



HALTON
PARISH COUNCIL

FINANCE COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

REVIEW AND AMENDMENT RECORD

Reviewer / Amender	Date	Amendments
Full Council	24 May 2023	Adopted

1. Authority

1.1 The Finance Committee is appointed by and is solely responsible to Halton Parish Council (HPC). The Committee's duties are defined and agreed by the Council who may vote, at any time, to modify the Committee's powers. The Committee will meet bi-annually but can also be convened as necessary to deal with urgent matters.

2. Membership

2.1 All members of the Committee will be HPC Councillors. The membership of the Committee will be reviewed annually but will consist of no less than four and no more than five Councillors. A quorum at the Committee meeting will consist of no fewer than two Councillors. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Council will automatically be ex officio members of the Committee with full voting rights.

2.2 Should a member of the Committee be unable to attend a meeting, they may appoint another Councillor to attend as their substitute. It should be noted however that this should only occur where:

- a) the meeting may be at risk of being inquorate without such a substitution
- b) the substitute Councillor has specific knowledge to share which is important to an item on the agenda.
- c) The Clerk must be notified of any substitution within three working days of the meeting.
- d) The ordinary member is responsible for ensuring the Councillor attending in their place is fully briefed on the items on the agenda.

2.3 The Committee may, by a show of hands, co-opt new permanent members on to the Committee. A new member who has been co-opted onto the Committee may take their place on the Committee immediately following their co-option.

2.4 Councillors wishing to resign from a Committee must do so by notifying the Clerk.

3. Chair of the Committee

3.1 At the Annual Council Meeting, the Council will elect a Chair to the Finance Committee.

3.2 In the absence of the Chair of the Committee, if the Chair of the Council is present at a Committee meeting, they will preside. The Chair of the Council may however waive this right. If the Chair of the Council is not present at the meeting (or waives their right to Chair the meeting), the first order of business of that meeting will be the nomination, by a show of hands, of a Chair to preside at that meeting.

4. Agenda Setting

4.1 The Clerk and Chair of the Committee will agree the items for the agenda prior to its publication.

4.2 Any Councillor wishing to ask for a particular item to be included on the agenda must do so at least five working days prior to the meeting date to allow the request to be considered by the Clerk and Chair of the Committee.

4.3 The decision on which items should be included on the agenda is ultimately the responsibility of the Clerk, it should however be possible for the Chair and the Clerk to agree together which items should and should not be on an agenda.

4.4 No decision should be made about any matter not listed for discussion on the published agenda.

5. Record of Proceedings

5.1 Written minutes will be taken by the Clerk of the Council. If the Clerk is unavailable, a member of the Committee may be nominated at the start of the meeting to take the minutes.

5.2 Minutes must include all of the Committee's decisions and any advice given by the Clerk even if that advice is not followed. Draft minutes will be circulated to all Councillors no later than 5 clear working days prior to the next Committee meeting. The Clerk is responsible for arranging the distribution of the minutes and receiving any requests for amendments or additions. Where the Clerk is in doubt about any requested alteration to the agenda this will be decided by the Committee and noted in the minutes.

6. Public exclusion

6.1 If the public are excluded from the meeting a record will be taken of all matters discussed and if not included in the general minutes, attached as a confidential record to be signed with the published draft minutes by the Chair at the next meeting. Should the Clerk be excluded from this part of the meeting, for any reason, the Chair shall take the minute/confidential record. Full minutes, including the confidential record, will be circulated to full Council, noting confidentiality if necessary.

6.2 At each meeting, the Committee will consider the Record of Decisions (RODs) of the previous meeting. The Committee will make a resolution to accept the RODs and the Chair of the meeting will sign them accordingly.

6.3 All Councillors are asked to contact the Clerk at least two working days prior to the Committee meeting if there are any changes they wish to make to the draft minutes.

7. Responsibilities

7.1 Primary Purpose: to manage the Council's financial resources and to debate and recommend strategy and action on policy and operational matters concerned with Council's finances. The Finance Committee has the following specific duties:

- a) To prepare budgets and recommend precepts for submission to the Council for approval.
- b) To ensure adequate financial controls are in place to utilise and protect the Council's finances and assets – to include;
 - insurance of buildings and property
 - maintenance of the asset register
 - maintenance of the risk register
- c) To review and if necessary, amend the Council's Financial Regulations on an annual basis and ensure the Council is observing the regulations.

- d) To monitor and effect compliance with laid down internal and external audit and other financial procedures, regulations and statutes.
- e) To monitor, and where appropriate, recommend the purchase of capital items.
- f) To make provision for future agreed capital projects.
- g) To review Council Fees and Charges on a regular basis
- h) To monitor the Council's financial risk assessments and recommend changes where necessary.
- i) To establish and effect a clear policy for grant administration.
- j) To approve other Committee's annual spending/budget levels and capital projects to be undertaken and recommend implementation of the same to the Council.
- k) To approve, within budgetary limits, day to day expenditure. To appoint the Responsible Financial Officer to oversee the Council's financial affairs (normally the Clerk)
- l) To regularly review the Council's banking and deposit arrangements.

8. Delegated power

8.1 The Committee makes recommendations to the Council regarding the matters it debates. The Committee is however given full delegated power with regards to the following activities;

- a) To approve expenditure within the agreed budget limits (Fin Regs 4.1).
- b) To approve minor amendments to the bank accounting system (or any such system that replaces it)
- c) To approve grant applications with a value of up to £5000 submitted to HPC.
- d) To review and recommend the Council's financial policies
- e) To arrange future meetings of the Committee
- f) To co-opt new members onto the Committee
- g) To accept apologies from Committee members
- h) To resolve to accept the RODs of the Committee
- i) To delegate decisions to the Clerk

8.2 Where the Council believes it to be appropriate, it may resolve to delegate additional specific decisions to the Committee.

8.3 In emergency situations, where delaying a decision would lead to a cost to the Council, any decisions regarding the investment of the Council's reserves can be made by the Clerk under advisement of the Chair of the Finance Committee.

8.4 The setting of the precept cannot legally be delegated as a decision to be taken by a Committee.

9. Public Participation

9.1 Committee meetings are held in public but are not 'public meetings'. The meetings are open to the public unless their presence would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business, or items of business to be transacted. The public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting will be by a resolution which shall give the reason(s) for the public's exclusion.

9.2 The period of time which is set aside for public participation is at the Committee Chair's discretion but in general will not exceed 15 minutes. Individuals will have a maximum of 3 minutes each. Further information can be found in the Standing Orders of HPC.

10. Conduct at Committee Meetings

10.1 Committee members are expected to abide by the HPC Code of Conduct at all times and HPC Standing Orders.