	Memorial Plaques on a Council-Owned Bench Policy (Draft). Incorporating amendments agreed by the Estates Committee on 24 June 2026

1. Purpose of Report

To present to Full Council, for final approval, the revised Memorial Plaque on a Council-Owned Bench Policy, incorporating amendments made by the Estates Committee on 24 June 2026 following the referral of this matter back to that Committee by Full Council on 10 June 2026.

2. Background

The original Policy was developed by the Estates Committee on 19 May 2026, following a resolution of Full Council of 10 December 2025 directing the Town Clerk to prepare a written policy on memorial bench plaques, arising from a request received from the family of a former Mayor of Longridge Town Council, the late Cllr Paul Byrne.

Full Council considered the draft Policy on 10 June 2026 and resolved to make a number of amendments before referring the Policy back to the Estates Committee for further consideration.

The Estates Committee considered the Policy as returned by Full Council at its meeting on 24 June 2026 and resolved a further set of amendments, summarised at Section 3 below. The Committee authorised the Town Clerk to update the draft Policy accordingly and to bring the revised Policy back to Full Council for final ratification.

The revised Policy, incorporating all amendments to date, is attached at Appendix 1.

3. Summary of Estates Committee Amendments (24 June 2026)

The Estates Committee resolved the following amendments to the Policy:

3.1 Title and framing

References to a “memorial bench” have been changed throughout to “memorial plaque on a council-owned bench”, to make clear that the bench itself remains a normal public asset and is not reserved or dedicated to the deceased.

3.2 Maximum number of benches available for use

The Committee rejected the cap proposed by Full Council that would have limited plaques to 50% of the bench stock in any given area, noting that a number of existing benches, including those outside the Council Offices, already exceed this proportion. The Council will instead retain discretion to manage demand for plaques as it arises.

3.3 Maximum number of plaques per bench

The maximum number of plaques permitted on a single bench has been set at three, reflecting existing practice and the capacity of the Council's standard benches.

3.4 Eligibility

The requirement for the commemorated person to have made a "significant contribution" to the community has been removed. All members of the community are to be treated equally for the purposes of eligibility, with the Council retaining discretion to determine the suitability of individual applications.

3.5 Fees

The existing fee structure has been confirmed: a non-refundable application fee of £20, together with a supply and installation fee of £250, giving a total of £270.

3.6 Duration of agreement and renewal

The original ten-year agreement term has been retained, without qualification by reference to the remaining useful life of the bench. Where a bench fails or requires replacement during the agreement term, the Council will replace it as a community asset, and the applicant (or successors) will not be liable or disadvantaged as a result.

A new renewal option has been introduced, allowing agreements to be extended for a further five years on payment of a £50 renewal fee. This addresses concerns that the original ten-year term was short relative to the life expectancy of the families concerned. Renewal may be transferred to a different living family member or representative where necessary. The renewal option does not apply retrospectively to plaques already installed, and following one renewal (a maximum total term of fifteen years) the agreement will end and the bench will be made available for future applications.

3.7 Plaque replacement

The Council will continue to bear the cost of plaque replacement where damage is attributable to the Council, its contractors, or normal weathering of the plaque material, on the basis that the Council supplies and specifies the plaque. The proposal that weathering-related replacement costs should fall to the applicant's family has been rejected. The applicant (or successor) will remain responsible for the cost of replacement if damage results from vandalism or accident, with the Council offering replacement on payment of the replacement fee.

3.8 Decorative items

A clause has been provided that the Council reserves the right to remove any items left at or near a bench, without notice, where they obstruct seating, present a trip hazard, or affect maintenance of the area.

4. Financial Implications

The fee structure confirmed by the Committee (application fee £20; supply and installation fee £250; replacement fee £100; transfer fee £50; renewal fee £50) is unchanged from that previously approved and is intended to recover the Council's reasonable costs. There are no additional budgetary implications arising from this report.

5. Recommendation

Full Council is recommended to:

- a. Approve the revised Memorial Plaque on a Council-Owned Bench Policy attached at Appendix 1, incorporating the amendments agreed by the Estates Committee on 24 June 2026; and
- b. Authorise the Town Clerk to publish the adopted Policy and make any consequential administrative amendments (including to the associated application form) required to give effect to it.



For Information

Draft Policy: Placing Memorial Plaques on Council Owned Benches

Adopted: 24-06-2026

Chairman: Cllr. N. Stubbs

Minute Ref.: 260624/6

This version of the Policy is based on that agreed at the 19 May 2026 Estates Committee, and approved by the Estates Committee on 24 June after considering the changes requested by the Full Council on 10 June.

Administered by Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to Longridge Town Council. To be reviewed every three years or sooner if circumstance's chance.

Longridge Town Council
Council Offices
The Station Building
Berry Lane
Longridge
PR3 3JP



clerk@longridge-tc.gov.uk
01772 782461
07495 473 845
www.longridge-tc.gov.uk

Mission Statement

Endeavour through foresight and leadership, to enhance quality of life for residents and visitors. Working to enrich and nurture opportunity to protect and improve the built and natural environment and improve community pride.

1. Introduction and Purpose

Longridge Town Council recognises that memorial bench plaques provide a meaningful and lasting tribute to loved ones, and at the same time contribute to the character and amenity of the town's public spaces. This Policy establishes a clear, consistent and compassionate framework for the consideration of requests to install commemorative plaques on benches owned or maintained by the Town Council.

This Policy was developed following a resolution of Full Council on 10 December 2025, which directed the Town Clerk to prepare a written policy on memorial bench plaques. The resolution arose from a sympathetic request received from the family of a former Mayor of Longridge Town Council. The Council determined that, given the likelihood of further such requests in future, a written policy should be in place to ensure consistency of decision-making and fairness as between applicants.

This Policy applies to all applications received on or after the date of its adoption by Full Council. Any application that was received before the date of adoption and was awaiting determination will be considered under this Policy.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to all benches owned or maintained by Longridge Town Council within the parish of Longridge. It does not apply to:

- Benches owned by Ribble Valley Borough Council, Lancashire County Council, or any other public or private body;
- Benches located on private land or land that is not under the ownership or control of the Town Council;
- Memorials other than plaques on benches (for example, dedicated benches in their entirety, memorial trees, or memorial inscriptions on other Council assets), which fall outside the scope of this Policy.

Where the Town Council receives an application that relates to a bench not under its ownership or control, the Town Clerk will write to the applicant within 10 working days to advise them and, where possible, to signpost them to the responsible authority.

3. Policy Objectives

The Council aims to:

- Provide a dignified and accessible process for families and others wishing to commemorate a loved one;
- Maintain the visual amenity and structural integrity of public benches and open spaces in Longridge;
- Ensure equitable and transparent administration of all applications, irrespective of the applicant's circumstances;
- Recover the reasonable costs of plaque supply, installation, and ongoing maintenance through the fees set out in this Policy;
- Manage the finite capacity of the Council's bench stock responsibly and fairly over time.

4. Eligibility

4.1 Who may apply

Applications may be submitted by:

- An immediate family member or legal next of kin of the deceased;
- A close friend or associate where no surviving family members exist, provided reasonable evidence of the connection is supplied;
- An organisation, community group, or charitable body wishing to commemorate a person of local significance.

The Council reserves the right to request supporting information to verify the applicant's relationship to the person being commemorated.

4.2 Persons who may be commemorated

Memorial plaques may be installed to commemorate:

- A deceased individual who had a connection to Longridge (for example, resided, worked, or had a strong community association with the town);
- A deceased individual where a Longridge location holds special meaning to the deceased or to the applicant.

Applications will not be considered in respect of living individuals.

5. Bench Availability and Location

Memorial plaques may only be affixed to benches that are owned or maintained by Longridge Town Council and that have capacity for a plaque. The Council will maintain a register of bench locations and their plaque availability (the "Bench Register"), which will form part of the Council's wider Asset Register and be reviewed periodically.

Applicants may express a preference for a particular bench location. The Council will endeavour to accommodate reasonable requests, but cannot guarantee a specific location. Bench availability will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis, subject to application approval.

Where a preferred bench is unavailable, the applicant will be offered an alternative of comparable character. The applicant may accept the alternative or withdraw their application, in which case any application fee paid will be refunded.

The Council may, from time to time, install new benches specifically to meet demand for memorial plaques, at its discretion and subject to funding.

Where capacity in a given area is limited, the Council may offer applicants the option of adding a further plaque to a bench that already carries a memorial plaque, up to a maximum of three plaques on any one bench.

Where no suitable bench is available, whether because demand in the applicant's preferred area is high or because no bench in that area has spare capacity, the Town Clerk will place the application on a waiting list. Applicants on the waiting list will be offered the next available bench, or capacity on an existing bench already carrying a plaque, in order of application date, and will be kept informed of their position on request.

A bench on which a memorial plaque is displayed remains, at all times, a public asset owned by Longridge Town Council and available for use by any member of the public. The presence of a plaque does not reserve the bench for the exclusive or preferential use of the applicant, their family, or any other person.

6. Application Process

6.1 How to apply

Applicants should complete the Council's Memorial Bench Plaque Application Form (Appendix A), available from the Town Council office and the Council's website, and submit it to the Town Clerk together with:

- The non-refundable application fee of £20 (see Section 9);
- The proposed plaque inscription for approval (see Section 7);
- Any additional information requested by the Town Clerk.

6.2 Consideration of applications

Applications will be considered by the Town Clerk under delegated authority. The Town Clerk may refer any application to the Estates Committee or to Full Council where the circumstances are unusual, where a decision of principle is required, or where the applicant or the person commemorated has a connection to the Town Council such that a decision by an officer alone might give rise to a perception of conflict.

The Council will acknowledge receipt of applications within five working days, and will aim to communicate a decision within 28 days of receipt of a complete application.

6.3 Right of review

Where an application is refused in whole or in part, the applicant may request a review by writing to the Town Clerk within 21 days of the decision. The review will be conducted by a panel of at least two councillors who were not involved in the original decision. The outcome of the review panel is final, save for any matter that may properly be the subject of complaint under the Council's Complaints Procedure.

7. Plaque Inscription and Design

7.1 Permitted content

Inscriptions must be respectful, dignified, and appropriate for display in a public place. All inscriptions are subject to approval by the Town Clerk. Inscriptions should typically include:

- The full name (or commonly used name) of the person commemorated;
- The year of birth and year of death (e.g. 1945–2026), or dates in another clear format;
- A short tribute, dedication, or phrase (see character limit below).

7.2 Character limits and format

The standard plaque size is 100mm × 50mm, or such standard size 200mm x 50mm or 152 x 75mm as the Council adopts from time to time. The total inscription, including name, dates, and tribute, must not exceed three lines of text. The Town Clerk will advise on character limits based on the standard plaque template.

7.3 Restrictions

Inscriptions must not include:

- Promotional or commercial content, including business names or website addresses;
- Political statements, or religious statements likely to cause offence to members of the public;
- Content that is defamatory, offensive, discriminatory, or otherwise contrary to law;
- Content that conflicts with the Council's equality and inclusion obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

The Council reserves the right to decline or require amendment of any inscription that does not meet these requirements.

7.4 Plaque specification

Plaques will be supplied and installed by the Council, or its appointed contractor, to a consistent specification. Privately sourced plaques will not normally be accepted, in order to maintain a consistent visual appearance across the bench stock. Plaques will generally be manufactured from cast aluminium or brushed stainless steel, or such other durable material as the Council determines from time to time.

8. Duration and Renewal

Plaque agreements will run for a period of ten years from the date of installation. The Council does not enter into agreements in perpetuity.

The Council will write to the applicant (using the contact details supplied at the time of the most recent renewal or application) approximately six months before the expiry of the agreement to invite renewal.

If the applicant wishes to renew, a single renewal of five years may be granted on payment of the renewal fee set out in Section 9. Only one such renewal is available per agreement, giving a maximum total term of fifteen years; on expiry of the renewal period the bench will be made available for a new application. This renewal option does not apply retrospectively to plaques already installed under existing agreements.

If no renewal is requested within three months of the expiry of the agreement, the plaque may be removed by the Council and the bench made available for a new application. The Council will retain the removed plaque for a period of six months, during which time the applicant may collect it. After that time, the Council may dispose of the plaque at its discretion.

9. Fees and Charges

A fee is payable to cover the reasonable costs of plaque supply, inscription, installation, and administration. The current fee schedule is set out below. Fees are reviewed annually as part of the Council's budget-setting process.

Item	Description	Fee
Application fee	Payable on submission of the application; non-refundable except where the Council is unable to offer a bench of comparable character.	£20
Plaque supply and installation	Plaque supply to the Council's standard specification, inscription, and installation on the agreed bench.	£250
Replacement plaque	Replacement of a damaged or unreadable plaque during the agreement period (where damage is not attributable to the Council).	£100
Transfer of agreement	Transfer of an existing agreement to a different family member or applicant.	£50
Renewal of agreement (5 years)	One-off renewal of the agreement for a further five years on expiry of the original ten-year term, available once per agreement (maximum total term of fifteen years). Not available retrospectively to agreements already in existence.	£50

The fees set out above are payable to Longridge Town Council and are inclusive of VAT where applicable. Fees may be reviewed by Full Council from time to time, and the version in force at the date of application or renewal will apply.

10. Maintenance, Replacement and Removal

10.1 Maintenance of benches

The Council is responsible for the maintenance and structural integrity of all Council-owned benches. The Council does not warrant that any particular bench will remain in any particular location, condition, or configuration for the duration of an agreement.

10.2 Decorative items and continued public use

A bench carrying a memorial plaque remains in full public use at all times. Items left on, at, or near the bench, may be removed by the Council where necessary for safety or maintenance reasons.

10.3 Responsibility of the applicant

The applicant is responsible for:

- Keeping the Town Clerk informed of any change to their contact details;
- Considering the renewal invitation issued at the six-month point before expiry of the agreement, and confirming whether or not they wish to renew;
- Notifying the Town Clerk of any visible damage to the plaque that they observe.

10.4 Replacement of plaques

Where a plaque is damaged or unreadable during the agreement period, the Council will:

- Replace the plaque at its own cost where the damage is attributable to the Council, its contractors, or due to normal weathering of the plaque material;
- Offer replacement to the applicant on payment of the replacement fee set out in Section 9, where the damage is attributable to vandalism, accident, or other cause not within the Council's responsibility.

10.5 Removal of plaques

A plaque may be removed by the Council in any of the following circumstances:

- On expiry of the agreement without renewal, in accordance with Section 8;
- Where the bench is to be replaced, relocated, or removed from the Council's estate, in which case the Council will work with the applicant to identify an alternative bench wherever practicable;
- Where the plaque has become damaged beyond reasonable repair and the applicant has declined to fund replacement;
- Where, exceptionally, the Council determines that the plaque is no longer appropriate (for example, on grounds of legal change, public sensitivity, or breach of this Policy).

The Council will give the applicant at least 28 days' written notice of any intended removal under the second, third, or fourth bullet above wherever practicable, using the contact details last supplied by the applicant.

11. Equality and Inclusion

Longridge Town Council is committed to providing a fair and accessible service to all members of the community. In administering this Policy, the Council will have regard to its duties under the Equality Act 2010, including the public sector equality duty under section 149 of that Act. The Council will make reasonable adjustments to its processes to assist applicants who may have difficulty in using the standard application form (for example, by providing the form in an alternative format, or by accepting an application by telephone or in person).

12. Data Protection

Personal data submitted as part of an application will be processed in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018. The Council's lawful basis for processing is the performance of a task carried out in the public interest (Article 6(1)(e) UK GDPR). The Council's Privacy Notice applies to all data collected under this Policy.

Application records, including the applicant's contact details and the inscription approved, will be retained for the duration of the agreement and for a period of six years following its expiry, in accordance with the Council's Document Retention Policy.

13. Complaints

Where an applicant or member of the public is dissatisfied with the way in which the Council has administered this Policy, they may use the Council's Complaints Procedure, which is available on the Council's website and on request from the Town Clerk.

14. Review

This Policy will be reviewed every three years, or sooner if there is a material change in the Council's circumstances, in relevant legislation, or in best practice. The first review will be due three years after the date of adoption shown in the document information table at the front of this Policy.

15. Adoption

This Policy was recommended for adoption by the Estates Committee at its meeting on 19 May 2026, incorporating amendments suggested by Full Council on 10 June 2026, and was further amended by the Estates Committee on 24 June 2026, prior to adoption by Full Council on 8 July 2026.

Signed: _____ Chair of Council

Signed: _____ Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer

Date: _____

APPENDIX A

Memorial Bench Plaque — Application Form

Please complete all sections of this form. Continuation sheets may be attached if required.

Section 1 — Applicant

Full name of applicant:

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone:

Email:

Relationship to the person to be commemorated:

Section 2 — Person to be Commemorated

Full name:

Year of birth:

Year of death:

Connection to Longridge:

Section 3 — Proposed Inscription

Please provide the exact wording you would like on the plaque. The total inscription must not exceed three lines.

Line 1:

Line 2:

Line 3:

Section 4 — Preferred Location

Preferred bench location (if any):

Reason for preferred location (if any):

Section 5 — Declaration

I confirm that the information given on this form is true and complete, and that I have read and accept the terms of the Longridge Town Council Memorial Bench Plaque Policy. I understand that the application fee is non-refundable except where the Council is unable to offer a bench of comparable character.

Signed:

Date:

Please return the completed form, together with the application fee, to: Town Clerk, Longridge Town Council, The Station Buildings, Berry Lane, Longridge, Preston, PR3 3JP.

APPENDIX B

Bench Register

The Bench Register is maintained by the Town Clerk as part of the Council's wider Asset Register. The Register records, for each bench owned or maintained by the Town Council:

- A unique bench identifier (e.g. LTC-B-001);
- Its location, with a brief description;
- Its material and condition;
- Whether a memorial plaque is currently fitted, and if so, the inscription, the applicant's name, and the date the agreement expires;
- The date the bench was installed or last inspected.

The Register is available for inspection by Members of the Council at any reasonable time, and is reported to the Estates Committee periodically. Personal data is held in accordance with Section 12 of this Policy and is not published on the Council's website.

Agenda Item 8

For Decision/Discussion



Meeting:	Full Council
Meeting Date:	8 July 2026
Title:	Standing Orders and Financial Regulations
Submitted by:	Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer
Appendices:	<p>Appendix A – Standing Orders 2026 (clean draft)</p> <p>Appendix B – Standing Orders: Summary of Changes 2024→2026</p> <p>Appendix C – Financial Regulations 2026 (clean draft)</p> <p>Appendix D – Financial Regulations: Summary of Changes 2024→2026</p> <p>Appendix E – Governance Compliance Checklist</p>

1. Purpose of report

To ask Full Council to consider and, subject to the decisions set out in Section 4, adopt updated versions of the Council’s Standing Orders and Financial Regulations to bring both documents into line with the National Association of Local Councils’ (NALC) current model framework and with changes in procurement law, and to rescind the versions adopted on 14 August 2024.

2. Background

The Council’s Standing Orders and Financial Regulations were last adopted on 14 August 2024 (minute references 240814/8 and 240814/9), based on NALC’s 2018 model documents.

NALC has since published two updates that the Council, as a NALC member, is expected to reflect in its own governance documents:

- Model Financial Regulations for Local Councils (March 2025) – a full reissue, principally to reflect the Procurement Act 2023 and the Procurement Regulations 2024, which replaced the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 with effect from 24 February 2025, and to simplify several administrative provisions.
- Model Standing Orders 2025 Update (England) (adopted by NALC 2 May 2025) – a targeted update to the 2018 model, principally affecting Standing Orders 13 and 14 (dispensations and code of conduct complaints) and Standing Order 18 (financial controls and procurement), together with a number of revised default time limits and gender-neutral drafting throughout.

The Clerk has reviewed both Council documents clause by clause against the current NALC models and produced: (a) clean re-drafted versions of each document; (b) a clause-by-clause summary of changes for each document; and (c) a compliance checklist setting out the decisions Council needs to take, the mandatory legal changes already applied, and ongoing monitoring items. These are appended to this report.

3. Report

3.1 Mandatory legal changes

The most significant driver for this review is the replacement of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 by the Procurement Act 2023 and the Procurement Regulations 2024. Both documents have been updated to refer to the new legislation wherever procurement thresholds and tendering procedures are addressed (Financial Regulations clause 5.4; Standing Order 18(e)). This is not discretionary and should be adopted regardless of the outcome of the discretionary items in Section 4.

3.2 Other changes carried over from the NALC update

NALC has also simplified the Code of Conduct Complaints standing order (14), removed the option for a dispensation to be decided by the Proper Officer alone (13(e) and (g)), removed the Tender Process appendix from the Financial Regulations (the equivalent steps already sit in Standing Order 18 and are retained there), and applied gender-neutral drafting throughout. These changes have been carried into both clean drafts and are explained in full in the accompanying change summaries.

3.3 Items retained from the Council's 2024 documents

Numeric thresholds and delegations that are matters of council choice, rather than legal requirement – for example the £5,000 grant authorisation threshold, the £60,000 formal tender threshold, and the quotation and card limits in the Financial Regulations – have been retained at the levels the Council adopted in 2024, rather than automatically moved to NALC's newer suggested defaults. Section 4 below asks Council to confirm this approach, or to adopt the newer defaults instead.

3.4 Local Government Reorganisation

Standing Orders 14 and 24 currently reference Ribble Valley Borough Council and Lancashire County Council as the relevant Principal Authorities. Given the live Local Government Reorganisation process for Lancashire, these references may need to be revisited once the outcome is confirmed; no change is recommended at this stage beyond noting the position, as set out in the compliance checklist.

4. Matters for Council to decide

Council is asked to consider and resolve on each of the following before the updated documents are finalised. Full detail and the officer's working assumption (as reflected in the draft documents circulated with this report) are set out in the Compliance Checklist Section A.

- i.** Retain the 2024 default speaking-time (5 minutes) and public-participation (30 minutes) limits, or adopt NALC's revised 2025 defaults (10 minutes / 15 minutes) as currently drafted.
- ii.** Retain the 2.5-hour meeting limit, or adopt the new 2-hour limit with an "extendable by resolution" safeguard as currently drafted.
- iii.** Confirm the Council does not hold a common seal, so Standing Order 23 can be finalised on that basis.
- iv.** Confirm how staffing matters are to be handled (Full Council, an existing committee, or the dedicated Staffing Committee), for the purposes of Standing Order 19.
- v.** Confirm whether to retain Financial Regulations section 18 (Charities), which NALC no longer includes in its generic template.

- vi. Confirm whether to retain the Council's existing 2024 procurement quotation and delegation thresholds, or adopt NALC's newer suggested default figures.
- vii. Resolve the outstanding bracket at Financial Regulations clause 4.3, specifying the month by which the RFO must produce the draft budget.

5. Financial implications

There are no direct costs associated with adopting the updated documents. Indirect implications follow from the decisions in Section 4 – for example, retaining or raising procurement and delegation thresholds affects how much expenditure can be authorised without a further Council or committee resolution, and should be considered alongside the Council's current budget and risk appetite.

6. Legal implications

As a local authority, the Council is required to act within the law regardless of what its own Standing Orders or Financial Regulations say. The procurement references in both documents must reflect current legislation; failure to update them does not change the Council's underlying legal obligations but increases the risk of officers and members relying on superseded guidance. Adopting the updated documents reduces this risk.

7. Recommendations

Council is recommended to:

- a. Note the contents of this report and the appended change summaries and compliance checklist;
- b. Resolve its position on each of the matters set out in Section 4;
- c. Instruct the Clerk to finalise the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations to reflect those resolutions; and
- d. Resolve to rescind the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations adopted on 14 August 2024 and adopt the finalised 2026 versions in their place, with the Clerk to record the adoption date and minute reference on each document and publish them on the Council website.

8. Appendices:

Appendix A – Standing Orders 2026 (clean draft)

Appendix B – Standing Orders: Summary of Changes 2024→2026

Appendix C – Financial Regulations 2026 (clean draft)

Appendix D – Financial Regulations: Summary of Changes 2024→2026

Appendix E – Governance Compliance Checklist



Standing Orders

Document Reference: LTC/POL/003

Re-adopted: 08-07-2026 (supersedes 14/08/2024 version)

Chair: Cllr. R. Walker

Minute Reference: [MIN. REF.]

Administered by the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to Longridge Town Council

This is version three of Model Standing Orders 2018 (England), updated to reflect NALC's Model Standing Orders 2025 Update (adopted by NALC 2 May 2025), comprising changes to clauses on debate and meeting time limits, code of conduct complaints, financial controls and procurement (to reflect the Procurement Act 2023 and the Procurement Regulations 2024), and gender-neutral drafting.

1. Rules of debate at meetings

- 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 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 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 they 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 they consider has been breached or specify the other irregularity in the proceedings of the meeting they are concerned by.
- q A point of order shall be decided by the chair of the meeting and their decision shall be final.
- r 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 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 their right of reply.
- 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 10 minutes without the consent of the chair of the meeting.

2. Disorderly conduct at meetings

- 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.
- 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 be excluded from the meeting. The motion, if seconded, shall be put to the vote without discussion.
- c If a resolution made under standing order 2(b) is ignored, the chair of the meeting may take further reasonable steps to restore order or to progress the meeting. This may include temporarily suspending or closing the meeting.

3. Meetings generally

Applies to: Full Council, Committee and Sub-Committee meetings (unless stated otherwise).

- 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.**
- 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.**
- c **The minimum three clear days' public notice for a meeting does not include the day on which the notice was issued or the day of the meeting unless the meeting is convened at shorter notice.**
- d **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.**
- e 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.
- f The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with standing order 3(e) shall not exceed 15 minutes unless directed by the chair of the meeting.
- g Subject to standing order 3(f), a member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes per item per person.
- h In accordance with standing order 3(e), 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.
- i A person shall raise their 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.
- j A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct their comments to the chair of the meeting.
- k Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the chair of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.
- l **Subject to standing order 3(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 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.**
- 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.**
- n **The press shall be provided with reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present.**
- o **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-Chair of the Council (if there is one).**
- p **The Chair of the Council, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chair is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chair of the Council (if there is one), if present, shall preside. If both the Chair and the Vice-Chair are absent from a meeting, a councillor as chosen by the councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.**

- q **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.**
- r **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.**
 - See standing orders 5(h) and (i) for the different rules that apply in the election of the Chair of the Council at the annual meeting of the Council.*
- s **Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on a question shall be by a show of hands, or by paper ballot if deemed appropriate (e.g. for co-option) by a majority of councillors present. 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.** Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.
- t 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; and
 - vii. the resolutions made.
- u **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 their right to participate and vote on that matter.**
- v **No business may be transacted at a meeting 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.**
 - See standing order 4(d)(viii) for the quorum of a committee or sub-committee meeting.*
- w **If a meeting is or becomes inquorate no business shall be transacted** and the meeting shall be closed. The business on the agenda for the meeting shall be adjourned to another meeting.
- x A meeting shall not exceed a period of 2 hours, unless extended by resolution of the meeting.

4. Committees and sub-committees

- 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.**
- b **The members of a committee may include non-councillors unless it is a committee which regulates and controls the finances of the Council.**
- 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.
- d The Council may appoint standing committees or other committees as may be necessary, and:
 - i. shall determine their terms of reference;
 - ii. shall determine the number and time of the ordinary meetings of a standing committee up until the date of the next annual meeting of the Council;

- iii. shall permit a committee, other than in respect of the ordinary meetings of a committee, to determine the number and time of its meetings;
- iv. shall, subject to standing orders 4(b) and (c), appoint and determine the terms of office of members of such a committee;
- v. may, subject to standing orders 4(b) and (c), appoint and determine the terms of office of 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 3 days before the meeting that they are unable to attend;
- vi. shall, after it has appointed the members of a standing committee, appoint the chair of the standing committee;
- vii. shall permit a committee other than a standing committee to appoint its own chair at the first meeting of the committee;
- viii. shall determine the place, notice requirements and quorum for a meeting of a committee and a sub-committee which, in both cases, shall be no less than three;
- ix. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a committee;
- 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;
- xi. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a sub-committee that they are permitted to attend; and
- xii. may dissolve a committee or a sub-committee.

5. Ordinary council meetings

- 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 councillors elected take office.**
- 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.**
- c **If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the Council shall take place at 6pm.**
- 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.**
- e **The first business conducted at the annual meeting of the Council shall be the election of the Chair and Vice-Chair (if there is one) of the Council.**
- f **The Chair of the Council, unless they have resigned or become disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until their successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the Council.**
- g **The Vice-Chair of the Council, if there is one, unless they resign or become disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chair of the Council at the next annual meeting of the Council.**
- h **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 annual 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 shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**
- i **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 the new Chair of the Council and shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**

- j Following the election of the Chair of the Council and Vice-Chair (if there is one) of the Council at the annual meeting, the business shall include:
- i. In an election year, delivery by the Chair of the Council and councillors of their 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 of their 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 of the recommendations made by a committee;
 - v. Review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, staff and other local authorities;
 - vi. Review of the terms of reference for committees;
 - vii. Appointment of members to existing committees;
 - viii. Appointment of any new committees in accordance with standing order 4;
 - ix. Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations;
 - x. Review of arrangements (including legal agreements) with other local authorities, not-for-profit bodies and businesses;
 - xi. Review of representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back;
 - xii. In an election year, to make arrangements with a view to the Council becoming eligible to exercise the general power of competence in the future;
 - xiii. Review of inventory of land and other assets including buildings and office equipment;
 - xiv. Confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insurable risks;
 - xv. Review of the Council's and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies;
 - xvi. Review of the Council's complaints procedure;
 - xvii. Review of the Council's policies, procedures and practices in respect of its obligations under freedom of information and data protection legislation (see also standing orders 11, 20 and 21);
 - xviii. Review of the Council's policy for dealing with the press/media;
 - xix. Review of the Council's employment policies and procedures;
 - xx. Review of the Council's expenditure incurred under s.137 of the Local Government Act 1972 or the general power of competence; and
 - xxi. Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.

6. Extraordinary meetings of the Council, committees and sub-committees

- 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 call an extraordinary meeting of the Council within seven days of having been requested in writing to do so by two councillors, any two councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council. The public notice giving the time, place and agenda for such a meeting shall 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 the sub-committee) at any time.

- d If the chair of a committee (or a sub-committee) does not call an extraordinary meeting within 7 days of having been requested to do so by 3 members of the committee (or the sub-committee), any 3 members of the committee (or the sub-committee) may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee (or a sub-committee).

7. Previous resolutions

- a A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least 7 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the recommendation of a committee or a sub-committee.
- b When a motion moved pursuant to standing order 7(a) has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved for a further six months.

8. Voting on appointments

- a Where more than two 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.

9. Motions for a meeting that require written notice to be given to the Proper Officer

- 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.
- b No motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is on the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least 7 clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.
- c The Proper Officer may, before including a motion on the agenda received in accordance with standing order 9(b), correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.
- d If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with standing order 9(b) is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it, so that it can be understood, in writing, to the Proper Officer at least 4 clear days before the meeting.
- e If the wording or subject of a proposed motion is considered 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 in the agenda or rejected.
- f The decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.
- g Motions received shall be recorded and numbered in the order that they are received.
- h Motions rejected shall be recorded with an explanation by the Proper Officer of the reason for rejection.

10. Motions at a meeting that do not require written notice

- a The following motions may be moved at a meeting without written notice to the Proper Officer:
- i. to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes of a meeting;
 - ii. to move to a vote;
 - iii. to defer consideration of a motion;
 - iv. to refer a motion to a particular committee or sub-committee;
 - v. to appoint a person to preside at a meeting;
 - vi. to change the order of business on the agenda;
 - vii. to proceed to the next business on the agenda;
 - viii. to require a written report;
 - ix. to appoint a committee or sub-committee and their members;
 - x. to extend the time limits for speaking;
 - xi. to exclude the press and public from a meeting in respect of confidential or other information which is prejudicial to the public interest;
 - xii. to not hear further from a councillor or a member of the public;
 - xiii. to exclude a councillor or member of the public for disorderly conduct;
 - xiv. to temporarily suspend the meeting;
 - xv. to suspend a particular standing order (unless it reflects mandatory statutory or legal requirements);
 - xvi. to adjourn the meeting; or
 - xvii. to close the meeting.

11. Management of information

See also standing order 20.

- 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.**

12. 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.
- 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 10(a)(i).
- 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 this view was not upheld by the meeting and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.”

- e **If the Council’s gross annual income or expenditure (whichever is higher) does not exceed £25,000, it shall publish draft minutes on a website which is publicly accessible and free of charge not later than one month after the meeting has taken place.**

Note: as Longridge Town Council’s gross annual income/expenditure has exceeded £200,000 (2025/26), this duty does not apply, but the Council shall continue to publish draft minutes promptly as a matter of good practice and transparency.

- f Subject to the publication of draft minutes in accordance with standing order 12(e) and standing order 20(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.

13. Code of conduct and dispensations

See also standing order 3(u).

- a All councillors and non-councillors with voting rights shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the Council.
- b Unless they have 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 they have a disclosable pecuniary interest. They may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which they had the interest.
- c Unless they have 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 they have 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.
- 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.
- e A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by a meeting of the Council, or committee or sub-committee for which the dispensation is required, and that decision is final.
- f A dispensation request shall confirm:
 - 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 13(d) and (f), a dispensation request shall be considered at the beginning of the meeting of the Council, or committee or sub-committee, for which the dispensation is required.
- h **A dispensation may be granted in accordance with standing order 13(e) 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.**

14. Code of conduct complaints

- a **Upon notification by the Principal Authority (Ribble Valley 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 them. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office.**

15. Proper Officer

- a The Proper Officer shall be either (i) the Clerk or (ii) other staff member(s) nominated by the Council to undertake the work of the Proper Officer when the Proper Officer is absent.
- b The Proper Officer shall:
- 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);

See standing order 3(b) for the meaning of clear days for a meeting of a full Council and standing order 3(c) for the meaning of clear days for a meeting of a committee.
 - ii. subject to standing order 9, include on the agenda all motions in the order received unless a councillor has given written notice at least 4 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 their 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 (if there is one);
- 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 23);
- 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 their absence the Vice-Chair (if there is one), of the Council (or of a Planning Committee, if one is appointed) within two working days of receipt, to facilitate an extraordinary meeting if the nature of the application requires consideration before the next ordinary meeting;
- xvi. manage access to information about the Council via the publication scheme; and
- xvii. retain custody of the seal of the Council (if there is one) which shall not be used without a resolution to that effect (see also standing order 23).

16. 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.

17. 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.
- c The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to each councillor as soon as practicable after 30 June, 30 September and 31 December in each year a statement to summarise:
 - 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;

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:
 - i. each councillor with 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 2 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, along with the meeting papers, at least 3 clear days 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.

18. Financial controls and procurement

- 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:
 - 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 £60,000 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.
- c 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:
 - 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. tenders are to be submitted in writing in a sealed marked envelope (or, where an electronic tendering process has been agreed by the Council, to a specific monitored email address) addressed to the Proper Officer;
 - iv. 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; and
 - v. tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate meeting of the Council or a committee or sub-committee with delegated responsibility.
- d Neither the Council, nor a committee or a sub-committee with delegated responsibility for considering tenders, is bound to accept the lowest value tender.
- e **Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed the threshold specified by the Government from time to time, the Council must consider whether the contract is subject to the requirements of the Procurement Act 2023, the Procurement Regulations 2024, or any successor procurement legislation, and, if so, the Council must comply with the applicable procurement rules. NALC's procurement guidance contains further details.**

19. Handling staff matters

- a A matter personal to a member of staff that is being considered by a meeting of the Council, or the relevant committee or sub-committee, is subject to standing order 11.
- b Subject to the Council's policy regarding absences from work, the Council's most senior member of staff shall notify the Chair of the Council or relevant committee/sub-committee, or, if they are not available, the Vice-Chair (if there is one), of absence occasioned by illness or other reason, and

that person shall report such absence to the Council or relevant committee/sub-committee at its next meeting.

- c The Chair of the Council or relevant committee/sub-committee, or in their absence the Vice-Chair, shall upon a resolution conduct a review of the performance and annual appraisal of the work of the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer. The reviews and appraisal shall be reported in writing and are subject to approval by resolution of the Council.
- d Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, the Council's most senior member of staff (or other members of staff) shall contact the Chair of the Council or relevant committee/sub-committee, or in their absence the Vice-Chair, in respect of an informal or formal grievance matter, and this matter shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the Council.
- e Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, if an informal or formal grievance matter raised by the Clerk or Responsible Financial Officer relates to the Chair or Vice-Chair of the relevant committee/sub-committee, this shall be communicated to another member of that committee/sub-committee, which shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the Council.
- f Any persons responsible for all or part of the management of staff shall treat as confidential the written records of all meetings relating to their performance, capabilities, grievance or disciplinary matters.
- g In accordance with standing order 11(a), persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to staff records referred to in standing order 19(f).

20. Responsibilities to provide information

See also standing order 21.

- 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 **As the Council's gross annual income or expenditure (whichever is higher) exceeds £200,000, the Council shall publish information in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015.**

21. Responsibilities under data protection legislation

(Below is not an exclusive list.) See also standing order 11.

- a The Council may appoint a Data Protection Officer.
- 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 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.**

22. Relations with the press/media

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

23. Execution and sealing of legal deeds

See also standing orders 15(b)(xi) and (xv).

- a A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the Council unless authorised by a resolution.
- b Subject to standing order 23(a), any two councillors may sign, on behalf of the Council, any deed required by law and the Proper Officer shall witness their signatures.

The Council does not hold a common seal; this clause applies accordingly. Should the Council resolve to adopt a common seal, this standing order will need to be amended to provide that the seal alone shall be used for sealing a deed required by law, applied by the Proper Officer in the presence of two councillors who shall sign the deed as witnesses.

24. Communicating with district and county (or unitary) councillors

- a An invitation to attend a meeting of the Council shall be sent, together with the agenda, to the ward councillor(s) of Ribble Valley Borough Council and Lancashire County Council representing the area of the Council.
- b Unless the Council determines otherwise, a copy of each letter sent to Ribble Valley Borough Council or Lancashire County Council shall be sent to the ward councillor(s) representing the area of the Council.

Note: Lancashire is currently subject to a Local Government Reorganisation process which may result in a unitary authority replacing the existing two-tier structure. This standing order, and references elsewhere to the "Principal Authority", should be reviewed once the outcome of reorganisation is confirmed.

25. Restrictions on councillor activities

- a Unless duly authorised 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.

26. 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.
- 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 3 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9.
- c The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the Council's standing orders to a councillor as soon as possible.
- d The decision of the chair of a meeting as to the application of standing orders at the meeting shall be final.

This document is based on NALC's Model Standing Orders (England) 2018, as updated by the Model Standing Orders 2025 Update (adopted by NALC 2 May 2025), adapted for Longridge Town Council. See the accompanying Compliance Checklist (LTC/GOV/COMPLIANCE/2026-06) for a full account of changes from the version adopted 14 August 2024.



Standing Orders – Summary of Changes (2024 → 2026)

Document Reference: LTC/GOV/CHANGES/2026-06-SO

Prepared: 08-07-2026

Chair: Cllr. R. Walker– officer working paper for Council consideration

Minute Reference: N/A

Administered by the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to Longridge Town Council

This paper summarises, clause by clause, the changes proposed to the Council’s Standing Orders (LTC/POL/003) to align them with NALC’s Model Standing Orders 2025 Update (adopted by NALC 2 May 2025). It is a redline summary to accompany the clean draft, not a Word “track changes” file.

1. Numeric defaults updated to NALC's 2025 model

Clause	2024 wording / position	2026 wording / position	Reason for change
1.t	Speeches limited to 5 minutes without the chair’s consent.	Limited to 10 minutes.	NALC’s 2025 update doubles the default speaking time. Non-statutory; Council may keep 5 minutes if preferred for meeting efficiency – flagged for decision.
3.f	Public participation session capped at 30 minutes.	Capped at 15 minutes.	NALC’s 2025 update halves the default. Non-statutory – Council may retain 30 minutes if it wishes to preserve more public engagement time; flagged for decision.
3.g	Public speakers limited to 3 minutes per item per person (unchanged).	Unchanged – 3 minutes per item per person.	No change; some council versions of the 2025 update simplify to “3 minutes” without the “per item per person” qualifier, but the fuller LTC wording is clearer and has been retained.
3.x	Meeting duration capped at 2.5 hours.	Capped at 2 hours, extendable by resolution.	NALC’s 2025 update reduces the default to 2 hours. The “extendable by resolution” safeguard has been added in the LTC draft so legitimate long meetings (e.g. budget-setting) are not curtailed; Council should confirm this practical addition is acceptable.
7.a	Special motion to reverse a resolution required written notice from at least 6 councillors.	Requires at least 7 councillors.	NALC’s 2025 update raises the threshold by one, reflecting a slightly higher bar for revisiting decided business.
9.b	Written notice of a motion required at least 5 clear days before the meeting.	Requires at least 7 clear days.	NALC’s 2025 update extends the notice period, giving the Proper Officer more time to check and circulate motions.

9.d	Resubmission of an unclear motion required at least 3 clear days before the meeting.	Requires at least 4 clear days.	Consequential on the extended notice period in 9(b).
26.b	Special motion to vary standing orders required written notice from at least 6 councillors.	Requires at least 3 councillors.	NALC's 2025 update lowers this threshold, making it easier for a smaller group of councillors to propose housekeeping changes to standing orders specifically (distinct from the higher bar retained at SO 7(a) for reversing substantive resolutions).

2. Substantive redrafts

Clause	2024 wording / position	2026 wording / position	Reason for change
3.s	Voting by show of hands only, with a recorded-vote option on request.	Adds an explicit paper-ballot option "if deemed appropriate (e.g. for co-option) by a majority of councillors present", alongside the existing show-of-hands and recorded-vote provisions.	NALC's 2025 update formally recognises paper ballots for sensitive votes such as co-options, reflecting good-practice guidance on secret ballots for personnel-adjacent decisions.
14 (Code of Conduct Complaints)	Four sub-clauses (a–d) covering: notification of a complaint; handling complaints made by the Proper Officer themselves; the Council's evidential and investigatory role; and the Council's response to a finding of breach.	Reduced to a single clause: on notification by the Principal Authority that a breach has occurred, the Council shall consider what action (if any) to take, excluding disqualification or suspension.	NALC has substantially simplified this section in the 2025 update, removing detail that duplicated the statutory Standards regime administered by the Principal Authority and which created scope for councils to inadvertently act outside their powers. The simplified clause is now headed "Principal Authority" rather than "District or Unitary Council", reflecting current statutory terminology.
13.e / 13.g (Dispensations)	Offered a choice: dispensation decided either by the Proper Officer alone, or by a meeting of the Council/committee/sub-committee.	Single option: dispensation decided only by a meeting of the Council, committee or sub-committee for which it is required.	NALC's 2025 update removes the "Proper Officer alone" option, ensuring dispensation decisions – which affect a councillor's right to participate and vote – are always taken collectively rather than by an officer acting alone.
18.e	Referenced thresholds "specified by the Office of Government Commerce" and required compliance with "the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016".	References thresholds "specified by the Government from time to time" and compliance with "the Procurement Act 2023, the Procurement Regulations 2024, or any successor procurement legislation".	The Office of Government Commerce no longer exists in this form, and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 / Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016 have been replaced by the Procurement Act 2023 and Procurement Regulations 2024 (in force from 24 February 2025). This is a mandatory legal update.
18.c(ii)–(iii)	Required advertising every tender in a local newspaper, and gave only a postal sealed-envelope route for submissions.	Drops the mandatory local-newspaper advertising step; recognises a monitored email address as an equivalent route to a sealed envelope where electronic tendering has been agreed.	Reflects modern practice (most procurement is now advertised via Contracts Finder / Find a Tender and council websites rather than print media) and NALC's recognition of electronic tendering routes already present in the Council's adopted Financial Regulations Appendix.

3. Gender-neutral drafting

Throughout the document, the repeated “he/she/they” and “his/her/their” constructions used in the 2018-derived model have been simplified to “they” and “their”, consistent with NALC’s 2025 update. This is a drafting-style change only and does not alter the substance of any clause.

4. Council-specific items – retained, updated, or flagged for decision

Clause	2024 wording / position	2026 wording / position	Reason for change
12.e (Publication of draft minutes)	Bracketed £25,000 threshold reproduced without comment.	Threshold retained as drafted (it is a statutory figure, not an LTC choice) with an added explanatory note that LTC’s gross income/expenditure now exceeds £200,000, so this specific duty does not bind LTC, though publishing draft minutes promptly remains good practice.	LTC crossed the £200,000 threshold for the first time in 2025/26 (per the year-end finance review), which also moves LTC from the Smaller Authorities transparency regime to the Local Government (Transparency Requirements) regime referenced at SO 20(b). This is now made explicit rather than left as a silent bracket.
19 (Handling staff matters)	Used bracketed alternatives throughout: “[the () committee] OR [the () sub-committee]”.	NALC’s 2025 model now refers throughout to a single named “Staffing Committee”. The clean draft retains LTC’s flexible bracketed wording (“Council or relevant committee/sub-committee”) rather than adopting NALC’s assumption of a Staffing Committee.	Flagged for decision: Council should confirm whether staffing matters continue to be handled by Staffing Committee or Full Council or relevant committee, or whether SO 19 should be updated to name it directly, consistent with NALC’s current model.
23 (Execution and sealing of legal deeds)	Presented both the “common seal” and “no common seal” options side by side, unresolved.	NALC’s 2025 model now publishes only the “no common seal” version. The clean draft adopts this as the working text and adds a note confirming the Council does not hold a common seal, with a clear route to amend if that ever changes.	Flagged for decision: please confirm LTC does not in fact hold or use a common seal before this is finalised; if it does, the seal-based wording must be reinstated.
24 (Communicating with district/county/unitary councillors)	Presented bracketed “District and County Council OR Unitary Council” wording, unresolved, and named no specific authorities.	Resolved to name Ribble Valley Borough Council and Lancashire County Council (the current two-tier principal authorities), with an explanatory note flagging the live Local Government Reorganisation process for Lancashire.	NALC’s 2025 model defaults to unitary-only wording, anticipating wider adoption of unitary structures, but Lancashire remains two-tier at the time of writing. Given the LGR asset-transfer correspondence already under way with RVBC, this clause should be revisited once reorganisation outcomes are confirmed, as the Principal Authority referenced at SO 14 may also change.

5. Cross-references checked

All internal cross-references (e.g. SO 3(u), SO 11(a), SO 15(b)(xi) and (xv)) have been checked against the renumbering in NALC’s 2025 update and are consistent in the clean draft. No section numbers change in the LTC version (1–26 are preserved) because LTC has not adopted NALC’s optional removal of bracketed sub-committee references throughout – these have been kept as alternatives rather than removed, preserving the existing numbering scheme that other LTC governance documents (e.g. the councillor induction pack) already refer to.



Financial Regulations

Document Reference: LTC/POL/004

Adopted: 08-07-2026 2026 (supersedes 14/08/2024 version)

Chair: Cllr. R. Walker

Minute Reference: [MIN. REF.]

Administered by the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to Longridge Town Council

1. General

- 1.1. These Financial Regulations govern the financial management of the Council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the Council. They are one of the Council's governing documents and shall be observed in conjunction with the Council's Standing Orders.
- 1.2. Councillors are expected to follow these regulations and not to entice employees to breach them. Failure to follow these regulations brings the office of councillor into disrepute.
- 1.3. Wilful breach of these regulations by an employee may result in disciplinary proceedings.
- 1.4. In these Financial Regulations:
 - 'Accounts and Audit Regulations' means the regulations issued under Sections 32, 43(2) and 46 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, or any superseding legislation, and then in force, unless otherwise specified.
 - "Approve" refers to an online action, allowing an electronic transaction to take place.
 - "Authorise" refers to a decision by the Council, or a committee or an officer, to allow something to happen.
 - 'Proper practices' means those set out in The Practitioners' Guide.
 - Practitioners' Guide refers to the guide issued by the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) and published by NALC in England ("Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioners' Guide (England)").
 - 'Must' and **bold text** refer to a statutory obligation the Council cannot change.
 - 'Shall' refers to a non-statutory instruction by the Council to its members and staff.
- 1.5. The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) holds a statutory office, appointed by the Council. The Clerk has been appointed as RFO and these regulations apply accordingly. The RFO:
 - acts under the policy direction of the Council;
 - administers the Council's financial affairs in accordance with all Acts, Regulations and proper practices;
 - determines on behalf of the Council its accounting records and control systems;
 - ensures the accounting control systems are observed;
 - ensures the accounting records are kept up to date;
 - seeks economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of Council resources; and
 - produces financial management information as required by the Council.

1.6. The council must not delegate any decision regarding:

- **setting the final budget or the precept (council tax requirement);**
- **the outcome of a review of the effectiveness of its internal controls;**
- **approving accounting statements;**
- **approving an annual governance statement;**
- **borrowing;**
- **declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence; and**
- **addressing recommendations from the internal or external auditors.**

1.7. In addition, the Council shall:

- determine and regularly review the bank mandate for all Council bank accounts; and
- authorise any grant or single commitment in excess of £5,000.

2. Risk management and internal control

2.1. The Council must ensure that it has a sound system of internal control, which delivers effective financial, operational and risk management.

2.2. The Clerk, with the RFO, shall prepare, for approval by the Council, a risk management policy covering all activities of the Council. This policy and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the Council at least annually.

2.3. When considering any new activity, the Clerk, with the RFO, shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration by the Council.

2.4. At least once a year, the Council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control, before approving the Annual Governance Statement.

2.5. The accounting control systems determined by the RFO must include measures to:

- **ensure that risk is appropriately managed;**
- **ensure the prompt, accurate recording of financial transactions;**
- **prevent and detect inaccuracy or fraud; and**
- **allow the reconstitution of any lost records;**
- **identify the duties of officers dealing with transactions; and**
- **ensure division of responsibilities.**

2.6. At least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, a member other than the Chair or a cheque signatory shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the RFO. The member shall sign and date the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of this. This activity, including any exceptions, shall be reported to and noted by the Finance Committee.

2.7. Regular back-up copies shall be made of the records on any Council computer and stored either online or in a separate location from the computer. The Council shall put measures in place to ensure that the ability to access any Council computer is not lost if an employee leaves or is incapacitated for any reason.

3. Accounts and audit

- 3.1. All accounting procedures and financial records of the Council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 3.2. **The accounting records determined by the RFO must be sufficient to explain the Council's transactions and to disclose its financial position with reasonable accuracy at any time. In particular, they must contain:**
- **day-to-day entries of all sums of money received and expended by the Council and the matters to which they relate; and**
 - **a record of the assets and liabilities of the Council.**
- 3.3. The accounting records shall be designed to facilitate the efficient preparation of the accounting statements in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.
- 3.4. The RFO shall complete and certify the annual Accounting Statements of the Council contained in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with proper practices, as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year. Having certified the Accounting Statements, the RFO shall submit them (with any related documents) to the Council, within the timescales required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 3.5. **The Council must ensure that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and internal control system in accordance with proper practices.**
- 3.6. **Any officer or member of the Council must make available such documents and records as the internal or external auditor consider necessary for the purpose of the audit** and shall, as directed by the Council, supply the RFO, internal auditor, or external auditor with such information and explanation as the Council considers necessary.
- 3.7. The internal auditor shall be appointed by the Council and shall carry out their work to evaluate the effectiveness of the Council's risk management, control and governance processes in accordance with proper practices specified in the Practitioners' Guide.
- 3.8. The Council shall ensure that the internal auditor:
- is competent and independent of the financial operations of the Council;
 - reports to Council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one written report during each financial year;
 - can demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships; and
 - has no involvement in the management or control of the Council.
- 3.9. Internal or external auditors may not under any circumstances:
- perform any operational duties for the Council;
 - initiate or approve accounting transactions;
 - provide financial, legal or other advice including in relation to any future transactions; or
 - direct the activities of any Council employee, except to the extent that such employees have been appropriately assigned to assist the internal auditor.
- 3.10. For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to internal audit the terms 'independent' and 'independence' shall have the same meaning as described in the Practitioners' Guide.
- 3.11. The RFO shall make arrangements for the exercise of electors' rights in relation to the accounts, including the opportunity to inspect the accounts, books, and vouchers and display or publish any notices and documents required by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, or any superseding legislation, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 3.12. The RFO shall, without undue delay, bring to the attention of all councillors any correspondence or report from internal or external auditors.

4. Budget and precept

- 4.1. **Before setting a precept, the Council must calculate its council tax requirement for each financial year by preparing and approving a budget, in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992 or succeeding legislation.**
- 4.2. Budgets for salaries and wages, including employer contributions, shall be reviewed by the Council at least annually in October for the following financial year and the final version shall be evidenced by a hard copy schedule signed by the Clerk and the Chair of the Council or relevant committee. The RFO will inform committees of any salary implications before they consider their draft budgets.
- 4.3. No later than [month], the RFO shall prepare a draft budget with detailed estimates of all receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for the following financial year, taking account of the lifespan of assets and cost implications of repair or replacement.
- 4.4. Unspent budgets for completed projects shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year. Unspent funds for partially completed projects may only be carried forward (by placing them in an earmarked reserve) with the formal approval of the Full Council.
- 4.5. Each committee (if any) shall review its draft budget and submit any proposed amendments to the Finance Committee not later than the end of November each year.
- 4.6. The draft budget, with any committee proposals, including any recommendations for the use or accumulation of reserves, shall be considered by the Finance Committee and a recommendation made to the Council.
- 4.7. Having considered the proposed budget, the Council shall determine its council tax requirement by setting a budget. The Council shall set a precept for this amount no later than the end of January for the ensuing financial year.
- 4.8. **Any member with council tax unpaid for more than two months is prohibited from voting on the budget or precept by Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and must disclose at the start of the meeting that Section 106 applies to them.**
- 4.9. **The RFO shall issue the precept to the billing authority no later than the end of February and supply each member with a copy of the agreed annual budget.**
- 4.10. The agreed budget provides a basis for monitoring progress during the year by comparing actual spending and income against what was planned.
- 4.11. Any addition to, or withdrawal from, any earmarked reserve shall be agreed by the Council or the relevant committee.

5. Procurement

- 5.1. Members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times. Any officer procuring goods, services or works should ensure, as far as practicable, that the best available terms are obtained, usually by obtaining prices from several suppliers.
- 5.2. The RFO should verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before it is made and, in the case of new or infrequent purchases, should ensure that the legal power being used is reported to the meeting at which the order is authorised and also recorded in the minutes.
- 5.3. Every contract shall comply with the Council's Standing Orders and these Financial Regulations and no exceptions shall be made, except in an emergency.
- 5.4. **For a contract for the supply of goods, services or works where the estimated value will exceed the thresholds set by Parliament, the full requirements of the Procurement Act 2023 and the Procurement Regulations 2024, or any superseding legislation ("the Legislation"), must be followed in respect of the tendering, award and notification of that contract.**

- 5.5. Where the estimated value is below the Government threshold, the Council shall (with the exception of items listed in paragraph 5.12) obtain prices as follows:
- 5.6. For contracts estimated to exceed £60,000 including VAT, the Clerk shall seek formal tenders from at least three suppliers agreed by the Council, or advertise an open invitation for tenders in compliance with any relevant provisions of the Legislation. Tenders shall be invited in accordance with Standing Order 18.
- 5.7. **For contracts estimated to be over £30,000 including VAT, the Council must comply with any requirements of the Legislation regarding the advertising of contract opportunities and the publication of notices about the award of contracts.**
- 5.8. For contracts greater than £3,000 excluding VAT, the Clerk (or RFO) shall seek at least three fixed-price quotes.
- 5.9. Where the value is between £500 and £3,000 excluding VAT, the Clerk (or RFO) shall try to obtain three estimates (which might include evidence of online prices, or recent prices from regular suppliers).
- 5.10. For smaller purchases, the Clerk shall seek to achieve value for money.
- 5.11. Contracts must not be split into smaller lots to avoid compliance with these rules.
- 5.12. The requirement to obtain competitive prices in these regulations need not apply to contracts that relate to items (i) to (iv) below:
- i. specialist services, such as legal professionals acting in disputes;
 - ii. repairs to, or parts for, existing machinery or equipment;
 - iii. works, goods or services that constitute an extension of an existing contract;
 - iv. goods or services that are only available from one supplier or are sold at a fixed price.
- 5.13. When applications are made to waive this financial regulation to enable a price to be negotiated without competition, the reason should be set out in a recommendation to the Council or relevant committee. Avoidance of competition is not a valid reason.
- 5.14. The Council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.
- 5.15. Individual purchases within an agreed budget for that type of expenditure may be authorised by:
- the Clerk, under delegated authority, for any items below £500 excluding VAT;
 - the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of the Council (or Chair of the appropriate committee), for any items below £2,000 excluding VAT;
 - a duly delegated committee of the Council for all items of expenditure within their delegated budgets for items under £5,000 excluding VAT;
 - in respect of grants, a duly authorised committee within any limits set by Council and in accordance with any policy statement agreed by the Council; and
 - the Council for all items over £5,000.
- Such authorisation must be supported by a minute (in the case of Council or committee decisions) or other auditable evidence trail.
- 5.16. **No individual member, or informal group of members may issue an official order (unless instructed to do so in advance by a resolution of the Council) or make any contract on behalf of the Council.**
- 5.17. No expenditure may be authorised that will exceed the budget for that type of expenditure other than by resolution of the Council (or a duly delegated committee acting within its Terms of Reference) except in an emergency.
- 5.18. In cases of serious risk to the delivery of Council services or to public safety on Council premises, the Clerk may authorise expenditure of up to £2,000 excluding VAT on repair, replacement or other work that in their judgement is necessary, whether or not there is any budget for such expenditure. The Clerk shall report such action to the Chair as soon as possible and to the Council as soon as practicable thereafter.

- 5.19. No expenditure shall be authorised, no contract entered into or tender accepted in relation to any major project, unless the Council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available and that, where a loan is required, Government borrowing approval has been obtained first.
- 5.20. An official order or letter (which may be sent by email) shall be issued for all work, goods and services above £250 excluding VAT, unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate. Copies of orders shall be retained, along with evidence of receipt of goods where applicable.
- 5.21. Any ordering system can be misused and access to it shall be controlled by the RFO.

6. Banking and payments

- 6.1. The Council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the RFO and authorised by the Council; banking arrangements shall not be delegated to a committee. The arrangements shall be reviewed annually for security and efficiency.
- 6.2. **The Council must have safe and efficient arrangements for making payments, to safeguard against the possibility of fraud or error.** Wherever possible, more than one person should be involved in any payment, for example by dual online authorisation or dual cheque signing. Even where a purchase has been authorised, the payment must also be authorised and only authorised payments shall be approved or signed to allow the funds to leave the Council's bank.
- 6.3. All invoices for payment should be examined for arithmetical accuracy, analysed to the appropriate expenditure heading and verified to confirm that the work, goods or services were received, checked and represent expenditure previously authorised by the Council before being certified by the RFO. Where the certification of invoices is done as a batch, this shall include a statement by the RFO that all invoices listed have been 'examined, verified and certified' by the RFO.
- 6.4. Personal payments (including salaries, wages, expenses and any payment made in relation to the termination of employment) may be summarised to avoid disclosing any personal information.
- 6.5. All payments shall be made by online banking (or cheque), in accordance with a resolution of the Council (or duly delegated committee, or a delegated decision by an officer), unless the Council resolves to use a different payment method.
- 6.6. For each financial year the RFO may draw up a schedule of regular payments due in relation to a continuing contract or obligation (such as salaries, PAYE, National Insurance, pension contributions, rent, rates, regular maintenance contracts and similar items), which the Council (or a duly delegated committee) may authorise in advance for the year.
- 6.7. A copy of this schedule of regular payments shall be signed by two members on each and every occasion when payment is made, to reduce the risk of duplicate payments.
- 6.8. A list of such payments shall be reported to the next appropriate meeting of the Council or Finance Committee, for information only.
- 6.9. The Clerk and RFO shall have delegated authority to authorise payments only in the following circumstances:
- i. any payments of up to £1,000 excluding VAT, within an agreed budget;
 - ii. payments of up to £2,000 excluding VAT in cases of serious risk to the delivery of Council services or to public safety on Council premises;
 - iii. any payment necessary to avoid a charge under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998 (or to comply with contractual terms), where the due date for payment is before the next scheduled meeting of the Council, where the Clerk and RFO certify that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of Council (or Finance Committee); and
 - iv. fund transfers within the Council's banking arrangements up to the sum of £10,000, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of Council (or Finance Committee).

- 6.10. The RFO shall present a schedule of payments requiring authorisation, forming part of the agenda for the meeting, together with the relevant invoices, to the Council (or Finance Committee). The Council (or committee) shall review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied itself, shall authorise payment by resolution. The authorised schedule shall be initialled immediately below the last item by the person chairing the meeting. A detailed list of all payments shall be disclosed within or as an attachment to the minutes of that meeting.

7. Electronic payments

- 7.1. Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the RFO shall be appointed as the Service Administrator. The bank mandate agreed by the Council shall identify a number of councillors who will be authorised to approve transactions on those accounts and a minimum of two people will be involved in any online approval process. The Clerk may be an authorised signatory, but no signatory should be involved in approving any payment to themselves.
- 7.2. All authorised signatories shall have access to view the Council's bank accounts online.
- 7.3. No employee or councillor shall disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the Council or its banking, to anyone not authorised in writing by the Council or a duly delegated committee.
- 7.4. The Service Administrator shall set up all items due for payment online. A list of payments for approval, together with copies of the relevant invoices, shall be sent by email to two authorised signatories.
- 7.5. In the prolonged absence of the Service Administrator, an authorised signatory shall set up any payments due before the return of the Service Administrator.
- 7.6. Two councillors who are authorised signatories shall check the payment details against the invoices before approving each payment using the online banking system.
- 7.7. Evidence shall be retained showing which members approved the payment online, and a printout of the transaction confirming that the payment has been made shall be appended to the invoice for audit purposes.
- 7.8. A full list of all payments made in a month shall be provided to the next Council meeting and appended to the minutes.
- 7.9. With the approval of the Council in each case, regular payments (such as gas, electricity, telephone, broadband, water, National Non-Domestic Rates, refuse collection, pension contributions and HMRC payments) may be made by variable direct debit, provided that the instructions are signed or approved online by two authorised members. The approval of the use of each variable direct debit shall be reviewed by the Council at least every two years.
- 7.10. Payment may be made by BACS or CHAPS by resolution of the Council provided that each payment is approved online by two authorised bank signatories, evidence is retained and any payments are reported to the Council at the next meeting. The approval of the use of BACS or CHAPS shall be renewed by resolution of the Council at least every two years.
- 7.11. If thought appropriate by the Council, regular payments of fixed sums may be made by banker's standing order, provided that the instructions are signed (or approved online) by two members, evidence of this is retained and any payments are reported to Council when made. The approval of the use of a banker's standing order shall be reviewed by the Council at least every two years.
- 7.12. Account details for suppliers may only be changed upon written notification by the supplier verified by two of the Clerk, the RFO and a member. This is a potential area for fraud and the individuals involved should ensure that any change is genuine. Data held should be checked with suppliers every two years.
- 7.13. Members and officers shall ensure that any computer used for the Council's financial business has adequate security, with anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall software installed and regularly updated.
- 7.14. Remembered password facilities (other than secure password stores requiring separate identity verification) should not be used on any computer used for Council banking.

8. Cheque payments

- 8.1. Cheques or orders for payment in accordance with a resolution or delegated decision shall be signed by two members and countersigned by the Clerk.
- 8.2. A signatory having a family or business relationship with the beneficiary of a payment shall not, under normal circumstances, be a signatory to that payment.
- 8.3. To indicate agreement of the details on the cheque with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall also initial the cheque counterfoil and invoice.
- 8.4. Cheques or orders for payment shall not normally be presented for signature other than at, or immediately before or after, a Council (or committee) meeting. Any signatures obtained away from Council meetings shall be reported to the Council (or Finance Committee) at the next convenient meeting.

9. Payment cards

- 9.1. Any debit card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Clerk and the RFO and will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £500 unless authorised by Council or Finance Committee in writing before any order is placed.
- 9.2. A pre-paid debit card may be issued to employees with varying limits. These limits will be set by the Council. Transactions and purchases made will be reported to the Council and authority for topping-up shall be at the discretion of the Council.
- 9.3. Any corporate credit card or trade card account opened by the Council will be specifically restricted to use by the Clerk and RFO, and any balance shall be paid in full each month.
- 9.4. Personal credit or debit cards of members or staff shall not be used, except for expenses of up to £250 including VAT, incurred in accordance with Council policy.

10. Petty cash

- 10.1. The Council will not maintain any form of cash float. All cash received must be banked intact. Any payments made in cash by the Clerk (or RFO) (for example for postage or minor stationery items) shall be refunded on a regular basis, at least quarterly.

11. Payment of salaries and allowances

- 11.1. **As an employer, the Council must make arrangements to comply with the statutory requirements of PAYE legislation.**
- 11.2. **Councillors' allowances (where paid) are also liable to deduction of tax under PAYE rules and must be taxed correctly before payment.**
- 11.3. Salary rates shall be agreed by the Council, or a duly delegated committee. No changes shall be made to any employee's gross pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the Council (or relevant committee).
- 11.4. Payment of salaries shall be made, after deduction of tax, national insurance, pension contributions and any similar statutory or discretionary deductions, on the dates stipulated in employment contracts.
- 11.5. Deductions from salary shall be paid to the relevant bodies within the required timescales, provided that each payment is reported, as set out in these regulations above.
- 11.6. Each payment to employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall be recorded in a payroll control account or other separate confidential record, with the total of such payments each calendar month reported in the cashbook. Payroll reports will be reviewed by the Finance Committee to ensure that the correct payments have been made.

- 11.7. Any termination payments shall be supported by a report to the Council, setting out a clear business case. Termination payments shall only be authorised by the Full Council.
- 11.8. Before employing interim staff, the Council must consider a full business case.

12. Loans and investments

- 12.1. Any application for Government approval to borrow money and subsequent arrangements for a loan must be authorised by the Full Council and recorded in the minutes. All borrowing shall be in the name of the Council, after obtaining any necessary approval.
- 12.2. Any financial arrangement which does not require formal borrowing approval from the Secretary of State (such as hire purchase, leasing of tangible assets or loans to be repaid within the financial year) must be authorised by the Full Council, following a written report on the value for money of the proposed transaction.
- 12.3. The Council shall consider the requirement for an Investment Strategy and Policy in accordance with Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments, which must be written in accordance with relevant regulations, proper practices and guidance. Any Strategy and Policy shall be reviewed by the Council at least annually.
- 12.4. All investment of money under the control of the Council shall be in the name of the Council.
- 12.5. All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO.
- 12.6. Payments in respect of short term or long-term investments, including transfers between bank accounts held in the same bank, shall be made in accordance with these regulations.

13. Income

- 13.1. The collection of all sums due to the Council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO.
- 13.2. The Council will review all fees and charges for work done, services provided, or goods sold at least annually as part of the budget-setting process, following a report of the Clerk. The RFO shall be responsible for the collection of all amounts due to the Council.
- 13.3. Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts shall be reported to the Council by the RFO and shall be written off in the year. The Council's approval shall be shown in the accounting records.
- 13.4. All sums received on behalf of the Council shall be deposited intact with the Council's bankers, with such frequency as the RFO considers necessary. The origin of each receipt shall clearly be recorded on the paying-in slip or other record.
- 13.5. Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the Council.
- 13.6. The RFO shall ensure that VAT is correctly recorded in the Council's accounting software and that any VAT Return required is submitted from the software by the due date. Any repayment claim under section 33 of the VAT Act 1994 shall be made at least annually at the end of the financial year.
- 13.7. Where significant sums of cash are regularly received by the Council, the RFO shall ensure that more than one person is present when the cash is counted in the first instance, that there is a reconciliation to some form of control record such as ticket issues, and that appropriate care is taken for the security and safety of individuals banking such cash.
- 13.8. Any income that is the property of a charitable trust shall be paid into a charitable bank account. Instructions for the payment of funds due from the charitable trust to the Council (to meet expenditure already incurred by the authority) will be given by the Managing Trustees of the charity meeting separately from any Council meeting.

14. Payments under contracts for building or other construction works

- 14.1. Where contracts provide for payment by instalments, the RFO shall maintain a record of all such payments, which shall be made within the time specified in the contract based on signed certificates from the architect or other consultant engaged to supervise the works.
- 14.2. Any variation of, addition to or omission from a contract must be authorised by the Clerk to the contractor in writing, with the Council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the contract sum by 5% or more, or likely to exceed the budget available.

15. Stores and equipment

- 15.1. The officer in charge of each section shall be responsible for the care and custody of stores and equipment in that section.
- 15.2. Delivery notes shall be obtained in respect of all goods received into store or otherwise delivered and goods must be checked as to order and quality at the time delivery is made.
- 15.3. Stocks shall be kept at the minimum levels consistent with operational requirements.
- 15.4. The RFO shall be responsible for periodic checks of stocks and stores, at least annually.

16. Assets, properties and estates

- 16.1. The Clerk shall make arrangements for the safe custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the Council.
- 16.2. The RFO shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date, with a record of all properties held by the Council, their location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held, in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 16.3. The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the Register shall be verified at least annually, possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.
- 16.4. No interest in land shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the Council, together with any other consents required by law. In each case a written report shall be provided to Council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate where required by law).

No tangible moveable property shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of the Council, together with any other consents required by law, except where the estimated value of any one item does not exceed £500. In each case a written report shall be provided to Council with a full business case.

17. Insurance

- 17.1. The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the Council and the property and risks covered, reviewing these annually before the renewal date in conjunction with the Council's review of risk management.
- 17.2. The Clerk shall give prompt notification to the RFO of all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.
- 17.3. The RFO shall be notified of any loss, liability, damage or event likely to lead to a claim, and shall report these to the Council at the next available meeting. The RFO shall negotiate all claims on the Council's insurers, in consultation with the Clerk.

- 17.4. All appropriate members and employees of the Council shall be included in a suitable form of security or fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined annually by the Council, or duly delegated committee.

18. Charities

- 18.1. Where the Council is sole managing trustee of a charitable body, the Clerk and RFO shall ensure that separate accounts are kept of the funds held on charitable trusts and separate financial reports made in such form as shall be appropriate, in accordance with Charity Law and legislation, or as determined by the Charity Commission. The Clerk and RFO shall arrange for any audit or independent examination as may be required by Charity Law or any Governing Document.

19. Suspension and revision of Financial Regulations

- 19.1. The Council shall review these Financial Regulations annually and following any change of Clerk or RFO. The Clerk shall monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and advise the Council of any need to amend these Financial Regulations.
- 19.2. The Council may, by resolution duly notified prior to the relevant meeting of Council, suspend any part of these Financial Regulations, provided that reasons for the suspension are recorded and that an assessment of the risks arising has been presented to all members. Suspension does not disapply any legislation or permit the Council to act unlawfully.
- 19.3. The Council may temporarily amend these Financial Regulations by a duly notified resolution, to cope with periods of absence, local government reorganisation, national restrictions or other exceptional circumstances.

This document is based on NALC's Model Financial Regulations for Local Councils (March 2025), adapted for Longridge Town Council. See the accompanying Compliance Checklist (LTC/GOV/COMPLIANCE/2026-06) for a full account of changes from the version adopted 14 August 2024.



Financial Regulations – Summary of Changes (2024 → 2026)

Document Reference: LTC/GOV/CHANGES/2026-06-FR

Prepared: 08-07-2026 Council Meeting

Chair: – Cllr. R. Walker for Council consideration

Minute Reference: N/A

Administered by the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to Longridge Town Council

This paper summarises, clause by clause, the changes proposed to the Council’s Financial Regulations (LTC/POL/004) to align them with NALC’s Model Financial Regulations for Local Councils (March 2025) and current law. It is intended as a redline summary to accompany the clean draft; it is not a Word “track changes” file. Council-specific numeric thresholds and bracket choices already adopted in 2024 have been retained except where indicated.

1. Mandatory legal updates

Clause	2024 wording / position	2026 wording / position	Reason for change
5.4	Referred to “The Public Contracts Regulations 2015” as “the Legislation” governing above-threshold tendering.	Refers to “The Procurement Act 2023 and The Procurement Regulations 2024” as “the Legislation”.	The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 were revoked and replaced by the Procurement Act 2023 / Procurement Regulations 2024, which came into force 24 February 2025. This is a mandatory legal update.
5.7	Referenced general “requirements of the Legislation regarding the advertising of contract opportunities and the publication of notices about the award of contracts.”	Wording retained, now read against the 2023/2024 regime via the updated definition of “the Legislation” at 5.4.	Consequential on the 2023 Act; no separate textual change needed beyond the definition fix at 5.4.
12.3 (Loans and investments)	“[Secretary of State/Welsh Assembly Government]” bracket retained.	Resolved to “Secretary of State” (England-only council).	NALC’s March 2025 model drops the Welsh Assembly Government alternative for England-only documents; LTC is England-only so the bracket can be safely resolved.

Structural changes (NALC March 2025 model)

Clause	2024 wording / position	2026 wording / position	Reason for change
Appendix 1 (Tender process)	Stood as a free-standing appendix to the Financial Regulations, duplicating Standing Order 18(c)–(d).	Removed from the Financial Regulations.	NALC's March 2025 model financial regulations no longer carry this appendix; the equivalent tender-process steps already exist in Standing Order 18, avoiding duplication and the risk of the two documents drifting out of step. Confirm Standing Order 18 remains the single source of truth for tender mechanics.
Section 18 (Charities)	Present, bracketed as optional.	Retained at LTC's discretion (no longer in NALC's generic template).	NALC has dropped this clause from the generic template since most councils are not sole charitable trustees. LTC is not currently recorded as a sole managing trustee of a charity; recommend Council confirm whether this clause is still needed or can be removed.
Numbering	19 substantive sections + appendix.	17 substantive sections (Charities retained as 18; Suspension and revision renumbered 19→17... see note).	Removing the appendix does not itself renumber sections; if Council also removes the Charities section, "Suspension and revision" becomes section 17 to match NALC's numbering exactly. The clean draft keeps Charities as 18 and Suspension/revision as 19 to preserve cross-references pending Council's decision.

3. Typographical and drafting corrections

Clause	2024 wording / position	2026 wording / position	Reason for change
12.6 (VAT)	"...any VAT Return required is submitted from the software by the due date."	"...any VAT Return required is submitted from the software by the due date."	Corrects an evident typographical error ("form" → "from") carried over from the 2024 document.
Throughout	Inconsistent capitalisation of "council".	Capitalised consistently as "Council" when referring to Longridge Town Council.	House-style consistency; no change of meaning.

4. Council-specific items retained unchanged

The following numeric thresholds and delegations, adopted by Council in 2024, sit outside NALC's generic model defaults but are legitimate council-specific choices and have been retained: grant/single commitment authorisation threshold (£5,000, clause 1.7); formal tender threshold (£60,000, clause 5.6); advertising threshold (£30,000, clause 5.7); quotation thresholds (£500/£3,000, clauses 5.8–5.9); delegated authority levels (£500/£2,000/£5,000, clause 5.15); payment delegation limits (£1,000/£2,000/£10,000, clause 6.9); debit card limit (£500, clause 9.1); and personal card expense limit (£250, clause 9.4).

NALC's current model suggests higher defaults in several places (e.g. £5,000 quotation threshold, £2,000 debit card limit); these are discretionary and not legally mandated, so we recommend Council positively confirm whether to retain the 2024 figures or adopt NALC's newer suggested defaults, rather than treat this as an automatic update.

5. Open brackets carried forward unresolved

The following brackets were unresolved in the 2024 document and remain unresolved in the 2026 draft pending a Council/officer decision: clause 4.3 “no later than [month]” (the draft budget preparation deadline); clause 3.7 internal auditor appointment is now resolved to “the Council” (was bracketed) – recommend confirming this matches actual practice (David Swift MCIAA is currently engaged as internal auditor under arrangements approved by Council).



Governance Compliance Checklist: Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

Document Reference: LTC/GOV/COMPLIANCE/2026-06

Prepared for Full Council 08-07-2026

Chair: Cllr. R. Walker – officer working paper for Council consideration

Minute Reference: N/A

Administered by the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to Longridge Town Council

This checklist supports Council's consideration of the updated Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, aligned to NALC's Model Standing Orders 2025 Update and Model Financial Regulations (March 2025). It is structured as: (A) decisions Council must take before adoption; (B) confirmations of mandatory legal changes already applied; (C) ongoing monitoring items; and (D) the adoption procedure.

A. Decisions Council must take before adoption

✓	Item	Document / clause	Owner	Status
<input type="checkbox"/>	Confirm whether to retain the 2024 speaking-time and public-participation defaults (5 min / 30 min) or adopt NALC's revised 2025 defaults (10 min / 15 min), as currently drafted.	SO 1(t), 3(f)	Full Council	For decision
<input type="checkbox"/>	Confirm whether to retain the 2.5-hour meeting limit or adopt the new 2-hour limit (with the "extendable by resolution" safeguard as drafted).	SO 3(x)	Full Council	For decision
<input type="checkbox"/>	Confirm the Council does not hold a common seal, so the "no common seal" wording can be finalised; if a seal exists or is intended, reinstate seal-based wording.	SO 23	Clerk to confirm with Chair	For decision
<input type="checkbox"/>	Confirm how staffing matters (performance reviews, grievances, absence) are currently handled – Full Council, or the dedicated Staffing Committee – and update SO 19 accordingly.	SO 19	Full Council	For decision
<input type="checkbox"/>	Confirm whether to retain Financial Regulations section 18 (Charities), which NALC has dropped from its generic template, given LTC is not recorded as sole trustee of a charity.	FR 18	Clerk/RFO to advise; Council to confirm	For decision

<input type="checkbox"/>	Confirm whether to retain the 2024 procurement quotation/delegation thresholds (£3,000/£500/£1,000 etc.) or move to NALC's newer suggested defaults (£5,000/£500/£2,000-card limit).	FR 5.8–5.9, 5.15, 6.9, 9.1	Finance Committee	For decision
<input type="checkbox"/>	Resolve the outstanding bracket at FR 4.3 ("no later than [month]") for when the RFO must produce the draft budget.	FR 4.3	RFO	For decision
<input type="checkbox"/>	Note the live Local Government Reorganisation process for Lancashire and its effect on SO 24 (district/county/unitary wording) and SO 14 (Principal Authority reference); revisit once outcomes are confirmed.	SO 24, SO 14	Clerk	Monitor / revisit

B. Mandatory legal updates already applied in the drafts

✓	Item	Document / clause	Owner	Status
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Procurement references updated from the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 / Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016 to the Procurement Act 2023 and Procurement Regulations 2024 (in force from 24 February 2025).	FR 5.4; SO 18(e)	Clerk	Applied in draft
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Code of Conduct Complaints clause simplified to match NALC's 2025 redraft, removing detail that duplicated the statutory Standards regime.	SO 14	Clerk	Applied in draft
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Dispensation decisions restricted to a meeting of Council/committee/sub-committee (the "Proper Officer alone" option removed).	SO 13(e), (g)	Clerk	Applied in draft
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Gender-neutral drafting applied throughout (he/she/they → they; his/her/their → their).	Both documents, throughout	Clerk	Applied in draft
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Typographical correction to the VAT clause ("submitted form the software" → "submitted from the software").	FR 12.6	Clerk	Applied in draft
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tender Process appendix removed from the Financial Regulations to avoid duplicating Standing Order 18; electronic tendering route to a monitored email address recognised alongside sealed envelopes.	FR Appendix 1 (removed); SO 18(c)	Clerk	Applied in draft

C. Ongoing monitoring items

✓	Item	Document / clause	Owner	Status
<input type="checkbox"/>	LTC's gross income/expenditure now exceeds £200,000 (first crossed 2025/26): confirm the Council is publishing information under the Local Government (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015 rather than the Smaller Authorities regime.	SO 20(b)	RFO	Monitor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Internal auditor (David Swift MCIAA) appointment by full Council resolution should be re-confirmed on the record annually, consistent with FR 3.7.	FR 3.7	Clerk	Annual check

<input type="checkbox"/>	Both documents should be reviewed at least annually (FR 19.1; SO 26 generally) and immediately following any change of Clerk/RFO.	FR 19.1	Clerk	Standing diary item
<input type="checkbox"/>	Watch for NALC's next scheduled update to the Practitioners' Guide / JPAG guidance, and any further procurement threshold changes published by Cabinet Office.	Both documents	Clerk	Ongoing

D. Adoption procedure

Recommended sequence for bringing both documents into effect:

1. Resolve outstanding brackets in Section A above (Full Council or relevant committee, as indicated).
2. Circulate the clean drafts (LTC_Standing_Orders_2026_CLEAN.docx and LTC_Financial_Regulations_2026_CLEAN.docx) and this checklist to all councillors with the agenda for the meeting at which adoption is proposed, in accordance with the Council's usual notice periods.
3. Full Council to resolve to rescind the versions adopted 14 August 2024 and adopt the updated versions, recording the minute reference on both documents.
4. Clerk to update the document control fields (adoption date and minute reference) on both clean drafts once resolved.
5. Clerk to update the councillor induction pack and any other governance documents that cross-reference specific Standing Order or Financial Regulation clause numbers, to confirm those references remain accurate.
6. Publish the adopted documents on the Council website, superseding the 14 August 2024 versions.

Agenda Item 9

For Discussion/Decision



Meeting:	Full Council
Meeting Date:	8 July 2026
Title:	Potential Transfer of Ribble Valley Borough Council Assets to Longridge Town Council
Submitted by:	Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer
Appendices:	A: Letter, from RVBC's Director of Community Services. B: Town Clerk's response to above letter.

1. Purpose of Report

This report informs members of the correspondence received from Ribble Valley Borough Council (RVBC) regarding the potential transfer of RVBC-owned land and assets within the Longridge parish to Longridge Town Council (LTC) as part of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) preparations, and sets out the assets within Longridge currently in RVBC ownership for Members' consideration. The report invites Council to agree its approach in responding substantively to RVBC by the end of July 2026, as requested.

2. Background.

By letter dated 16 June 2026 (Appendix A), RVBC's Director of Community Services, Adam Allen, wrote to all parish and town councils in the borough explaining that, as part of LGR preparations, RVBC is reviewing its land and asset holdings and considering whether transfer of some assets to parish or town councils may offer best value and better serve local communities. RVBC notes that several statutory tests would need to be met before any transfer could proceed, and that it would only facilitate transfer where there is a clear and sustainable plan for the future maintenance and running of the asset.

RVBC has asked each parish and town council to set out, by the end of July 2026, whether it wishes RVBC to consider the transfer of any asset within its area, on what basis, and with a clear rationale.

Members are reminded that the Government's decision on the future unitary structure for Lancashire is expected before the Parliamentary recess on 16 July 2026, ahead of RVBC's own deadline for asset transfer responses. This timing means Council is being asked to consider its position on asset transfers before it is known which unitary authority will ultimately inherit RVBC's functions and assets.

3. Clerk's Holding Response.

Given the significance and complexity of the issues raised, the Clerk wrote to Mr Allen on 23 June 2026 (Appendix B) confirming that LTC welcomes the opportunity to consider asset transfers and will respond formally by the end of July deadline, but seeking clarification on three matters considered essential to inform any business case:

- a. Ongoing upkeep and maintenance funding – whether any transfer would be accompanied by a capital sum, maintenance dowry or other financial contribution to reflect the revenue burden being passed to LTC.

- b. Timing of transfer – the anticipated start date for any transfer of ownership, how this would be reconciled with the wider LGR timetable, and what transitional arrangements (insurance, condition surveys, outstanding works) would apply before legal completion.
- c. Legal and professional costs – who would meet conveyancing, Land Registry and survey costs, and whether RVBC would meet or contribute towards LTC’s reasonably incurred costs, given that the transfer process is being initiated by RVBC as part of its own LGR planning.

A response from RVBC to these questions had not been received at the time of writing this report, however Mr. Allen has responded saying once a clear position is available, he will get back to the Clerk. Members will be updated verbally at the meeting if a response is received beforehand.

4. Assets Identified Within Longridge in RVBC Ownership.

The Clerk has compiled the following summary of significant RVBC-owned assets located within the Longridge parish, for Members’ information and initial discussion. This list is not exhaustive and is intended as a starting point for Council to identify which, if any, assets it may wish to put forward for consideration.

Asset	Summary	Considerations
Windsor Avenue Allotments	Annual-charge lease to LTC already in place (£319.25, March 2026); RVBC freehold.	LTC already operates the site under lease.
Kestor Lane Playing Field	Play area, pump track, skate park, outdoor gym and pitches. Registered as a Centenary Field (2018). Skate Park and Gym already leased to LTC. RVBC invested £70,000 (2022 play area) and £100,000 (2025 pump track).	High amenity value and recent significant RVBC capital investment; ongoing maintenance liability for skatepark, play equipment, pump track and pitches would be substantial.
John Smiths Playing Field	Diamond Jubilee status (2013). RVBC secured a £24,000 Sita Trust grant for play equipment.	Established community asset; maintenance and play equipment replacement liability.
Mardale Road Playing Field (Brian Holden Memorial Playing Field)	Playing pitches, pavilion and car park. £300,000 refurbishment (2023) funded via UKSPF and a community levy. 3G pitches likely to be installed in 2026.	Pavilion and car park bring higher maintenance and insurance costs; recently refurbished, which may strengthen the case for a maintenance dowry.
Towneley Garden	RVBC has allocated £90,000 of UKSPF funding for a proposed events space; which should be completed in late summer 2026.	Recommended for transfer when Events Space project is complete (end of August 2026) and funding for Stage 2 is resolved.
Longridge Civic Hall and Community Centre	Multi-purpose community building with meeting rooms, gym and function spaces for hire, public toilets, car parking; used for community and civic events and occasionally as a polling station.	Significant strategic and community value, but a substantial building with associated running, repair and insurance costs.
Public Toilets, Berry Lane	Public convenience facility in fair condition, maintained to a functional standard.	Modest footprint but ongoing servicing and cleaning costs; importance as a town-centre amenity.

5. Considerations for Council

5.1 Financial implications.

Acquiring any asset would transfer ongoing maintenance, insurance, repair and (where applicable) additional staffing costs to LTC's precept. Several of the assets listed have benefited from significant recent RVBC capital investment (for example £100,000 at Receptions Ground in 2025 and £300,000 at Mardale Road in 2023); Members may wish to consider whether transfer should be conditional on RVBC providing a capital sum or maintenance dowry reflecting this investment and the future revenue burden, consistent with the questions raised in the Clerk's letter of 23 June.

5.2 Timing and LGR uncertainty.

As the Government's decision on Lancashire's future unitary structure is expected only shortly before RVBC's own end-of-July deadline, Council may wish to treat its July response as an indicative long list, expressly subject to further clarification once RVBC has answered the Clerk's outstanding questions and the outcome of LGR is known.

5.3 Legal and professional costs.

Conveyancing, survey and Land Registry costs can be material, particularly for sites with use restrictions (such as the Centenary Field status at Kestor Lane). Council should be mindful that, absent confirmation from RVBC, LTC could be exposed to professional costs for a process it has not itself initiated.

5.4 Strategic fit.

Some assets (such as Windsor Avenue Allotments, and the skatepark and gym at Recreation Ground) are already leased to and operated by LTC, making transfer of the freehold a relatively low-risk extension of existing arrangements. Others, such as Longridge Civic Hall and Towneley Garden, carry higher strategic value but also materially greater financial and operational commitment.

6. Consequences of Non-Transfer: LGR Implications

To assist Members in understanding the full context of the decision before them, this section sets out what is likely to happen to RVBC-owned assets within Longridge if they are not transferred to LTC before or during the LGR process. The purpose is not to pre-determine the Council's decision, but to ensure Members can weigh the risks of inaction alongside the risks of transfer.

6.1 The legal default: assets vest in the successor unitary authority

If no transfer is agreed before LGR is completed, all RVBC assets will automatically pass to whichever new unitary authority covers the Longridge area under the statutory transfer scheme that accompanies LGR. This is the legal default. LTC would have no automatic entitlement to those assets at that point, and any subsequent request for transfer would be a matter entirely at the discretion of the new authority, which will have its own priorities and asset strategy.

6.2 Risk of disposal for capital receipts

New unitary authorities will face significant financial pressure arising from the costs of structural reorganisation, including aligning pay and grading across multiple predecessor councils, managing legacy liabilities, and delivering savings. Disposal of assets considered surplus to requirements is one of the most straightforward ways for a new unitary to generate capital receipts in the short term.

Community facilities such as playing fields, pavilions, civic halls, and public conveniences that were maintained locally by a district council may be assessed differently by a large authority with a much wider geography and a different set of strategic priorities. There is a material risk that assets which are valued by the Longridge community could be identified as surplus and disposed of, particularly where they are revenue-negative and no local operator has been identified.

6.3 Risk of reduced or remotely managed services

Even where assets are retained by the new unitary rather than disposed of, management from a large authority covering a wide Lancashire geography is unlikely to be as locally responsive as RVBC or LTC. Maintenance schedules, booking arrangements, investment decisions, and local usage priorities may all be determined at a remove from the community they serve. RVBC's track record of locally-targeted investment in Longridge — including the pump track, the Mardale Road refurbishment, and the Towneley Garden events space project — reflects a district-level relationship with the town that a successor unitary will not replicate automatically.

6.4 Protections that survive regardless

Members should be aware that some protections attach to the land itself rather than to its owner, and would carry over regardless of who holds the asset after LGR:

- Recreation Ground Playing Field — the Centenary Field designation (registered by RVBC with Fields in Trust in 2018) protects the site in perpetuity for recreational use. No owner, whether a new unitary authority or otherwise, can overturn this protection without Fields in Trust's consent.
- John Smiths Playing Field — the Diamond Jubilee Field status carries similar moral weight and Fields in Trust protection against disposal for non-recreational purposes.

However, Members should note that these protections guard against outright disposal for non-recreational use; they do not guarantee adequate maintenance, continued local access, or sympathetic management. A designation that prevents a playing field from being sold for housing does not prevent it from falling into disrepair through under-investment.

6.5 The window of opportunity

The Government's decision on the future unitary structure for Lancashire is expected before 16 July 2026. Once LGR proceeds and assets are absorbed into the new unitary's estate, the leverage LTC currently holds — namely that RVBC is actively inviting parish and town councils to put forward transfer proposals — will be lost. A new unitary authority will conduct its own asset review, and LTC will be one of many town and parish councils across Lancashire making representations, without the benefit of a dedicated invitation process or an established relationship with the predecessor authority.

The Clerk therefore advises that the current process, whilst requiring careful consideration, represents a time-limited opportunity that is unlikely to recur in the same form. Members may wish to take a positive decision on which assets to put forward, even on an indicative basis, rather than defer to a future meeting at which the political and procedural context may be materially different.

Asset	Risk if not transferred	Protections that survive LGR
Civic Hall and Community Centre	Disposal or reduced local access; no designation protection	None specific – at discretion of new unitary
Windsor Avenue Allotments	Existing lease may be reviewed or terminated by new unitary	LTC lease provides some interim protection pending renewal
Recreation Ground Playing Field	Under-investment; loss of local management; skatepark/gym leases at new unitary’s discretion	Centenary Field designation – cannot be disposed of for non-recreational use
Mardale Road Playing Field	Pavilion and pitches managed remotely; reduced maintenance; possible disposal	None specific
John Smiths Playing Field	Reduced maintenance; possible disposal	Diamond Jubilee Field status – Fields in Trust protection against non-recreational disposal
Towneley Garden	Project completes August 2026; if not transferred, absorbed into new unitary with UKSPF obligations, complicating later transfer	UKSPF grant conditions restrict disposal during funding period
Berry Lane Public Toilets	Potential closure; public conveniences often early casualty of unitary cost-cutting	None

7. Revenue Analysis

A key element of the statutory test for any transfer is that the receiving council has a clear and sustainable plan for the maintenance and running of the asset. To assist Members in evaluating which assets might realistically satisfy that test, this section sets out the potential revenue-generating opportunities associated with each asset. Revenue income is unlikely to fully offset running costs unaided for most assets; this analysis should therefore be read alongside the maintenance dowry considerations in Section 5.1.

7.1 Longridge Civic Hall and Community Centre – Strong revenue potential

Of the assets identified, the Civic Hall presents the most significant opportunity for self-sustaining income. Established revenue streams would include:

- Room hire to community groups, voluntary organisations and local clubs, charged on an hourly or sessional basis;
- Private event and function hire (meetings, receptions and community celebrations);
- Commercial event and conference hire at market rates;
- Polling station fees from the Returning Officer;
- Vending, catering concession or community café arrangements, subject to facilities available.

Active, in-house management of bookings would maximise the margin available to LTC. At comparable community venues in Lancashire, hire income in the range of £20,000–£50,000 per annum is not untypical, though this depends heavily on building condition and the Council's capacity to promote and manage the facility. The Clerk recommends that a full condition survey and income modelling exercise be commissioned before any formal transfer commitment is made.

7.2 Windsor Avenue Allotments – Existing income, scope to grow

LTC already receives an annual income from users (£437 in 2025/26). Freehold transfer would enable LTC, remove the RVBC lease charges, and potentially expand provision. Allotment income is modest in absolute terms but reliable and low-cost to administer.

7.3 Recreational Ground Playing Field – Moderate revenue potential

LTC already holds leases for the skatepark and outdoor gym, so those income streams are already partially embedded. Freehold transfer of the wider site would open up additional possibilities:

- Temporary event licensing for outdoor community events on the open space;
- Sponsorship or naming rights for the pump track, following similar arrangements adopted by other councils.

Members should note that the Centenary Field designation (registered by RVBC in 2018) protects the site in perpetuity for recreational use, which limits commercial development options but does not preclude managed hire arrangements for sporting and community purposes.

7.4 Mardale Road – Brian Holden Memorial Playing Field – Moderate revenue potential

The recently refurbished pavilion is the principal income opportunity at this site.

Established income streams at comparable pavilion sites include:

- Changing facility and pavilion hire to football, cricket and other sports clubs on match days and for training;
- Function hire for community events;
- Car park charging, which is politically sensitive in a town context and would be a matter for Council to consider carefully.

The £300,000 UKSPF refurbishment (completed 2023) means the building is in good condition, which should reduce near-term maintenance demands. Officers would recommend clarifying with RVBC whether any UKSPF grant conditions attach to the commercialisation of the pavilion before proceeding.

7.5 John Smiths Playing Field – Limited revenue potential

As a primarily open recreation space, John Smiths Playing Field offers limited income-generating scope beyond occasional hire for junior sports. Revenue from this asset is likely to be modest and intermittent.

7.6 Towneley Garden – Emerging income potential

RVBC’s events space project at Towneley Garden is expected to complete by end of August 2026, and the UKSPF grant conditions are known and agreed with RVBC.

Once the events space is operational, the garden and events space could generate hire income from community events, market days, and commercial bookings. The extent of any commercial use restrictions within the UKSPF grant conditions will need to be reflected in the income projections within the autumn 2026 business case, which the Clerk will prepare following the project’s completion. Members should note that even with some grant-related constraints on commercial activity in the early years, the events space has the potential to become a meaningful income stream for LTC over time.

7.7 Berry Lane Public Toilets – Minimal income opportunities

Public toilet provision is inherently a cost rather than an income centre, but some income mitigation options are available:

- Community Toilet Scheme — commercial premises in the town centre may contribute toward the cost of public toilet provision in return for signage and promotion;
- Voluntary donation units, though income is typically very modest;
- Advertising panels, where permitted by planning and any relevant covenant.

7.8 Summary of revenue potential

Asset	Revenue potential	Principal income streams
Civic Hall and Community Centre	Strong	Room/function hire, commercial events, polling station fees, catering concession
Windsor Avenue Allotments	Low – reliable	Plot rents (current); scope to expand provision
Recreation Ground	Moderate	Pitch hire, community events, skatepark
Mardale Road Playing Field	Moderate	Pavilion and changing room hire, sports club lettings, possible car park charging
John Smiths Playing Field	Limited	Occasional ground hire
Towneley Garden	Moderate – emerging	Events space hire
Berry Lane Public Toilets	Minimal	Community Toilet Scheme, voluntary donations, advertising

Clerk’s overall assessment is that the Civic Hall, if well-managed, presents the strongest case for partial self-sufficiency; the playing fields and allotments can generate supplementary income but are unlikely to be self-sustaining; and the remaining assets are essentially cost centres with marginal income potential. For any asset where LTC proceeds to a formal business case, the Clerk recommends that income projections are prepared on a prudent basis, with a three-year financial model submitted to Council for approval before any transfer commitment is made.

8. Precept Implications

As Responsible Financial Officer, the Clerk is required to draw Members' attention to the financial implications of any decision that could materially affect the Council's budget. This section sets out the potential precept impact of asset transfers, using LTC's confirmed 2026/27 tax base and current precept for context. It is not intended to replace the detailed financial modelling that should accompany any formal business case, but to give Members a clear sense of the scale of financial commitment involved.

8.1 LTC's current financial position

LTC's 2026/27 Band D council tax precept is £32.28, calculated on a confirmed tax base of 3,296 Band D equivalent properties. Each £1.00 of additional net annual cost to LTC therefore equates to approximately 0.03p per Band D household. Conversely, every £3,296 of additional net annual expenditure increases the precept by approximately £1.00 per Band D. Members should bear this relationship in mind when considering the figures below.

8.2 Illustrative running cost estimates

The following table sets out illustrative annual running cost ranges for each asset, based on comparable facilities managed by town and parish councils in Lancashire. These figures represent gross costs before income or any maintenance dowry, and should be treated as indicative pending proper condition surveys and financial modelling.

Asset	Est. gross annual running cost	Est. annual income potential	Indicative net annual cost
Civic Hall and Community Centre	£40,000 – £80,000	£20,000 – £50,000	£0 – £60,000 depending on management model
Windsor Avenue Allotments	£2,000 – £5,000	£1,000 – £3,000	£1,000 – £4,000
Recreational Ground	£15,000 – £30,000	£5,000 – £12,000	£10,000 – £25,000
Mardale Road Playing Field	£18,000 – £35,000	£5,000 – £15,000	£10,000 – £30,000
John Smiths Playing Field	£8,000 – £15,000	£1,000 – £3,000	£7,000 – £14,000
Towneley Garden	To be assessed – project completes August 2026	Events space hire – to be modelled in autumn 2026 business case	Formal business case to Council autumn 2026
Berry Lane Public Toilets	£8,000 – £15,000	£500 – £2,000	£6,000 – £14,000

Note: All figures are indicative only and based on comparable facilities. Actual costs will depend on building condition surveys, staff implications, insurance premiums, and any maintenance dowry negotiated with RVBC. Professional financial modelling will be required before any transfer commitment is made.

8.3 Precept impact per Band D household

Using the illustrative net annual cost ranges above and LTC's confirmed 2026/27 tax base of 3,296 Band D equivalent properties, the precept impact per Band D household per year for each individual asset would be as follows. Figures in the final column show what the addition represents as a percentage of the current £32.28 Band D precept.

Asset	Low per Band D	High per Band D	As % of current £32.28 precept
Civic Hall and Community Centre	£0.00	£18.20	0% – 56.4% (range reflects management model)
Windsor Avenue Allotments	£0.30	£1.21	0.9% – 3.8%
Recreation Ground	£3.03	£7.58	9.4% – 23.5%
Mardale Road Playing Field	£3.03	£9.10	9.4% – 28.2%
John Smiths Playing Field	£2.12	£4.25	6.6% – 13.2%
Towneley Garden	TBC	TBC	Business case to Council autumn 2026
Berry Lane Public Toilets	£1.82	£4.25	5.6% – 13.2%

Note: Calculated on confirmed 2026/27 tax base of 3,296 Band D equivalent properties and current Band D precept of £32.28.

8.4 Cumulative precept impact

If LTC were to take on all six assets modellable at this stage, the cumulative indicative net annual cost would fall in the range of approximately £34,000 to £147,000 per year.

Towneley Garden is also included in LTC's July submission but cannot be fully modelled until the events space project is complete in August 2026; a dedicated business case will be brought to Full Council in autumn 2026. On LTC's confirmed tax base of 3,296 Band D equivalent properties, the six modellable assets represent a precept impact of approximately £10.32 to £44.60 per Band D household per year.

To place this in context:

- At the lower end (£10.32 per Band D), the cumulative addition would represent a 32% increase on the current £32.28 precept, taking the total LTC precept to approximately £42.60 per Band D.
- At the higher end (£44.60 per Band D), the cumulative addition would represent a 138% increase on the current precept — more than doubling what LTC currently charges — taking the total to approximately £76.88 per Band D.

Members should note that these figures represent a worst-case scenario in which no maintenance dowry is received from RVBC and income generation performs at the lower end of estimates. Even a modest maintenance dowry across the main assets could materially reduce the net precept impact, particularly in the early years of operation. Nonetheless, the figures make clear that taking on multiple assets simultaneously without robust income plans and financial support from RVBC would represent a very significant financial commitment for a council of LTC's size.

8.5 The RFO's recommendation on financial process

As RFO, the Clerk recommends that, before any individual transfer is formally committed to, Council should require:

- A detailed business case for each proposed asset, incorporating a three-year income and expenditure projection on a prudent basis;
- Confirmation of the maintenance dowry or capital contribution (if any) to be provided by RVBC;
- A building or site condition survey, identifying any material repair or compliance liabilities;
- Clarification of additional staffing implications and any associated employment costs;
- A precept impact assessment using LTC's confirmed 2026/27 tax base of 3,296 and agreed income assumptions;
- Specialist VAT advice where the asset will generate income subject to VAT;
- A review and quotation for any additional insurance cover required.

The Council's Financial Regulations require Members to have regard to the RFO's advice on financial matters. The Clerk's advice is that proceeding to formal business cases on a prioritised basis — beginning with those assets where LTC already has an operational relationship (Windsor Avenue Allotments, skatepark and gym at the Receptions Ground) and those with the strongest income potential (Civic Hall) — represents the most financially prudent approach, and that committing to transfer of all assets simultaneously without detailed financial modelling would not be consistent with LTC's obligations as a responsible custodian of public funds.

9. Recommendations

Having regard to the analysis set out in this report and the advice of the Responsible Financial Officer in Section 8, Council is recommended to:

- a. Note the contents of this report, the correspondence at Appendices A and B, and the RFO's financial advice in Section 8, including the illustrative precept impact analysis based on LTC's confirmed 2026/27 tax base of 3,296 Band D equivalent properties and current Band D precept of £32.28;
- b. Agree, on a prioritised basis, which assets it wishes the Clerk to put forward to RVBC for initial consideration, having regard to the RFO's recommendation that a phased approach is financially prudent, beginning with those assets where LTC already has an operational relationship (Windsor Avenue Allotments; skatepark and outdoor gym) and those with the strongest income potential (Longridge Civic Hall and Community Centre);
- c. Agree that Towneley Garden should be included in LTC's July 2026 submission to RVBC as a priority asset, noting that Towneley Garden is a focal point in the town, that the UKSPF grant conditions are already known and agreed with RVBC, and that RVBC's events space project is expected to complete by end of August 2026;

- d. Resolve that any submission to RVBC shall be expressed as indicative and without commitment, and shall be subject to: (i) satisfactory written answers from RVBC to the financial, timing and legal questions raised in the Clerk's letter of 23 June 2026; (ii) the outcome of LGR being known; and (iii) Full Council approval of a detailed business case for each asset before any transfer is formally committed to;
- e. Resolve that no asset transfer shall be formally committed to without Full Council having first approved a detailed business case incorporating: a three-year income and expenditure projection on a prudent basis; a building or site condition survey; confirmation of any staff implications and associated employment costs; a precept impact assessment based on LTC's confirmed tax base; specialist VAT advice where applicable; and a quotation for any additional insurance cover required;
- f. Authorise the Clerk to seek guidance from LALC on the legal and practical aspects of community asset transfer, legal capacity during the LGR transition period, and LTC's powers to hold and manage each category of asset;
- g. Authorise the Clerk to submit LTC's formal indicative response to RVBC by the end of July 2026 deadline, reflecting Council's decisions under recommendations (b), (c) and (d) above; and
- h. Request that the Clerk report back to Full Council once a substantive response has been received from RVBC, and prior to the submission of any individual business case for Members' approval.

Appendix A



RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

please ask for: Adam Allen
direct line: 01200 414461
e-mail: Adam.allen@ribblevalley.gov.uk
my ref:
your ref:
date: 16 June 2026

Council Offices
Church Walk
CLITHEROE
Lancashire BB7 2RA

01200 425111
www.ribblevalley.gov.uk

Dear Parish Councils

As you will be aware, councils across Lancashire continue to make plans for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). LGR will see the county, district and unitary councils across Lancashire restructured into a smaller number of unitary councils which will deliver all services across local government. Various options are currently being appraised by the government which will see the creation of two, three, four or five unitary councils across Lancashire depending on which proposal the government decides to take forward. The government's decision is expected before the Parliamentary recess starts on 16 July 2026.

Ribble Valley Borough Council (RVBC) continues to prepare for LGR including how best to manage land and assets currently in the council's ownership. Consideration is being given to whether, for some assets, transfer to a parish or town council may offer best value and better serve the needs of residents and communities going forward.

Several statutory tests would have to be met to enable transfer, and the council would only be able to facilitate this where there is a clear and sustainable plan for the maintenance and running of assets if transferred.

We are writing to ask your parish council to set out whether it wishes Ribble Valley Borough Council (RVBC) to consider the transfer of any asset within your parish area and if so, on what basis, and with a clear rationale. Once we have a long list of those assets' parishes wish to be considered we will be able to undertake an options appraisal and progress any viable options (with the above statutory tests in mind).

Please respond by the end of July 2026 with the name of any asset you wish to be formally considered and details of the rationale for such consideration.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adam Allen'.

Adam Allen
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

Longridge Town Council

Station Building
Berry Lane
Longridge
Preston
Lancashire PR3 3JP

Mr Adam Allen

Director of Community Services
Ribble Valley Borough Council
Council Offices
Church Walk
Clitheroe
Lancashire BB7 2RA

By email: adam.allen@ribblevalley.gov.uk

23 June 2026

Dear Mr Allen

Local Government Reorganisation – Potential Transfer of Assets to Longridge Town Council

Thank you for your letter of 16 June 2026 regarding Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and the Council's consideration of asset transfers to parish and town councils.

Longridge Town Council (LTC) welcomes the opportunity to consider whether any RVBC assets within the parish might appropriately transfer to the Town Council, and will respond formally with details of any specific assets and supporting rationale by the end of July 2026, as requested.

Before LTC can identify and assess potential assets, and to enable the Council to satisfy itself that any transfer would represent a sustainable and viable option, we would be grateful for clarification on the following points, which we anticipate will need to inform the Council's decision-making and any business case prepared in support of a transfer request:

1. Ongoing upkeep and maintenance funding

How is it envisaged that the future upkeep, maintenance and running costs of any transferred asset would be met? In particular, we would welcome RVBC's view on whether any transfer would be accompanied by a capital sum, maintenance dowry, or other financial contribution to reflect the ongoing revenue burden being passed to the receiving council, given the statutory requirement referred to in your letter for a clear and sustainable maintenance plan.

2. Timing of transfer

What is the anticipated start date for the Town Council assuming ownership of any agreed asset, and how would this be reconciled with the timetable for LGR itself, noting that the Government's "minded to" decision on the future unitary structure for Lancashire is expected ahead of the Parliamentary recess on 16 July 2026? We would welcome clarity on whether transfers would be expected to complete before, during, or after the wider reorganisation process, and what transitional arrangements (for example, insurance, asset condition surveys, and any outstanding works) would apply in the period before legal completion.

3. Legal and professional costs

Who would be responsible for meeting the legal and other professional costs associated with any transfer (for example, conveyancing, land registry fees, surveys, and Land Registry title rectification where required)? We would be grateful to know whether RVBC would meet its own costs and contribute towards, or meet in full, the Town Council's reasonably incurred costs in progressing a transfer, given that such transfers are being initiated as part of RVBC's own LGR asset planning rather than at the Town Council's request.

Clarification on these points would assist the Town Council considerably in evaluating which, if any, assets it wishes to put forward for consideration, and in preparing a robust and sustainable case in line with the statutory tests referred to in your letter.

I would be happy to discuss this further by telephone or in person at your convenience, and look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely



Michael Hill
Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer
Longridge Town Council

Agenda Item 10

For Information



Meeting:	Full Council
Meeting Date:	8 July 2026
Title:	Local Government Reorganisation
Submitted by:	Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

1. Purpose

This report provides Members with an update on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Lancashire, the position of Ribble Valley Borough Council (RVBC) within that process, and the most recent correspondence from the Secretary of State indicating that a decision on the new structure is expected before Parliament rises for the summer recess.

2. Background

LGR is a national programme led by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), under which most of England's remaining two-tier areas are being reorganised into unitary authorities. In Lancashire, this means the County Council and the 12 district/borough councils (including RVBC) would be replaced by a small number of new unitary councils, each typically serving a population of 500,000 or more, although exceptions have been made elsewhere in the country.

Lancashire's 15 constituent authorities have worked jointly through the process to date. Five business case proposals were submitted to MHCLG on 28 November 2025, ranging from a two-unitary to a five-unitary model:

- Two unitary authorities (Lancashire County Council proposal) — North and South Lancashire.
- Three unitary authorities (Blackburn with Darwen, Fylde, Hyndburn, Rossendale and Wyre proposal).
- “Four Lancashire” — the model backed by RVBC, Lancaster and Preston, under which Ribble Valley would join Lancaster and Preston to form a North Lancashire unitary authority serving around 374,000 residents.
- An alternative four-unitary model.
- Five unitary authorities (Burnley and Pendle proposal).

A statutory public consultation on these proposals ran from 5 February to 26 March 2026. RVBC and its councillors have consistently and unanimously supported the Four Lancashire model, joining with Preston and Lancaster, on the basis that it offers the best combination of financial sustainability and local responsiveness for the Borough, including Longridge.

3. Current Position

Following the close of the statutory consultation, Lancashire's authorities have continued to work through the next stages of the process, including joint engagement with MHCLG on the Structural Changes Order (SCO) — the legal instrument that will set out the detailed timetable for abolishing existing councils and establishing the new unitary authorities, together with transitional arrangements. The 15 Lancashire councils submitted a joint response on this in recent months.

Government guidance has consistently pointed to a ministerial decision on the preferred unitary structure for Lancashire being made in “Summer 2026”, with national commentary suggesting decisions for the remaining reorganisation areas (including Lancashire) are likely in July, once consultation responses for all areas have been assessed.

The Town Clerk, has been made aware that the Secretary of State has recently written to RVBC confirming that LGR in Lancashire remains on track, and that a decision on the new unitary/combined authority structure is expected to be announced before Parliament rises for the summer recess (currently scheduled for around 16 July 2026 in the House of Commons). This is consistent with the wider national programme, under which decisions for other reorganisation areas (such as Essex, Hampshire, Norfolk and Suffolk) were announced by the Secretary of State on 25 March 2026, with Lancashire's decision having been held back to a later point in the summer timetable.

At the time of writing, the precise model the Government intends to confirm for Lancashire — and whether it follows the option backed by RVBC — has not been published. Members should treat any forecast of the outcome with caution until the Secretary of State's formal announcement is made.

Once the Secretary of State's decision is announced, elections to the new “shadow” unitary authority are expected to take place in May 2027, with the shadow authority then operating alongside the outgoing councils for around a year before formally taking over all services on vesting day, 1 April 2028. As part of this transition, the number of elected councillors representing the Ribble Valley area will reduce significantly compared with the current arrangement: RVBC currently has 40 councillors across 26 wards, and indicative figures suggest the Ribble Valley area would be represented by between 16 and 18 councillors on the new unitary authority — a reduction of more than half. Under the Four Lancashire model, the new authority would serve some 374,000 residents across Ribble Valley, Preston and Lancaster, with each member therefore representing a substantially larger electorate than at present. RVBC's own elected members have raised concerns about this reduction in representation, characterising it as a potential “democratic deficit” for rural areas such as the Ribble Valley. Final councillor numbers and ward boundaries for the new authority will be confirmed through a subsequent boundary review by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, following the Secretary of State's structural decision.

4. Indicative Timetable

- 28 November 2025 — Final business case proposals submitted to MHCLG.
- 5 February – 26 March 2026 — Statutory public consultation.
- Summer 2026 (anticipated before the Commons rises for recess, c. 16 July 2026) — Secretary of State's decision on the preferred unitary structure for Lancashire.
- Following the decision — Structural Changes Order made, subject to Parliamentary approval.
- May 2027 — Elections to the new “shadow” unitary authority; the Ribble Valley area is expected to be represented by between 16 and 18 councillors, down from RVBC's current 40.
- 1 April 2028 — Vesting day: new unitary council(s) go live; existing county and district/borough councils, including RVBC, cease to exist.

5. Implications for Longridge Town Council

Parish and town councils, including Longridge Town Council, are not directly affected by LGR in terms of abolition — town and parish councils continue under the new structure. However, the Council's principal authority relationships, including with RVBC for planning, environmental health, leisure and other district-level services, and with Lancashire County Council for highways, social care and education, will in due course transfer to whichever new unitary authority is confirmed for this area.

This has a direct bearing on a number of live workstreams, in particular the proposed transfer of assets from RVBC to the Town Council (reported separately on this agenda), where the timing and terms of transfer may need to account for the incoming unitary authority's position. The Clerk will continue to monitor announcements and will report further once the Secretary of State's decision is published, with a fuller assessment of practical implications for the Council brought to a future meeting.

6. Recommendation

That Council notes the contents of this report, and that the Clerk be authorised to report further to Members as soon as the Secretary of State's decision is announced.



Meeting:	Full Council
Meeting Date:	8 July 2026
Title:	Longridge Community Hospital - Update
Submitted by:	Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

1. Purpose

To update members on the current position regarding Longridge Community Hospital, drawing on the most recent statements from NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB), Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust (LSCFT), local campaigners, and Parliament.

2. Background:

- February 2025: The 15-bed inpatient ward was reduced to 5 beds and relocated to the ground floor, after fire safety inspections raised concerns about evacuating frail and older patients from the first floor in an emergency.
- November 2025: Further inspections identified additional fire safety issues. LSCFT and the ICB took the decision to temporarily close the remaining 5 inpatient beds altogether.
- December 2025: The 15-bed inpatient service reopened temporarily at Chorley Hospital on the Cuerden Ward, now known as “Longridge at Cuerden”. It opened on 28 December 2025 and is staffed by the same clinical team who worked at Longridge.
- Throughout this period, outpatient and community clinics at the Longridge site itself have remained open and unaffected.

3. The Current Position (as of 30 June 2026)

3.1 The inpatient ward

- The 15-bed inpatient ward remains based at Chorley Hospital (“Longridge at Cuerden”) and continues to operate 24 hours a day.
- Admission criteria have widened: patients must now be registered with a Central Lancashire GP (rather than only a Longridge GP) and require ongoing medical, nursing or therapy care.
- By early May 2026, the Chorley-based ward had cared for around 85 patients since the move, with an average stay of around two weeks.

3.2 The cost of reopening at Longridge

- NHS bosses have told residents it would cost approximately £8 million to reinstate the ward at the Longridge site, principally due to fire safety and structural (load-bearing masonry) works needed to bring the building up to modern standards.
- That capital funding is not currently allocated to Longridge, although the ICB has confirmed funding of this kind exists elsewhere in the wider Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS capital programme (an annual pot of around £100 million).
- At a public meeting on 7 May 2026, ICB Chief Commissioning Officer Craig Harris said there is a long-term commitment to retain “a hospital” in Longridge, but he could not guarantee that the 15-bed ward specifically would be part of future plans.

3.3 No closure decision has been taken

- NHS leaders have repeatedly stated there is “no intention of closing Longridge hospital.” No formal decision to permanently close the ward, or the hospital, has been announced.
- Equally, no funded timetable or commitment to restore the ward to Longridge has yet been published. The position remains under review.
- The ICB's most recent published statement (11 May 2026) restates the current arrangements at Chorley but does not set out a timeline or new funding commitment.

4. Services Currently Available at the Longridge Site

The hospital building itself remains open. According to the Trust's most recently updated service listing (last updated 7 May 2026), the following clinics continue to operate from Longridge Community Hospital:

- Heart failure clinic,
- Podiatry
- Phlebotomy (blood tests) this may not be the case as at June 2026

Note: an earlier accessibility listing for the site also referenced Baby Clinic, District Nurses, Speech and Language, Healthy Minds, Orthoptist and Quit Squad services. We have not been able to confirm whether all of these remain in place.

5. The Community Campaign

- The “Help Save Longridge Community Hospital” campaign group has held several peaceful protests since March 2026, including a demonstration of around 100 people outside the hospital and outside the Council Offices on 20 June.
- Ribble Valley MP Maya Ellis organised a public meeting at Longridge Civic Hall on 7 May 2026, attended by around 200 residents, where ICB and Trust representatives answered questions.
- Mrs Ellis has launched a petition calling on the ICB to commit to a full reopening of inpatient services at Longridge, and to provide a clear timeline for resolving fire safety concerns. The petition remains open via her website.
- Residents' main concerns centre on the difficulty of visiting relatives at Chorley — a journey campaigners describe as requiring up to four buses and around four hours round trip without a car.

6. Parliamentary Activity

- 25 November 2025: Maya Ellis raised the closure directly with the Health Minister in the House of Commons on the day it was announced, asking whether the Government expects ICBs to keep community hospitals open rather than centralising services.
- 16 June 2026: A Westminster Hall debate on “Community Hospitals” (led by Dr Roz Savage MP) discussed similar ward and bed closures affecting community hospitals across the country, including in Gloucestershire, Devon, Somerset, and West Sussex. Longridge was not named directly in this debate, but the Government's response is relevant: **Ministers confirmed that decisions on individual services remain a matter for local ICBs, not central government, and that there is currently no national framework or funding ringfenced specifically for protecting existing community hospitals as the NHS rolls out its new “neighbourhood health centres” programme.**
- No Adjournment Debate or Westminster Hall debate specifically on Longridge Hospital has yet taken place.

7. What Happens Next

- The ICB has indicated that further options for the long-term future of the hospital will be developed, following the 7 May public meeting, but no published timetable for this work has yet been issued.
- Longridge Town Council were invited to a meeting on 2 July with the ICB at Park House.
- The Clerk will continue to monitor ICB and Trust announcements and will share further updates with members as they become available.

8. Recommendation

That Council notes the contents of this report, and requests the Clerk to provide regular updates.