

PART 1

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The Council has appointed 6 Overview and Scrutiny Committees to support the work of the Executive and the Council as a whole. The Overview and Scrutiny committees hold the Executive to account by scrutinising its decisions, examining performance and asking questions of decision-makers and service providers. A decision which has been made by the Executive but not yet implemented can be called in for Scrutiny and will be considered by the Call-in Overview and Scrutiny Committee **subject to the reasons for the call-in being within the framework laid out in the call-in protocol included in Part 7 of this Constitution**. They may recommend that the Executive reconsider the decision but cannot block a decision indefinitely or impose their own views on the Executive. The Overview and Scrutiny committees are also involved in strategic and cross-cutting issues by supporting the Executive in the development and review of policy, overseeing health matters, and reviewing the performance of other partners and the Local Strategic Partnership work programme.

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- (a) If:-
- (i) an Overview and Scrutiny Committee decides; or
 - (ii) five non-executive members of the Council (for the avoidance of doubt excluding voting and non-voting co-opted and independent members) request

that any decision of the Executive or a committee of the Executive or any Key Decision made by officers be called in for scrutiny then the Call-in Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall consider that decision at its next meeting which unless otherwise determined by the Leader shall in the case of a decision made by the Executive or its committee(s) take place within 15 days of the date on which the relevant decision was made or in the case of an officer decision take place within 15 days of the date on which the record of the decision is made publicly available in accordance with the Access to Information Rules. This period will be extended by the Democratic Services Manager as appropriate to take account of any public or religious holidays identified in the Municipal Calendar.

- (b) Any such decisions or requests to call in a decision shall be made within 5 days of the date on which the relevant decision was made or in the case of a decision made by officers within 5 days of the date on which the record of the decision is made publicly available in accordance with the Access to Information Rules. Any request to call-in shall be made in accordance with Standing Orders 5 and 6 **and the process set out in the call-in protocol included in Part 7 of this Constitution.**
- (c) Any decision which has been called in pursuant to paragraph (a) above which has not been implemented prior to the date on which the decision maker receives notification of the call in from the Democratic Services Manager shall not be implemented until the Call-in Overview and Scrutiny Committee has met to consider the decision in accordance with paragraph (a) unless the decision, in the reasonable opinion of the Chair of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee, needs to be implemented as a matter of urgency and should not be delayed. The Executive shall report to the next ordinary meeting of Full Council details of any such urgent decisions and the reasons why the decision needed to be implemented as a matter of urgency.
- (d) In considering the call-in the Call-in Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall **have regard to the call-in protocol and** determine whether it accepts any response which may have been given to it by the relevant decision maker and if it does not accept their response it can, in respect of that decision, agree recommendations to be given to the decision maker.
- (e) If the Call-in Overview and Scrutiny Committee) recommends to the decision maker that it should reconsider the decision or matter then
- (i) in the case of a decision made by the Executive the Executive shall meet and shall take into account the views expressed or recommendations made to it and may then proceed to implement or change the decision as it sees fit, whether or not the matter is referred to Full Council for further consideration under Standing Order 21; or

- (ii) in the case of a key decision made by an officer, the officer who made the key decision shall take into account the views expressed or recommendations made to him or her and may then proceed to implement or change the decision as he or she sees fit, whether or not the decision is referred to Full Council for further consideration under Standing Order 19.

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Protocol on Call-in

PROTOCOL ON CALL-IN

1. Introduction

1.1 The basic premise of call-in is that it is a failsafe mechanism enabling non executive Councillors to make the Executive re-consider a particular decision if it is of major concern or in Members eyes profoundly flawed.

1.2 The statutory guidance on call-in states that there needs to be an appropriate balance between effectively holding the Executive to account, being able to question decisions prior to them being implemented and allowing effective, efficient decision making. It also balances the need to make the process accessible and the need to ensure that call-in procedures are not abused or used to delay or slow down the decision making process.

1.3 As call-in can inevitably result in a delay to the implementation of decisions it should not be used for party political purposes to seek to further discuss a decision that some members do not agree with. Equally, the rights of non executive members to call-in a decision and exercise their right to question the decision, the decision maker and consider alternative options needs to be respected.

1.4 This protocol is designed to provide a locally agreed framework within which call-in can operate, a clear set of criteria against which a call-in request can be judged and a format for the effective conduct of the meeting considering the call in.

2. What is a call-in?

2.1 A decision made by the council's Executive can be called in for review before it is implemented. Decisions can be called in by five non-executive members or an Overview and Scrutiny Committee. If an Executive decision is called-in, that decision should not be implemented until it has been considered by scrutiny. Called in decisions are considered by the Call-in Overview & Scrutiny Committee. An urgency procedure is in place for any decision that cannot afford to be delayed.

2.2 The Call-in Overview & Scrutiny Committee will meet within 15 working days of the decision being made. If the Committee agrees with the reasons for the call in, the decision is referred back to the Executive along with the reasons why the Committee thinks it should be reconsidered. The Executive will then decide whether to implement the original decision or review the decision based on the views of the Call-in Overview & Scrutiny Committee. If the Committee does not agree with the reasons for call in then the matter is not referred back to the Executive and the original decision is implemented.

3. The call-in process

3.1 A call in request must be submitted within 5 days of the relevant decision being made or in the case of a decision made by officers within 5 days of the date on which the record of the decision is made publicly available in accordance with the Access to Information Rules. When submitting the call in request members must set out the following:

- an explanation as to why they are calling in the decision and if they are calling in all or part of the decision(s).

- what they recommend the Call-in Overview & Scrutiny Committee to do in relation to the call in. .

3.2 The call-in request form or a similar format should be used to ensure full information is provided.

3.3 When a call-in request is submitted the Democratic Services Manager will refer it to the Director of Legal and Procurement and the Director of Strategy, Partnership and Improvement (the council's designated scrutiny officer) who will decide whether or not the call-in conforms with this protocol. The call-in request will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Is the call-in process being used as a means of gaining information / understanding or discussing general concerns with Members and officers? If this could be achieved through the general overview and scrutiny process or by talking to the relevant officer or lead member informally the call-in will not be valid,
- Does the call-in duplicate a recent call-in on the same issue? If the call-in duplicates another call-in made within the previous 6 months it will not be valid,
- Have the reasons for calling in the decision already been discussed by an overview & scrutiny committee? If the reasons for calling in the decision have been discussed by an overview and scrutiny committee prior to the decision being made the call-in will not be valid,
- If the call in request is considered to be frivolous, vexatious or clearly outside the call-in provisions it may be deemed invalid. Prior to deciding the validity the Director of Legal and Procurement and the Director of Strategy, Partnership and Improvement may seek clarification from the members concerned.

3.4 At least one of the following will need to be included in the reasons for call-in:

- Have the Members calling in the decision clearly identified where they believe there are any defects in the decision making process? This may include significant additional evidence that is relevant to the decision but has not been considered and alternative options / recommendations that have not been discussed but would strengthen the decision,
- Have Members identified a serious risk associated with implementing the decision that has not already been considered?
- Have Members identified an equalities issue that has not been considered?

4. The Conduct of the call-in Meeting

4.1 The Call-in Overview & Scrutiny Committee is an official committee of the council and its meeting are held in public.

4.2 The purpose of a call-in meeting is for non executive members to examine and consider the decision made by the Executive and for members of the committee to make suggestions and recommendations they consider appropriate. The Call-in Overview & Scrutiny Committee provides an opportunity for members to seek clarification of the methodology used in enabling a decision to be made, as well as explore work undertaken by officers culminating in the matter coming before the Executive.

4.3 The relevant Executive Portfolio Holder and chief officer (or his/her representative) will be invited to attend the Call-in Committee meeting to explain the reasons for the decision, respond to the issues raised in the call-in request and answer questions at the meeting.

4.4 It is the chair of the Call in Overview & Scrutiny Committee's responsibility to manage the meeting effectively by applying standing orders, maintaining good discipline and fostering a culture of respect. All contributions to the meeting should go through the chair and the chair should ensure that no purely personal disagreements or comments are allowed to continue.

4.5 To ensure that the meeting is effective the chair will:

- (a) Start each call-in agenda item by asking a representative of the members that called in the decision to set out the reasons for the call in.
 - (b) If a member of the public has made a request to address the meeting, the rules relating to members of the public addressing a meeting as set out in Standing Orders apply. Members of the public can be allowed to speak for 2 minutes or 3 minutes in exceptional circumstances. If a number of requests to speak have been received then the chair should seek to limit the number of contributions to avoid hearing the same points repeated and should seek advice from the Democratic Services Manager about how this should be managed.
 - (c) Ensure that all of the members of the public who it has been agreed will address the meeting are heard prior to the lead member and any relevant officers being asked to respond to the issues raised by the call-in.
 - (d) Invite members of the committee to question the lead member and officers and discuss the issues. Members who are not members of the committee but wish to ask a question can be invited to do so.
 - (e) Having considered the call-in invite members of the committee to come to one of the following conclusions:
 - That the grounds for the call-in are upheld. In these circumstances the committee must set out what it wants the Executive to do.
 - That the grounds for the call-in are rejected and the decision can be implemented.
- 4.6 Ensure that any member wishing to make a recommendation to the Executive clearly states what course of action they are proposing.

Appendix 2

The Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This code applies to all local authorities in England specified in section 6 of the Local Government Act 1986 and to other authorities in England which have that provision applied to them by other legislation. Where the term “local authorities” is used in this code it should be taken as referring to both those categories of authority. References to “the Act” are to the Local Government Act 1986.
- 1.2 Local authorities are required by section 4(1) of the Act to have regard to the contents of this code in coming to any decision on publicity. Section 6 of the Act defines publicity as “any communication in whatever form, addressed to the public at large or a section of the public”. The code therefore applies in relation to all decisions by local authorities relating to paid advertising and leaflet campaigns, publication of free newspapers and newsheets and maintenance of websites – including the hosting of material which is created by third parties.
- 1.3 Nothing in this code overrides the prohibition by section 2 of the Act on the publication by local authorities of material which in whole or in part appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party. Paragraphs 21 to 24 offer some guidance for local authorities on the management of publicity which may contain or have links to party political material.

Principles

- 1.4 Publicity by local authorities should:-
- be lawful
 - be cost effective
 - be objective
 - be even-handed
 - be appropriate
 - have regard to equality and diversity
 - be issued with care during periods of heightened sensitivity

Lawfulness

- 1.5 Local authorities should ensure that publicity complies with all applicable statutory provisions. Paid-for advertising must comply with the Advertising Standards Authority’s Advertising Codes.
- 1.6. Part 3 of the Communications Act 2003 prohibits political advertising on television or radio. Local authorities must ensure that their publicity does not breach these restrictions.
- 1.7. Section 125 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 places a specific restriction on the publication by a local authority of material relating to a referendum under Part 7 of that Act, during the period of 28 days immediately before the referendum is held.

- 1.8. Regulation 5 of the Local Authorities (Conduct of Referendums) (England) Regulations 2007 (S.I. 2007/2089) prohibits local authorities from publishing material in the 28 days immediately before a referendum which expresses support for, or opposition to a particular answer to a referendum question relating to the constitutional arrangements of the authority.
- 1.9. Regulation 15 of the Local Authorities (Referendums, Petitions and Directions) (England) Regulations 2000 (S.I. 2000/2852) prohibits local authorities from incurring expenditure to publish material which appears designed to influence people in deciding whether or not to sign a petition relating to the constitutional arrangements of the authority, or to assist others to publish such material.

Cost effectiveness

- 1.10. In relation to all publicity, local authorities should be able to confirm that consideration has been given to the value for money that is being achieved, including taking into account any loss of potential revenue arising from the use of local authority-owned facilities to host authority publicity.
- 1.11. In some circumstances it will be difficult to quantify value for money, for example where the publicity promotes a local amenity which is free to use. In such a case authorities should be able to show that they have given thought to alternative means of promoting the amenity and satisfied themselves that the means of publicity chosen is the most appropriate.
- 1.12. If another public authority, such as central government, has issued publicity on a particular topic, local authorities should incur expenditure on issuing publicity on the same matter only if they consider that additional value is achieved by the duplication of that publicity. Additional value might be achieved if locally produced publicity gives a local context to national issues.
- 1.13. The purchase of advertising space should not be used as a method of subsidising voluntary, public or commercial organisations.
- 1.14. Local authorities should consider whether it is appropriate to seek advice from economic analysts, public relations experts or other sources of expert advice before embarking on a publicity campaign involving very large expenditure.

Objectivity

- 1.15. Local authorities should ensure that publicity relating to policies and proposals from central government is balanced and factually accurate. Such publicity may set out the local authority's views and reasons for holding those views, but should avoid anything likely to be perceived by readers as constituting a political statement, or being a commentary on contentious areas of public policy.
- 1.16. Any publicity describing the council's policies and aims should be as objective as possible, concentrating on the facts or explanation or both. Local authorities should not use public funds to mount publicity campaigns whose primary purpose is to persuade the public to hold a particular view on a question of policy. It is acceptable for local authority publicity to correct erroneous material which has been published by other parties, despite the fact that the material being corrected may have been published with the intention of influencing the public's opinions

about the policies of the authority. Such publicity should seek to explain the facts in an objective manner.

- 1.17. Where paid-for advertising is used by local authorities, it should be clearly identified as being advertising. Paid-for advertising, including advertisements for the recruitment of staff, should not be used in any publication owned or controlled by a political party.
- 1.18. Advertisements for the recruitment of staff should reflect the tradition of political impartiality of local authority employees and should not (except in the case of advertisements relating to the appointment of staff pursuant to section 9 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (assistants for political groups)) refer to any political activities or affiliations of candidates.

Even-handedness

- 1.19. Where local authority publicity addresses matters of political controversy it should seek to present the different positions in relation to the issue in question in a fair manner.
- 1.20. Other than in the circumstances described in paragraph 34 of this code, it is acceptable for local authorities to publicise the work done by individual members of the authority, and to present the views of those individuals on local issues. This might be appropriate, for example, when one councillor has been the “face” of a particular campaign. If views expressed by or attributed to individual councillors do not reflect the views of the local authority itself, such publicity should make this fact clear.
- 1.21. It is acceptable for local authorities to host publicity prepared by third parties – for example an authority may host a blog authored by members of the authority or a public forum on which members of the public may leave comments. Maintenance by a local authority of a website permitting the posting of material by third parties constitutes a continuing act of publication by that local authority which must accordingly have a system for moderating and removing any unacceptable material.
- 1.22. It is generally acceptable for local authorities to host publicity, such as a blog, which itself contains links to external sites over which the local authority has no control where the content of those sites would not itself comply with this code. This does not amount to giving assistance to any person for the publication of material which local authorities are not permitted to publish. However, particular care must be taken by local authorities during the period before elections and referendums to ensure that no breach of any legal restriction takes place. It may be necessary to suspend the hosting of material produced by third parties or public forums which contain links to impermissible material during such periods.
- 1.23. It is acceptable for publicity containing material prepared by third parties and hosted by local authorities to include logos of political parties or other organisations with which the third parties are associated.
- 1.24. It is acceptable for publicity produced or hosted by local authorities to include a logo associated with a particular member of the authority, such as a directly elected mayor, or leader of the authority. Publicity material produced by local

authorities relating to a particular member must not seek to affect public support for that individual.

- 1.25. Where local authorities provide assistance to third parties to issue publicity they should ensure that the principles in this code are adhered to by the recipients of that assistance.

Appropriate use of publicity

- 1.26. Local authorities should not incur any expenditure in retaining the services of lobbyists for the purpose of the publication of any material designed to influence public officials, Members of Parliament, political parties or the Government to take a particular view on any issue.
- 1.27. Local authorities should not incur expenditure on providing stands or displays at conferences of political parties for the purpose of publicity designed to influence members of political parties to take a particular view on any issue.
- 1.28. Local authorities should not publish or incur expenditure in commissioning in hard copy or on any website, newsletters, newssheets or similar communications which seek to emulate commercial newspapers in style or content. Where local authorities do commission or publish newsletters, newssheets or similar communications, they should not issue them more frequently than quarterly, apart from parish councils which should not issue them more frequently than monthly. Such communications should not include material other than information for the public about the business, services and amenities of the council or other local service providers.
- 1.29. Publicity about local authorities and the services they provide should be freely available to anyone who wishes to receive such information in a format readily accessible and understandable by the person making the request or by any particular group for which services are provided.
- 1.30. All local authority publicity should clearly and unambiguously identify itself as a product of the local authority. Printed material, including any newsletters, newssheets or similar publications published by the local authority, should do this on the front page of the publication.

Equality and diversity etc

- 1.31. Publicity by local authorities may seek to influence (in accordance with the relevant law and in a way which they consider positive) the attitudes of local people or public behaviour in relation to matters of health, safety, crime prevention, race relations, equality, diversity and community issues.
- 1.32. Local authorities should consider how any publicity they issue can contribute to the promotion of any duties applicable to them in relation to the elimination of discrimination, the advancement of equality and the fostering of good relations.

Care during periods of heightened sensitivity

- 1.33. Local authorities should pay particular regard to the legislation governing publicity during the period of heightened sensitivity before elections and referendums – see paragraphs 7 to 9 of this code. It may be necessary to suspend the hosting of

material produced by third parties, or to close public forums during this period to avoid breaching any legal restrictions.

- 1.34. During the period between the notice of an election and the election itself, local authorities should not publish any publicity on controversial issues or report views or proposals in such a way that identifies them with any individual members or groups of members. Publicity relating to individuals involved directly in the election should not be published by local authorities during this period unless expressly authorised by or under statute. It is permissible for local authorities to publish factual information which identifies the names, wards and parties of candidates at elections.
- 1.35. In general, local authorities should not issue any publicity which seeks to influence voters. However this general principle is subject to any statutory provision which authorises expenditure being incurred on the publication of material designed to influence the public as to whether to support or oppose a question put at a referendum. It is acceptable to publish material relating to the subject matter of a referendum, for example to correct any factual inaccuracies which have appeared in publicity produced by third parties, so long as this is even-handed and objective and does not support or oppose any of the options which are the subject of the vote.

Appendix 3

SEALING AND SIGNING OF DOCUMENTS

71. Custody of Seal

The common seal of the Council shall be kept in a safe place in the custody of the Director of Legal and Procurement and shall be secured by two different locks, the keys or combination of which shall be kept by the Director of Legal and Procurement provided that the Director of Legal and Procurement may entrust the keys or combination temporarily to another officer of the Council.

72. Sealing of Documents

- (a) The Common Seal of the Council shall not be affixed to any document unless the transaction or decision to which the document gives effect is authorised by a person or body in accordance with the Constitution and is confirmed as being so authorised by the Director of Legal and Procurement or a member of his or her staff or a person nominated or authorised by him or her for that purpose.
- (b) The seal shall be attested by the Director of Legal and Procurement or a deputy or other person duly authorised by the Director of Legal and Procurement for that purpose and an entry of every sealing of a document shall be made and consecutively numbered in a book kept for the purpose and shall be signed by the person who has attested the seal.

73. Contracts, agreements or transactions to be in writing and/or under seal

- (a) All contracts, agreements or transactions
 - (i) in respect of which there is no consideration
 - (ii) that exceed £500,000 in value over the life of the contract including contracts where the Council is providing goods, services or works to another body); or
 - (iii) which are grants that exceed the sum of £150,000

must be executed as a deed under seal in accordance with these Standing Orders. **However this will not apply to contracts for insurance where the contract is brought into effect by the issue of a schedule of insurance and policy documents to the Council by the insurer.**

- (b) Any other contract, agreement or other transaction which is:
 - (i) £150,000 in value or more (in money or money's worth); or
 - (ii) relates to land or property

shall be in writing and shall EITHER be executed as a deed under seal in accordance with these Standing Orders OR be signed by two officers who are

either Chief Officers or officers duly authorised in accordance with the Constitution by the Chief Officer under whose authority the contract is entered into. **However this will not apply to contracts for insurance where the contract is brought into effect by the issue of a schedule of insurance and policy documents to the Council by the insurer.**

- (c) Other contracts shall be executed under seal if the relevant Chief Officer or the Director of Legal and Procurement considers that to do so would be in the Council's best interest.
- (d) Contracts below £150,000 shall be in writing (which includes the Council's official order form) and signed in accordance with the Financial Regulations or any relevant financial procedures issued by the Director of Finance and Corporate Services. **However this will not apply to contracts for insurance where the contract is brought into effect by the issue of a schedule of insurance and policy documents to the Council by the insurer.**

84. General Requirements

- (a) Every contract entered into by the Council shall be entered into pursuant to or in connection with the Council's functions AND shall be procured in accordance with all relevant domestic and European legislation and unless for good operational and/or financial reasons the Executive (or, if appropriate, the General purposes Committee) agrees otherwise with these Contract Standing Orders and the Council's Financial Regulations.
- (b) In addition to the powers of the Executive in paragraph 84(a) to grant an exemption from the requirement to procure in accordance with these Contract Standing Orders, the Director of Finance and Corporate Services is also able to grant such exemptions:
- (i) on grounds of extreme urgency
 - (ii) where the exemption sought is in relation to the requirement to obtain 3 written quotes under Standing Order 86(b).
- The Director of Finance and Corporate Services shall only exercise his / her authority under this paragraph (i) following legal advice that there is no breach of domestic or EU law or the Council's own procedures in the exercise of the authority (ii) where there are good operational and / or financial reasons for doing so.
- (c) Chief Officers shall ensure in undertaking any contract procurement that:-
- (i) fair, transparent and auditable processes are followed at all stages;
 - (ii) tender exercises are conducted appropriate to the nature of the contract being procured;
 - (iii) all tenderers are treated equally and fairly;
 - (iv) these Contract Standing Orders are complied with; and
 - (v) the Contract Database is kept updated at all times as set out in Standing Order 110.**
- (d) Contract tendering procedures are contained in the Council's Contract Procurement and Management Guidelines which shall be updated and amended from time to time to comply with these Contract Standing Orders. Advice on any of the requirements of these Contract Standing Orders shall be sought from the Director of Legal and Procurement or Director of Finance and Corporate Services as appropriate.
- (e) For the avoidance of doubt these Contract Standing Orders apply to:-
- (i) the appointment of consultants; and
 - (ii) the establishment of Framework Agreements.
- (f) Subject to paragraph (a) and (b) above and Standing Order 97 (Mandatory Approved List), all medium and high value contracts shall be entered into and procured in accordance with the formal tendering procedures set out in these Standing Orders.

Authority to go out to tender and enter into contracts

- (a) Chief Officers have delegated to them power to invite expressions of interest, agree shortlists, invite Tenders, negotiate, award, and terminate contracts in accordance with paragraph 2.5, of Part 4 of this Constitution. No individual Member may enter into a contract on the Council's behalf.
- (b) Where approval to invite expressions of interest is required from the Executive (or if appropriate the General Purposes Committee or Pension Fund Sub-Committee) the Executive, the General Purposes Committee, or the Pension Fund Sub-Committee as the case may be shall receive and consider a report setting out the pre-tender considerations specified in Standing Order 89 and shall give such approval or approvals as it considers necessary.
- (c) Where approval to award, or terminate a contract is required to be obtained or is in any event sought from the Executive (or the General Purposes Committee or Pension Fund Sub-Committee), the Executive, the General Purposes Committee or the Pension Fund Sub-Committee as the case may be shall receive and consider a report setting out all relevant information necessary to enable it to give such approval or approvals as it considers necessary.
- (d) **Chief Officers are responsible for ensuring that the relevant category manager in the Corporate Procurement Centre is notified of all proposed procurements exceeding £20,000 in value. The role of the category manager under this Standing Order 88 is to advise on appropriate procurement routes, ensuring that the service department takes legal advice as necessary.**

110. Contracts Register

- (a) A register of all contracts placed by the Council to the value of **£20,000** or more over the term of the contract shall be maintained by the Contract **Database** Officer **within the Corporate Procurement Centre**. Such register shall for each contract specify the name of the relevant Council's Service Unit, the contractor, the services, supplies or works to be provided, the contract value and contract term and where relevant any provisions for extension. Details of all such contracts awarded **must** be reported to the Contract **Database** Officer within **two weeks** of award and in the required format.
- (b) **Chief Officers shall also ensure that for all contracts on the database, all contract extensions and variations, early terminations, assignments and novations are notified to the Contract Database Officer and to the relevant category manager in the Corporate Procurement Centre.**