



# Policy for the Formation and Operation of Working Groups & their Terms of Reference

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Plaistow and Ifold Parish Council ('the Council') is committed to providing the best service it can for the benefit of the people who live or work in its area or are visitors to the locality.
- 1.2 The Council recognises the invaluable ability of Working Groups to provide focused attention to specific topics, outside of the time constraints of agenda-driven public meetings and consequently are an integral tool in delivering community service.
- 1.3 The Council and any of its Committees can set up Working Groups from time to time as is deemed necessary, to carry out tasks as defined by the Council or the Committee.
- 1.4 Working Group, Working Party, Steering Group or Steering Party shall have the same meaning and this policy shall apply to all.
- 1.5 A Working Group will investigate/research/discuss/ a particular issue or project or carry out a specified task/develop plans.
- 1.6 Working Groups have no decision-making powers, but simply present the Council or Committee with their findings and recommendations.
- 1.7 The Council or Committee can instruct Working Groups to deliver any plans/tasks once properly approved by resolution during a public meeting.
- 1.8 Working Groups can be formed from both Councillors and members of the community ('Community members').
- 1.9 The opportunity for residents to join Working Groups will be made through, but not limited to, the E-Newsletters, social media, Parish News publications, or on the Council's noticeboards and website.

## 2. Terms of Reference

- 2.1 When setting up a Working Group, the Council or Committee must set clear Terms of Reference for it regarding objectives, scope, and outcome(s). These will be approved by the Council or Committee before the Working Group is formed.
- 2.2 Once their work has been completed, the Working Group will be disbanded.

*Date adopted: May 2022*

*Review Date – May 2023*

- 2.3 The Terms of Reference will include this Policy, the name of the Council or Committee to which the Working Group reports and all members of the Working Group will sign it to confirm acceptance.
- 2.4 Please refer to Appendix 1 for the model Terms of Reference document to be used when forming a Working Group. The model Terms of Reference document can be amended by the Council or Committee when setting up a Working Group, to ensure the Working Group is fit for purpose.
- 2.5 The Terms of Reference and membership for each Working Group will be published on the Council's website.

### **3. Membership**

- 3.1 The number of Councillors able to join a Working Group will be decided at the time of its formation but it must consist of no fewer than two (2) elected Councillors.
- 3.2 The Working Group must amend paragraph 2.1 of its Terms of Reference document to ensure parity with 3.1 above as a minimum.
- 3.3 The Working Group shall notify the Council or Committee of the name of the Chair once they are appointed after the first meeting.
- 3.4 A quorum for any meeting of a Working Group will be three (3) members, at least one (1) of whom must be a Councillor.

### **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

- 4.1 The role of the Council or Committee is to consider and question the recommendations put to it by the Working Group before a decision is taken.
- 4.2 A Working Group will be accountable to the Council or Committee.
- 4.3 A Committee can resolve for the recommendations of its Working Group to be presented directly to the Council for decision making.
- 4.4 A Working Group must provide the Council or Committee with as much information as possible to ensure it can make an informed decision on its recommendation(s).
- 4.5 A Working Group will not have a budget. The budget will remain with the Council or Committee.
- 4.6 Working Groups do not meet in public; therefore, the Council's Standing Orders are not applicable unless expressly stated in the Terms of Reference document.
- 4.7 The Code of Conduct applies to all members of a Working Group and declarations of pecuniary and other interests will be required at each meeting.

*Date adopted: May 2022  
Review Date – May 2023*

- 4.8 Working Groups will follow all relevant Council policies including, but not limited to:
  - 4.8.1 Complaints Procedure
  - 4.8.2 Media and Communications Policy
  - 4.8.3 Information and Data Protection Policy
  - 4.8.4 Freedom of Information Act Procedure
  
- 4.9 The Clerk will ensure that all Community members have a Council email address for the duration of their time on the Working Group.
  
- 4.10 All documents and records produced, and emails shared by Working Groups will be retained in accordance with the Council's Freedom of Information Act Procedure.

## **5. Life of a Working Group**

- 5.1 A Working Group shall continue until such time as either
  - 5.1.1 it has achieved its stated objectives, scope, and outcome(s) as outlined at paragraphs 1.2 and 6 of its Terms of Reference, or
  - 5.1.2 its existence is deemed unnecessary by a resolution of the Council or Committee, or
  - 5.1.3 the Working Group members determine and make a recommendation to the Council or Committee for its dissolution by way of resolution.



## Appendix 1 –

# FINANCE WORKING GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Finance Working Group ('the Working Group') is a Working Group of Plaistow and Ifold Parish Council's Finance Committee ('the Committee').
- 1.2 The aim of the Working Group is to work with the Committee and RFO in the management of the Council's financial resources and to consider and recommend strategy and action on policy and operational matters concerned with the Council's finances, property, and resources. For example (but not limited to) providing support, recommendations, and ideas on budget monitoring; budget preparation; financial management e.g., loans; actions required by Internal and External Auditors; annual grants and donations and other financial considerations as directed by either the Committee or Council.
- 1.3 This Terms of Reference document must be read in conjunction with the 'Formation and Operation of Working Groups & their Terms of Reference Policy' ('the Policy').

### 2. Membership

- 2.1 The membership of the Working Group shall be up to six (6) Members of the Committee and/or Council. The Working Group shall not include anyone who is not an elected Councillor with full voting rights in accordance with Local Government Act 1972, s.102(3).
- 2.2 The Chairman of the Council shall be an ex officio Working Group member.
- 2.3 Working Group members shall be appointed by resolution of the Finance Committee.
- 2.4 In accordance with Local Government Act 1972, s.102(3), paragraphs 1.8 and 1.9 of the Policy do not apply to the Finance Working Group.
- 2.5 Membership of the Working Group shall be reviewed annually at the Annual Council Meeting.

2.6 The Working Group Chair shall be chosen annually by its members as the first item of business on the agenda at its first meeting, following the Annual Council Meeting. The Chair will be the main point of contact for the Working Group and will convene meetings in conjunction with the Clerk/RFO. The Working Group must notify the Committee of its Chair pursuant to paragraph 3.3 of the Policy.

2.7 If the Chair is unable to attend a meeting, then a substitute Chair will be appointed for that specific meeting by the Working Group's members as the first item of business on the agenda.

2.8 On being nominated to the Working Group, all members must read and adhere to its Terms of Reference.

### **3. Voting**

3.1 Each member of the Working Group has one vote. In case of equality of votes, the Chair of the meeting has the casting vote, whether they gave an original vote or not.

### **4. Meetings**

4.1 Working Group meetings shall be called by the Chairman of the Committee and the Clerk/RFO as and when deemed necessary.

4.2 Working Group meetings are not required to be held in public.

4.3 Copies of the draft minutes of the meeting shall be circulated to all Working Group members via email within 10 working days of the meeting.

4.4 The minutes shall be agreed by a majority of members via email and signed by the Chair of the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 9(d).

4.5 The agreed minutes shall be circulated to the Committee and/or Council no later than the day of service of the summons to attend the scheduled meeting. On this basis, they shall be taken as read in accordance with Standing Order 9a.

4.6 The Working Group minutes will be appended to the public minutes of the Committee and/or Council.

### **5. Quorum**

5.1 The quorum shall be three (3) members of the Working Group.

5.2 If the number of members present falls below the required quorum, the meeting shall be adjourned, and business not transacted until the next meeting or on such other day as the Chair may fix.

### **6. Responsibilities**

6.1 The key objectives of the Working Group will be to work with the Committee and RFO in the management of the Council's financial resources and to consider and recommend strategy and action on policy and operational matters concerned with the Council's finances, property, and resources. For example (but not limited to) providing support, recommendations, and ideas on budget monitoring; budget preparation;

*Date adopted: May 2022*

*Review Date – May 2023*

financial management e.g., loans; actions required by Internal and External Auditors; annual grants and donations and other financial considerations as directed by either the Committee or Council.

6.2 The Working Group will utilise S.M.A.R.T principles when formulating its recommendations (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely)

## **7. Life of the Finance Working Group**

7.1 The Working Group shall continue until

7.1.1 such time as its existence is deemed unnecessary by a resolution of the Committee or

7.1.2 such time as the Working Group members determine and make a recommendation to the Committee for its dissolution by way of resolution.

## **8. Review**

8.1 The Policy and these Terms of Reference shall be reviewed annually by the Council in May of each year.

## **9. Signatures**

9.1 All members of the Working Group must sign this Terms of Reference document to confirm acceptance:

Cllr. Phil Colmer

Cllr. Paul Jordan

Cllr. Nicholas Taylor

Cllr. John Bushell