

Good Councillors' Guide: Essential guidance for local councillors

Addendum to the 4th edition – produced April 2015



The National Training Strategy
for Town & Parish Councils

This addendum has been produced to complement the fourth edition of the Good Councillors Guide. It is not intended as a standalone document, but to read alongside the good Councillors Guide which can be freely downloaded from <http://www.nalc.gov.uk/publications> or hard copies can be purchased from your County Association.

Part Two: Due care and attention

Members of the public now have the right to record any public meeting of the council

Page 21 of the guide states: “*Council, committee and sub-committee meetings must generally be open to the public.*”. However, the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, mean that local councils now **must** allow members of the public to record and report the proceedings of the public meetings of their councils.

For more information:

- NALC members can download Legal Topic Note [05 | Parish and Community Council Meetings \(February 2015\)](#)
- The Government produced a [plain English guide](#) for the press and public on attending and reporting meetings of local government

Changes to the ‘two signature rule’ for council payments

Page 25 The guide states: “*As a minimum control two councillors must sign every cheque*”. This is no longer a legal requirement, plus councils can now make electronic payments. However robust financial checks and oversight is still of great importance.

For more information:

- NALC members can download Legal Briefing [F04E-14 | Cheques LRO: Implementation Briefing \[England\] \(March 2014\)](#)
- NALC members can download [NALC's Model Financial Regulations \[England\] \(October 2014\)](#)
- Governance and Accountability for Local Councils details proper practices for local council accounting statements. It can be downloaded from [NALC's website](#) or [SLCC's website](#)

Changes to audit requirements

Pages 26 and 27 section on Internal and External Audit

There have been a number of recent changes including the new Transparency Regulations and the closing of the Audit Commission. These changes will affect all councils, however small councils in particular have been a focus of these changes and are strongly advised to keep up to date and seek support from their County Associations, NALC and SLCC as required.

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For more information:

- NALC members can download Legal Topic Note L05 [05 | Parish and Community Council Meetings \(February 2015\)](#)
- NALC members can download Legal Briefing: [L02-15 | Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities with a Turnover not exceeding £25,000 \(March 2015\)](#)
- NALC members can download Legal Briefing: [L03-14 The Local Government Transparency Code for Parish Councils with a Gross Income or Expenditure Exceeding £200,000](#)
- The Government have produced a guide describing [Changes to the smaller authorities' local audit and accountability framework](#)

Part Three – Getting under way

Page 35 section 10 'At the meeting'. Readers are reminded to note that the new openness regulations mean that members of the public have the right to record council meetings held in public. See above for more detail.

Part Four - Delivering the goods

Pages 46 and 47 section 15 'The Quality Council'. This scheme has been replaced by the new [Local Council Award Scheme](#). The Local Council Award Scheme has been designed to celebrate the successes of the very best local councils, and to provide a framework to support all local councils to improve and develop to meet their full potential.

Part Five – The toolbox

The National Training Strategy is now overseen by the [Improvement and Development Board](#). You can find out more about the training and development by contacting your local County Training Partnership. You can find CTP contact details as well as information on National Training Strategy products at <http://www.nalc.gov.uk/our-work/national-training-strategy>. New NTS offers include:

- Introduction to Local Council Administration - an online learning tool
- An updated Continuous Professional Development point scheme
- A refreshed Certificate in Local Council Administration for 2015

NALC also recently produced [Local Councils Explained](#). This book provides an easy to read narrative about the role of local (parish and town) councils, their councillors and officers and how they work.