

Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

Finance and General Purposes 02/01/2025

Policies

Agenda item 24/049 1.

- b. To consider a draft note regarding the potential new committee structure and the proposed relevant documents as listed and agree further actions:**
- i. Scheme of Delegation**
 - ii. Guidance and Glossary**
 - iii. Draft timetable**

BACKGROUND

Potential new committee structure

- Away day in August (document 24-049 1b1) - agreed to re-cast the standing committees: F&GP, Community, Facilities, and Highways & Planning.
- October Full Council meeting - working group established to draft terms of reference, etc.
- Two work streams: (a) new committee (etc) ToR (now “Scheme of Delegation”) and consequent changes to other policies, and (b) discussion about many meetings per year (council, committees, etc).

New Scheme of Delegation (v1.2)

- Starts with expansion of existing principle that if a budget line is allocated to a committee that committee has delegated power over its subject matter. Concept of delegated matters, budgets and decisions. Some of this is in a revised Financial Regulations, the rest in the Scheme.
- So, once council has signed off on a budget (so council still has control of everything at a high level), the relevant committee will run the matter, project, etc, reporting back as necessary (but can still take something to council to decide if it’s important).
- New document:
 - takes the old Committee Terms of Reference and expands it - general introduction plus terms of reference for all committees, sub-committees and steering groups (currently in separate documents);
 - introduces a new element – formalising the Clerk’s powers (something Lynn thought was a good idea to back up her powers in the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations).

- **The terms of reference in the appendices need discussion and deliberation** – the draft is very sparse in some places (eg relating to the Communities Committee) because this needs input from everyone.

New Policy Guidance and Glossary (v0.6)

- Does three things:
 - removes the definitions from policies and puts them in one place;
 - formalises the Clerk’s power to make minor amendments to policies to keep them updated;
 - lists all the council’s policies (etc) and identifies which body is responsible for them.

Meetings (draft timetable)

- ***Current***: 10 Full, 8 F&GP, 3 F&C, 3 RF&C, and fortnightly Planning – in 24/25 we had 47 scheduled meetings and 37 scheduled meeting days (because Planning and Full on the same day).
- ***Proposal***: 6 Full , 7 F&GP (tied to Full with one extra for the budget), 4 each of Community and Facilities, and Planning every three weeks (with 4 of those being Highways as well) - reduces the numbers to 38 meetings and 29 meeting days.

Other Policies

- There will be consequent changes (eg to Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, and any policy that contains definitions now removed to the Glossary), but the first thing is to get the ToR and number of meetings agreed.

Cllr G Bridgman 19/12/2024