



Statement on Managing the Performance of the Council as a Corporate Body

Adopted on 19 September 2024 – Full Council – Minute 2114

Staff

Folkestone Town Council (FTC) employs thirteen permanent members of staff (ten full time equivalents). Council services are generally delivered in house by Council officers headed by a qualified Town Clerk, who also acts as the Responsible Financial Officer. The Clerk is CILCA (Certificate in Local Council Administration) qualified. The Finance Officer is also the Deputy Clerk and is currently pursuing the CILCA qualification.

All employed staff have a contract of employment and are remunerated under NALC (National Association of Local Councils) pay scales and have clear job descriptions.

All members of staff are subject to an annual appraisal undertaken by the Town Clerk, the Clerk's appraisal is undertaken by the Personnel Sub-committee. This identifies training needs, sets targets and is an opportunity for an open and transparent sharing of information and assessment of performance. Self-assessment also informs these outcomes. The Council has an identified Training Budget and recognises the importance of enhancing skills and knowledge in both employed staff and elected councillors.

Councillors

FTC councillors are elected for a period of four years but sometimes vacancies arise during this period, due to ill-health, relocation or personal matters. When this occurs, a notice of vacancy is posted and the opportunity of an election is advertised. If no such request is made, a casual vacancy may be filled by co-option and applications are invited. Where more than one eligible candidate applies, candidates are interviewed individually, using pre-prepared questions, at a Full Council meeting. The successful candidate is chosen by closed vote.

New councillors are inducted to council work via a number of meetings and training sessions and a Training Budget ensures that all councillors can access relevant training as and when necessary.

The Kent Association of Local Councils training diary is shared with all councillors so that they are aware of the opportunities available.

Management structure

Folkestone Town Council operates through a system of Committees, Sub-committees and Working Groups, with each committee having clear delegated terms of reference which are reviewed annually to ensure that the Council:

- Meets its statutory responsibilities
- Complies with local policies
- Delivers local strategic and operational aims and objectives
- Manages its risks and has good systems of internal control
- Provides good financial management and value for money
- Is open, fair and transparent
- Responds to local needs

There are five Full Council meetings held throughout the year, plus the Annual Meeting, where the Mayor is elected for the ensuing year, and a Town Assembly. There is a period for public questions at all meetings of the Full Council and minutes from Committees are ratified.

The Annual Town Assembly is a public meeting and Electors of the Town and Parish of Folkestone may raise matters and ask questions in respect of local government services provided in the Town. Councillors from the Town, together with representatives from Kent Police and Kent Fire and Rescue will be present to answer questions.

The Clerk, Finance Officer and Chair of Finance and General Purposes Committee work closely together to monitor the Council's budget and ensure expenditure remains within budget.

Detailed accounts are presented to the Finance and General Purposes Committee for ratification and a Councillor signs the reconciliations as evidence of verification.

The Planning Committee receive a list of applications before the next meeting convenes. The planning list is circulated to the Planning Committee members, the committee members provide their comments for each application, the comments are then submitted to Folkestone & Hythe District Council Planning department.

The following committees meet as follows, with additional meetings called as and when required:

Finance & General Purposes – every two months
 Community Services – four per year
 Climate & Environment – four per year
 Planning – every one month

Policies and Procedures

FTC operates under rules set out in legislation including Standing Orders and Financial Regulations which are reviewed regularly and which regulate the manner in which the key functions of the Council are carried out. In addition, the Asset Register is regularly updated to ensure that Insurance for all assets is adequate.

The Council employs an internal auditor who checks the soundness of internal control annually. Both internal and external audits are conducted in line with legal requirements and any recommendations of these are reported to Full Council for approval of recommendations.

There are policies to cover all aspects of the Council's work and these are also regularly reviewed and amended when particular events highlight the need for changes.

A full system of Health and Safety Risk Assessment operates for all areas of the Council's work and all premises are subject to regular inspection.

The Council's Corporate Plan sets out the Council's medium term aims and links these with budget expectations. This is monitored regularly. A self-assessment system of monitoring is in place and indicates where additional action is necessary.

Individual councillors take the lead on specific actions and council projects. Focus events allow councillors to assess progress towards stated goals and to modify or add to the plans as appropriate.

Overall performance of the Town Council is reported in the Annual Report which is published online and is available in paper copy at the Town Hall and other locations of the town.