

22/1130 Council structure.

To discuss and adopt correct protocol for committees and working parties following relevant guidance.

Chair's recommendation:

Stand down working parties with no specific target criteria

- Community Wellbeing
- Youth and Education
- Health, Safety and Crime

Re constitute working groups as committees

- Finance & Policy Committee
- Planning & Highways Committee
- Amenities Committee

Assign tasks and set goals for working groups

- Green Middleton Working Party
 - To advise council on requirements for village grass cutting provision enabling tender process- Amenities Committee
 - To advise council on options relating to PC building regeneration project – Amenities Committee

Council meetings and committee meetings are formal events, their clear purpose is to make decisions. Furthermore, they are public events; the meetings must be advertised, and the press and public have a right to observe, record and report on how the council operates. The same approach should be adopted for sub-committees. Exceptions are when sensitive issues are discussed (such as legal, contractual or staffing matters) and then the council can agree to exclude the press and public for just that item of business.

All [Councillors](#) are required to attend the Full Council meetings. They may also work on other sub-committees and working groups. Representation is normally proposed and voted on at the annual meeting. Working Groups may involve members of the public. All Terms of Reference for all committees and working groups should be published, this is normally approved by the full Council at its annual meeting. The main council committee can delegate some of its statutory functions (responsibilities assigned to a parish council in legislation) to one or more committees. These may in turn have sub-committees. **If there's a specific task focussed activity**, then a Task and Finish group may be setup.

Parish Council meetings are led by the Council's (or committee) Chair and advised by a Clerk, who is there to see that business is conducted within the law on how parish councils are run.

The council should decide on a [schedule of meetings](#) for the year.

- Council meetings are meetings of full council. All councillors are expected to attend.
- Committee meetings bring together a smaller number of councillors to concentrate on a specific function of the council and share the workload. Some committees are permanent or standing committees, but others are set up for a short-term project.

Many councils have a permanent Planning Committee for example, allowing them to comment on planning applications as required without convening a full council meeting.

Some committees are advisory; they make recommendations to the full council, which then makes the decisions. There are also executive committees where the full council delegates responsibility for certain decisions to the committee, as in our HR Committee. The committee then reports its decisions to the full council.

- Sub-committees are appointed by a committee to focus discussion on a specific topic among an even smaller group of councillors. Otherwise, they operate like committees.
- Working parties or '**task-and-finish**' groups are occasionally set up for a short-term purpose. They are not subject to the strict rules that apply to formal council meetings and do not need to be held in public. A working party **cannot make a decision** on behalf of the council, but they can explore options and present these to the council for a decision.

- There are rules about who is permitted to join a committee or sub-committee. Sometimes non-councillors can be included (although with a few exceptions, they cannot vote). This is an excellent means of involving others, particularly young people, in council work.

The key difference is that a committee (or sub-committee) comprises members of the council whilst a Task and Finish group can include other individuals. Any committee/sub-committee must hold regular open sessions, at which members of the public can speak. Residents can bring to the attention of the parish council anything that concerns them, either directly or through the clerk. If matters raised are not the responsibility of the council, the clerk can bring them to the attention of the proper authority.

Unlike Committees and Sub-Committees, Task and Finish groups cannot have delegated responsibilities and do not have to be open to the public, however, they do have to abide by certain Parish Council Policies. Their findings and recommendations must be minuted and a report submitted to the Committee to whom the council has decided they report. These reports are then discussed at Committee level before being recommended to Main Council. The Council or the Committee can send report back to the Sub-Committee / Working Group requesting more information or clarification before accepting or rejecting the report and its contents.

Representation on Parish Council Committees and Working Groups

Key: C = Chair, VC = Vice Chair, L = Lead Councillor on working group (could also be formal Chair), M = Member. Note the Parish Council Chair and Vice-Chair are ex-officio members of all committees and Working Groups – not shown in the table above.

Committee / Working Group Title (Grouped by their parent Committee)	A Y	KB	MA	RS T	EJ C	N T	RH	S H	A K	KS		
Main Council Committee	C	VC	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M		
Community Wellbeing Working Group	M	M				M		M				
Green Middleton Working Group		M				M		M				
Youth & Education Working Group					M		M		M			
Health, Safety & Crime Working Group	M				M		M		M			
Planning / Cemetery / Highways Working Group		M		M		M		M				
Finance Working Group	M	M	M	M	L	M	M					
HR Committee	M		C	M	M	M	M					
Policies & Procedures Working Group	M				M			M	M			
Number of Committees / Working Groups (Excluding Main Council Committee)	5	4	3	3	5	5	4	4	3	0		