

# **STANDING ORDERS**

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An asterisk against a Standing Order indicates that it is required by statute.

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An asterisk against a Standing Order indicates that it is required by statute.

## STANDING ORDER 1

### Meetings of the Authority

1. The Authority shall hold an annual meeting in May/June each year. The first item of business on the agenda for the annual meeting shall be the appointment of Chairperson for the ensuing year.
2. In addition to the annual meeting of the Authority and any extraordinary meetings convened by the Chairperson or by members of the Authority in accordance with paragraph (4) below, meetings for the transaction of general business shall be held on such dates and times as may be determined by the Authority at its annual meeting, provided that any such date and time may be varied at a subsequent meeting. There shall be a minimum of five meetings a year; late May/early June (Annual Meeting), late September, early December, early February and early April.
3. In these Standing Orders 'ordinary meeting' means a meeting described in paragraph (1) or (2) above other than a meeting convened by the Chairperson or by members of the Authority in accordance with paragraph (4) below. The term 'year' means the period from an Annual meeting in one calendar year to the Annual Meeting in the next following year.
4. An extraordinary meeting of the Authority can be called at the request of the Chairperson or by at least four members of the Authority, irrespective of which Constituent Authority they are from, in writing signed by them and given to the Secretary specifying the business for which the meeting is to be called.

## STANDING ORDER 2

### Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Authority

The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Authority shall be appointed at the annual meeting for the ensuing year. When a casual vacancy occurs for either of these offices, an appointment to fill the vacancy shall be made at the next meeting (other than an extraordinary meeting).

## STANDING ORDER 3

### Chairperson of the Meeting

1. In the absence of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson will preside at a meeting of the Authority. In the absence of both the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, a Chairperson will be appointed for the meeting.

2. Any power or duty of the Chairperson in relation to the conduct of a meeting may be exercised by the person presiding at the meeting.

#### STANDING ORDER 4

##### Quorum

1. The quorum prescribed by statute for meetings of the Authority is one third of the whole number of members. Business shall not be transacted at a meeting of the Authority or of any Committee unless at least one third of voting members are present and at least one member from each constituent authority.

This paragraph shall not apply to meetings of the Standards Committee or its sub committees.

2. If, during any meeting of the Authority, the Chairperson after counting the number of members present, declares that there is not a quorum present, the meeting shall stand adjourned. The consideration of any business not transacted shall be adjourned to a time fixed by the Chairperson at the time the meeting is adjourned, or, if he/she does not fix a time, to the next ordinary meeting of the Authority.

#### STANDING ORDER 5

##### Minutes of the Authority

1. At a meeting of the Authority at which minutes of a previous meeting are submitted for approval as a correct record, the Chairperson shall move that those minutes be so approved.
2. No motion or discussion shall take place upon the minutes, except upon their accuracy, and any matter concerning their accuracy shall be raised by amendment.
3. If no such matter is raised, or if it is raised then as soon as it has been disposed of, the Chairperson shall sign the minutes.

#### STANDING ORDER 6

##### Questions by Members

1. At a meeting of the Authority, and subject to the following paragraphs, a member may ask the Chairperson of the Authority any question relating to a matter concerning the function of the Authority.

2. The text of any question not related to an item already under consideration at the meeting shall be submitted in writing to the Secretary not less than two clear days before the meeting at which the member proposes to ask the question.
3. With the permission of the Chairperson of the meeting, a member of the Authority may ask a question relating to urgent business of which notice has not been given as required by paragraph (2) above. The text of any such question shall, if possible, be delivered to the Secretary not later than two hours before the meeting at which the question is to be asked.
4. After a question has been replied to, the member who asked it may ask one supplementary question for the purpose of clarifying the reply which has been given. A member asking such a supplementary question shall confine himself/herself to the substance of the original question, and shall not introduce any new matter which did not fall within the scope of the original question. In paragraphs (5) - (8) of this Standing Order, the word 'question' shall include such a supplementary question.
5. Every question shall be put and answered without discussion unless otherwise determined by the Chairperson.
6. An answer may take the form of a direct oral answer, or, where the reply to the question cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer, or where the desired information is contained in a publication of the Authority by a reference to that publication. A written answer will normally be given within 5 working days of the meeting at which the question has been asked.
7. No resolution shall be moved with reference to any question or reply to a question.
8. If the Chairperson of the meeting is of the opinion that the question is out of order, or of a personal character, or in the interests of the Authority it is undesirable, he/she shall so inform the member and shall not allow the question to be put.

## **STANDING ORDER 6a**

### **Public Participation**

1. At a meeting of the Authority, and subject to the following paragraphs, questions/comments can be put by any member of the public – individuals, representatives of Town and Parish Councils, Community Liaison Forums, Urban Community Councils or voluntary and other external organisations, including businesses.  
(Questions will not normally be accepted from employees of the Authority as they have sufficient channels of communication, both internally and through their representative bodies).

2. Up to fifteen minutes will be allowed in total for questions/comments.
3. Speakers will be invited on a first come first served basis. Anyone wishing to speak should either write in advance to the Clerk to outline his or her question or statement, or talk to the Clerk before the meeting starts. They will be asked to complete a form summarising their question or statement, which will be passed to the Chairman.
4. Questions/statements should relate to the Authority's responsibilities and affect Bedfordshire or Luton.
5. The Chairman may invite each speaker to address Members of the Authority in order that they may be clearly identified and hear better. Questions or statements should be directed to the Chairman.
6. Each person will be able to ask up to two questions (subject to paragraph 7 below) but will be limited to a maximum of three minutes in which to do so. The Clerk will time each speaker to ensure that s/he does not exceed three minutes. If a speaker continues for longer the Chairman will ask him/her to stop. No more than three speakers will normally be permitted per subject at a meeting (subject to the Chairman's discretion).
7. The Chairman will deal with the question/statement or request that an appropriate Member (or Officer) reply orally. It is open to the Chairman to decide whether the questioner should have the opportunity to seek clarification of the reply or ask one supplementary question.
8. Any questioner who attends but does not receive a response through lack of time will be sent a written reply within five working days after the meeting.
9. The Chairman will stop persons from speaking at any time if s/he considers the question or statement to:
  - be defamatory or improper.
  - be outside the responsibilities of the Authority.
  - relate to the performance or employment of individual Authority and/or Brigade staff.
  - concern a matter in which a right of appeal or review exists.
  - concern a matter which is 'confidential or 'exempt' business including individual cases under investigation or sub-judice and allegations of crime or individual complaints against employees.

## STANDING ORDER 7

### Motions and Amendments

1. Any member may place an item or motion on the agenda of a meeting of the Authority by giving notice of it in writing to the Secretary at least ten clear days before the meeting.
2. A motion or amendment shall not be discussed unless it has been proposed

and seconded, and it shall, if required by the Chairperson, be put into writing and handed to the Chairperson before it is further discussed or put to the meeting.

3. A member may not propose or second a motion or amendment on which he/she is disqualified from voting.

## STANDING ORDER 8

### Motions Affecting Persons Employed by the Authority

If any question arises at a meeting of the Authority or a committee as to the appointment, promotion, dismissal, salary, superannuation/pension, conditions of service or the conduct of any person employed by the Authority, such question shall not be the subject of discussion until the Authority or committee, as the case may be, has decided whether or not the power of exclusion of the public under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 shall be exercised.

## STANDING ORDER 9

### Amendments to Motions

1. An amendment shall be relevant to the motion and shall be either:
  - a. to refer a subject of debate for further consideration or reconsideration;
  - b. to leave out words;
  - c. to leave out words and insert or add others;
  - d. to insert or add words;

but such omission, insertion or addition of words shall not have the effect of merely negating a motion before the Authority.
2. If an amendment is lost, other amendments may be moved on the original motion. If an amendment is carried, the motion as amended shall take the place of the original motion and shall become the motion upon which any further amendment may be moved.
3. Only one amendment may be moved and discussed at a time and no further amendment shall be moved until the amendment under discussion has been disposed of.

## STANDING ORDER 10

### Alteration or Withdrawal of Motion

1. A member may, with the consent of the Authority and without discussion, alter a motion of which he/she has given notice or, with the further consent of the seconder, alter a motion which he/she has moved, if in either case the alteration is one which could be made as an amendment.
2. A proposer of a motion or of an amendment may, with the concurrence of the seconder and the consent of the Authority, withdraw the motion or amendment which he/she has proposed, and no member shall speak upon it after the proposer has thus asked permission for its withdrawal, unless such permission shall have been refused.
3. The giving or refusal of the consent of the Authority to the alteration or withdrawal of a motion or amendment shall be signified without discussion.

## STANDING ORDER 11

### Right of Reply

The mover of a motion has a right to reply at the close of the debate on the motion, immediately before it is put to the vote. If an amendment is moved, the mover of the original motion shall also have a right of reply at the close of the debate on the amendment, and shall not otherwise speak on the amendment. The mover of the amendment shall have a right of reply to the debate on his/her amendment immediately before the mover of the original motion has his/her opportunity under this Standing Order to reply to the debate on the amendment.

## STANDING ORDER 12

### Motions which may be moved during Debate

When a motion is under debate, no other motion shall be moved except the following:

- a. to amend the motion;
- b. to seek leave to withdraw a motion;
- c. to adjourn the debate;
- d. to suspend Standing Orders in accordance with Standing Order 30;
- e. to proceed to the next business;
- f. that the question be now put;
- g. that a member be not further heard;

- h. by the Chairperson under Standing Order 18(3) that a member do leave the meeting;
- i. a motion under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, to exclude the public.

### STANDING ORDER 13

#### Points of Order

1. A member shall be entitled to be heard forthwith on a point of order or in personal explanation. A point of order shall relate only to an alleged breach of a Standing Order or statutory provision and on rising, the member shall first specify the Standing Order or statutory provision and the way in which he/she considers it has been broken. A personal explanation shall be confined to some material part of a former speech by him/her which may appear to have been misunderstood in the present debate.
2. The ruling of the Chairperson on a point of order or on the admissibility of a personal explanation shall not be open to discussion.

### STANDING ORDER 14

#### Next Business

1. A member may move at the conclusion of a speech of another member, unless the Chairperson considers that the matter has been insufficiently discussed, 'that the Authority proceed to the next business' or, if there is no other business to be transacted, 'that the Authority adjourn'.
2. The proposer of such a motion may speak thereon but the seconding of the motion shall be formal and without comment and there shall be no debate on the motion.
3. On the seconding of the motion, the Chairperson shall first give the mover of the original motion an opportunity to speak on it and then put to the vote the motion of proceed to the next business or to adjourn the Authority.
4. If that motion is carried, the original motion shall be considered as withdrawn.

### STANDING ORDER 15

#### Adjournment of Debate

1. A member may move that the debate be moved to a later hour or on another occasion may, at the conclusion of the speech of another member, move that

the debate be adjourned to that hour or occasion.

2. If the member does not specify an hour or occasion, the motion shall be deemed to intend that the debate shall be resumed at the next ordinary meeting of the Authority.
3. The proposer of such a motion may speak thereon but the seconding of the motion shall be formal and without comment and there shall be no debate on the motion except that the mover of the original motion may speak on it.
4. On the resumption after adjournment of an interrupted debate, the Authority shall proceed to the further consideration of the adjourned business as though the meeting had been continuous for the purposes of these Standing Orders.

### STANDING ORDER 16

#### Closure

1. A member may at the conclusion of the speech of another member, move 'that the question be now put' (which is in these Standing Orders referred to as 'the closure').
2. The proposal and seconding of the closure shall be formal and without comment and there shall be no debate on it. The closure shall be put immediately to the vote unless it appears to the Chairperson that the proposition to which it is sought to apply the closure has not been sufficiently discussed.
3. If the closure is carried, the motion or amendment which is the subject of the interrupted debate shall be put without further discussion, subject to the mover of the amendment and the mover of the original motion first having a right of reply.

### STANDING ORDER 17

#### Respect for Chair

Whenever the Chairperson so instructs during a debate, the Authority, including any member speaking, shall be silent.

### STANDING ORDER 18

#### Conduct of Members

1. A member shall direct his/her speech to the question under discussion or to a personal explanation or to a point of order, and shall not impute motives or use offensive expressions to or about any other member.

2. If any member in the opinion of the Chairperson has misconducted or is misconducting him/herself by persistently disregarding the ruling of the Chair, or by behaving irregularly, improperly, or offensively, or by wilfully obstructing the business of the Authority, or by tedious repetition or unbecoming language in his/her speech, the Chairperson or any other member may move 'That the member named be not further heard', and such motion if seconded shall be put and determined without discussion.
3. If the member named continues his/her misconduct after a motion under the last previous paragraph has been carried, the Chairperson shall either:
  - a. move 'That the member named do leave the meeting' (in which case the motion shall be put and determined without seconding or discussion); or
  - b. adjourn the meeting of the Authority for such period as he/she in his/her discretion shall consider expedient.

## STANDING ORDER 19

### General Disturbances

1. If a member of the public interrupts the proceedings at any meeting, the Chairperson shall warn him/her. If he/she continues the interruption, the Chairperson shall order his/her removal from the room. In case of general disturbance in any part of the room open to the public, the Chairperson shall order that part to be cleared.
2. If, in the opinion of the Chairperson, misconduct or obstruction renders the due and orderly dispatch of business impossible, the Chairperson, in addition to any other power vested in him/her, may without the question being put, suspend the meeting for a period not exceeding 30 minutes.

## STANDING ORDER 20

### Voting

1. Every proposition shall, unless otherwise required by these Standing Orders or Statute, be determined by show of hands or, at the discretion of the Chairperson, by voices.
2. In taking the votes on any proposition, those members only shall be entitled to vote who are present in the room when the proposition is put by the Chairperson.
3. After a proposition is put by the Chairperson, but before the vote is taken, any four members by show of hands may require that the voting shall be recorded

in the minutes of the meeting so as to show whether each member present gave his/her vote for or against that proposition or abstained from voting.

- \*4. Immediately after a vote is taken, a member has the right to require that the minutes show whether he/she cast his/her vote for or against the question or whether he/she abstained from voting.

## STANDING ORDER 21

### Appointments by the Authority

1. Every candidate nominated to represent the Authority in any capacity or for any position to be filled by the Authority, shall be openly proposed and seconded.
2. At the close of nominations, the Chairperson shall state the names of the candidates who have been duly proposed and seconded and the number of vacancies to be filled if the number is limited.
3. If the number of nominations does not exceed the number of vacancies or if the number of vacancies is not limited, the Chairperson shall immediately put the appointment of the duly nominated candidates collectively as a substantive motion upon which no amendment may be moved.
4. If the number of nominations exceeds the number of vacancies, there shall be a secret ballot of the members present at the meeting in which each member of the Authority may vote for as many candidates as there are vacancies to be filled.
5. No candidate shall be appointed unless the number of votes cast in his/her favour exceeds half the number of persons voting. If in any ballot no candidate received the number of votes entitling his/her to be appointed, the names of those who receive no votes and the name of the one who received the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh ballot be taken, and so on, until all the vacancies are filled.
6. Any ballot shall be conducted by the Monitoring Officer whose return shall be final and conclusive.

## STANDING ORDER 22

### Record of Attendances

A register of those members present at meetings of the Authority or any of its committees or sub committees shall be kept by the Secretary.

## STANDING ORDER 23

### Interest in Contracts or Other Matters

(See Code of Conduct)

## STANDING ORDER 24

### Candidates for Appointment

- \*1. Every appointment to a post under the Authority, statutorily required or otherwise, shall be made by the Authority unless determined otherwise.
2. Canvassing of members of the Authority, directly or indirectly, for any appointment under the Authority, shall disqualify the candidate concerned for that appointment. The purpose of this paragraph of this Standing Order shall be included in any form of application.
3. A member of the Authority shall not solicit for any person any appointment under the Authority, but this shall not preclude a member from giving a written testimonial of a candidate's ability, experience, or character for submission to the Authority or the Chief Fire Officer with an application for appointment.
4. A candidate for any appointment under the Authority who knows that he/she is related to any member or employee of the Authority shall disclose that relationship in his/her application. A candidate who fails to disclose such a relationship shall be liable to be disqualified for the appointment and if appointed, shall be liable to dismissal without notice. The purpose of this paragraph of this Standing Order shall be included in any form of application.
5. Every member and senior officer of the Authority shall disclose to the Chief Fire Officer any relationship known to him/her to exist between himself/herself and any person whom he/she knows is a candidate for an appointment under the Authority.

## STANDING ORDER 25

### Meetings of Committees

1. All meetings of the Authority and its committees or sub committees shall be summoned by the Secretary.
2. No business shall be transacted at an ordinary meeting of a committee or sub committee other than that specified in the summons relating thereto except as a matter of urgency and with the consent of the Chairperson of the committee or sub committee.
3. The Chairperson of a committee or sub committee or the Chairperson of the

Authority may cause a special meeting of the committee or sub committee to be called at any time.

4. A special meeting of a committee or sub committee can be called on the request of at least three members of the committee or sub committee, in writing signed by them and given to the Secretary specifying the business for which the meeting is to be called.

## STANDING ORDER 26

### Proceedings of Committees and Sub Committees

1. The quorum of every committee and sub committee, unless a special quorum is otherwise prescribed, shall be at least one third of the whole number of the committee or sub committee, provided that in no case shall a quorum of a committee or sub committee be less than three members.
2. With the exception of the Standards Committee, If a member is unable to attend a meeting of a committee or sub committee on which he/she serves, the Secretary may on the recommendation of the Chairperson of that Committee or Sub Committee or the Chairperson of the Authority appoint as substitute another member of the Authority to attend in his/her place, such substitution to be notified to the Secretary in advance of the meeting. Any such substitute assumes the rights and responsibilities of the member for whom he/she is acting for the duration of the meeting and of any adjourned meeting unless barred from so doing by Standing Orders or other determination of the Authority.
3. Any Authority member may attend as an observer at meetings of committees and sub committees (except those committees and sub committees which the Authority may from time to time determine for the purposes of this Standing Order) to which he/she has not been appointed as a member, including meetings or items of business from which the public has been excluded. If given permission by the Chairperson of the meeting, a member attending as an observer may speak (but not vote) on any matter.

**(NOTE:** The Authority has determined the following as exceptions for the purposes of Standing Order 26(3):

- a. the Appeals Committee of the Authority and any conditions of service committee or any other committee or sub committee established to consider individual cases under any grievance, disciplinary or complaints procedures for employees or Members of the Authority or for Fire Officers;
- b. committees or sub committees established to consider individual cases of salary grading or appointments).

- c. any sub committee of the Standards Committee established to consider any function relating to a complaint against a Member (or independent Member) under the Members' Code of Conduct.
4. All agenda, reports, and other documents and all proceedings of committees and sub committees, shall be treated as confidential unless and until they become public in the ordinary course of the Authority's business and for the purpose of this Standing order all agenda, reports and proceedings of a committee at which the press are present shall be deemed to have become public.
5. No act of a sub committee shall have effect until approved by the appointing committee, except to the extent that the committee has itself power to act without the approval of the Authority and the power so to act has been conferred upon the sub committee.
6. In addition to those Standing Orders which expressly relate to committees or sub committees, Standing Orders 5 and 7 to 23 inclusive, shall apply with any necessary modification to committees and sub committees.

#### STANDING ORDER 27

##### Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of Committees and Sub Committees

1. The Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of a committee, or of any sub committee which the Authority may from time to time determine for the purposes of this Standing Order, shall be appointed by the Authority in accordance with this Standing Order and may be removed by the Authority or may resign. If the Authority so decide, the appointment of the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of a committee or sub committee may be left for that body itself to decide.
2. The appointment of the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of a committee or sub committee shall be conducted in the same way as an appointment is required to be made by the Authority under Standing Order 21, unless agreed otherwise.
3. Subject to Paragraph (1) of this Standing Order, the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of a committee or sub committee appointed by the Authority shall hold office until the next annual meeting of the Authority after this appointment.
4. If the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of a committee or sub committee is absent from a meeting of the committee or sub committee, the members present shall choose one of their number who is a member of the Authority to preside over the meeting, subject to Paragraph (5) of this Standing Order.
5. If the Chairperson or Vice Chairperson of a committee or sub committee arrives at a meeting of the committee or sub committee, after the time for

which the meeting has been summoned, he/she shall preside over the meeting after any question under discussion on his/her arrival has been disposed of but not before then.

## STANDING ORDER 28

### Sealing of Documents

1. The seal of the Authority shall be affixed to a document only on the authority of:
  - a. a resolution of the Authority,
  - b. a resolution of a committee which the Authority has empowered to authorise the use of the seal, or
  - c. a decision by the Authority, or by a duly authorised committee or officer, to do anything where a document under the seal is necessary to complete the action.
2. The affixing of the seal shall be attested by the Secretary and a record maintained.

## STANDING ORDER 29

### Questions on Fire Matters at Council Meetings

The Authority shall nominate a member or members to attend any meeting of either of the constituent authorities at which questions on the discharge of the functions of the Authority are to be put and to answer such questions on the Authority's behalf.

## STANDING ORDER 30

### Variation and Revocation of Standing Orders

Any motion to add to, vary or revoke these Standing Orders shall, when proposed and seconded, stand adjourned without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Authority.

## STANDING ORDER 31

### Suspension of Standing Orders

1. Subject to Paragraph (2) of this Standing Order, any of the preceding Standing Orders may be suspended so far as regards any business at the meeting where its suspension is moved.

2. A motion to suspend Standing Orders shall not be carried unless at least two thirds of the members of the Authority present and voting, vote in favour of the motion.

### STANDING ORDER 32

#### Standing Orders to be given to Members

A printed copy of the Standing Orders and of such other provisions as regulate the proceedings and business of the Authority shall be given to each member of the Authority by the Monitoring Officer upon the member's appointment.

### STANDING ORDER 33

#### Interpretation of Standing Orders

1. The ruling of the Chairperson as to the construction or application of any of these Standing Orders, or as to any proceedings of the Authority, shall not be challenged at any meeting of the Authority.
2. For the purpose of these Standing Orders, any function required or authorised to be performed by the Chief Fire Officer, the Secretary or the Monitoring Officer shall or may be performed by such other person as they may respectively nominate.

### STANDING ORDER 34

#### Breach

The Standing Orders/Financial Regulations apply to all Fire Authority Members, Co-opted Members and officers, and employees and officers of the Fire and Rescue Service, where relevant.

It is the duty of Fire Authority Members, Co-opted Members and officers, and employees and officers of the Fire and Rescue Service to ensure compliance with these Standing Orders/Financial Regulations, where applicable.

It is the responsibility of all Members and managers to familiarise themselves with the provisions of Standing Orders/Financial Regulations and for managers to take appropriate steps to bring them to the attention of their staff.

For employees/officers, a breach of the provisions of these Standing Orders/Financial Regulations may result in disciplinary action being taken in accordance with the Service's Disciplinary Procedure.

For Authority Members and Co-opted Members, a breach of the provisions of these Standing Orders/Financial Regulations could, depending on the circumstances, result

in action being taken under the provisions of the Standards Board for England Code of Conduct.