

BROMHAM PARISH COUNCIL: **FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

Terms of Reference

1. Constitution

- 1.1 The Finance & General Purposes Committee (the “Committee”) is established as an Executive Committee under the Authority of the Parish Council (the “Council”) in accordance with Standing Orders.
- 1.2 The Committee Terms of Reference may be amended at any time by the Council.
- 1.3 The Committee may from time to time investigate, discuss or review matters outside its Terms of Reference, if required to do so by the Council.

2. Authority

- 2.1 The Committee is authorised by the Council to manage any activity within its Terms of Reference.
- 2.2 The Committee is responsible for advising the Council on financial, land and property, staffing and general administrative issues and must be professional, accountable, transparent and risk-aware in conducting business.
- 2.3 The Committee is authorised by the Council to obtain external legal or other professional advice in line with services identified in the approved budget and, where deemed essential, to secure the occasional appointment of anyone it considers has relevant experience, expertise or knowledge with the agreement of the Chairman of the Council and the Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

3. Membership

- 3.1 The Committee shall be appointed by the Council from amongst its members and shall consist of not less than four members and not more than seven. In accordance with Standing Orders, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council may attend all Committee Meetings and may exercise their right to speak and vote.
- 3.2 The Committee shall elect a Chairman and a Vice-Chairman for the municipal year at its first meeting in every year. In the event that both are absent at a meeting, the Councillors in attendance will elect a chair for the meeting.
- 3.3 The designated Parish Clerk of the Council is ordinarily Clerk to the Committee although the Committee may, from time to time, be serviced by the designated Support Officer.

4. Attendance at Meetings

- 4.1 The quorum necessary for the transaction of the business of the Committee shall be not less than 4 members.
- 4.2 Any Parish Councillor who does not attend three consecutive meetings of the Committee without having an excuse accepted by the Chairman of the Council will automatically cease to be a member of the Committee.
- 4.3 The Public and Press will be admitted to all meetings of the Committee in line with the Council's Standing Orders. If required, the Committee 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 where the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of these items due to the confidential nature of this item. Where the press and public are likely to be excluded from the meeting this will normally be advertised on the Committee's agenda.

5. Frequency of Meetings

- 5.1 Meetings shall be held at least four times a year.
- 5.2 Meetings shall be held at the Village Hall.
- 5.3 Additional Meetings may be called by the Chairman of the Committee or by order of the Council.

6. Committee Responsibilities

- 6.1 The Committee will work with the Responsible Finance Officer in the management of the Council's financial resources and to consider and recommend strategy and action on policy and operational matters concerned with the Council's finances, property, staff and other resources.
- 6.2 The Committee will undertake the following specific duties:
 - (a) To exercise the powers and duties delegated to the Committee by the Council in accordance with established policy direction, approved Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and within agreed budgets to enable the Council to be well run, effectively and efficiently organised and compliant with legislative and other standards required.
 - (b) To advice on all the financial aspects of the Council.
 - (c) To maintain, through designated staff, adequate and effective financial management arrangements and adequate financial controls to utilise and protect the Council's finances and assets – to include insurance cover and the maintenance of an asset register.

- (d) To review and update, as necessary, the Council's Financial Regulations on an annual basis and make appropriate recommendations to Council. These govern the conduct of all financial transactions of the Council.
- (e) To receive and review internal and external audit reports and monitor the implementation of any recommendations.
- (f) To review and recommend the annual accounts to the Council and to ensure that financial returns are submitted on time.
- (g) To prepare the annual budget, taking into account the needs of Council committees, to recommend the annual precept level and to submit the budget and annual precept to Council for approval.
- (h) To notify the annual precept and demand the payment from Bedford Borough Council before 31 January each year.
- (i) To maintain, through designated staff, sound and up to date financial records and effective financial monitoring and reporting arrangements. This includes the regularly monitoring of the income received and expenditure incurred against the approved budget.
- (j) To make provision for future agreed capital projects and to monitor and, where appropriate, to recommend the purchase of capital items.
- (k) To carry out financial investigations and request relevant supporting documents and evidence when appropriate.
- (l) To monitor the Council's financial risk assessments and recommend changes where necessary.
- (m) To ensure that the Council is adequately insured, that this is reviewed annually, and recommendations are made to Council accordingly.
- (n) To oversee and review the Council's banking arrangements and investment portfolio. The Committee will, as appropriate, consider and recommend any loan proposals to Council.
- (o) To consider forward planning and to identify earmarked reserves for the replacement of property and equipment.
- (p) To oversee all legal matters pertaining to leases, insurance claims, easements, tenancies, contracts, loans, insurance cover, damage to property, debt recovery and make recommendations to Full Council.
- (q) To consider orders and contracts relevant to the Committee in line with agreed Financial Regulations and to monitor these contracts to ensure that high standards are maintained for the duration of each contract.

- (r) To consider land and property transactions on behalf of the Council and to maintain effective arrangements for the best use of the Council's property and resources in line with the Land Acquisition & Disposal Policy. This includes the negotiation of rent levels and the terms for the purchase or sale of land or properties on behalf of the Council when instructed to do so by resolution of the Council and to make recommendations to Full Council regarding the terms of a transaction or for proposals to secure best consideration from its asset portfolio.
- (s) To consider applications for grants and s137 payments in line with the approved Grant Awarding Policy.
- (t) To monitor, review and recommend on all matters relating to the Council's staff levels, emoluments, appraisals and conditions of service.
- (u) To review Council Fees and Charges on a regular basis (and at least annually).

6.3 Any urgent matters related to the Council's finances, which need to be resolved before the next Committee meeting, may be dealt with by the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Committee (or in the absence of both of them, the Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Council).

6.4 The Committee may incur expenditure within its authority as defined in the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and, in doing so, shall manage and control spending from its assigned budget during the year and ensure best value at all times. The Council aims to give excellent value for money as it raises and spends money for the benefit of the local community.

6.5 The Committee is responsible for reviewing and monitoring the implementation of relevant policies of the Council relating to the Council's finances and resources and, where appropriate, recommend any amendments and/or new policies to the Council. Policies shall include:

- Standing Orders
- Financial Regulations
- Treasury Management Policy
- Revenue Budget Policy Statement
- Land Acquisition & Disposal Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Grant Awarding Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Information & Data Protection Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Habitual or Vexatious Complainants Policy
- Freedom of Information Publication Scheme

6.6 The Committee, on behalf of the Council must be confident that whenever it spends money:

- It has legal power (it is not acting beyond its powers)
- It follows sound and established procedures
- It does not take unnecessary risks
- Transactions are transparent
- Councillors conform to standards in public decision-making.

7. Reporting Procedures

7.1 The Chairman shall be responsible for bringing forward a Progress Report to the Council meeting following the Committee Meeting to update Council on the activities of the Committee and its current and planned work programme.

7.2 Clear and concise formal resolutions are required at all times to avoid ambiguity in the minutes and to ensure that the intention of the resolution is conveyed to the Councillors for them to vote on.

7.3 Minutes of Committee meetings shall be circulated promptly to all members of the Committee and shall be considered and approved at the next full Parish Council meeting.

7.4 The minutes will be published on the Parish Council web-site following approval.

Adopted by:	Parish Council
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