

WRPC GOVERNANCE REVIEW MAY 2026 DRAFT

1 Legislative changes

The Procurement Act 2023 is the main statutory change but has no effect on WRPC because of high threshold limits.

The Councillor Code of Conduct regime is being updated with teeth following consultation; the necessary legislation is expected in the near future so no changes are necessary for now.

2.NALC Pro Formas for Standing Orders and Financial Regulations .

New versions issued in 2025. No changes of significance for WRPC.

3. Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Panel (SAPPP)

SAPPP is responsible for setting out guidance and standards to be taken into account for the purposes of Accounts and Audit. There are two relevant changes in its guidance for 2025/6 . The first regarding the division of duties between Chairman and RFO is the subject of a separate paper previously circulated to Councillors. The Council should record it has taken this guidance into account.

The second relates to Digital Risks where the new guidance states that: “The authority has carried out an assessment of the risks in relation to the use of information technology and has put in place adequate arrangements to manage those risks.”

In essence this then repeats the legal requirements relating to Data protection and Privacy , Freedom of Information and transparency and Accessibility and adds:

“1.54 All smaller authorities (excluding parish meetings) must also have an IT policy. This explains how everyone-clerks, members and other staff -should conduct authority business in a secure and legal way when using IT equipment and software. This relates to the use of authority-owned and personal equipment.”

During 25/26 WRPC has commissioned a change in domain for its website to gov.uk and has established its own email facilities to be used by Councillors for all official Council work with password protection ; this will cover off the policy requirement once documented. I will explain in more detail in a separate note on implementation of these changes which I will endeavour to issue shortly. The Privacy and Freedom of Information policies were revised and published in May 2025 and are subject to review this year. I do not propose any changes. A new Accessibility statement has now been drafted for consideration and adoption. There are minor consequential changes to our Financial regulations reflecting in data storage which will now possible on the private part of our website.

4. Village Policy Statement

There have been a number of changes and additions in the year and the current version is attached. It is up for consideration whether the procedures for Planning should be expanded to deal with circumstances where the Council would seek to involve itself in matters of planning enforcement through CDC as the local Planning authority. In general the policy statement has thus far been restricted to deal with matters that WRPC has a direct responsibility for. In relation to planning therefore the current policy relates to the Council's role as a statutory consultee on applications for development only. This does not preclude the Council from making representations to Planning Enforcement where there are potential breaches which affect adversely the

community as a whole. Presently these are matters for judgement in the circumstances of each case.

5.Risk Management Plan

The section “Financial loss” has been expanded to deal with legal claims against the Council.

6. Delegations

There are no longer any committees or advisory groups. The Council passed resolutions at its December meeting as follows:

“To ratify the Chairman’s continuing authority to deal with residents on Water issues and take measures including litigation with the advice of Cllr. Watson , the Council’s legal adviser.

To authorise the Chairman to take such measures including legal action , with the advice of Cllr Watson, that are necessary to protect the Council and /or Councillors from undue burden and/or harassment.”

These arrangements persist until the Council resolves to revise them.

7. Insurance

Our policy which has been renewed for £264 without any substantive increase in premium other than that arising from our precept band. The cover is set out in the Quote attached.

8.Subscriptions

The ICO subscription is compulsory . The GALC (formerly GATPC) subscription seems to have lapsed by default. This will be renewed if the Clerk considers it desirable.