



Oakham Town Council

FINANCE COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

Purpose

The Finance Committee is appointed by Oakham Town Council ("the Council") to oversee the Council's financial affairs, ensure sound financial management, and make decisions or recommendations to Full Council on financial matters.

Objectives

To work with the Clerk/RFO in the management of the Council's financial resources and to consider and recommend strategy and action on policies and operational matters concerned with Council's finances, property and resources.

Authority

The Committee is appointed under the Council's Standing Orders and operates in accordance with:

- The Local Government Act 1972
- The Accounts and Audit Regulations (as amended)
- The Council's Financial Regulations and Standing Orders

The Committee has delegated authority to act only as set out in these Terms of Reference. All decisions shall be subject to Council policies and budget.

Membership

- Membership of the Finance Committee shall consist of a maximum of 6 Members.
- Any Councillor can be a member of the Oakham Town Council Finance Committee, and membership is usually decided on at the May Annual Full Council meeting.
- Three members will constitute a quorum. If the numbers of the Councillors present (not including those debarred by reason of a declared interest) falls below the required quorum the meeting shall be adjourned and any business not transacted

shall be transacted at the next meeting, or the next Full Council meeting. It is acceptable for an informal discussion to take place but no decisions can be made.

- A Committee Chair is to be elected annually by the Committee at the first meeting following the statutory Annual Full Council Meeting of Oakham Town Council and shall hold office until the next statutory Annual Meeting of Oakham Town Council.
- Should any elected member resign, a new member of the Committee will be elected at the next Full Council meeting.
- The Standing Orders on the rules of debate and the Standing Order on interest of members in contracts and other matters shall apply to committee, sub-committee or working group meetings.
- The Clerk / Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) shall attend meetings in an advisory capacity.

Voting

Only appointed Members may vote and participate at a meeting. Non-member councillors and members of the public may attend and speak at a meeting during public participation. In the case of an equal vote the Chairman of that meeting shall have a second or casting vote.

Meetings

- A minimum of 4 meetings will be held per year quarterly. Additional meetings can be called as and when necessary.
- Meetings will be conducted in accordance with the Town Council's Standing Orders.
- Agendas and minutes will be published in line with statutory requirements.
- The Committee will meet as required but may conduct business about routine matters via email.
- A record of all decisions taken by the Committee will be recorded in the minutes.
- The duration of a Finance Committee meeting will be for a maximum of 2 hours.
- The Committee can decide upon the times of meetings.

Declarations of Interest

All Councillors must declare interests on agenda items in line with the Code of Conduct as adopted by Oakham Town Council.

Scope of Responsibilities

The Committee is responsible for:

Budget and Precept

- Work with the Clerk/RFO to prepare and recommend the annual budget to the Full Council by November each year.
- Review income and expenditure against budget throughout the year. Present any budget review items to Full Council for consideration.
- Recommend the annual precept requirement to Full Council.

Financial Monitoring

- Monitor the Council's financial performance and cash flow.
- Review, check and sign bank reconciliations and bank statements.
- Check financial statements.
- Ensure adequate reserves are maintained in line with best practice.
- Oversee all legal matters pertaining to leases, insurance claims, easements, tenancies, contracts, loans, damage to property, rents and debt recovery and make recommendations to Full Council.

Payments and Expenditure

- Review and approve payments within budget.
- Scrutinise all significant or unusual expenditure.
- Ensure compliance with Financial Regulations.

Audit and Governance

- Oversee internal and external audit arrangements and review audit reports.
- Review and recommend approval of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) to Full Council.
- Ensure compliance with statutory financial requirements.
- Regularly review the Council's financial governance documents, including, but not limited to, the Financial Regulations, Financial Risk Assessment, Risk Register, and Investment Strategy. Reviewed documents are to be taken to Full Council for final approval.
- Oversee financial procedures and internal controls.
- Ensure adequate financial controls are in place to utilise and protect the Council's finances and assets – including reviewing and ensuring appropriate insurance for the Council.

Risk Management

- Monitor financial risks and recommend mitigation measures.
- Review the Council's Risk Register at least annually.

Banking and Investments

- Review the Council's banking arrangements and recommend changes where necessary to Full Council.
- Oversee investments and ensure compliance with relevant guidance.
- Review the Council's Investment Strategy at least annually.

Asset Management

- To negotiate the rent or purchase of land or properties on behalf of the Council when instructed to do so by resolution of Full Council and to make recommendations to Full Council regarding the terms of negotiation.
- Regularly review the Asset Register to ensure it is accurate and up-to-date.
- To consider forward planning and the provision of earmarked reserves for the replacement of equipment and property.
- Decide upon asset management software when required.

Grant Funding

- To work with the Clerk/RFO on obtaining grant funding for Council projects and initiatives.
- The Committee shall have delegated power to consider and approve grant applications:
 - The Committee is to collectively determine grant awards using any judging and funding criteria in place, referring to the Grant Application Guidelines.
 - The Committee will review the progress of grants and, where a project is not delivering to an agreed timeframe or standard, has the authority to agree whether to extend the delivery period or to withdraw the grant.
 - The Committee will ensure any funding is publicised locally, encouraging groups/organisations to submit applications which meet grant objectives and the local community's needs and to maximise the use of such funding.
 - Grant applicants may be requested to provide additional information and should encouraged to attend the meeting where the applications are being discussed to speak to their application and/or answer any questions.
 - Priority for funding should be given to groups/organisations that attend and report to the Annual Town Meeting to help ensure transparency, accountability and communication.

- All grant applications received to be published on the agenda, with personal information redacted.
- Committee may approve grants in full (including any conditions), or approve partially (including the amount, specific elements to be funded and any conditions), or reject an application (including the reason which does not have to be reported publicly or to the applicant).

General

- Be involved in drafting any Council strategic plan in place to ensure finance is considered within the Plan.
- To consider any comments from members or residents of the parish before coming to a decision.
- To consider whether to canvass opinion for and against any finance issue to assist with a fair determination.
- To attend finance training sessions as required and to read all relevant documentation to ensure that the Committee is aware of current legislation and regulations.
- The Committee will ensure the Council follows the principle of best value at all times.

Delegated Powers - General

The Committee has delegated authority as stated above and to:

- Make recommendations to Full Council on financial matters.
- Take urgent action between meetings in consultation with the Clerk and Chairman of the Committee and Council, where necessary, in line with the Council's Financial Regulations.
- All decisions must comply with the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.
- Approve invoices for payment which are within the annual budget agreed by Full Council.

The Committee may not:

- Approve the annual precept.
- Approve the annual accounts.
- Authorise any expenditure outside of the annual budget agreed by Full Council.

Admission of the Public and Press

The public and press will be admitted to all meetings of the Committee in line with the Oakham Town Council Standing Orders. If required, the Committee will have the right to pass a resolution to exclude the press and public in accordance with s1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 where the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of these items due to the confidential nature of this item.

Minutes of Meetings

The minutes of the Committee meetings are to be approved by the Committee at the following meeting. The draft minutes will be published on the Council's website as soon as possible after the meeting. The Clerk is to take all minutes but can delegate to another Officer where necessary. All minutes are to be presented to the next Full Council meeting to note, and any Committee recommendations are to be stated which need Full Council approval.

Approved at the Full Council meeting held on 8th July 2026

Date for review: July 2029