



PUBLIC REALM COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE 2026

Status of the Committee

The Public Realm Committee is a standing committee of Stotfold Town Council established under S101 of the Local Government Act 1972.

The Committee shall exercise the powers and functions delegated to it by the Town Council, subject to:

- statute and common law.
- the Council's Standing Orders.
- the Council's Financial Regulations.
- the Council's Scheme of Delegation.
- approved budgets.
- council policies; and
- any specific direction of the Town Council.

Membership of Committee

- Ten Town Councillors appointed annually at the May Town Council meeting.
- The Town Council will appoint the Chair of the Committee in accordance with Standing Orders at the Annual Town Council Meeting.
- Five members shall constitute a quorum for meetings.
- The Mayor and Vice Mayor are ex-officio on all committees and additional voting members.
- Non-Committee Members may attend meetings and speak at the Chairman's discretion but may not vote.

Meetings

- Ordinary meetings will be held monthly, except January and August, unless the Committee or Council determines otherwise.
- Extraordinary meetings can be held in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders.
- Meetings shall be held in public unless the Committee resolves to exclude the press and public in accordance with the (Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960) and any other relevant legislation.

Purpose

The purpose of the Public Realm Committee is to oversee, manage, maintain and develop the Council's public realm functions, assets and services, and to make decisions within the delegated authority and approved budget of the Town Council.

In all its considerations and actions, the Committee shall have regard to:

- the Council's adopted Corporate Strategic Plan.
- health and safety obligations.
- asset management principles.
- biodiversity and environmental considerations.
- value for money; and
- the needs of the community.

Functions of the Committee

The Committee shall be responsible for the management maintenance, improvement and development of Town Council owned or managed sites:

- Hitchin Road Recreation Ground
- Riverside Playing Fields
- Greenacre Park
- Arlesey Road Recreation Ground
- Multi Use Games Areas (Arlesey Road and Riverside)
- The Green
- Pix Brook Play Area
- Prince Charles Avenue Play Area and open space, associated play equipment
- Jubilee Meadow and open space
- Public conveniences and car park at Brook Street/High Street
- Public conveniences at Arlesey Road Recreation Ground.

This includes authority to:

- Prepare, review and oversee grounds maintenance and inspection schedules.
- Arrange repairs, maintenance and minor improvement works.
- Maintain a rolling programme of maintenance and improvement projects.
- Review maintenance arrangements and contracts for relevant facilities, including play areas, MUGAs and all-weather surfaces.
- Provide, maintain and review litter bins, bus shelters, seats, signage, noticeboards, flowerbeds, tubs, troughs and other public realm features.
- Manage land and facilities held by the Council freehold, leasehold, licence or other lawful arrangement where assigned to this Committee.
- Liaise with community and environmental groups, including TEASEL, in relation to Council-managed land and environmental initiatives.
- Promote attractive, safe and well-maintained public spaces throughout the town.
- Ensure inspection, maintenance and management arrangements support compliance with health and safety duties.

Highways

The Committee shall:

- Liaise with Central Bedfordshire Council and other relevant bodies on matters affecting:
 - highways.
 - footways and footpaths.
 - bridleways.

- car parking.
- drainage; and
- related public realm matters within the town.
- Monitor issues affecting the local footpath and bridleway network and raise concerns with the relevant authority.
- Consider and promote improvements to the local environment where these fall within the Town Council's powers or influence.

For the avoidance of doubt, the Committee's role in respect of highways maintained by the principal authority is primarily one of **liaison, advocacy and recommendation**, unless specific powers are delegated or a formal agreement is in place.

Allotments

The Committee will be responsible for:

- Manage Town Council owned allotments.
- Manage Common Road Allotments on behalf of the Eleemosynary Charity of William Field.

Streetlights

The Committee shall be responsible for:

- The maintenance, repair, replacement and management of Town Council owned street lighting assets.
- Liaison with Central Bedfordshire Council regarding faults or concerns affecting street lighting owned by that authority.
- Oversight of the street lighting maintenance contract, including specification review and re-tendering on the appropriate cycle.
- Ensuring appropriate inspection, testing and compliance arrangements are in place for Council-owned lighting assets.

Trees, Landscaping and Biodiversity

The Committee shall be responsible for:

- Overseeing landscaping and tree planting on Town Council land.
- Managing trees on Town Council owned land in accordance with the Council's adopted Tree Management Policy and any related professional inspections.
- Considering biodiversity, habitat enhancement and sustainable grounds maintenance in line with the Council's adopted policies.
- Working with the Town Council's Tree Warden, officers, contractors and relevant partners on tree and landscape matters.
- Reviewing and prioritising tree works arising from inspection reports and risk assessments.

Cemetery

The Committee shall be responsible for the Council's cemetery and burial ground functions, including:

- Continuing improvements to the site for burial ground use.
- Monitoring and reviewing cemetery capacity and future requirements.
- Monitoring, reviewing and determining cemetery rules, regulations and operational arrangements relating to interments and memorials, subject to legislation and any matters reserved to Council.
- Arranging periodic memorial safety inspections and other required compliance checks.

- Maintaining a rolling programme of cemetery maintenance and improvement works.
- Reviewing cemetery-related leases, licences, tenancies and site use arrangements within delegated powers, and making recommendations where outside delegation.
- Overseeing the appearance, safety and proper management of the cemetery in accordance with relevant legislation and council policy.

Health, Safety and Compliance

In relation to the service areas within its remit, the Committee shall:

- Oversee compliance with relevant health and safety obligations.
- Ensure appropriate inspection, testing, monitoring and record-keeping arrangements are in place.
- Review condition reports, risk assessments and recommended actions.
- Support the safe management of Council land, equipment and public facilities assigned to the Committee.
- Review relevant policies and procedures within its remit and recommend amendments where appropriate.

Finance

Within the service areas delegated to it, the Committee shall:

- Authorise expenditure within the approved budget and delegated financial limits.
- Monitor budget performance throughout the year.
- Prepare draft revenue and capital estimates for the forthcoming financial year for submission through the Council's budget-setting process.
- Conduct a mid-year budget review based on September figures, or such other reporting cycle as the Council determines.
- Review anticipated year-end expenditure and make recommendations on any required action.
- Review fees and charges within its remit, including cemetery fees and open spaces charges, where delegated.
- Review income opportunities, rents, licences and charges relating to land or facilities within its remit and make recommendations where required.
- Monitor contracts and seek value for money in service delivery.

General

- The Committee may establish time-limited working groups or sub-committees, subject to Standing Orders and any direction of the Town Council.
- Any working group established by the Committee shall be advisory only and shall not make binding decisions on behalf of the Council.
- The membership, scope and duration of any working group or sub-committee shall be clearly recorded.

Urgent Matters

- Where urgent action is required between meetings in relation to matters within this Committee's remit, the Town Clerk/Proper Officer may act in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee and/or Chair of the Council where appropriate.
- Any such action shall be reported to the next meeting of the Committee or Council as appropriate.