

Finance & General Purposes Committee 13th March 2017

Committee Structure

Agenda Item 4

Two meetings of the Committee Structure sub-committee have taken place and the recommendations of that committee are contained in the minutes attached below. This issue needs to be considered now as any changes to committee structure would ideally take place in time for the new council year which starts at the Annual Town Council Meeting on 15th May.

I have attached Cllr Nelson's background paper for additional information.

This is a significant change to the current system so please scrutinise the minutes & notes carefully.

Proposed committee delegated authorities are also attached below for reference.

Proposals:

- That two new standing committees should be formed replacing the following existing standing committees: Finance and General Purposes, Highways and Amenities, Public Buildings & Tourism and Business.
- That the new committees should be restricted to 8 members plus 3 substitutes
- That members and substitutes should be selected by drawing lots
- That members not serving on these committees would have a reserved space in the council chamber and would be able to contribute to the debate.
- That standing orders in respect of elections to committees and committee delegated authorities should be amended.
- Planning Committee to remain unchanged.



Phil Burgess
Town Clerk

Impact on Crime and Disorder	:	None
Impact on Bio-diversity	:	None
Budgetary Impact	:	None

TENTERDEN TOWN COUNCIL – FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF A MEETING ON 21st February 2017

Councillors Present: Mrs Ferguson, Knowles, Mulholland, Nelson & Mrs Smith.

The Town Clerk, Phil Burgess was present and took notes.

1. Apologies for absence: Cllrs Carter & Mrs Curteis

2. Appointment of chair. Councillor Mulholland was elected chair

3. Co-option. Cllr Mrs Smith was co-opted to the committee.

4. Terms of reference. The terms of reference had been circulated and were agreed.

5. Mayoral Role. A proposal had been made to adopt an “ABC style” ceremonial Mayor where the Mayor would chair Town Council but would not take an active role in standing committees. It was decided that the mayoral role would remain as it is at present but with no requirement for the Mayor to take part in all standing committees. This item had already been removed from standing orders so no changes are required here.

6. Standing Committee Structure & Membership. Cllr Nelson made a radical suggestion regarding the structure of the committees from the next council year. Planning would be unaffected by any changes but the four remaining standing committees would be completely re-structured to form two committees dealing with internal and external matters.

Internal would deal with anything regarding council assets & property and would include elements of the current Finance and General Purposes, Highways and Amenities and Public Buildings Committees.

External would encompass Tourism and Business, plus liaison with the higher tiers of councils (ABC and KCC) and contact with outside organisations in the town, including such items as donations. Some of the functions of Tourism would be delegated from this committee to sub-committees to facilitate attendance of ABC/KCC staff and remove the need for a 5pm standing committee meeting.

Membership of Planning would be unrestricted, as now. The two new standing committees would be restricted to 8 councillors (or half the council membership if this increases with new development). Membership would be decided by drawing lots. The smaller standing committees should streamline decision making. Councillors who are not members would have reserved places in the council chamber and would be able to raise issues at the point of the agenda item. Ideally questions would be raised prior to the meeting and notified to the Clerk. (Note: The assembly room diary is now restricted to council use on a Monday night and the new PA system will be available shortly. The assembly room will then be used for all standing committee and Town Council meetings.)

In addition to their regular members, committees would have reserve members to stand in and avoid any issues over the quorum during holiday periods.

Sub-committees would generally be fewer but have a broader base.

As this is such a significant departure from our current structure, members agreed that the new system should be considered in advance of the next sub-committee meeting before recommending it to council and would consider more suitable committee names.

7. Town Events & Town Partnership. This item was deferred pending a decision on the item above.

8. Recommendations to Council. None at this stage.

9. AOB. None

10. Next Meeting. Monday 27th February at 5pm.

Meeting Closed at 6.20 p.m.

TENTERDEN TOWN COUNCIL – FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF A MEETING ON 27th February 2017

Councillors Present: Mrs Curteis, Mrs Ferguson, Mulholland, Nelson & Mrs Smith. Cllr Sugden (not a member of this sub-committee) was also present.

The Town Clerk, Phil Burgess was present and took notes.

1. Apologies for absence: Cllrs Carter and Knowles

2. Minutes. The minutes of the meeting held on 21st February were agreed.

3. Matters arising. Dealt with under items below.

4. Mayoral Role. No additional criteria would be applied to mayoral candidates such as length of service. A democratic vote to elect the mayor and deputy would be taken as now.

5. Standing Committee Structure. Internal and External committee structure as outlined in the minutes of 21st February would be recommended to the standing committee. Members all agreed that the structure should work well.

Whilst there would be no compulsion for councillors to attend when not a member, apologies would be recorded for non-members as they would participate more in the new structure than currently.

The drawing of lots at the Annual Council Meeting for membership of these two committees would be followed by the election of 3 further substitutes (to cover for absence and councillor resignation) again by lot.

These substitute members would serve on the committees in the order which their name was drawn. i.e. if two members were absent, the first two councillors drawn would substitute.

PB to check with KALC if there could be any issues with this structure.

6. Standing Committee Naming. The names of internal and external would be retained but with explanatory "strap lines".

7. Standing Orders. Delegated authorities of the existing committees will be re-worked to form the delegated authority of the new committees. Standing order 8a dealing with election by ballot) will be extended to include the line "Members for both internal and external standing committees, along with substitute members, will be selected by drawing lots."

8. Recommendations to Council.

- That two new standing committees should be formed replacing the following existing standing committees: Finance and General Purposes, Highways and Amenities, Public Buildings & Tourism and Business.
- That the new committees should be restricted to 8 members plus 3 substitutes
- That members not serving on these committees would have a reserved space in the council chamber and would be able to contribute to the debate.
- That standing orders and committee delegated authorities should be amended as in 7 above.
- Planning Committee to remain unchanged.

9. AOB. None

10. Next Meeting. None arranged. The sub-committee would meet again if requested by the standing committee.

Meeting Closed at 17.50

TENTERDEN TOWN COUNCIL

Finance & General Purposes Committee - background for agenda item 4 on 13th March 2017

RESTRUCTURING THE TOWN COUNCIL'S STANDING COMMITTEES

The members of the Restructuring Sub-committee recommend that –

- (a) the Planning Committee be left unaltered, except that as many councillors as possible are encouraged to join it in order to provide comments from as wide a range of viewpoints as possible; and
- (b) the remaining standing committees (Finance & General Purposes, Highways & Amenities, Public Buildings and Tourism & Business) be reduced to two committees: one covering the internal affairs and responsibilities of the council and the way it is funded and run, the other dealing with the council's relationships with outsiders, including other councils; and
- (c) the membership of the two new committees be
 - i. limited to 8 councillors (with 4 being a quorum) and
 - ii. selected by lot at the start of each council year – or every two years – but with provision for (say) 3 substitutes for each committee, to stand in for absent committee members and the ability for councillors to switch from one committee to the other on allotment, if they have an opposite number willing to switch.

The main intention behind these proposals is to streamline the council's business, including by avoiding one standing committee passing a decision to another: a clear internal/external character should minimise that. The Town Clerk has expressed the view that the recommended restructuring would ease the administrative burden on the staff.

The committees could sensibly meet on a 6 week cycle as follows –

- Week 1: Planning; External; Internal
- Week 3: Council; Planning; Internal

then repeat. The Planning and Internal committees would therefore meet every 3 weeks; council would continue to meet 6-weekly, as would the External committee (to allow attendance by outsiders).

The purpose of limiting the number of councillors on the committees is two-fold: smaller committees should mean each member is more effective; it also avoids the situation where a committee comprises all but one of the council members.

Councillors who are not members of a particular standing committee would still be able – indeed encouraged – to attend the committee's meetings and participate in the discussions; they would simply not have a vote at that committee, but only when recommendations come before council for ratification. Such councillors would have reserved seats at the lower end of the committee table for easy participation without confusing the vote-counting.

Instead of the current Tourism & Business Committee meeting at 5pm to accommodate officers from other councils, the External committee would meet in the evening, as the other committees, having meetings with ABC officers, etc, via sub-committees, as needed.

Membership of the Internal committee would be limited to councillors, as it will control the council's finances; the External committee can include non-councillor members.

Sub-committees would, of course, need to be rationalised under any new committee structure.

Most of the delegated powers of the existing standing committees fit obviously under one or other of the new committees – for instance, all of the current delegated powers of Finance & General Purposes Committee would pass to the Internal committee, with the exception of deciding on grant and loan applications. Some allocations may be less obvious: it may be that the maintenance of council facilities would be dealt with by the Internal committee, while their use would be dealt with by the External committee, or that maintenance and use are under a single committee. It is suggested that the Town Clerk be asked to advise on allocation, assuming the basic proposal is accepted.

Similarly, it is for the Town Clerk and his staff to decide on particular arrangements for allotting committee membership, arranging and calling on substitutes, rationalisation of sub-committees, etc.

However, one aspect that should be decided by councillors is chairmanship: by law, the Mayor must chair council meetings and the Annual Town Meeting. Under standing order 4 d vi, council decides which committee member shall be chair (strangely, not the deputy chair) of the relevant committee; it is suggested that these roles should be spread amongst councillors once they have served for a couple of years, to enable them to gain experience of chairing in readiness for becoming Mayor.

Crime and disorder reduction impact: None envisaged

Biodiversity conservation impact: None envisaged.

Budget: No change

Cllr Justin Nelson - 05 March 2017

TENTERDEN TOWN COUNCIL

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INTERNAL MATTERS COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

- a. To advise the Council as to its financial and economic policies and deal with the allocation and control of financial resources.
- b. To consider the recommendations of other committees so far as they would materially affect resources not approved in the annual budget.
- c. To deal with irrecoverable or doubtful debts.
- d. Management of the Council's loan debt.
- e. To deal with insurance and pensions.
- f. Payment of accounts.
- g. To deal with personnel matters generally, and in particular:
 - Recruitment and appointment procedures.
 - Staff welfare.
 - Terms and conditions of service.
 - Discipline.
 - Matters arising under legislation relating to contracts of employment and industrial relations.
 - To maintain an overall view of staffing requirements and the allocation of resources and to deal with all matters pertaining to staff, subject to all new posts on the Council's establishment being approved by the Council.
 - To maintain, review and advise upon the required level of staff resources and their deployment.
- h. To review, and where necessary, to improve management methods to ensure that they are effective in meeting the objectives of the Council.
- i. To recommend Standing Orders and Financial Regulations of the Council and to review them from time to time.
- j. The assessment, provision, maintenance, improvement and management of Council-owned parks, open spaces, playgrounds and sports facilities (both indoor and outdoor).
- k. To undertake or arrange for the provision of public entertainments & events at Council-owned locations.
- l. To provide noticeboards at Council-owned locations.
- m. To determine and undertake maintenance of Council-owned amenity areas.
- n. To manage, maintain and control the Town Hall, the Pebbles, the Pavilion, Storage buildings, public toilets and the kiosk on Tenterden Recreation Ground.

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EXTERNAL MATTERS COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

- a. To maintain an overall view of land requirements, resources and allocation (in consultation with other committees if applicable).
- b. To deal with all matters relating to boundaries and representation.
- c. To make arrangements for press and public relations.
- d. To deal with requests for loans, financial assistance, grants, subscriptions, donations, etc., which are not directly related to the functions of another committee.
- e. To liaise with sporting and leisure organisations with regard to the provision of sporting and recreation facilities within the town.
- f. To represent the Council on highways matters, including street naming, parking, public transport, etc.
- g. To deal with matters relating to the postal service and public utilities.
- h. To deal with matters relating to street lighting.
- i. To deal with matters relating to public rights of way.
- j. To encourage liaison between individuals, businesses and organisations that are involved in the promotion of Tenterden, and to give them endorsement where applicable.
- k. To liaise with Ashford Borough Council on matters relating to tourism and business within Tenterden.
- l. To investigate specific projects and ideas which aim to improve Tenterden as a location for residents and businesses and as a destination for visitors, and to support such schemes if appropriate.