

PRESTEIGNE AND NORTON TOWN COUNCIL

Working Groups Protocol : September 2023

1. The Town Council (but not its Committees) can set up Working Groups to carry out tasks/examine work areas as defined by the Council. These groups meet informally.
2. The opportunity for members of the public to join such groups is allowed so members of the public can contribute in areas of particular expertise or interest. No more than one third of a working group may be members of the public.
3. The purpose of a Working Group is to meet to discuss issues, explore options and develop proposals and report back to the Council (or on Council instruction to a Committee) with recommendations. It may meet to consider ongoing issues (such as the Local Development Plan) or to consider one off matters.
4. Working Groups have no decision-making powers but simply present the Council or Committee with their findings. They are set up to give particular topics much more time and attention to detail outside agenda-driven meetings and to provide background to enable the Council to make decisions.
5. When setting up a Working Group, the Council will make clear the terms of reference, regarding objectives, scope, and outcome(s). These will be formally approved by the Council. Once the work has been completed, the Working Group will be disbanded.
6. Membership. The number of Councillors able to join a Working Group will be decided at the time of its formation but it must consist of no fewer than two councillors and it is recommended that it should not exceed five in total number. The number of public vacancies must also be decided at the time of the Working Group's inception.
7. A quorum for any meeting of a Working Group will be three members, at least two of which must be Councillors. A lead Member should be appointed to co-ordinate reports/liaise with the Clerk.
8. A Working Group will not have a budget.
9. Working Groups tend not to meet in public and it is recognised above that they are more informal than a committee meeting. However due regard should be had to the Council's standing orders; the Code of Conduct still applies, and declarations of pecuniary and other interests will be required at each meeting.
10. All Working Groups will follow all relevant adopted Council policies and any that may subsequently be adopted after the formation of the Working Group.
11. All documents and records produced, and emails shared by Working Groups will be retained as per the Council's Data Retention Policy. Members of the Working Group should be aware of the rules regarding storage of personal and/or confidential information.
12. Direct Contact with Council contractors should not be made and any concerns should be raised with the Clerk.
13. County Council Matters: Again any queries or questions should be raised with the Clerk who will liaise with the relevant County Council Member. It is not appropriate for any member of a working group to contact a County Council Officer directly.
14. Any Council Member may ask to attend a Working Group to observe proceedings.

APPROVED COUNCIL MEETING SEPTEMBER 2023