

Terms of reference for Ongar Town Council committees

Introduction.

Committees are concerned with the longer-term policy and budgets issues; the committee's role is to define what the Council is going to achieve, the standards it will set, and to make corrections if the goals or standards are not being met.

To achieve this, the committee has delegated powers defined in its terms of reference. These are agreed by the council and renewed annually; they set the limits of spending and authority so there is no need for the committee's decisions to be challenged or debated in council. Provided the decision is within the council's policy and within the committee's remit and budget it cannot be challenged.

1. Terms of reference common to all committees.

- 1.1. All meetings of Town Council committees will be convened in accordance with the Town Council's standing orders. Meetings will be minuted by the Clerk to the Council or a delegated member of staff or a member of the committee.
- 1.2. Committees may authorise expenditure or amend fees provided the decision is consistent with the responsibilities of the committee and within the budget set for that activity or within any additional budget for work authorised by full council or the Resources and Procedures committee during the course of the financial year.
- 1.3. Minutes will be circulated to all council members and will be presented at full council for agreement. Agreement is given to acknowledge that the decisions have been reached within the powers delegated to that committee. For decisions taken within those powers, further approval is not needed.
- 1.4. Councillors shall indicate their preferences for Committee Membership in advance of the Annual General Meeting, and the list of potential members will be circulated with the agenda of that meeting. Membership of all the committees will be as decided at the Annual General Meeting each year, subject to the proviso that the chairman and vice-chairman of the Town Council shall, in any event, be ex officio members. The committee shall be subject to a quorum of half of its members or three whichever is the greater.
- 1.5. The chairman of the committee will be elected by the committee at its first meeting after the Annual Town Council meeting. The vice-chairman of the committee will be elected by the committee at its first meeting after the Annual Town Council meeting. Until a new chairman is elected, the chairman from the previous year retains that office.
- 1.6. Town Councillors not on a committee may attend meetings but not vote.
- 1.7. Non-councillors who are appointed to committees will have voting rights and will agree to be bound by the code of conduct, financial regulations and standing orders of the Council.
- 1.8. The press and public may be excluded from committee meetings if their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. The public's exclusion shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for that exclusion.

- 1.9. Committees may create working groups to deliver a specific objective. These groups will work within an agreed brief and budget so there is minimal need to refer decisions back to a parent committee or council. Working groups will be wound-up at the completion of their task.
- 1.10. Committees may create sub-committees. These may consist of councillors and non-councillors with equal voting rights. Advertising the time and place of the sub-committee will be at the discretion of the members, but is not required as the public do not have an automatic right to attend. Sub-committees may make such decisions as have been delegated to them, but these decisions will be reported to the responsible committee.
- 1.11. The meeting calendar will be based on monthly cycle with meetings normally held on the third Thursday of the month
- 1.12. Unless otherwise advertised, meetings will be held at Bansons, Bansons Way, Ongar, Essex, CM5 9AS

2. STAFFING COMMITTEE

Number of members	6 members
Quorum	3
Standing agenda items	None
Meeting frequency	Biannual, or as necessary

This committee is appointed to make decisions about all staffing matters, subject to budget and expenditure limits decided by the Full Council. Recommendations from this committee would be made directly to Full Council. Where necessary, a panel of three committee members will be appointed to consider grievance or disciplinary matters and report directly to Full Council. Any appeal would be heard by another panel comprising of Full Council members who were not on the original panel. Ex-officio rights would not apply to the appeal panel.

2.1. Roles and responsibilities

- To establish and keep under review the staffing structure.
- To draft, implement, review, monitor and revise policies for staff.
- To establish and review salary pay scales for all categories of staff and to be responsible for their administration and review.
- To oversee the recruitment and appointment of staff.
- To arrange execution of new employment contracts and changes to contracts.
- To establish and review performance management (including annual appraisals) and staff training programme for staff.
- To oversee any process leading to dismissal of staff (including redundancy),
- To keep under review staff working conditions, and health and safety matters.
- To monitor and address regular or sustained staff absence.
- To make recommendations on staffing related expenditure.
- To consider any appeal against a decision in respect of pay.
- To consider a grievance or disciplinary matter (and any appeal).
- To supervise and performance manage the Clerk's work, to administer leave, record and monitor absences and handle grievance and disciplinary and pay disputes.
- To monitor and review all staff training programmes

3. Policy Working Group

Number of members	6
Quorum	3
Standing agenda items	None.
Meeting frequency	Quarterly, or as necessary.

This working group is appointed to review all matters relating to governance of the Council, including, but not limited to, Financial Regulations, Standing Orders, Terms of Reference, policies and procedures. Recommendations from this committee would be made directly to Full Council.

3.1. Roles and responsibilities

- To establish and keep under review the legal requirements and constraints of the Council.
- To draft, implement, review, monitor and revise policies.
- To ensure policy and procedure is compliant with legislation and best practice.

4. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN COMMITTEE

Number of members	3 Town Councillors, 3 residents appointed by full council.
Quorum	3
Standing agenda items	None.
Meeting frequency	Monthly or as required.

The Committee will be supported by senior officers of Epping Forest District Council. The Local Planning Authority are obliged to provide assistance under the statutory provisions of the Localism Act 2011. Group - Community Planning Guidance

4.1. Purpose

- To prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan for Ongar, in consultation with the wider community, local groups and interested parties and in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 and Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 and any subsequent amendments
- Report back to the Town Council every three months on progress, issues arising and outcomes. (See role of the Bridging Co-ordinator under Roles and Relationships.)

4.2. Working Groups

- The Committee may establish such Working Groups as it considers necessary to carry out the functions specified by the Committee.
- The Committee may appoint a local Community Group such as Ongar Neighbourhood Plan Community Group and delegate the process of producing Ongar's Neighbourhood Plan to such a Group, with agreed Terms of Reference and monitoring by this Committee in accordance with legislation and regulations.
- An Appointed community Group or Working Party will report back to the Committee at the scheduled meetings.
- Each Working Group will appoint a lead person who will report back to the Committee at the scheduled meetings.

4.3. Finance

- All grants and funding will be applied for in conjunction with the appropriate Community Group/Working Group and held by the Town Council, who will ring-fence the funds for Neighbourhood Development Plan purposes only.
- Volunteers who wish to claim expenses should refer to the Ongar Town Council expenses policy.
- Orders for expenditure should be issued by the Town Office and given an order number in accordance with the Council's Finance Regulations.
- Invoices will be made out in the name of the Town Council.
- Members of the community who are involved as volunteers with any of the Working Groups may submit an expense claim to the Committee who will decide if it is appropriate for reimbursement.

Dissolving the Committee

At the conclusion of the Neighbourhood Development Plan project the Committee will be dissolved.

5. PLANNING COMMITTEE

Number of members	4 members
Quorum	3
Standing agenda items	None
Meeting frequency	Monthly as required.

Meetings

Meetings may be called on the third Thursday of any month, normally commencing 7.00 or 7.30 p.m. Meetings to be held at the Council offices, Basons Way, Ongar.

Roles and Responsibilities

- To consider every planning application within the Ongar Town Council boundary and provide comments to the planning authority
- To comment on planning appeals and review enforcement action
- Wider planning issues may be discussed
- The committee may also appoint a Council representative to represent the Council at Planning Authority meetings
- To make recommendations regarding street naming

To make representation to the appropriate authority in respect of

- all matters relating to public foot paths, highways and traffic management
- vehicle parking
- services and facilities provided by other outside agencies and bodies
- Tree preservation orders