

PORTLAND TOWN COUNCIL

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Terms of Reference for the Portland Town Council IT and Communications Committee

As approved at the meeting of Portland Town Council held on 21-05-25

Name of Committee: IT and Communications Committee

Purpose

To review, report on, and as appropriate, make decisions, recommendations to the Council on issues relating to the Council's IT equipment and policies, website and social media accounts, and all matters relating to Council communications.

Summary of Responsibilities

The IT and Communications Committee shall have delegated authority to: -

- Consider all matters relating to IT and Communications, and report as necessary to Council.
- Determine all matters within the remit of the Committee in accordance with the delegated authority to spend limit of the Committee detailed at regulation 4 – Financial Regulations.
- Draw up and propose to full Council any plans for IT improvements or upgrades.
- Review and make recommendations or improvement plans in relation to all telephony matters.
- Review and make recommendations to Council concerning its social media and Facebook accounts.
- Consider and report on any other publicity and media releases.
- As and when necessary, lead on the production of any of the Council's public communications, which may include newsletters, press releases or paper documentation.
- Regularly and strategically review all of the above to ensure Council practices reflect the changing external environment, and the Council's needs.
- To have due consideration of Climate and Ecological impacts including the Town Councils adopted Bio-Diversity Strategy associated with decisions made by the Committee.

Status

The IT and Communications Committee is a fully constituted Committee. It has elected membership, with one vote per member.

All Councillors are welcome to attend any meetings of the Committee and may speak at the invitation of the Chair but shall not vote.

Membership

The Committee will comprise 6 Councillors, elected annually at the Annual Council meeting, or at any other Council meeting should an interim need arise.

Should any Committee Member resign, the Chair will consult with the other members and, if it is deemed necessary, seek another Councillor to fill the vacancy, which shall be decided by election at the subsequent Council meeting.

Operation of the Committee

- The Committee has power to operate only as set out in these Terms of Reference.
- Meetings of the Committee will be held at least four times a year, as and when designated by the Chair, and subject to availability.
- The Chair of the Committee, and Vice where appropriate, will be elected at its first meeting following the Annual Meeting of the Council.
- If the Chair is not able to attend a meeting, the Vice, where applicable, shall manage the meeting's proceedings. If the Vice is not present, another Member will be approved, by majority vote, to conduct proceedings for the duration of the meeting in question.
- The Committee will make decisions by consensus demonstrated by a simple majority vote of those members of the Committee present at any meeting.
- In the case of a tied vote, the Chair will cast the deciding vote.
- The Clerk, or any other nominated Officer, will prepare and circulate to Councillors an agenda by email for each meeting, at least 3 clear days prior to meeting, and will publish the agenda on the Council's website and noticeboard.
- Minutes of each meeting will be produced by the Clerk, or any other nominated Officer. They will be circulated in draft to the chair of the Committee promptly after each meeting and will be published to the Council's website.
- The Terms of Reference, agendas, and minutes of the Committee's meetings will be made available to Councillors and the public as soon as practicable.
- Any amendments to these Terms of Reference may only be by formal resolution at a full Council meeting.
- The Chair of the Committee will briefly report to the Full Council, as to the progress of any material matters under its consideration.
- Members of the public will be granted the opportunity to address the Committee through standing agenda item for public speaking. This shall be in line with the Council's Standing Orders. A maximum of 3 minutes speaking per person will be allowed, with public speaking time not exceeding 30 minutes in total.

Working Groups

As a means of enabling effective working practices, the IT and Communications Committee may elect to periodically set up specific Working Groups with a defined brief relating to the remit of the Committee. Any such groups will act as informally and meet at a frequency of members' choice between formal Committee meetings, to review ideas and initiatives, formulate plans and create reports for consideration by the Committee.

Working Groups will have advisory status only and will rely on the decisions of the Committee, or full Council where appropriate, to inform actions to be taken. Discussions and recommendations from all Working Groups will be summarised for the attention of the Committee as and when it meets.

General

- The Committee has delegated authority from the Council to incur individual expenses relating to the Committee's core responsibilities to a maximum of £25,000 (per item) to be met from the appropriate approved Council budget, or where applicable from General Reserves. No other expenditure may be permitted without express approval from the Council.
- In the event that more than £25,000 is required for any one item of expenditure, the Committee will seek the express approval of the Council before proceeding.
- Any amendments to these Terms of Reference may only be by formal resolution at a full Council meeting.