

## 1. Objectives

To ensure that meetings are focused at the right level for the councillors and council resources are engaged, without duplication and with suitable delegated authorities and deal with matters in a timely and sequential order.

Time also needs to be made available in councillors busy schedules for working groups, community, and business meetings to formulate strategy and to progress projects to a stage they can be presented to council and committee meetings for decision.

Meetings must also be accessible to all residents, to listen and contribute, in a welcoming and friendly environment that enables council business to be progressed in a constructive manner, whilst also holding the council to account for its actions and expenditures.

## 2. Current Meetings and Committees

Meeting	Planning Advisory Group	Community Matters	Full Council	Staff & Finance
When	1 <sup>st</sup> Wed in month	2 <sup>nd</sup> Wed in month	3 <sup>rd</sup> Wed in month	4 <sup>th</sup> Wed in quarter
Where	Folk Hall	Folk Hall	Folk Hall	Folk Hall
Number per year	12	12	12	4

The envisaged scope and terms of reference for each are:

### a. Full Council

- To decide council strategy on significant matters
- To determine and approve Council policy and procedures (incl Standing Orders and Financial Regulations)
- To approve significant expenditures or matters of significant risk to the Council
- To engage with external bodies on matters of policy and consultation
- To hear evidence and comment upon significant matters of concern to the Town
- To oversee and delegate authority to specialist committees, where appropriate

### b. Planning Advisory Group

- To review and comment on individual planning applications in the PTC area
- To hear evidence and comment on consultations that affect local planning issues

### c. Community Matters (formerly Recreation & Works)

- To maintain and invest in PTC assets and amenities (i.e. halls, toilets, play parks, bins, allotments etc)
- To provide a forum for community groups to engage with and present to the Council on matters that improve community assets, services, environment and wellbeing.
- To encourage and consider grant applications from community groups, to foster the above objectives
- To agree funding and service level agreements for the provision of services by community and voluntary sector groups

#### **d. Staff & Finance**

- Responsible for the financial wellbeing of the council, its budgets, internal controls, processes, accounting and audit
- To ensure adequate staffing for the objectives of the council and the wellbeing of council staff
- To consider and conduct financial due diligence in respect of grants (and SLAs), being a stakeholder in the grants process and to make recommendations to the Community Matters committee for its consideration of grant applications
- To ensure value for money in council contracting
- To consider and approve banking arrangements and the investment of council funds
- To establish council policies and procedures (including Standing Orders and Financial Regulations) and make recommendations to the Full Council Meeting in that respect

### **3. Current Issues**

- 3.1. **Delegated Authority** - limits are too low to ensure that committees and council staff can take quick action and not refer relatively small and low risk items to the Full Council.
- 3.2. **Grants Consideration** – on an annual basis is potentially a block to applications and delays the provision of funding to worthy groups and projects.
- 3.3. **Order of Meetings** - with Community Matters following full Council, is not conducive to quick decision making where matters need to be referred to the full council.
- 3.4. **Full Council Meetings** - with the increase in longer term projects and greater delegation to Committees and working parties, the day-to-day workload on councillors is increasing and more time is required for working parties to deliver projects.
- 3.5. **Meeting Accessibility** - conducting all meetings on Wednesday nights and in the same location limits public access to council business. However, there are logistical problems in moving meeting days particularly in the post Covid-19 period, so further consideration of the best solution is required.
- 3.6. **Planning consideration** -the immediate nature of planning applications combined with a 21-day response deadline causes practical issues in dealing with planning applications, and a bottleneck if significant numbers of non-contentious applications are dealt with at PAG committee. Delegated authority to the Chairman and PAG members needs to ensure that discussion at PAG meetings are focused on the most significant planning applications.
- 3.7. **Staffing & Finance** - with increasing activity particularly around the financial year end an additional Staffing & Finance committee meeting in June may be beneficial.

The appendix sets out the meeting structure of other local authorities in the area in comparison to that of PTC. This indicates that when normal council business is suitably delegated to appropriately structured committees, then monthly full council meetings are not essential and councillor time can be more productively utilised on other matters.

#### 4. Proposal

- 4.1. **Delegated Authority for approval of expenditure** - to align the delegated authority limits for expenditure approval, excluding grant approval, for all Committees as follows:
- a. Expenditure within budget up to £500 (excl VAT) can be approved by the RFO and any single councillor.
  - b. Expenditure within budget up to £2,000 (excl VAT) can be approved by the RFO and two councillors one of which must be the Chair or Vice-Chair of the council or the relevant committee for the type of expenditure.
  - c. Expenditure within budget up to £5,000 (excl VAT) can be approved by the relevant committee. Only the Community Matters committee or Full Town Council can approve grant expenditure.
  - d. All items of expenditure (other than grants) over £5,000 (excl VAT) require Full Town Council approval.

A list of all payments made, and a bank reconciliation will continue to be reported to the Full Town Council for approval at a meeting after the month of payment.

The approval of expenditure in accordance with the above delegated authorities may be evidenced by signature or approval by email or other electronic means by the relevant persons (including approval of purchase orders). Where approval of a committee is required this will be evidenced by a minute of the relevant committee meeting.

The Staffing and Finance committee is also authorised to approve all banking, investment insurance arrangements, contracts, and decisions.

- 4.2. **Delegated Authority for the approval of grant awards** – the Community Matters committee is given the delegated authority to approve all grant applications and awards of less than £10,000. All grant applications and awards of £10,000 or more require Full Town Council approval, although the Community Matters Committee shall consider all applications and make recommendations to the Full Town Council in respect of such.

In considering and approving any grants the Community Matters committee shall seek advice from the RFO and the Chair of the Staffing & Finance committee.

- 4.3. **Order of meetings** – the order of meetings is changed so that Planning Advisory Group and Community Matters committee meetings proceed Full Town Council meetings in any month.
- 4.4. **Full Town Council Meetings** – are held on a bi-monthly basis with an additional meeting in June. Accordingly, meetings will be held in May (including the Annual Town Council meeting), June, July, September, November, January, and March.
- 4.5. **Annual Residents Meeting** – it is proposed that the Annual Residents Meeting is held in April so that its resolutions can be considered at the Annual Town Council meeting in May.

- 4.6. **Meetings Accessibility** – the Community Matters committee meeting will remain on a Wednesday and at the Folk Hall until at least October 2020. A further review to be conducted on the feasibility of changing the day of meeting to a Tuesday from 2021-22 and the meeting taking place at different hall (Redcliffe Bay, North Western and the Folk Hall) on a rotating basis from November 2020.
- 4.7. **Staffing & Finance** – committee meetings shall be held quarterly on the last Wednesday in April, July, October, and January. Although provision is made for an additional meeting in May each year to assist the year end process.

## 5. Meeting Schedule for 2020-2021

In summary, the following schedule of meetings is proposed for 2020-21:

- Planning Advisory Group (PAG) – the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of each month at the Folk Hall
- Community Matters (CM) – the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month at the Folk Hall, with a review of day and place of meeting from October 2020.
- Full Council Meeting (PTC) – 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of every alternate month at the Folk Hall, with an additional meeting in June. The Annual Town Council meeting being in May.
- Staff and Finance (S&F) – last Wednesday of every quarter at the Folk Hall, with an additional meeting in May to assist with the financial year end.
- Annual Residents Meeting (ARM) – in April.

A table of the proposed meeting dates is provided in point 6.

## 6. Proposed 2020-21 Meeting Calendar

Month	Date	Day	Committee	Location
<b>Jun 2020</b>	3	Wed	Planning Advisory Group	Folk Hall
	10	Wed	Community Matters	Folk Hall
	17	Wed	Town Council	Folk Hall
<b>Jul 2020</b>	1	Wed	Planning Advisory Group	Folk Hall
	8	Wed	Community Matters	Folk Hall
	15	Wed	Town Council	Folk Hall
	29	Wed	Staffing & Finance	Folk Hall
<b>Aug 2020</b>	5	Wed	Planning Advisory Group	Folk Hall
	12	Wed	Community Matters	Folk Hall
<b>Sep 2020</b>	2	Wed	Planning Advisory Group	Folk Hall
	9	Wed	Community Matters	Folk Hall
	16	Wed	Town Council	Folk Hall
<b>Oct 2020</b>	7	Wed	Planning Advisory Group	Folk Hall
	14	Wed	Community Matters	TBC
	28	Wed	Staffing & Finance	Folk Hall
<b>Nov 2020</b>	4	Wed	Planning Advisory Group	Folk Hall
	11	Wed	Community Matters	TBC
	18	Wed	Town Council	Folk Hall
<b>Dec 2020</b>	2	Wed	Planning Advisory Group	Folk Hall
	9	Wed	Community Matters	TBC
<b>Jan 2021</b>	6	Wed	Planning Advisory Group	Folk Hall
	13	Wed	Community Matters	TBC
	20	Wed	Town Council	Folk Hall
	27	Wed	Staffing & Finance	Folk Hall
<b>Feb 2021</b>	3	Wed	Planning Advisory Group	Folk Hall
	10	Wed	Community Matters	TBC
<b>Mar 2021</b>	3	Wed	Planning Advisory Group	Folk Hall
	10	Wed	Community Matters	TBC
	17	Wed	Town Council	Folk Hall
<b>Apr 2021</b>	7	Wed	Planning Advisory Group	Folk Hall
	14	Wed	Community Matters	TBC
	21	Wed	Portishead Residents Annual Meeting	Folk Hall
<b>May 2021</b>	28	Wed	Staffing & Finance	Folk Hall
	5	Wed	Planning Advisory Group	Folk Hall
	12	Wed	Community Matters	TBC
	19	Wed	Town Council – Annual Meeting	Folk Hall
	26	Wed	Staffing & Finance	Folk Hall

An Extraordinary Meeting of the Town Council may also be called at any time if something urgent requires resolution.

<b>REVIEW OF MEETINGS - COMPARISON TO OTHER LOCAL COUNCILS</b>							
<i>PTC equivalent meetings</i>	<i>PTC</i>	<i>PAG</i>	<i>CM</i>	<i>S&amp;F</i>			<i>Total</i>
<i>PTC current meetings</i>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>4</b>			<b>40</b>
<b>Meeting/Committees</b>	<b>Full Council</b>	<b>Planning Advisory</b>	<b>Property/ Amenities/ Environmental</b>	<b>Finance/ Policy/ Staff</b>	<b>Transport/ Highways</b>	<b>Events/ Communication/ Community</b>	
Clevedon	6	12	6	6	6	6	42
Nailsea	9	17	8	8		8	50
Weston Super Mare	6	13	12	6		6	43
Backwell	12	12					24
Yatton	6	As needed	6	6			18
Frome	6	17	6	6			35
Paulton	12	13	6	4		6	41
<i>PTC proposed committee meetings</i>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>35</b>