

## **Parish Forum**

### **Terms of Reference**

#### **1. Definition of Terms**

1.1 For the purposes of these Terms of Reference, the terms:

- 'Parishes' refers to Town and Parish Councils and Parish Meetings;
- 'District Council' refers to Stratford-on-Avon District Council;
- 'Forum' refers to a Parish Forum partnership between the District Council and the Parishes;
- 'Forum Meeting' refers to the Parish Forum Meeting;
- 'District' refers to the district of Stratford-on-Avon.

#### **2. Purpose**

- 2.1 The Forum is a partnership meeting between the District Council and the Parishes within the District to facilitate the way in which they work together to serve the residents of the District.
- 2.2 The Forum operates within the framework of the Warwickshire Local Councils' Charter.
- 2.3 The Forum does not have any decision-making powers but representations can be made by the Forum to the District Council, which may inform the decisions of the District Council.
- 2.4 The Forum Meetings are not statutory meetings of the District Council or the Parishes.

#### **3. Membership**

- 3.1 Membership of the Forum is limited to the following:
- 3.2 The District Council shall appoint the Portfolio Holder for Law and Governance who shall act as the Forum Chair at the Forum Meetings.
- 3.3 In the event that the Portfolio Holder for Law and Governance is not available to Chair a Forum Meeting, then the Chair can appoint a substitute to act as Chair in their absence.
- 3.4 The District Council's Parish Champions (East and West) and any other District Council member who is requested to address an item on the agenda by the Chair will be expected to attend. All other SDC District Councillors shall be invited to attend as observers.
- 3.5 The Parishes shall each be entitled to send nominated representatives of their Council (usually the Chair and/or their Clerk). Maximum two per Council.
- 3.6 Additional Parish representatives may attend, subject to written notice being given to the District Council's Democratic Services Team ([committeemanagers@stratford-dc.gov.uk](mailto:committeemanagers@stratford-dc.gov.uk) five working days' prior to the Forum Meeting) and subject to the subsequent approval of the Forum Chair.
- 3.7 The Warwickshire Association of Local Councils (WALC) shall be entitled to attend and/or send a representative.

- 3.8 The Head of Community Partnerships at Warwickshire County Council shall be entitled to attend and/or send a representative.
- 3.9 Officers of the District Council may attend as considered necessary by the Chair to advise and assist discussion.

#### **4. Meetings**

- 4.1 The Forum Meeting shall be chaired by the Forum Chair who shall act independently and work on behalf of the Forum for the wider benefit.
- 4.2 There will usually be two Forum Meetings per year, held virtually via Teams.
- 4.3 Forum Meetings will usually be held at 6pm for no longer than three hours unless otherwise directed by the Forum Chair.
- 4.4 The Forum Meeting shall proceed in accordance with the circulated agenda agreed with the Forum Chair.
- 4.5 Agendas and papers for the Forum Meeting will be circulated a minimum of five working days prior to a Forum Meeting, with notes of each meeting taken by a Democratic Services Officer of the District Council.

#### **5. Agenda**

- 5.1 The Forum Chair, the District Council's elected Representative(s) (who is/are attending the respective Forum Meeting) and the Parish Champions (following consultation with the Parishes in their respective parts of the District), and taking into account the matters stated below, shall set the items in the Agenda for the Forum Meeting. For the avoidance of doubt, the Forum Chair shall have full discretion to settle the agenda
- 5.2 Agenda items of relevance for discussion at a Forum Meeting will be those:
- That are strategic or legislative issues;
  - That have direct impact on all, or a significant number of Parishes;
  - That support an effective working partnership between tiers of local government;
  - That relate to the Local Councils' Charter;
  - Where a collective view from Parishes would be helpful.
- 5.3 Items that are not relevant for a Forum Meeting will be those:
- That relate to a single, or small number of parishes;
  - For which other, effective channels of communication exist;
  - That are day to day operational issues;
  - That need to be addressed immediately.
- 5.4 The infrequency of Forum Meetings means that it is not a practical forum through which to engage in routine enquiries and those that require immediate action.

## **6. Conduct at Meetings**

- 6.1 The Forum Meeting recognises that the District Council and the Parishes have a common purpose to promote the wellbeing and serve the same residents of the District. Whilst the Forum Meeting relies on open discussions there is a need to respect and value each other's views and opinions. The Forum members will adhere to the Nolan Principles of public life and the Code of Conduct.
- 6.2 Attendees will:
- engage positively in discussions;
  - work together on finding solutions;
  - share good practice; and
  - seek to strengthen relationships.
- 6.3 All those attending a Forum Meeting shall be accorded the same degree of respect, dignity and consideration by all other attendees, irrespective of people's protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation and with regard to equalities legislation.
- 6.4 With a view to the effective management of the Forum Meeting, the Forum Chair, shall have full discretion as to the order in which those members of the Forum who have registered to speak or who have not registered to speak but wish to do so during the Forum Meeting, shall be invited to speak.
- 6.5 The Forum Chair may remove or exclude persons from a Forum Meeting at their discretion if, in the Chair's opinion, they are not conducting themselves in accordance with paragraphs 6.1 to 6.3 above.

## **7. Miscellaneous**

- 7.1 These Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually by The Cabinet of the District Council and any amended Terms of Reference discussed at the next available Forum Meeting.
- 7.2 The minutes of the Forum Meeting shall be noted at the next available meeting of The Cabinet.

Version Control	Date
Version 1	29 November 2024