

Terms of reference for Rayleigh 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.
- 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 Finance 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. Political representation on Committees will be pro-rata to the political composition of the council with seats being allocated in the ratio of declared political affiliation. Non-aligned or apolitical members will be counted as independent for the purposes of allocation.
- 1.5. 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.
- 1.6. 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.
- 1.7. Town Councillors not on a committee may attend meetings but not vote.

- 1.8. Non-councillors will only be co-opted for the specific purposes identified in Regulation 3 of The Parish and Community Councils (Committees) Regulations. If appointed to an eligible committee, they will have limited voting rights and will agree to be bound by the code of conduct, financial regulations and standing orders of the Council.
- 1.9. 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.
- 1.10. 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.
- 1.11. Committees may create sub-committees. These may consist of councillors and non-councillors with equal voting rights (see 1.8). 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.
- 1.12. The meeting calendar will be based on monthly cycle with Council and Committee meetings normally held Mondays as advertised on the calendar of meetings.
- 1.13. Unless otherwise advertised, meetings will be held at the Pavilion meeting room.

Planning and Local Development Committee.

Number of members	Up to ten members with representatives from each ward.
Quorum	Four
Meeting frequency	Monthly as required.

The Planning and local development committee shall be empowered to:

To make representation to the appropriate authority of any planning issues and domestic planning applications published in the District Council's weekly list for development within the Town Council boundary and provide comments to the planning authority.

Consider planning appeals and review enforcement action.

Consider applications for tree works and note Tree Preservation Orders
Consider matters relating to highways and traffic management, vehicle parking within the town.

Make recommendations regarding street naming.

Positively contribute to discussions, evaluations, and consultations in respect of major or contentious new development activity, including the establishment of formal meetings with professional planning staff, to exchange views and consider details proposals whenever necessary.

Wider planning issues may be discussed but major and speculative developments will be considered by Full Council.

Delegated powers to the Clerk in consultation with the Chair or Vice Chair of the committee if there is insufficient time to submit comments to the Planning Authority. Informal representation from other councillors, especially those representing the wards in question will be sought.

Environmental and Open Spaces Committee.

Number of members	Up to ten members
Quorum	Four
Meeting frequency	Monthly as required

The Environmental Committee shall be empowered to advise on the long-term management and safety of open spaces owned or managed by the council.

Oversee and manage the Rayleigh Town Council's policy for the maintenance and development of all recreational and open spaces managed by the Council.

Advise the council on an environmental policy that promotes sustainability.

To seek opportunities to acquire new land and improve the facilities of existing sites.

Ensure that the spaces are managed in compliance with all relevant codes and legislation with valid risk assessments where required.

Manage the provision and maintenance of street furniture, bus shelters and public notice boards.

Oversee the effectiveness and efficiency of street cleansing operations undertaken by the council.

Manage the Allotment sites through a sub committee consisting of four councillors and one representative from each allotment site.

Footpaths and public rights of way.

Maintain and improve play equipment.

Retain, maintain, develop, and promote the Rayleigh Town footpaths network.

Manage the open spaces.

Oversee the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the street lighting provided by the Council.

Communities Committee

Number of members	Up to ten members with representatives from each ward.
Quorum	Four
Meeting frequency	Monthly as required.

The Communities Committee has delegated power to deal with all aspects of anti-social behaviour, crime and disorder for the whole of Rayleigh.

To advise the council on the needs and requirements of the community, recommending ways to match council resources to community needs.

To research and advise the council on methods of reducing crime and the fear of crime in the Town.

To research and advise the council on methods of improving the quality of life in the Town.

To manage the provision and maintenance of public floral displays.

To manage the Market.

Appoint working groups to deliver

Festive Lighting

Trinity Fair

Rayleigh in Bloom

Annual awards

Other public events

Finance Committee.

Number of members	Up to ten members
Quorum	Four
Meeting frequency	Quarterly as required.

The Finance Committee has delegated power to

advise the Responsible Financial Officer of financial requirements.

ensure that adequate and comprehensive financial controls are in place and implemented in line with Financial Regulations.

recommend the annual accounts to the Council.

advise on the appointment of the Auditors and on matters arising from the audit.

contribute to and review financial planning as part of the strategic and business planning process.

consider and recommend annual estimates of income and expenditure to the Council.

develop and recommend an annual precept to the Council.

monitor income and expenditure against the estimates referred to above.

request and receive reports from other Committees on any matter having a financial implication.

have oversight of the assessment of risk and actions taken to minimise risk.

Review the Risk Assessments for individual property, open spaces and working practices in relation to the property portfolio.

ensure that the ICT and document management requirements of the business are safeguarded.

To allocate funding to working groups if required.

Personnel Committee.

Number of members	Seven members including chair of council and all committees.
Quorum	Three
Standing agenda items	None
Meeting frequency	As required.

The Personnel Committee has delegated power to;

Oversee and manage Rayleigh Town Council personnel matters

Review the job descriptions, appraisals, roles & responsibilities, and contracts of Town Council personnel.

Make representation to the Finance Committee on employment-related matters including contracts, salary reviews, roles and responsibilities

Review personnel policies covering sickness absence, grievance, equalities, discipline, health and safety.

Oversee the training programme for Officers and Members of the council.

To review health and safety at work for all Council employees.

To review all Council policies that relate to staff employment on an annual basis.

To ensure the Council complies with all legislative requirements relating to the employment of staff.

to act as a disciplinary or grievance panel as set out in the Green Book.

To appoint an appeals panel of councillors who are not members of the personnel committee to provide a review mechanism for grievance or disciplinary decisions.

Allotments sub committee

Number of members	Four councillors and one representative from each allotment site.
Quorum	Six
Standing agenda items	None
Meeting frequency	Twice yearly.

Advise the Environmental Committee on the requirements for the allotments and to provide formal liaison between the Council and the tenant groups.