



BIRCHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

TERMS OF REFERENCE – STANDING COMMITTEES

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

Birchington Parish Council operates with the following Standing Committees:

- Finance, Policy and Governance Committee
- Place and Environment Committee
- Planning Applications Committee
- Human Resources Committee

These committees exercise powers delegated by the Council as detailed in Standing Orders – Appendix A Scheme of Delegation.

All committees report to Full Council, which retains overall responsibility for the Council's strategic direction and governance.

Appointment of Committees

Standing Committees are appointed at the Annual Meeting of the Council.

The Council shall determine:

- Committee membership
- Committee Chairmen
- Committee meeting schedules

Membership

Committees will consist of no fewer than three councillors, with a maximum of five.

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council shall be ex-officio members of all committees unless the Council resolves otherwise.

Two additional non-councillors may be appointed to a standing committee (other than Finance, Policy and Governance and Human Resources Committees). These appointed members will not have voting rights.

Due to the confidential nature of staffing matters, the Human Resources Committee shall normally consist of three to five councillors.

The Council may appoint substitute members where necessary.

Chairmanship

Each committee shall elect a Chairman at its first meeting following the Annual Meeting of the Council.

If the Chairman is absent, a Chairman for that meeting shall be elected by the members present.

In the case of an equality of votes, the Chairman shall have a second or casting vote.

The Chairman of the standing committee will provide reports at Full Council Meetings and will publish an annual report to the Annual Meeting.

Committee chairmen will participate in the annual budget setting process.

Quorum

The quorum for committee meetings shall be three councillors. The quorum for Full Council is four councillors.

If the meeting becomes inquorate no further business shall be transacted.

Meetings

Committees shall meet in accordance with the Council's agreed schedule of meetings.

Additional meetings may be called where necessary to conduct Council business.

The Planning Applications Committee may meet more frequently in order to respond to planning consultations within statutory deadlines.

Meeting will usually begin at 6.30pm unless otherwise notified.

Full Council Meetings will be livestreamed and published on the Parish Council's You-Tube channel.

Committee Meetings will be recorded for the purpose of accurately recording the minutes. The audio will be recorded once the minutes are approved.

Public attendance is both welcomed and encouraged at committee meetings. The Chairman of the standing committee will invite and direct any representation and will be the sole arbiter on attendance and participation.

If confidential matters are to be discussed, members will have the right to pass a resolution to exclude the press and public in accordance with s1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

Notice of Meetings

In accordance with the Council's Standing Orders the minimum statutory notice period for meetings is five clear days.

To assist councillors in preparing for meetings, the Council will normally issue agendas and meeting papers at least seven clear days in advance.

Where necessary, the statutory minimum notice period may be used.

Agendas

Agendas shall be prepared by the Clerk (Proper Officer) in consultation with the Chairman of the committee.

All committee members may bring forward agenda items by request to the Parish Clerk.

Agendas will clearly identify:

- Items for decision
- Items for discussion
- Items to note

Only items listed on the agenda may be formally decided at a meeting.

Agendas and supporting documents will be published on the Parish Council website.

Confidential items will be marked as such and will be handled by the Parish Clerk.

Minutes

Minutes shall record:

- Decisions taken
- Actions agreed
- Responsible officers where appropriate

Minutes shall not be a verbatim record of debate.

Draft minutes shall be circulated to members in accordance with Standing Orders.

Minutes will be approved at the next meeting of the committee.

Declarations of Interest

Councillors must declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or other interest in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct.

Members with a disclosable pecuniary interest must withdraw from the meeting.

Delegated Powers

Committees may exercise delegated authority as detailed in Standing Orders Appendix A – Scheme of Delegation.

Committees may only make decisions:

- within approved budgets
- within Council policy
- within the limits of their delegated authority.

Any matter outside these limits must be referred to Full Council.

Unresolved matters relating to standing committees will be arbitrated by Full Council.

Reporting to Council

Each committee shall report to Full Council.

Approved committee minutes will be presented to the next meeting of the Council for note.

Full Council may review or amend committee decisions where appropriate.

Working Groups

Committees or the Council may establish Working Groups.

Working Groups:

- are not decision-making bodies
- operate informally
- operate in an advisory capacity
- make recommendations to committees or Council
- may contain outside persons as well as councillors
- are generally time limited and set up for a specific purpose

Review of Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference shall be reviewed annually at the Annual Meeting of the Council or in the event of the Council revising its committee structure.

Adopted by Full Council on

Last Review Date:

Next Review Date :

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