

**To receive recommendations of the Working Party Workshop**

Further to Minute No. 6 of the meeting of this committee held on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2025, a workshop was held on 9<sup>th</sup> May to consider the future appointment of working parties. At the workshop consideration was given to a table that had been produced to assess each of the working parties under the criteria agreed by the committee.

During the discussion, attention was drawn to the need to retain some working parties on a standing basis, including those described as panels. However, it was felt that others could be disbanded given that matters could be dealt with via the outside representatives appointed to specific organisations.

There was broad support for the future appointment of some working parties on an ‘as and when required’ basis to deal with specific issues. There was support for referring to those working parties with a defined task to be completed over a finite timescale as task and finish groups.

In effect, this would result in the Council having three varieties of informal meetings, all of which would be working parties in terms of the Council’s Standing Orders.

- Panels – to be appointed annually to assess specific applications/proposals and formulate recommendations.
- Working Parties – to be appointed annually either to support officer decision making or to formulate recommendations about ongoing matters.
- Task & Finish Groups – to be appointed as and when required to consider a specific matter in-depth over a defined timescale and make a recommendation.

Having weighed up various options, it was broadly agreed that the Finance and Governance Committee should consider including the following working parties in a list of appointments to be presented to the Annual Meeting of the Town Council on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> May

Panels

- Community Awards
- Grants
- Property

Working Parties

- Car Parks and Market
- Communication Strategy
- Events
- Health Services
- Seafront Masterplan
- Sport, Leisure and Wellbeing

This list incorporates two changes to the remit of existing working parties. It merges the market and car parks working parties and expands the remit of the former emergency health services working party to cover all/any health services.

There was some support at the workshop for the appointment of a fees and charges working party that would meet early in the autumn as part of the annual budget setting process. It was felt that this could be considered later in the year.

**Decision required:**

To determine which working parties should be included in a list of appointments to be presented to the Annual Meeting of the Town Council on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> May.

Martin Ayres  
Town Clerk

May 2025

# SWANAGE TOWN COUNCIL

## VEXATIOUS CORRESPONDENCE AND COMPLAINTS POLICY

### Introduction

The great majority of people who contact Swanage Town Council do so politely and with respect to Council employees. The Town Council welcomes feedback and encourages people who feel that they have grounds for complaint to contact the Council so that their concerns can be investigated in accordance with the Council's Complaints Procedure, which is designed to provide complainants with a thorough and fair means of redress.

There are, however, exceptional circumstances where behaviour can present a challenge to the wellbeing of staff or councillors, resulting in unacceptable stress. Furthermore, some correspondence will result in a disproportionate amount of resource being spent in response, preventing the Council from efficiently fulfilling its wider duties.

Swanage Town Council does not expect its staff or councillors to tolerate unreasonable behaviour from members of the public or other points of contact. The organisation has a direct duty of care to its employees and also a responsibility to any associated organisations and/or partners it works alongside.

This procedure is designed to address vexatious correspondence and complaints. It should assist the Council to manage inappropriately demanding or unreasonable behaviour from vexatious correspondents. Where the correspondence in question can be interpreted as a request or requests for information, this policy should be read in conjunction with the Information Commissioner's guidance on dealing with vexatious requests, issued in connection with s.14 (1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

It is important that the application of this policy does not prevent people from accessing services to which they have a statutory entitlement, and it is designed to ensure that the rights of service users are protected. However, Council resources are limited, and the Council has an obligation to ensure that these are used fairly and effectively. The Council must also ensure that the Clerk and Councillors receive a reasonable degree of protection from the stress that can be caused by vexatious correspondence and complaints.

This procedure is not designed to address violent or threatening behaviour which needs an urgent response.

### 1 Defining vexatious correspondence or complaints

Vexatious complaints and correspondence can be characterised in one or more of the following ways:

- 1.1 **Displays an approach which is experienced by councillors and/or staff as one or more of the following:** Behaviour which is perceived as obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, repetitious.

- 1.2 Displays an insistence on pursuing unmeritorious ~~matters~~ ~~issues~~ and/or ~~irrational unrealistic~~ outcomes beyond all reason.
- 1.3 Displays an insistence upon pursuing meritorious complaints or ~~concerns~~ ~~issues~~ in an unreasonable manner, for example failing to focus on addressing ~~a matter~~ ~~the issue~~ in a harmonious and pragmatic way.
- 1.4 Forms part of a scatter gun approach, with copies of letters being sent to several recipients on a regular basis, often including various council officers, the media, the MP, the Mayor, other Councillors and external regulators) ~~sometimes before the person to whom correspondence is addressed to has had a reasonable opportunity to respond;~~ and/or ~~appears to be~~ is part of a completely random approach, lacking any clear focus, or seeming to have been solely designed for the purpose of ~~speculatively seeking~~ ~~'fishing'~~ ~~for~~ information without any idea of what might be revealed.
- 1.5 Repeated and/or frequent requests for information, ~~which have already received a response, or frequent (more than quarterly) requests for new information,~~ whether or not those requests are made under the access to information legislation.
- 1.6 Repeated use of social media to criticise Council members or officers ~~could also be judged as vexatious conduct, as this~~ ~~which~~ could amount to cyber-bullying.

Guidance issued by the Information Commissioner recommends that four broad themes are considered when assessing whether a request for information is vexatious, and these factors may be more broadly applied to other correspondence:

1. the burden (on the public authority and its staff);
2. the motive (of the requester);
3. the value or serious purpose (of the request); and
4. any harassment or distress (of and to staff and councillors).

## **2 Procedure for determining whether correspondence is vexatious**

- 2.1 If the Clerk or Councillors identify behaviour that they think exhibits the characteristics set out in Section 1, and which they believe may be vexatious, they should consult the Vexatious Correspondence sub-committee, consisting of the Mayor and/or Deputy Mayor and two members of the Finance & Governance Committee. An officer who has not been dealing with the correspondence in question should act as minute taker.
- 2.2 If the sub-committee agrees with the assessment, they should prepare a brief statement of why the sub-committee considers the complaint or correspondence to be vexatious, including its effect upon the Clerk, Councillors and/or the Town Council as a corporate body. This should be accompanied by a list of correspondence over the last 6 months via email, telephone, letter and social media, including information about whom the correspondence was addressed to, how many people/organisations it was copied to on each occasion, and a one-line description of each piece of correspondence.

### **3 Handling correspondence and complaints that have been assessed as vexatious**

- 3.1 The first step will be for the Mayor/Deputy Mayor to write to the correspondent advising them that their complaint and/or correspondence has been determined to be vexatious and giving the reason for that decision. The letter should state that any future correspondence will be passed direct to the sub-committee who will consider whether it raises any substantive new issue(s) and whether or not it is also considered vexatious. The correspondent should be advised that if it is considered to be vexatious, any future correspondence will not receive a response, unless the Council is obliged to do so under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act or other legislative provision. They should be advised that the decision will be reviewed in six months from the date of the letter advising them that their complaint/correspondence has been determined to be vexatious. There is no route of appeal against the decision that a complaint or correspondence is vexatious.
- 3.2 Any future correspondence should be passed to the sub-committee for consideration. If they decide that it raises no genuinely new and substantive issues, and/or is considered to be otherwise vexatious, no response is required. If they consider it to be appropriate, they may acknowledge the first 2 or 3 pieces of correspondence, referring the correspondent to the letter advising them of the decision that their correspondence has been determined to be vexatious. After that, however, no response or acknowledgement should be sent.
- 3.3 If future correspondence does raise significant new issues, and does not meet the criteria for vexatious correspondence set out in Section 1 above, it should be responded to. It may be appropriate for the response to be routed via the Mayor/Deputy Mayor in order to prevent the renewal of scatter gun correspondence.

### **4 Reviewing the decision**

- 4.1 Six months after the correspondent has been advised that their complaint and/or correspondence is vexatious, they can request a review. If such a request is received, the sub-committee should meet to consider whether there has been any improvement in the vexatious behaviour over that time. The Mayor/Deputy Mayor should write to the correspondent advising them of the outcome of the review. If the behaviour has improved, future correspondence can be treated in the normal way. If there has not been a significant improvement, the correspondence will continue to be treated as vexatious with the correspondent being able to request a review after a further six month period.

### **5 Further advice and guidance**

- 5.1 Defining complaints and/or correspondence as vexatious is a very serious step and will only be undertaken as a last resort. For that reason, it is essential that the decision to treat correspondence or complaints as vexatious is evidence-based and reviewed regularly.

For further information:

Information Commissioner's Office:

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/foi-eir-and-access-to-information/freedom-of-information-and-environmental-information-regulations/section-14-dealing-with-vexatious-requests/>

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman:

<https://www.lgo.org.uk/information-centre/information-for-organisations-we-investigate/councils/guidance-notes/guidance-on-managing-unreasonable-complainant-behaviour>

- 5.2 Any concerns about a particular correspondent should be discussed with the Mayor/Deputy Mayor in the first instance.

## 6 Document change history

Date	Changes made
2 <sup>nd</sup> February 2024	Template policy amended for Swanage Town Council.
20 <sup>th</sup> March 2024	Draft Policy presented to Finance & Governance Committee for recommendation to adopt.
29 <sup>th</sup> April 2024	Policy adopted by Full Council.
12 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	Revised policy presented to Finance & Governance Committee for recommendation to adopt.

# **Swanage Town Council**



## **Committee Terms of Reference**

### **Standing Committees and Sub Committees**

1. Community Services Committee
2. Environment Committee
3. Finance & Governance Committee
  - 3.a. Capital Projects Sub-Committee
  - 3.b. Vexatious Correspondence & Complaints Policy Sub-Committee
4. Personnel Committee
5. Planning & Consultation Committee
  - 5.a. Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (Sub-Committee)
6. Tourism & Local Economy Committee

### **Advisory Committees**

7. Coastal Change & Beach Management Advisory Committee
8. Traffic Management Advisory Committee

Adopted 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023

Amended version adopted 24<sup>th</sup> April 2023

## **1. Community Services Committee Terms of Reference**

**Main Objective/Remit:** To protect and enhance the delivery of public services in Swanage, encourage health and wellbeing and enhance community safety. To comment on proposals for improved traffic management in the parish.

**Reports to:** Full Council

**Outside Representatives:** Prospect Allotment Association, James Smith Funeral Directors, Swanage Tennis Club, Swanage Bowling Club, Dorset Police, S&PDT, Greengage Community Gardening Project, S&HFC, Swanage Cricket Club, **Swanage Museum, Swanage Community Housing Project, Swanage Community Skatepark Project.**

**Frequency of Meetings:** Three scheduled meetings per year, otherwise as and when required.

**Member Training requirements:** None

**Sub-Committees/Advisory Committees:** Traffic Management Advisory Committee.

**Working Parties/Panels:** The following working parties will report to the Committee (or to full Council), and can also be instructed to examine specific matters by the Committee:

- Emergency Health Services
- Lower Grammar School Field
- Public Conveniences
- Sport, Leisure & Wellbeing

### **Other Matters:**

The public shall be excluded from any matter that is confidential in nature. This may include non-voting committee members.

### **Delegated Matters:**

- 1.1 To oversee the management, within agreed budgets, of the following Town Council services: allotments; bandstand; Beach Gardens; CCTV; cemeteries; play areas/skate park, playing fields; public toilets; SIDs; street furniture (benches, shelters, signs, streetlights, bus shelters); Town Hall and public help desk.
- 1.2 To determine the allocation of existing budgets where the relevant manager requires clarification or wishes to bring forward an alternative allocation of funds. N.B. Where a formal virement is required it must be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations.
- 1.3 To agree minor amendments to relevant Council policy documents.
- 1.4 To receive the minutes of the Traffic Management Advisory Committee, consider any recommendations set out therein and make representations to Dorset Council accordingly.
- 1.5 To consider any other matters delegated to the Committee by full Council.



**Other functions:**

- 2.1 To consider project proposals from partner organisations and other third parties relating to community safety, community transport, culture, health, leisure, sport and wellbeing.
- 2.2 To consider revenue funding requests to support the provision of community services by third parties (e.g. Dorset Council school crossing patrol).
- 2.3 To consider proposals for the provision of additional community services by Swanage Town Council.
- 2.4 To refer matters for detailed consideration to a relevant working party.
- 2.5 To make recommendations to full Council regarding matters requiring the allocation of unbudgeted expenditure or significant changes to policy.
- 2.6 To consider relevant capital and revenue budget proposals as part of the annual budget setting process and make recommendations to the Finance & Governance Committee.
- 2.7 To consider relevant sections from the Council's scale of fees and charges as part of the annual budget setting process and make recommendations to the Finance & Governance Committee.
- 2.8 To consider any other matters relating to the delivery of community services to Swanage residents and improvements to traffic management in the parish.

## **2. Environment and Green Spaces Committee Terms of Reference**

**Main Objective/Remit:** To consider measures to protect the natural environment, address the climate crisis and oversee the management of the Town Council's parks, gardens and green spaces.

**Reports to:** Full Council

**Outside Representatives:** Durlston Country Park, National Trust, Dorset Wildlife Trust, Dorset Council, Planet Purbeck, Sustainable Swanage, Swanage Landers, Beach Buddies

**Frequency of Meetings:** Three scheduled meetings per year, otherwise as and when required.

**Member Training requirements:** All Committee Members to be invited to undertake training on the climate crisis.

**Sub-Committees/Advisory Committees:** To receive recommendations from the Beach Management Advisory Committee.

**Working Parties/Panels:** The following working parties will report to the Committee (or to full Council), and can also be instructed to examine specific matters by the Committee:

- Environmental Policy & Action Plan Working Party
- Waste Management Working Party

### **Other Matters:**

The public shall be excluded from any matter that is confidential in nature. This may include non-voting committee members.

### **Delegated Matters:**

- 1.1 To oversee the management, within agreed budgets, of the following Town Council services and properties: grounds maintenance, waste management, Peveril Point & The Downs Local Nature Reserve, parks, gardens and green spaces, footpaths and sustainable transport.
- 1.2 To oversee implementation of Council policies relating to the services and properties listed in 1.1, including the Environmental Action Plan, Carbon Neutral Plan 2030, and Green Infrastructure Strategy.
- 1.3 To oversee the Council's relationship with Sustainable Swanage and the delivery of its objectives.
- 1.4 To determine the allocation of existing budgets where the relevant manager requires clarification or wishes to bring forward an alternative allocation of funds. N.B. Where a formal virement is required it must be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations.
- 1.5 To consider recommendations relevant to the Committee's remit from the Beach Management Advisory Committee.
- 1.6 To agree minor amendments to relevant Council policy documents.
- 1.7 To consider any other matters delegated to the Committee by full Council.

**Other functions:**

- 2.1 To consider project proposals from partner organisations and other third parties relating to the protection of the natural environment or to the management of the Council's parks, gardens and green spaces.
- 2.2 To refer matters for detailed consideration to a relevant working party.
- 2.3 To make recommendations to full Council regarding matters requiring the allocation of unbudgeted expenditure or significant changes to policy.
- 2.4 To consider relevant capital and revenue budget proposals as part of the annual budget setting process and make recommendations to the Finance & Governance Committee.
- 2.5 To consider any other matters relating to the natural environment, the climate crisis or the management of the Council's parks, gardens or green spaces.

### **3. Finance & Governance Committee Terms of Reference**

**Main Objective/Remit:** To oversee the Council's governance arrangements and its management of public funds, ensuring that appropriate policies are in place and that adequate arrangements are made to manage risk.

**Reports to:** Full Council

**Outside Representatives:** None

**Frequency of Meetings:** Six scheduled meetings per year, otherwise as and when required.

**Member Training requirements:** Relevant in-house training will be offered to all councillors as part of their induction process.

**Sub-Committees:** Capital Projects Sub-Committee.

**Working Parties/Panels:** The following working parties/panels will report to the Committee (or to full Council), and can also be instructed to examine specific matters by the Committee:

- Rents & Licences Panel
- Communications Strategy Working Party

**Other Matters:** The Committee will be comprised of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and the Chair of each of the Council's Standing Committees (Community Services, Environment, Personnel, Planning & Consultation and Tourism & Local Economy), together with any other Member(s) appointed by Council. The public shall be excluded from any matter that is confidential in nature.

#### **Delegated Matters:**

- 1.1 To receive quarterly budget monitoring and variance reports, and determine any response required to address urgent concerns.
- 1.2 To monitor and review Council investments, including receipt of quarterly reports on treasury activity.
- 1.3 To receive interim reports from the Council's internal auditor and approve or amend the actions proposed by officers to address the concerns raised.
- 1.4 To receive, at least annually, a report demonstrating reconciliation of the Council's bank accounts.
- 1.5 To monitor and review funding arrangements for the Council's capital works programme.
- 1.6 To consider, at least annually, a report on the Council's provision for bad debts, authorising the writing off of any such debt not exceeding £500 and agreeing actions in respect of larger sums (the write-off of which must be approved by Council).
- 1.7 To agree minor amendments and clarifications of existing Town Council policies in respect of finance and governance.
- 1.8 To appoint an appropriate person to act as the Council's internal auditor.
- 1.9 To appoint a Capital Projects Sub-Committee, agree its Terms of Reference, receive its minutes and consider any recommendations set out therein.

- 1.10 To approve any increase in budget (up to £5,000) further to a recommendation from the Capital Projects Sub-Committee.
- 1.11 To ensure appropriate arrangements are in place for carrying out rent reviews in respect of Council-owned property, and to consider any recommendations from the Rents & Licences Panel.
- 1.12 To review from time to time the adequacy of the Council's insurance cover and receive at least once a year a report regarding claims settled and lodged since the last report.
- 1.13 To monitor and review the performance of the Council's external contracts where appropriate (e.g. public toilet cleaning).
- 1.14 To review, at least annually, a report of complaints received regarding the Council's services and consider any actions required to address the concerns raised.
- 1.15 To consider periodically reports regarding the Council's compliance with its regulatory requirements (e.g. health and safety, data protection and transparency).
- 1.16 To act in a scrutiny role in respect of Council decisions, as and when requested by full Council.

**Other functions:**

- 2.1 To consider the strategic direction of the Town Council and periodically review the Town Council's Corporate Plan and Governance Arrangements, making appropriate recommendations to the Council.
- 2.2 To review the Town Council's list of priorities twice yearly and monitor progress towards their achievement, making appropriate recommendations to the Council.
- 2.3 To review, at least annually, the adequacy of the Town Council's Risk Register, and recommend amendments to the Council.
- 2.4 To consider in detail recommendations made by the Council's external auditor and recommend any resulting action plan to full Council.
- 2.5 To consider draft versions of Council policy documents relevant to these Terms of Reference and make appropriate recommendations to the Council.
- 2.6 To consider the response to changes in legislation affecting the Town Council and recommend appropriate steps to the Council.
- 2.7 To consider the draft annual estimates each year (usually in December) and make a recommendation to the Council regarding their adoption, including the Council's parish precept for the forthcoming financial year.
- 2.8 To consider any proposed virement (transfer of expenditure from one budget heading to another) and make a recommendation to Council.
- 2.9 To consider any case for the Council entering into borrowing and make an appropriate recommendation to Council.
- 2.10 To consider the adoption or amendment of the Members' Allowance Scheme in light of the Independent Panel's Report, and make a recommendation to Council accordingly.

- 2.11 To consider any other matters relating to the Council's governance arrangements and financial management.

### **3.a. Capital Projects Sub-Committee Terms of Reference**

**Main Objective/Remit:** To monitor the delivery of projects included in the Council's Capital Programme and the one-off list of revenue expenditure contained in the Annual Budget Report, providing support and guidance to officers as required.

**Reports to:** Finance & Governance Committee

**Outside Representatives:** None

**Frequency of Meetings:** As and when required.

**Member Training requirements:** None

**Other Matters:** The Committee will be comprised of three or four Members of the Finance & Governance Committee, usually including the Chairs of the Community Services and Environment Committees.

Due to the routine discussion of contractual and procurement matters the meetings of the sub-committee will not be open to the public, although all meetings will be preceded by a period of public participation time.

#### **Delegated Matters:**

- 1.1 To support officers in prioritising the capital and revenue projects agreed by Council as part of the Estimates process each year.
- 1.2 To consider matters raised by officers in respect of the management of capital projects and provide advice and guidance accordingly.
- 1.3 To monitor progress in the delivery of projects, and receive reports from officers, contractors and external advisors, as appropriate.
- 1.4 To consider any additional matters referred by another Committee or Council.
- 1.5 To approve the minutes of its meetings for accuracy.

#### **Other functions:**

- 2.1 To advise the Finance & Governance Committee on project budgets for the forthcoming financial year, as part of the Estimates setting process.
- 2.2 To consider any requirement for additional funds in respect of a specific project and make a recommendation to either the Finance & Governance Committee (up to £5,000), or Full Council, accordingly.
- 2.3 To consider any other matters relating to the management and delivery of Council projects.

### **3.b. Vexatious Correspondence and Complaints Sub-Committee Terms of Reference - Draft**

**Main Objective/Remit:** To determine whether correspondence or complaints referred to the sub-committee by officers or councillors should be determined as vexatious, in accordance with the Town Council's adopted Vexatious Correspondence and Complaints Policy.

**Reports to:** Finance & Governance Committee

**Outside Representatives:** None

**Frequency of Meetings:** As and when required.

**Member Training requirements:** None

**Other Matters:** The Committee will be comprised of the Mayor and/or Deputy Mayor and two members of the Finance & Governance Committee.

An officer who has not been dealing with the correspondence in question should act as minute taker.

#### **Delegated Matters:**

- 1.1 To determine whether correspondence or complaints referred to the sub-committee by officers or councillors should be treated as vexatious, in accordance with the Town Council's adopted Vexatious Correspondence and Complaints Policy.
- 1.2 Where correspondence or a complaint is determined to be vexatious, to prepare a statement and otherwise act in accordance with paragraph 2.2 of the Town Council's adopted Vexatious Correspondence and Complaints Policy.
- 1.3 When requested, to carry out a six-monthly review of a decision to determine correspondence as vexatious, in accordance with paragraph 4.1 of the Town Council's adopted Vexatious Correspondence and Complaints Policy.
- 1.4 To approve the minutes of its meetings for accuracy.

#### **Other functions:**

- 2.1 To periodically review the Vexatious Correspondence and Complaints Policy and make recommendations about proposed amendments to the Finance & Governance Committee.
- 2.2 To consider any additional matters referred by another Committee or Council.



#### **4. Personnel Committee Terms of Reference**

**Main Objective/Remit:** To ensure that the Town Council fulfils its objective to be an excellent employer and complies with relevant legal obligations.

**Reports to:** Full Council

**Outside Representatives:** None

**Frequency of Meetings:** Three scheduled meetings per year, otherwise as and when required.

**Member Training requirements:** All Members willing to participate in grievance or disciplinary appeal hearings should be provided with relevant training.

**Working Parties/Panels:** The Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairperson, can convene panels of three trained committee members to hear appeals in relation to disciplinary and grievance matters. The Chairman can convene a panel to hear a disciplinary, grievance or other personnel issue in relation to the Town Clerk. All hearings will be held in accordance with the Staff Handbook and guidance will be sought from the Council's employment advisors.

#### **Other Matters:**

The public shall be excluded from any matter that would identify an individual member of staff.

Councillors who are not Members of the Committee will not automatically be sent copies of confidential agenda papers.

The Chairperson of the Committee will undertake the Town Clerk's annual appraisal, together with the mayor and deputy mayor, unless otherwise agreed with the Town Clerk.

#### **Delegated Matters:**

- 1.1 To determine requests for the regrading of existing posts within agreed budgets, having considered recommendations from the Town Council's employment advisors.
- 1.2 To determine the detailed implementation of Council policy, where this cannot be decided by officers (for example, where there is a conflict of interest because the decision would directly impact their terms and conditions).
- 1.3 To agree changes to the Council's staffing structure, and associated job descriptions and person specifications, within agreed budgets.
- 1.4 To agree significant additions/changes to the Council's training programme within agreed budgets.
- 1.5 To agree one-off payments to Staff from within agreed budgets.
- 1.6 To agree minor changes to the Staff Handbook.
- 1.7 To consider any other matters delegated to the Committee by full Council.

#### **Other functions:**

- 2.1 To review at least annually the Council's staffing structure and make recommendations to full Council about any change requiring an additional budget allocation.

- 2.2 To review proposed changes to the Staff Handbook and make recommendations about significant amendments to the Town Council.
- 2.3 To review proposed changes to staff contracts of employment and make recommendations about significant amendments to the Town Council.
- 2.4 To consider matters relating to employees' health and safety.
- 2.5 To annually review the Council's training budget and make recommendations to full Council.
- 2.6 To oversee any staffing review or job evaluation process.
- 2.7 To consider any recommendation from the Town Clerk appointment panel and in turn make a recommendation to Full Council.
- 2.8 To consider any proposed changes to the Town Council's pension provision and make recommendations to Full Council.
- 2.9 To develop the Council's approach to apprenticeships.
- 2.10 To consider proposals for staff benefits.
- 2.11 To oversee the recruitment of a new Town Clerk, when a vacancy arises, and make a recommendation as to a preferred candidate to Full Council.
- 2.12 To consider any other matters relating to the employment of staff.

## **5. Planning & Consultation Committee Terms of Reference**

**Main Objective/Remit:** To comment on planning applications submitted to Dorset Council regarding development within the parish of Swanage, or that are of direct relevance to the parish; to oversee the development and review of a Neighbourhood Plan; to comment on licensing and tree work applications within the parish; and to respond to third-party consultation exercises.

**Reports to:** Full Council

**Outside Representatives:** None

**Frequency of Meetings:** Monthly

**Member Training requirements:** All Members are expected to attend relevant training regarding the planning system, including the making of material comments on planning applications.

**Sub-Committees/Advisory Committees:** Swanage Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (Sub-Committee).

**Working Parties/Panels:** None

**Other Matters:** The committee may, by resolution, resolve to refer any matter of sufficient importance for consideration at a forthcoming Council meeting.

### **Delegated Matters:**

- 1.1 To determine the Council's response to all planning applications submitted to Dorset Council regarding development either within the parish, or that is of direct relevance to the parish.
- 1.2 Where appropriate, to determine if the Town Council will be represented at meetings of Dorset Council's Eastern Area Planning Committee, or at appeal hearings held by the Planning Inspectorate.
- 1.3 To determine the Council's response to licensing applications submitted to Dorset Council regarding premises within the parish of Swanage or that will have a direct impact on residents of the parish.
- 1.4 To comment on any applications for tree works within the parish that have been submitted to Dorset Council.
- 1.5 To determine the Council's response to consultation documents prepared by third parties that contain proposals with direct relevance to the parish of Swanage, residents of Swanage, or the work of the Town Council.
- 1.6 To appoint a Neighbourhood Plan Sub-Committee, agree its Terms of Reference, receive its minutes and consider any recommendations set out therein.

### **Other functions:**

- 2.1 To consider proposals for heritage related projects.
- 2.2 To consider proposals in relation to Conservation Areas within the town.
- 2.3 To advise the Town Council as to budget requirements in connection with the Committee's business.

- 2.4 To consider any other matters relevant to planning, licensing or heritage not mentioned above.

## **5.a. Swanage Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (Sub Committee) Terms of Reference**

### **Introduction/Background**

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is a sub-committee of Swanage Town Council's Planning and Consultation Committee and is referred to below as the "Steering Group".

Swanage Town Council (STC) is aiming to produce a Neighbourhood Plan that ensures the growth of our town is both sustainable and achieved within a townscape and environment that protects and enhances the special characteristics of the town as recognised by the Swanage community and which, in turn, attract the visitors who power the town's seaside economy.

### **1. Purpose and Objective**

To ensure the production of a Draft Neighbourhood Plan, which defines the planning priorities identified by the community, taking into account all representations made during the plan making process and having regard to all relevant existing plans and evidence.

### **2. Constitutional Arrangements**

**2.1** The Steering Group is a Sub-Committee of Swanage Town Council's Planning and Consultation Committee. As such its governance arrangements must be in accordance with the Town Council's Standing Orders.

**2.2** STC is the qualifying body for the purposes of preparing and financing the Plan. Quarterly reports will be made to the full Council to ensure effective progress, and the Town Council's Planning and Consultation Committee will receive copies of the Steering Group minutes to consider any matters arising.

**2.3** The Steering Group has full delegated authority to manage the preparation of the Plan as set out in the objectives, and within agreed budgets, up to and including the publication of the Draft Neighbourhood Plan for public consultation. STC will approve the final draft Neighbourhood Plan prior to submission to the Local Planning Authority.

**2.4** The Steering Group will approve the minutes of its meetings for accuracy.

**2.5** The Steering Group must seek approval from its parent committee for any changes to these Terms of Reference.

### **3. The Steering Group will meet regularly to:**

**3.1** Determine the overall scope and objectives of the plan based on public feedback;

**3.2** Commission and monitor a project plan and report to Swanage Town Council on progress against key objectives;

**3.3** Ensure that there is a continued review of the legislative requirements around Neighbourhood Planning to ensure the plan meets all requirements;

- 3.4** Make recommendations to the Town Council on resourcing the Plan, via the Planning and Consultation Committee;
- 3.5** Ensure that the wider community is involved in the Plan process;
- 3.6** Ensure that necessary evidence is gathered to inform each of the themes within the scope of the plan;
- 3.7** Ensure that all available options are identified and assessed in respect of each theme and reflected in the draft Plan for wider consultation and review;
- 3.8** Ensure minutes, reports and documents relating to the plan are made publicly accessible;
- 3.9** Agree a timescale for completion.

#### **4. Task Teams**

The Steering Group will oversee the setting up of Task Teams, which will feed evidence back to the Steering Group to support preparation of the Plan. A member of the Steering Group will chair the Task Teams. The initial theme groups are:

- Development Task Team (incorporating Housing and Community Services, Town Centre and Economic Development)
- Environment Task Team (incorporating Environment, Heritage and Conservation)

#### **5. Membership**

**5.1** Membership of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is as follows:

- a) Six Councillor Members of Swanage Town Council's Planning and Consultation Committee, nominated by the Planning and Consultation Committee.
- b) Up to six other members residing in the Parish of Swanage (the Steering Group having delegated authority to co-opt accordingly, dependent on skills and experience).

**5.2** The Chair and Vice-Chair will be elected by the Steering Group.

**5.3** Representatives of O'Neill Homer, Planning Consultants can attend any meeting of the Steering Group, and Theme Groups, as advisors.

#### **6. Meetings**

The Steering Group will meet regularly. Decisions made by the Steering Group should normally be by consensus at Steering Group meetings. Where a vote is required, in accordance with legislation each Councillor Member shall have one vote, and votes can only be made in person. The quorum is three voting members, although a minimum of five voting members shall be present at Steering Group meetings when a proposal is considered to recommend changes to these Terms of Reference. A simple majority will be required to support any motion. The Chair shall have one casting vote.

Town Council administrative staff will take minutes and organise meetings of the Steering Group and reporting to STC.

## **7. Conduct and Interests**

The Steering Group will follow the Code of Conduct as adopted by Swanage Town Council. Whilst members as individuals may be accountable to their parent organisations, the Steering Group as a whole is accountable to the wider community for ensuring that the Plan reflects their collective expectations.

## **6. Tourism & Local Economy Committee Terms of Reference**

**Main Objective/Remit:** To promote sustainable tourism and consider measures to support the local economy.

**Reports to:** Full Council

**Outside Representatives:** Durlston Country Park, Swanage & District Chamber of Trade and Commerce (up to three members to represent retailers, hospitality and licensed premises), Swanage Railway, Swanage Fishermen's Association, Swanage Pier Trust, Visit Dorset, National Trust, RNLI, Swanage Museum & Heritage Centre, Mowlem Theatre, Sandbanks Ferry and 'Heart of Swanage'.

**Frequency of Meetings:** Three scheduled meetings per year, otherwise as and when required.

**Member Training requirements:** None.

**Sub-Committees/Advisory Committees:** To receive recommendations from the Coastal Change and Beach Management Advisory Committee.

**Working Parties/Panels:** The following working parties will report to the Committee (or to full Council), and can also be instructed to examine specific matters by the Committee:

- Car Parks
- Communications Strategy
- Events
- Market
- Museum
- Seafront Masterplan

### **Other Matters:**

The public shall be excluded from any matter that is confidential in nature. This may include non-voting committee members.

### **Delegated Matters:**

- 1.1 To oversee the management, within agreed budgets, of the following Town Council services: beach management, Beach Huts, boat park, car parks, events, festive lights, fishermen's huts, market, publicity & promotion, seafront infrastructure, Swanage Information Centre and town centre improvements.
- 1.2 To determine the allocation of existing budgets where the relevant manager requires clarification or wishes to bring forward an alternative allocation of funds. N.B. Where a formal virement is required it must be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations.
- 1.2 To consider recommendations relevant to the Committee's remit from the Coastal Change and Beach Management Advisory Committee.
- 1.3 To agree minor amendments to relevant Council policy documents.
- 1.4 To consider any other matters delegated to the Committee by full Council.



**Other functions:**

- 2.1 To consider project proposals from partner organisations and other third parties relating to events, the promotion of Swanage, tourism and the local economy.
- 2.2 To refer matters for detailed consideration to a relevant working party.
- 2.3 To make recommendations to full Council regarding matters requiring the allocation of unbudgeted expenditure or significant changes to policy.
- 2.4 To consider relevant capital and revenue budget proposals as part of the annual budget setting process and make recommendations to the Finance & Governance Committee.
- 2.5 To consider relevant sections from the Council's scale of fees and charges as part of the annual budget setting process and make recommendations to the Finance & Governance Committee.
- 2.6 To receive reports from the Museum working party and consider any recommendations set out therein.
- 2.7 To consider any other matters relating to tourism and the local economy.

## 7. Coastal Change and Beach Management Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

**Main Objective/Remit:** To advise the Council on measures required to provide a safe, clean and well-maintained beach facility, compliant with the European Blue Flag criteria. Also to provide a forum for stakeholders to discuss matters relating more widely to the management of the impacts of climate induced coastal change in Swanage and Durlston Bays and make recommendations to Council accordingly.

**Reports to:** Tourism & Local Economy Committee and Environment Committee.

**Councillor Membership:** ~~Three~~ **Four** councillors to be appointed at the Annual Council Meeting each May, one of which will be elected as Chairman of the Advisory Committee.

**Outside Representatives:** Swanage Lifeboat Crew, MCA, Coastwatch, Dorset Council, Dorset Police, Dorset Coast Forum, National Trust, Environment Agency, Swanage Pier, Swanage Sailing Club, Swanage Fishermen's Association, Swanage Angling Club, Private Beach Hut Sites Hut Owners' Group, North Beach Representative, Swanage Sea Rowing Club, local divers, Ocean Bay businesses, Seaweed removal contractor, Pierhead Watersports and Byelaw Enforcement, Durlston Country Park, Designated Bathing Zone Operator, Quay Operators, Deckchair/pedalo concessionaire, Wessex Water, and Natural England, RNLI Lifeguard team, Beach Buddies, local outdoor adventure companies, Swanage Moorings Association, Planet Purbeck, Jurassic Coast Trust, former chairmen of Swanage Coastal Change Forum and **Swanage Bay Sauna**.

**Quorum:** Five Members, at least one must be a Swanage Town Councillor.

**Frequency of Meetings:** Three times a year, in February, May, and October.

**Member Training requirements:** None.

**Other Matters:** This committee has no delegated decision making powers. Any issue requiring Town Council expenditure or amendment to Town Council policy will be the subject of a recommendation to either the Tourism and Local Economy Committee or Environment Committee, which may in turn be referred to a meeting of the Town Council. The committee can provide guidance to officers to assist them in taking forward minor matters that do not require referral to a committee.

### **Functions:**

- 1.1 To consider proposals, and make recommendations as appropriate, in respect of the following matters relating to the beach and Swanage Bay:
  - beach and water safety
  - environmental management and education
  - signage
  - events
  - accessibility
  - moorings and boat launching/landing facilities
  - management of personal watercraft
  - commercial proposals relating to the Main Beach (Mowlem to Ulwell Stream).
- 1.2 To advise on amendments to the beach rules and regulations.
- 1.3 To advise on amendments to Dorset Council's Public Pleasure Boats Byelaws.

- 1.4 To receive reports regarding sea defence works, flood prevention and beach replenishment schemes from the Environment Agency and Dorset Council.
- 1.5 To receive reports regarding water quality from Wessex Water.
- 1.6 To consider any matter referred to it by the Town Council or another council committee.
- 1.7 To provide a focus for local consultation by statutory agencies on coastal matters.
- 1.8 To encourage community engagement in the challenges posed by coastal change and other matters within the committees remit.
- 1.9 To review consultation documents that are relevant to the work of this advisory committee and advise the Town Council on an appropriate response.
- 1.10 To approve the minutes of its meetings for accuracy.

## **8. Traffic Management Advisory Committee Terms of Reference**

**Main Objective/Remit:** To consider proposals relating to traffic management and highway safety in the parish of Swanage, in consultation with Dorset Council, and formulate recommendations to the Community Services Committee accordingly.

**Reports to:** Community Services Committee.

**Outside Representatives:** Dorset Police, Community Highways Officer (Dorset Council).

**Quorum:** Three Members/Outside Representatives.

**Frequency of Meetings:** Quarterly, otherwise as and when required.

**Member Training requirements:** None.

**Other Matters:** Although this committee has no delegated decision-making powers, it can provide guidance to officers to assist them in taking forward minor matters that do not require referral to the parent committee.

### **Functions:**

- 1.1 To consider the following matters, taking into account advice from a relevant Highways Officer, and where appropriate make recommendations to the Community Services Committee about a response to Dorset Council as the Highway Authority.
  - a) Proposals to improve traffic management on the public highway (e.g. parking restrictions and changes to speed limits).
  - b) Proposals to improve highway and pedestrian safety (including pavements).
  - c) Concerns regarding parking enforcement.
- 1.2 To work with Dorset Council in respect of any town-wide parking review.
- 1.3 To consider traffic management measures in respect of Town Council owned roads and highways (i.e. Station Approach, Peveril Point Road, Panorama Road, De Moulham estate service roads).
- 1.4 To consider any other traffic management measure within the parish of Swanage, not otherwise described above.
- 1.5 To consider any matter referred to it by the Town Council or the Community Services Committee.
- 1.7 To approve the minutes of its meetings for accuracy.

Council and Committee Meeting Schedule  
May 2025-July 2026

	Council Meetings	Committee Meetings						Advisory Committee Meetings	
N.B. All Meetings start with fifteen minutes of Public Participation Time	Council	Planning & Consultation	Finance & Governance	Community Services	Environment & Green Spaces	Tourism & Local Economy	Personnel	Coastal Change & Beach Management (reports to Environment & G S and Tourism & L E Committees)	Traffic Management (reports to Community Services Committee)
	Monday		Wednesday						
Commencing	7pm	7pm	2.15pm	2.15pm	2.15pm	2.15pm	9.30am	2.15 pm	5.00 pm
2025 May	19* & 28 (Wed)▲	7 (Wed)							
June	23	2			25			4	11
July	21	7	23	16		9 ***			
August		4							
September	15##	8							
October	20	6		22	8 instead 22		8 instead 15	1 instead 15	15
November	17	3	5	12		12 instead 19***			5
December	15	1	10						
2026 January	19# & 26	5	12 (Mon)						
February	23	2	25					11	
March	23**	2 & 30	11	18	4	25 ***			4
April	27						22		
May	11* & 20 (Wed)▲	6 (Wed)							
June	22	1			24			3	10
July	20	6	22	15		8 ***			

\* Annual Council Meeting (Election of Mayor)

▲ Final Accounts

# Annual Estimates Meeting

## This Meeting will be held in The Swanage School, Main Hall, High Street

\*\* This Meeting will be held in the Methodist Church, High Street

\*\*\* This Meeting will be held in the Grand Hotel, Burlington Road

N.B. The Annual Parish Assembly is scheduled to take place on 20th April 2026 at The Centre, Chapel Lane

Meetings of the Neighbourhood Plan sub-committee and Capital Projects sub-committee will be held as required

< > Reserve date