

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE October 2013

The Finance and General Purposes Committee (F&GP) is responsible for oversight of the Council's finances, and all of its legal, statutory and regulatory affairs unless the matters are included in the terms of reference of any other committee. The committee is responsible for ensuring that the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) carries out the duties of the role properly. This committee is accountable specifically for the following areas

1. Finances
2. Standing Orders
3. Byelaws
4. Councillor Matters
5. Publicity and Parish Matters
6. Legal
7. Legislation
8. External Liaison
9. Staffing Matters
10. Historic Records
11. Law and Order
12. Health and Safety
13. Equality
14. Risk
15. Investment
16. Financial Regulations

The following sections give some explanatory detail of the elements involved above but they are not exhaustive

1) Finances

- a) The opening and closing of Bank Accounts.
- b) Approving accounting practices and systems.
- c) Preparing the Committee's annual estimates.
- d) Considering all the Council's Committees annual estimates to obtain an overall position of the Council's finances in order to make appropriate recommendations to Council and Committees.
- e) Recommending a precept to Council.
- f) To apply Best Value Principles to the Council's affairs, even though there is no legal requirement to undertake this, and recommend accordingly.
- g) To consider forward planning and provide earmarked reserves for the replacement of equipment, vehicles, buildings and specific items of expenditure required in the future in order to lesson the precept burden in any one year.
- h) Undertaking an annual review of all fees, charges and allowances.
- i) To consider all aspects of the Council's service delivery and recommend accordingly.
- j) To seek grant aid and appropriate support in respect to the responsibilities of the Council.
- k) Making investments in the long and short term.
- l) Ensuring the Council is adequately insured, that this is reviewed annually and recommend accordingly.
- m) Providing grants and loans to third parties, usually Parish organisations.
- n) Making donations, usually to organisations operating within the Parish.
- o) Authorising subscriptions to organisations that are involved in local and national issues, which affect the work of the Council.
- p) Monitoring all Committees income and expenditure during the financial year and where appropriate recommending action to be taken.
- q) Making arrangement for the Internal Audit to be undertaken each year. To consider the subsequent reports and taking appropriate action where necessary.
- r) Submitting the necessary documentation to the External Auditor. To consider the subsequent reports and taking appropriate action where necessary.

- s) To appoint at least two backbench members of the Council to audit the Councils financial affairs during the year to ensure practices, procedures, best value principles, management and legislative requirements are complied with and there are no discrepancies. These members and the Chairman of the committee consider all the above financial matters and make appropriate recommendations where necessary to this Committee.
- t) Ensuring the cheques, standing orders and direct debits are signed by two members and/or are approved by Standing Committees of the Council.
- u) Recording expenditure under Section 137 of the Local Government Act and recording this in end of year balance sheets.
- v) Recommending the borrowing of funds and making the appropriate Loan Sanction Applications.

2) STANDING ORDERS

- a) Annually to prepare, review, monitor and amend the Council's Standing Orders and recommend accordingly.

3) BYELAWS

- a) To prepare, review, monitor and amended the Council's Byelaws and recommend accordingly when appropriate

4) COUNCILLOR MATTERS

- a) To set allowances and expenses and recommend accordingly. To deal with: electoral matters, casual vacancies and co-options onto the Council. To deal with: persistent absences of members and member's conduct and recommend accordingly. To make recommendations on appropriate training for members, Chairmen and Vice-Chairman. The appointment of members to appropriate conferences, seminars, workshops and meetings to represent the Council.
- b) To ensure that all matters relating to the Code of Conduct contained within the Local Government Act 2000 and subsequent regulations are complied with. Also to ensure that all members comply with their Code of Conduct. This includes the

register of member's interests and matters that should be referred to or arising from Wycombe District Council's Standards Committee.

5) PUBLICITY and PARISH MATTERS

- a) To be accountable for all publicity matters which could include
 - i) Newsletters
 - ii) Electronic media
 - iii) Press Releases
 - iv) Exhibitions
 - v) Public Meetings
 - vi) Council Notice Boards
 - vii) Council Annual Report
- b) To consider and make recommendations on the Council's committee structure and fix a calendar of meetings.
- c) To make arrangements for Parish Meetings, and referendum as necessary.
- d) To comply with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 in making as much information as possible freely available to the public as approved by a Council meeting in 2002.
- e) To annually submit and revise the Council Publicity Policy.
- f) To appoint a Sub-Committee, consisting of at least one Member from each Ward, to deal with the issue of the Newsletter, Civic functions and exhibitions.

6) LEGISLATION

- a) To consider all legislative matters, regulations and guidance and where appropriate refer such matters to the appropriate Committee of the Council. To consider new and proposed legislation, including consultation documents and views expressed by individuals or organisations, to respond accordingly. To make representations to amend or abolish existing legislation. If necessary to undertake consultation on such matters.

7) LEGAL

- a) To consider all legal issues affecting the Council and to make appropriate recommendations, to Council, where action is being proposed or taken against the Council.
- b) The establishment of policy principles and their monitoring in respect to contractual matters, easements, leases, tenancies, specifications for work and recommend accordingly.
- c) To deal with all issues related to boundary reviews, warding arrangements and electoral matters affecting the Parish.
- d) To consider proposals and legislation relating to changes within Local Government and recommend accordingly.

8) EXTERNAL LIAISON

- a) To liaise with national organisations, local organisations, Government Departments, charities, individuals and any other body responsible for activities or functions affecting residents and the work of the Council except where the liaison falls within the terms of reference of another committee.

9) STAFFING MATTERS

- a) To be responsible for appointing, termination, discipline, training, and terms and conditions of service for full time and part-time staff. To review rates of pay

annually and to consider recommendation made by all Council Chairmen. To make provision, at employees request, for employee and employer contributions to the Bucks County Council Superannuation Scheme or any other approved pension provider. To make the appropriate payments and salary reductions in respect to income tax and national insurance contributions. To review staff performance.

- b) To be responsible for the appointment and termination of contracts for consultants and or advisors to assist the Council in undertake the work of the Council.
- c) To be responsible for considering the workload of staff, consultants and advisors. To set, when necessary, priorities of work and workload controls.

10) HISTORIC RECORDS

- a) To maintain and expand the Council's historic records.
- b) To ensure that the documents the council is legally required to maintain are properly secured and stored.

11) LAW and ORDER

- a) To liaise with the Police and other appropriate bodies on specific and general matters affecting residents. Consider ways of increasing public awareness to police issues, dumping, vandalism, drug abuse, highway offences and other law and order matters.

12) HEALTH AND SAFETY

- a) To be responsible for health, safety and welfare under the Health and Safety legislation, regulations and guidance as well as any other legislative safety requirements to ensure the safety of employees, contractors and the public on Council land or in Council buildings, including those rented or leased, or individuals and organisations using Council's facilities: These to include:
 - i) Reviewing and revising the Council's Health and Safety Policy.

- ii) Recommending the provision of financial resources.
- iii) The preparation and review of risk assessments arising from work activities and public safety responsibilities, including contractors and permit holders.
- iv) Ensuring that regular safety inspections are undertaken and that when necessary also ensuring that appropriate action is taken when necessary.
- v) The preparation of procedures and safe practices and their review.
- vi) The display of up to date safety notices and information as well as providing appropriate advice.
- vii) Keeping records.
- viii) Obtaining advice when necessary. Obtaining appropriate up to date documents, regulations and guidance to be kept in a library available to Members, employees and the public.
- ix) Ensuring contractors, agents, or anyone given permission to be on Council land or in Council buildings, for a specific reason, complies with safety requirements.
- x) All forms of equipment are regularly maintained and inspected for safety purposes.
- xi) To ensure the safe handling and use of substances.
- xii) To provide information, instruction and supervision for employees.
- xiii) To ensure that employees are competent to do their tasks and given them adequate training.

13) EQUALITY

- a) To ensure that the Council policy on Race Equality and equality for others, approved in 2002, is applied to all aspects of the Council's work and functions. To monitor and review this policy.

14) RISK

- a) To ensure that the Council's Risk Register is maintained and reviewed annually and that all the actions contained within it are properly undertaken.

15) INVESTMENT

- a) To ensure that the Council's Investment policy is maintained and reviewed annually and that all the actions contained within it are properly undertaken.

16) FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

- a) To ensure that the Council's Financial Regulations are followed and that they are reviewed annually.

Adopted at Full Council on 7 November 2013