

Frome Town Council Constitution

Chapter 1

Introduction

Frome Town Hall
Christchurch Street West
Frome
BA11 1EB

01373 465757

info@frometowncouncil.gov.uk

www.frometowncouncil.gov.uk

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1. Introduction to the Constitution of Frome Town Council

Frome Town Council is responsible for a number of local services. It must provide some of these services by law; others are discretionary. It is a statutory corporation - that is, a body created by government under an Act of Parliament.

The Constitution is the Council's internal rule book. It sets out how the Council will operate and how decisions are made. Some of the processes are required by law, while others are a matter for the Council to choose.

The Constitution also contains procedural rules which apply to the conduct of meetings of the Council.

In order to ensure the sound management of the Council's financial affairs and good corporate governance, the Constitution includes financial regulations and rules that apply to all contracts for works and the supply of goods and services to the Council.

The Constitution is a living document. It is kept under continual review and is re-examined annually by Council.

The Constitution is split into a number of different chapters and the following chapters form the Constitution for Frome Town Council:

1. Constitution Contents and Introduction
2. Standing Orders
3. Financial Regulations
4. Staff Handbook
- 4a. Organisational Change Policy
5. Training Statement of Intent
6. Civic Protocol
7. Councillor and Staff Protocol – Principles of Good Practice
8. RFO Protocol
9. Councillor Code of Conduct
10. Health and Safety Policy
11. Corporate Governance Policy
12. Risk Management Strategy
13. Accessibility Policy
14. Information Policy – Freedom of Information and Data Protection
15. Publication Scheme
16. Community Engagement Strategy
17. Media Communications Protocol
18. Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy

2. Who pays?

Money for services comes from the following sources:

- Fees and charges
- Grants
- Council tax in the form of a precept

Frome Town Council receives no income from business rates and its general expenditure is not subsidised through a government grant. There are no central government controls or “cap” on the Council’s expenditure. This makes Frome Town Council directly accountable to residents for the financial implication of its actions.

3. Who decides?

Every four years, voters in Frome elect 17 Town Councillors. They take all major decisions in Council. Decisions are always collective and voted on unless they have been delegated to the Town Clerk.

4. The Council's job

Frome Town Council's role is to deliver its services to the people of Frome in an open, transparent and cost-effective way; acting in the best interests of Frome and its citizens as a whole. This sometimes means that the 'greater good' is more important than individual or particular group's interests, but this is what democratic local government is all about. Taking those decisions, after listening to the community, is the job of the Town Councillors acting collectively as Frome Town Council.

5. How is the Council organised to carry out its job?

The Council makes all policy and other decisions within the powers given to a town council by law.

Committees can make decisions only on those issues the Council has delegated, otherwise a Committee has to make a recommendation to Council.

Sub-Committees can make decisions only on those issues the Committee has delegated, otherwise it has to make a recommendation.

Panels, Working Parties and Open Forum Groups can be appointed by Council and Committees and can be made up of Councillors and/or staff and/or representatives of other organisations and/or individuals. They can make recommendations to the parent committee or Council as appropriate and cannot decide on matters.

Staff deliver the Council’s services in line with policies or directions as determined by Councillors, collectively in Council, a Committee or a Sub-Committee. They can advise Councillors on policy issues and statutory requirements the Council has to meet. They carry out the day to day detailed management of the Council’s services.

6. Further Information

The Town Clerk, Paul Wynne, can be contacted on 01373 465757 or wynnep@frometowncouncil.gov.uk.