

Adopted: September 2016

Reviewed and Readopted: annually, last reviewed June 2023

Next review date: March 2024

Terms of Reference

General Terms of Reference applicable to all Committees

1. There shall be a minimum of 3 meetings of each Committee per year.
2. At the Annual Council Meeting a Chairperson shall be appointed, (and Vice-Chairperson if deemed necessary shall be appointed at the first meeting of the committee).
3. A minimum number of members present at a meeting for there to be a quorum shall be 3 or 50% of Committee members whichever is the greater.
4. The four main committees will comprise of 4 members. Members may sit on a maximum of two committees if required. Guest Councillors may be invited to join a committee with full voting rights for a specific meeting subject to the nomination by the Chair of the committee and approval by the members present.
5. Councillors that are connected by marriage, family, employment, or any relationship that a member of the public could reasonably perceive as a potential conflict of interest are not permitted to serve on the same Committee.
6. An agenda shall be issued, to each committee member and publicly, at least 3 working days prior to the meeting.
7. All committee meetings shall be open to the public.
8. Members of the public shall be able to speak during a committee meeting, at the discretion of the Chairperson and with the approval of members of the relevant committee.
9. Every committee meeting shall be minuted and the minutes issued to all councillors and publicly, within 7 working days of the committee meeting.
10. Each committee shall liaise with other committees, as required, where projects overlap.
11. Each committee shall consider the needs of all aspects of the community including, but not limited to, young, elderly, and disabled people.
12. Each committee shall, at all times, consider its duty with respect to Best Value.
13. Each committee shall, at all times, consider its duty with respect to Health & Safety.
14. Each committee shall address the issues of Sustainability and Care of the Environment in all aspects of their work.

15. Each committee shall bring to the attention of the Council any matter being pursued by other local authority/statutory/voluntary or other bodies which may have a beneficial or detrimental effect on Somerton.
16. Each committee shall consider such matters as may be delegated by Council from time to time.
17. Where considered appropriate, each committee may appoint Working Groups from members of the Council or members of the public to carry out part of its business. These Working Groups shall report progress at each appropriate committee meeting.
18. Matters delegated to any committee may be referred back to Council at the request of the Chair of Council or the Clerk.
19. Any unresolved differences between committees shall be resolved at full Council.
20. Each committee Chairperson, or Vice-Chairperson in their absence, shall report key committee discussions, decisions and spending at each Council meeting.
21. Each committee shall establish a written, annual committee budget by the end of October of each year, for approval by the Town Council.
22. The Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Council are Ex Officio members of all Committees, with full voting rights but will not automatically take the Chair of any Committee meetings they attend in this capacity. Please refer to the terms of reference for the Finance and Personnel Committee where there is a different protocol.
23. Each committee shall seek to acquire grant funding for approved projects where appropriate.
24. Each committee shall seek to improve revenue streams where possible.
25. Each committee has delegated power to manage the budget and spending for those elements of the budget which relate to their area of operation without reference to full Council. These elements of the budget will be agreed by full Council at the start of each new financial year. All spending must be in accordance with the financial protocols of the Council and only for the purposes intended. No element of any budget can be overspent, or any changes made between budgets, or reserves released without the authorisation of the full council.
26. Each committee shall seek competitive tenders from contractors and suppliers in accordance with Financial Standing Orders.
27. Each committee shall deal with all correspondence relevant to their terms of reference.
28. Responsibility for scoping, managing, and implementing projects may fall within the remit of a committee, however the authorisation of funds and spending for all projects must be sought from the full Council. For the purposes of this document projects are defined as 'specific' proposals which are outside the current or normal remit of the sponsoring committee. Projects will be identified and shown separately each year in the Council's precept budget.
29. Where guidance is required in any situation not covered by these Terms of Reference the rules outlined in the Council's Standing Orders will apply.

Accessibility and Highways Committee Terms of Reference

The Aim of the Accessibility and Highways Committee is to ensure the easy, safe movement of each Somerton resident and visitor around the Town every day. The responsibilities of the Committee are as follows:

Highways including pavements & Car Parks:

1. The day-to-day administration of the Town Council controlled car parks in the town.
2. The supervision of a Town Council employed Car Park Inspector (if in post), in conjunction with the Town Clerk.
3. The management and planned maintenance of the car parks.
4. Liaison with the Highway Authority over maintenance aspects of the public highway network, both carriageway and footpath, to ensure appropriate levels of service are provided to residents of the town.
5. To oversee/inspect any contract for the cutting of highway verges which fall under the maintenance of STC; the appropriateness of these operations being regularly discussed.
6. To seek the implementation of any minor improvements to the highway network, as may be suggested by the Committee or Town Council, after consultation with the Highway Authority.
7. To endeavour to have flood free roads in and around Somerton by working with SCC Highway Authority, private landowners and any other appropriate body.
8. To work pro-actively with the SCC Highway Authority, the Highway Agency and Police to ensure speed limits are met on all our roads.

Public Lighting:

9. Liaison with the relevant authority and their contractors, over the on-going maintenance of the existing public lighting on the highways around the town.
10. To maintain ongoing discussion about the level of public lighting in Somerton with the community and with SCC. This would include consideration of improvements and the allocation of appropriate funding for the public lighting system for the town.
11. The appropriate provision and maintenance of lighting to serve all lands controlled by the Town Council.
12. To co-operate with the Christmas Lights Volunteer team to put up and take down the lights safely each year.

Footpaths, Cycle Routes, Bus Routes:

13. The monitoring of the condition of existing public footpaths, liaising with SSDC/SCC on problems encountered as they are the responsible authorities concerned. The Committee should encourage walking within the Town by paying attention to the needs of pedestrians particularly children, parents, and those with limited mobility, including the monitoring and keeping footpaths clear of dog fouling, other noxious litter, and other obstructions such as parked vehicles.
14. To consider suggestions from residents on improvements to the footpath network, seek support for improvements identified and encourage use of the footpaths around the town.
15. Facilitate the provision of cycle routes in and around Somerton where possible and generally promote more cycling. Make provision for the storage of bicycles and scooters within the shopping area of the town.
16. Liaise with public and private businesses to promote and improve public transport.

General Amenity

17. To encourage Somerton residents to engage with the 'appearance' and ambience of their Town in as many ways as possible.

Somerton Town Council Owned Vehicles

18. The Accessibility and Highways Committee will oversee all aspects of the management of the council's road going vehicles.

The War Memorial, Market Square

19. The Accessibility and Highways Committee shall oversee the maintenance and safe keeping of this monument.

Tree Management

20. Appoint a Tree Management representative from the committee to work with the Clerk's Office and ensure that the Tree Management Strategy is implemented and adhered to.

Land and Property Committee Terms of Reference

The aims of the Land and Property Committee are to:

- Ensure the Town Council owned land and property is always made available for the benefit of the residents of Somerton;
- Improve and maintain Town Council owned land and property;
- Ensure insurances are maintained and are adequate;
- Ensure that the Council's statutory responsibilities are met with regard to the land and property it owns.

Public toilets at Cox's Yard

1. In conjunction with the Town Clerk ensure all facilities are adequate and properly maintained.
2. In conjunction with the Town Clerk ensure all facilities are adequately and properly cleaned.

Edgar Hall office/meeting rooms

3. In conjunction with the Town Clerk ensure all facilities are adequate, properly maintained and cleaned.
4. In conjunction with the Town Clerk ensure that arrangements and equipment are suitable for all meetings and events.
5. In conjunction with the Town Clerk ensure the lift is inspected and maintained to statutory requirements.
6. Review bookings policy and pricing.
7. Review financial performance of letting areas and make recommendations on future strategy.

Cemetery

8. To oversee and plan future operation of the Cemetery in Somerton, in conjunction with the Town Clerk, and the Deputy Clerk who is responsible for the day-to-day management.
9. Review the level of charges levied for the use of the Cemetery facilities.
10. To ensure that correct and full records of burials and cremation plots are made and maintained.

Recreation Areas (Etsome Terrace/Gassons Lane/Sutton Road/Parklands Way)

11. In conjunction with the Town Clerk and Town Council contractors, who are responsible for day-to-day management of these sites, the Land and Property Committee will oversee the condition of the play areas and ensure safety inspections are carried out by the appropriate safety advisors.
12. In conjunction with the Town Clerk ensure all facilities are adequate, safe and properly maintained and reports of damage, breakages etc are dealt with speedily.
13. To consider future play area provision around the town and seek support (in terms of both advice and financial assistance) from SSDC and other Agencies.
14. In conjunction with the Town Clerk, oversee replacements and plan future operation of the recreation areas in Somerton.

Memorial Garden, Etsome Terrace

15. In conjunction with the Town Clerk ensure inspections are carried out and any reports of damage, breakages etc are dealt with speedily.
16. In conjunction with the Town Clerk oversee maintenance and replacement of planting.

Land south of King Ina Road (leased to local Scouts Group)

17. STC is freeholder but has no day-to-day responsibility.

Land at Horse Mill Lane

18. In conjunction with the Town Clerk ensure grounds are adequately and properly maintained.

The Market Cross

19. In conjunction with the Town Clerk ensure the structure is safe and properly maintained.

Promotion and Communications Committee Terms of Reference

The aim of the Communications Committee is to ensure that all methods of communication, both internally and externally, are delivered clearly, correctly, and promptly and to promote the town of Somerton for the benefit of local residents and businesses.

Communications within the Town Council

1. Improve, where necessary, and monitor all internal and external methods of communication regarding Somerton town Council.
2. Co-ordinate the compilation of the Council Annual Report, with the cooperation of all other committees, for approval by Council.
3. Establish and maintain the policies covered by the council's Model Publication Scheme, as well as the publication Scheme itself.
4. Implement the relevant elements of the Local Council Award.
5. Organise and monitor a dedicated STC website.

Communication with residents

6. Responsibility for communications between the Council and Somerton residents and businesses.
7. Arrange 'surgeries' for local residents to meet councillors.
8. Encourage the participation of local groups and individuals in community projects for the benefit of Somerton.
9. Co-ordinate the production of all Town Council publications (incl. Viaduct and Your Somerton) distributed to the town.
10. Liaise with local clubs, organisation, trusts, local authorities, statutory bodies and interested parties as required.
11. Arrange for consultations and questionnaires for undertaking by the local residents, as requested by Council, regarding important town issues.
12. Responsibility for writing and issuing Press Releases for approval by the Town Clerk within the provisions of the media policy.
13. Arrange training for Councillors on the creation of Press releases and the requirements of the media policy.
14. Promote the effective use of the town notice boards (including the digital noticeboards).
15. Arrange town competitions as considered appropriate.

16. Arrange and co-ordinate the council Annual Town Assembly and Annual Town Council Meeting, involving local organisations, where considered appropriate.
17. Participate in the distribution of Public Information Material in co-operation with other agencies and bodies as appropriate.
18. Promote local elections and provide appropriate information about the election and voting process. The committee shall also inform the electorate regarding the roles and responsibilities of councillors with a view to encouraging potential candidates.

Youth

19. Foster and develop the provision of Youth Facilities in the town in conjunction with the Council.
20. Foster and develop opportunities for Youth engagement, entertainment, development and play.
21. Represent the Town Council at or on appropriate Youth related functions, meetings or bodies.
22. Manage all Town Council Youth funding/grants for Youth on behalf of the Council.

Promotion of Somerton

23. Participate in and support the appropriate marketing of the town and its amenities.
24. Facilitate further development of the Somerton Community Plan.
25. Establish and maintain links with local business.
26. To seek to promote, with others, the town of Somerton in any manner considered to be appropriate, e.g. Floral displays; nature trail.

Finance and Personnel Committees Terms of Reference

The Finance and Personnel Committees report to the Council and have delegated decision making where stated. Their role is to support the work of the Town Clerk/RFO, the Council and its Committees with regard to all matters relating to finance, accounting and management of the council business and to provide Human Resources support. The members of the Finance Committee are Chairs of Committees. All members of the council are encouraged to attend meetings of the Finance committee.

Finance Committee

1. The Finance is to consist of the Chair of Full Council, Chairs of Committees. When the Chair of Committee is unable to attend, the Vice Chair *or a nominated member* of that committee may attend as a substitute member. The Chair of the Full Council shall be the Chair of this Committee, as the Chair of Full Council has no direct responsibility for either part or the whole of the council budget. A quorum of 3 members is recommended for this committee, and will be 3 members, but an alternative level may be stated and agreed if necessary.
2. The Finance Committee will meet three times a year, and at other times during the financial year when required for example to finalise the budget for precept setting.
3. The Responsible Financial Officer, (RFO), is to attend all Finance Committee meetings. In the absence of the RFO, the Town Clerk will attend. The Deputy Clerk will attend these meetings as an officer of the Town Council, as and when required.
4. The Finance Committee has appointed a Personnel sub-committee which should contain three members from the Finance Committee, one of which is the HR Councillor. It is recommended that the Chair of the Personnel sub-committee is the HR Councillor.
5. Update the asset register.
6. Oversee the regular tendering of insurance and utilities.
7. Advise on the Council's policy and approach to Risk Management.
8. Recommend the format of internal financial reports.
9. Ensure the tender process is sound and is followed.
10. Regularly review the Councils Financial Standing Orders.
11. Support and advise on the preparation of grant applications by the Council.
12. Be an 'official' and trusted source of financial information for the Council.
13. Provide financial analysis for decision making purposes to the Committees when required.
14. Advise on the handling of non-routine Freedom of Information requests.
15. Bring to Full Council areas for discussion with supporting documentation and recommendations.
16. Provide a vehicle to receive commercially sensitive/confidential presentations and be authorised to make a judgement when such information is in the Public Interest and should be made available to the community.
17. Undertake the Annual Review of internal audit for inclusion in the annual governance statement.

18. Test the soundness of the Council's finance system. One member of this committee to work with another councillor (not on this committee and to be a different councillor each time) to work with the RFO and provide monthly scrutiny of the financial proper practices.
19. Provide Members for Complaint Hearings and Freedom of Information Reviews.
20. Check that the Council is obtaining value for money in all areas.
21. To research saving and investment opportunities in order to produce an Investment Policy as per the Joint Panel of Accountability and Governance (JPAG) Practitioners Guide.
22. Finalise the annual budget by the end of December each year, with precept setting recommendations, to present to Full Council in January for approval.
23. To appoint an internal auditor and to ensure effective internal audit.

Personnel Committee Terms of Reference

The Personnel Committee will meet as and when required and has delegated powers to resolve staffing issues. Two further sub-committees to be created as necessary: a 'Hearing Panel' and an 'Appeals Panel'. These 'panels' to consist of other members of the members of the wider Full Council. Note these 'panels' will be determined and meet **only** if the need arises.

Delegation of powers: The Full Council delegates the interview and appointment of staff posts to this committee, working with the Town Clerk.

Staffing matters

1. Provide line management to the Town Clerk and provide support with the line management of the other Town Council employees.
2. To ensure that annual appraisals are completed for all employees.
3. To complete the Town Clerk's appraisal review in conjunction with the Chair of Full Council.
4. To review staff salaries and pay increases.

Recruitment

5. To work closely with the Town Clerk to prepare job descriptions and person specifications for any staff vacancy.
6. To approve the advertisement of posts and prepare long and shortlists on the advice of the Town Clerk.

Training

7. To ensure appropriate training for all staff and councillors is identified and supported within the annual training budget set.
8. To review any policies relating to staffing and employment.

Disciplinary, Grievance and Capability

9. To oversee and resolve in conjunction with the Clerk any employee disciplinary, grievance and capability matters.

Human Resources Legislative changes

10. Work with the Clerk to monitor and implement changes required by employment legislation.

Planning Committee Terms of Reference

On behalf of the council oversee the Planning responsibilities of the Council.

1. Present to Councillors Planning applications requiring decisions. Visit sites and liaise with interested parties for significant applications.
2. Provide support and training to Councillors on current and new planning legislation.
3. Liaise with the relevant planning authority when required to do so.
4. Manage the 106 / CIL payments priorities with the relevant officers, coordinating the STC priorities for this funding.