

PORLOCK PARISH COUNCIL WORKING GROUP PROTOCOL



1. The Parish Council and any of its standing Committees can set up Working Groups to carry out tasks as defined by the Council or the Committee. The opportunity for members of the public to join such groups will be made (time dependent) through social media or on the Council's noticeboard and website.
2. The purpose of Working Groups formed from both councillors and members of the public is to meet to discuss issues, explore options and develop proposals and report back to the Council or Committee with recommendations. Subsequently, they have no decision-making powers but simply present the Council or Committee with their findings. However, their ability to give particular topics that much more time outside agenda-driven meetings has proved to be invaluable.
3. When setting up a Working Group, the Council or Committee must set clear terms of reference for it regarding objectives, scope, and outcome(s). These will be approved by the Council or Committee before the Working Group is formed. Once their work has been completed, the Working Group will be disbanded.
4. The Terms of Reference will include this protocol, the name of the Committee to which the Working Group reports. All Members appointed to a Working Group will be deemed to have accepted this protocol and the terms of reference for the Working Group as approved at the Council or Committee.
5. The Terms of Reference and membership will be published on the Council's website.
6. 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. The number of public vacancies must also be advised at the time of the Working Group's inception.
7. Members of the public will be invited to join by the Working Group itself following an advertising and application process. The Working Group will manage this and ultimately appoint members of the public. It will be for the Working Group to decide whether it does appoint, and if it does, it does not have to appoint to the maximum number of vacancies.
8. The Working Group will notify the Council or Committee of the name of the Chair and Vice Chair once they are appointed after the first meeting.
9. A quorum for any meeting of a Working Group will be three members, at least one of whom must be a councillor
10. The role of the Council or parent Committee is to consider and question the recommendations put to it by the Working Group before a decision is taken and, in the case of a Committee, to be satisfied with them before making any decision, or recommendations to, the full Council.

11. A Working Group will be accountable to its parent Committee unless agreement is made, due to expediency and subject to agreement via email of a majority of members of that parent Committee, for recommendations to be made directly to the Parish Council.

12. The Working Group must provide the Council or Committee with as much information as possible to ensure it can make an informed decision on its recommendation(s).

13. A Working Group will not have a budget. The budget will remain with the Council or parent Committee.

14. Working Groups tend not to meet in public and it is recognised 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. Any members of the public joining the Working Group will be required to sign up to the code of conduct and declare any interests they may have as a matter of transparency.

15. All Working Groups will follow all relevant adopted Council policies and any that may subsequently be adopted after the formation of the Working Group.

16. The Parish Clerk will ensure that a shared email is set up for all Working Groups. The Chair of the Working Group will ensure that the importance of its use is communicated to all members. All documents and records produced, and emails shared by Working Groups will be retained as per the Council's Data Retention Policy