

Core Documents and Policies

This is not an exhaustive list, but a guide as to what core documents or policies a council may wish to have. A star (*) next to a document indicates that a template document, or guidance on creating the document, may be available. Please contact us on enquiries@devonalc.org.uk for guidance on where to find them.

All documents and policies of the council should be reviewed on a regular basis and at least annually. This list does not include insurance policies, although insurance is also essential.

Must haves

Documents which a council is required by law to have.

- **Standing Orders***; *collective agreement of the council as to how it functions, includes some statutory requirements.*
- **Financial Regulations***; *a framework for ensuring good financial practices.*
- **Code of Conduct***; *explains the conduct expected of members.*
- **Publication Scheme***; *what documents the council has available and how they can be obtained.*
- **Privacy Notice***; *how the council deals with personal data that it processes.*
- **Equality and Diversity Policy***; *highlights the council's duty and commitment to promoting equality and diversity.*
- **Contracts of employment***; *a written statement of particulars which forms the basis of the employment relationship. Councils should ensure that they have in place any other documents referred to in the contract, such as disciplinary and grievance procedures.*
- **Risk Management Scheme***; *manages risks to public money, also called risk policy/risk register etc.*
- **Health and Safety Policy**; *arrangements put in place to protect staff.*
- **Website Accessibility Statement***; *explains any content on a website which is not accessible and why, with a description of accessible alternatives.*
- **Asset register**; *lists the council's fixed assets (property).*
- **Investment Strategy**; *required **only** for councils whose total investments exceed or are expected to exceed £100,000 at any time during the financial year.*

Should haves

While these documents are not legal requirements, these are all highly recommended to ensure that the council is following best practice. Any document which is referred to in the council's contracts of employment (such as disciplinary and grievance procedures) should be in place.

- **Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures***; *how staff can raise grievances and employers can carry out disciplinarys.*
- **Member/Officer Protocol**; *details how members and officers may interact by exploring suitable conduct.*
- **Employment documents***; *including annual leave, emergency/dependants leave, expenses, flexible working, homework, information technology, lone working, maternity leave, paternity leave, poor performance, sickness absence, whistleblowing, and appraisal policies.*

- **Job description for employees;** *establish guidelines for employee performance and duties.*
- **Dignity at work/bullying/harassment at work policy;** *provides guidelines to help ensure that staff and members can work in an environment free from harassment and bullying.*
- **Training and Development Policy;** *ensures that members, officers and volunteers are correctly trained.*
- **Grant-giving Policy;** *how the council deals with grant applications.*
- **Internal Control Statement;** *the internal controls put in place to protect public money.*
- **Complaints Procedure*;** *details how complaints can be made about the council.*
- **Data Breach Response Procedure*:** *how the council responds to a potential data breach.*
- **Subject Access Request Procedure*:** *how the council responds to subject access requests.*
- **Communications Strategy and Policy/Community Engagement Policy/Media Policy:** *councils may have a variety of documents in this area, detailing how they will engage with the communities.*
- **Social Media Policy*;** *details how the council, its staff or members, might use social media for council business.*

Other

A selection of policies and procedures that can help your council handle occasional situations (such as co-options, petitions or recruitment) or are council specific (such as neighbourhood plans or climate change policies).

- **Petitions Policy;** *procedure for handling petitions.*
- **Volunteer Policy;** *explains the council's management of volunteers.*
- **Co-option Procedure;** *procedure for handling co-options.*
- **Payroll Procedure;** *covers payroll procedure.*
- **Recruitment Policy;** *procedure for handling staff recruitment.*
- **Planning Response Policy;** *procedure for handling planning applications.*
- **Neighbourhood Plan*;** *allows communities to shape development in their area.*
- **Parish Plan;** *community-led plan that sets out a vision for the future of a parish and outlines how it may be achieved.*
- **Design Statement;** *community-led agreement about what kind of development would be preferred.*
- **Management Policies;** *explains how the council manages its assets such as cemeteries, allotments, buildings, open spaces, public toilets, etc.*
- **Safeguarding Policy;** *procedure for handling safeguarding issues if relevant.*
- **Climate Change/Biodiversity Policies;** *affirms the council's commitment to the climate emergency and any linked actions.*
- **Members Allowance Policy;** *explains the council's allowances for members if paid.*
- **Emergency Plan*;** *helps prepare for an emergency by putting strategies in place.*
- **Scheme of Delegation;** *details what council functions have been delegated to staff and/or committees.*
- **Council committees must have terms of reference;** *why the committee has been appointed and what responsibilities it has.*
- **A schedule of meetings for the coming year;** *can help staff and members plan ahead.*
- **Contact details of councillors, the clerk and staff;** *useful for internal communication. Clerks and staff should only be contacted during working hours.*