**Middleton Cheney Parish Council Terms of Reference**

**Committees & Working Groups**

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# COMMITTEES

## Full Council

Background: Members of the Middleton Cheney Parish Council (MCPC) meet once a month, to which members of the public are welcome to attend, to discuss all aspects of the parish and agree financial, planning and governance aspects of the Council. Meetings are run in accordance with the Parish Council’s Standing Orders.

Terms of the Committee: The following matters shall be reserved for decision by Full Council, but the appropriate Committee(s) may make recommendation for the Council’s consideration:

1. The Precept.
2. Borrowing money.
3. Making, amending or revoking Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Duties and Powers of Proper Officer provisions.
4. Making, amending or revoking by-laws.
5. Making of Orders under Statutory Powers.
6. Matters of principle or policy.
7. Addressing recommendations in any report from the Internal and External Auditors.
8. Nomination or appointment of representatives of the Parish Council on an authority, organisation or body (except approved conferences or meetings).
9. Nomination of members of all standing committees.
10. New powers or duties.
11. Nomination or appointment of representatives of the Parish Council to any enquiry on matters affecting the parish.
12. To receive and adopt the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.
13. To receive and sign off the Annual External Audit and Return.
14. To receive reports and recommendations referred to Full Council from the various committees.
15. To set up direct reporting working groups as necessary.
16. To receive reports and recommendations and consider recommendations from all direct reporting committees and working groups set up by Full Council or indirect groups where considered appropriate by the Parish Clerk or Committee Chairs.
17. To authorise the sealing of various documents with signatures of two parish councillors.
18. To appoint representatives on outside bodies or joint bodies.
19. To confirm the schedule of meetings of Full Council and the standing committees for the ensuing year.
20. To receive petitions and deputations from members of the public or any organisations.
21. Any other matters not delegated to a standing committee or referred to Full Council by standing committees.

## Human Resources Committee

Background: The Committee shall be called the Human Resources Committee (hereafter the HR Committee or HRC). The purpose of the HRC is to act in a fair and transparent manner on behalf of Middleton Cheney Parish Council in matters concerning human resources, including but not limited to: employment and staffing, health and safety, and training of staff and members.

Members are appointed by MCPC.Members are appointed until the next Annual Meeting of the Council. If necessary MCPC will from time to time appoint additional or substitute members to the committee. The committee shall elect a chairman annually at the first meeting of the committee after the formation of the committee or after the Annual Parish Council meeting, unless MCPC has already elected a chair at the Annual Parish Council Meeting. The committee may choose to elect a vice-chairman as required.

Terms of the Committee:

1. To include the Parish Council chair and Clerk/RFO as ex officio members and be quorate only if at least three members are present.
2. To agree and manage relevant expenditure of amounts up to the budget agreed for such matters, up to a maximum of £1,000.
3. To approve staff overtime and holidays (unless otherwise delegated by MCPC).
4. To determine employment policies and procedures including:
   * Employment contracts
   * Job descriptions
   * Dignity at Work Policy
   * Disciplinary Policy
   * Equality Policy
   * Grievance Policy
   * Health and Safety Policy
   * Safeguarding Policy
5. To agree and manage training of staff and council members.
6. Management of any other specific matters as shall be decided by MCPC.
7. To establish and keep under review the staffing structure in consultation with the Parish Council.
8. To establish and review staff salary pay scales for all categories of staff and be responsible for their administration and review.
9. To oversee the recruitment and appointment of staff.
10. To arrange execution of new employment contracts and changes to contracts.
11. To review and revise employment contracts in consultation with staff and in compliance with legislation and, as appropriate, to recommend any changes to the Parish Council.
12. To keep under review the Clerk’s Job description and ensure it reflects the requirement of the role.
13. To establish and review performance management (including annual appraisals) and staff training programmes.
14. To keep under review staff working conditions and Health and Safety matters.
15. To monitor and address regular or sustained staff absence (as per Absence Management Policy).
16. To make recommendations on staffing related expenditure to full Council.
17. To consider any appeal against a decision in respect of pay.
18. To oversee any process leading to dismissal of staff (including redundancy).
19. The Committee is authorised to establish sub-committees and working groups as and when necessary to assist in its work.
20. To manage, supervise and appraise the Clerk.
21. To agree and monitor achievement against annual objectives; administer leave requests; record, monitor and manage absences from work.
22. To review and monitor the Clerk’s timesheets and agree ‘Time off in lieu’ allowances.
23. To consider grievance or disciplinary matters (and any appeal) in accordance with Middleton Cheney Parish Council’s Grievance or Disciplinary procedures.

The terms of reference of the HRC are to be reviewed annually by the full Middleton Cheney Parish Council (MCPC).

Meetings will be held as deemed necessary by the members of the HRC or by MCPC, subject to MCPC’s Standing Orders. They will be advertised as required by law and will be open to press and public, unless the confidential nature of the business to be transacted precludes this.

The chairman of the committee or other designated representative will take and distribute minutes within seven days of the meeting. If the Clerk is not present for a particular item a member of the committee shall take the minutes and pass them to the Clerk within seven days for distribution. Minutes will be approved at the next meeting of the HRC or submitted to MCPC for approval if no meeting of the HRC shall be scheduled within 9 weeks of the meeting to which the minutes refer. If not already approved and published, draft minutes shall be published within 1 month[[1]](#footnote-1) of the meeting to which they refer.

The chairman of the committee or other designated representative shall report proceedings to the next MCPC meeting as required. Minutes from the HR Committee are to be noted by the Full Council for information, including decisions on creation of new roles and recruitment to all roles will be made by the full council.

The HR Committee delegates the responsibility to the Clerk to provide day-to-day oversight, direction, guidance, and support for the work of the Council staff. The Clerk is also responsible for managing annual leave, approved lieu time and monitoring sickness. It is the responsibility of the Clerk to bring serious matters of concern to the HR Committee, including unusual or extended sick leave patterns. Reports on staff appraisals, performance review and salary reviews will be prepared by line managers prior to agreement by the HR Committee.

## Finance and policy Committee

Background: The Finance and Policy Committee will take responsibility and support full council in management of all finance matters and policy management. Including, generation of the organisational needs and creation of both a strategic plan and a budget. The strategic plan will lay out the direction and goals of the organisation and guidelines for actions to achieve those goals, while the budget looks at the money needed to support achieving those goals. The Parish Council has limited ability to gain income above the set precept and must act within its budget. Undertaking all the activities desired by residents may not be possible; therefore, residents will need to be given information to understand the cost consequences, obligations, limitations, and benefits of budget expenditure.

Terms of the Committee:

1. To include the Parish Council chair and Clerk/RFO as ex officio members and be quorate only if at least three members are present.
2. To work within the Council’s financial regulations at all times.
3. To work with the Council’s responsible financial officer (the clerk) to ensure that the Committee is fully informed of the Council’s financial resources and expenditure obligations.
4. Be responsible for making recommendations to the Council on budget requirements, including recommendations for the precept level to ensure the Council manages its finances to meet its short and long term goals by: a. Advising the Council of the potential cost of new services b. Taking into account the estimates of services identified by other committees (e.g. the HR Committee, Amenities committee and Planning & Highways Committee) c. Considering forward planning and necessary earmarked reserves for the replacement of equipment, buildings and specific items of expenditure required in the future in order to lessen the precept burden in any one year d. Ensure that the budget is directly linked to the tasks identified in a 3 year strategy and the management of the Council’s assets and responsibilities.
5. To develop a strategy to manage the Council’s business that is fully informed by residents of Middleton Cheney by consultation and open meetings.
6. The Finance and Policy Committee is expected to meet at least quarterly, 1. to coordinate the outcomes of consultation, analyse feasibility, create a strategy that considers risk and benefits and identifies the budget implications and 2. to review the progress midway through the financial year.
7. To arrange extraordinary meetings if new legislation or external impacts are considered to have financial consequences that require recommendations to full Council to significantly change the strategic plan. Extraordinary meetings will only be arranged at the request of a full Parish Council meeting or may be called by the clerk, as responsible finance officer, if she considers that matters of risk or financial security require such a meeting, and should be for matters that are deemed inappropriate to be considered in an ordinary Parish Council meeting.
8. In relation to risk management, the Finance and Policy Committee will develop a strategy and budget for the Parish Council in compliance with the Council’s Risk Management Policy and its stated role contained therein.
9. To make recommendations as to any professional and/or legal advice deemed necessary by the Committee to ensure that strategic development is maximised.
10. To co-opt any person or persons (up to a total of 3) it deems appropriate to the Committee. Such co-opted members will not have voting rights.
11. To designate committee members with key responsibilities for consultation and liaison, for research, for budget presentation and for identifying legal obligations.
12. To review and update council policies for annual approval and adoption by full council.
13. To maintain a standard format for all policies and procedures that include a version number, owner, date of adoption, document version history and approval history.
14. To maintain register of all approved policies.
15. To manage the review, change and approval of documents.
16. To schedule review of policy documents at full council meetings.
17. To collaborate with other councillors, committees, working groups, and council employees in the creation and review of new and existing policy.

## Amenities Committee

Background: To oversee the ongoing provision, maintenance and future development of all assets either leased or managed by the Parish Council for the benefit of the Parish. To manage and oversee Parish Council community events.

Terms of the Committee:

1. To comply with the Parish Council’s Standing Orders on the governance and membership of the Amenities Committee.
2. To implement relevant policies of the Parish Council relating to the parish’s amenities and, where appropriate, recommend amendments and new policies to the Parish Council.
3. To exercise the delegated powers and duties of the Parish Council with respect to the provision, care, maintenance and development of: a. All buildings, the Cemetery, open spaces, playgrounds, village greens, allotment and horticultural areas whether owned, leased or managed by the Parish Council; b. Sporting, cultural and recreational facilities provided by the Parish Council and to review the local provision of such facilities.
4. To work with the PFA Memorial Hall Committee and to represent the Parish Council’s interests in the management and use of the Memorial Hall.
5. To submit proposals to the Parish Council for new and improved services.
6. To formulate a budget for revenue/capital expenditure for the next financial year and to recommend it to the November meeting of the Parish Council.
7. To control the expenditure and income of the approved budgets (Revenue and Capital) for the Committee and to report to the Parish Council any possible variations.
8. To propose, budget and obtain quotes for revenue/capital expenditure subject to the permission of the Parish Council.
9. To set rents and fees for persons or groups using the facilities provided by the Parish Council.
10. To consider and consult on recreation area improvements and determine how any recommendations coming from this should be managed, ensuring compliance with health and safety legislation and impact on insurance liability and make recommendations to the Parish Council on future management.
11. To be responsible for dealing with items of correspondence, consultations and projects relating the identified responsibilities of the Amenities committee.
12. To assess and discuss issues relating to the condition and maintenance of footpaths in the parish and correspond with the relevant bodies.
13. The Committee is authorised to establish sub-committees and working groups, and to include volunteer advisers as and when necessary to assist in its work.

## planning and highways Committee

Background: This Committee is appointed to consider all aspects of new housing developments and any highways issues within the parish.

Terms of the Committee:

1. To make recommendations on all matters relating to new housing developments to be built within the parish.
2. To make recommendations on responses to parish planning applications.
3. To work in partnership with the developer, West Northamptonshire Council, other key parties and the Parish Council to deliver the design, affordable housing, facilities and infrastructure needed to provide a development which preserves and enhances the character of the parish.
4. To make recommendations on a detailed response to any planning application for a new development.
5. To identify and agree the key priorities for the parish as a response to new housing developments.
6. To engage with the developer, West Northamptonshire Council and other key parties at an early stage to ensure that an appropriate community contribution is secured.
7. To engage with the developer, West Northamptonshire Council and other key parties at an early stage to ensure the delivery of the agreed key priorities.
8. To make recommendations as to any professional and/or legal advice deemed necessary by the Committee to ensure that maximum benefit can be realised from any development. Provide budgetary estimates to the Parish Council for approval.
9. To consider any proposals for potential adoption of sports and recreational facilities, open spaces, or streetlights deriving from new development.
10. To review, secure evidence and advise on any changes required to the West Northamptonshire Core Strategy and Development Plan.
11. To co-opt any person or persons it deems appropriate to the Committee.
12. The Committee is authorised to establish sub-committees and working groups as and when necessary to assist in its work.

# working groups

The Parish Council as the parent body, or committees with delegated powers, can form a Working Group to carry out specific detailed tasks on any matter that falls within its powers.

Full Council may form or disband a Working Group who will carry out tasks as defined by Full Council. Specific Terms of Reference, including if necessary delegated powers, will be prepared by the Clerk for ratification at the next Full Council Meeting following the Working Group being established.

1. Membership

Members of the working group will be appointed by the Parish Council, or committee with delegated powers, and will consist of a minimum of 3 elected members of the council unless otherwise specified.

With the authority of the Full Council the working group can co-opt members of the public (Lay members) who have specific knowledge / expertise on the subject to assist the Working Group.

The Term of Membership for a working group will be for a period of one year or to the next Annual meeting of the Full Council or time limited for a period of 6 months.

The Annual Meeting of the Council can re-confirm the working group’s membership and terms of reference or appoint other elected members to serve for the forthcoming civic year.

2. Leader

A leader will be appointed for the working party by the Parish Council.

The leader will be the main point of contact for the Clerk to Council, Council members and members of the public, and must be an elected member of the Council unless otherwise agreed by the Full Council.

3. Powers

Working Groups cannot make decisions on behalf of the Parish Council, and any recommendations made by working groups will be subject to approval by the Full Council.

4. Responsibilities and Areas of Operation

The Full Council will establish the role of the working group and its full terms of reference. This may include:

1. To tackle issues as directed by the Council.
2. To be task specific and time limited.
3. To examine an issue in detail, read reports and related materials, examine options, and obtain advice for the Council.
4. To act as experts and/or liaise with experts.
5. To make recommendations to Council.
6. To explain the recommendations, reasons, options to Full Council by way of a written report.
7. To answer questions from the Council.
8. No funding or monies to be spent or committed without delegated authority or prior Full Council endorsement. The working group will arrange its own meetings and schedule of work at its inaugural meeting.

The leader of the working group, if unable to attend a meeting of the Full Council, will nominate another member of the working party to attend and deliver the progress report.

5. Meetings of Working Groups

A Working Party does not meet in public, therefore Standing Orders are not applicable, although the Code of Conduct still applies to any councillor who is a member of the working party.

Formal agendas and Minutes are not required. The Clerk to the Council will be notified of any meeting with at least 3 working days’ notice.

The quorum of the group shall be 3 elected members, co-opted members will not count towards the quorum. The working group shall report formally to each meeting of the Council with informal updates to Council members following each meeting.

The working group will report formally to the Full Council at its Annual Meeting if required.

Frequency of Meetings will be as required.

The working group is expected to be time limited as specified by Full Council or parent committee. The continuing need for a working group will be reviewed by the Full Council on a 6 monthly basis unless otherwise specified.

**Document History**

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1. Required by the Transparency Code 2014 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)