ACKWORTH PARISH COUNCIL COMMITTEES

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE REVIEW PANEL COMMITTEE

1. The Committee will be known as the Review Panel Committee

2. The Complaints and Freedom of Information Review Committee is established to review and respond to complaints submitted to the Parish Council, including those under the Council's formal complaints policy, and to ensure compliance with Freedom of Information (FOI) and Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) obligations. The Committee will consider procedural appeal requests, internal review requirements, and appeals relating to FOI/EIR requests and Data Subject Access Requests (DSARs) under the Data Protection Act and UK GDPR

3. The Parish Council's Standing Orders will apply to this Committee

4. The review panel will make non-binding advisory recommendations to the Council on procedures and processes, based on insights from specific cases referred to them. The Council will decide on the resolution of the review and provide instruction to the Clerk

5. The Review Panel will report directly to Full Council

6. The meetings of this Committee will be convened in accordance with the Parish Council's standing orders in which the proper officer will convene ordinary meetings

7. There will be 6 members of this committee

    a. Where there is deemed to be a conflict of interest of more than 3 members of the elected Review Panel, the Full Council can co-opt other councillors to the review panel on a case-by-case premise

8. The Review Panel will meet on an ad-hoc basis as instructed by the Parish Council from recommendation of the Clerk or Deputy Clerk and not by an individual Councillor

9. The Chair & Vice Chair will be appointed by way of member vote during the meeting of the Review Panel on a case-by-case basis

10. The review panel will not consider cases relating to live or ongoing criminal or civil proceedings

11. The quorum of the Committee will be 3

12. The membership of the Committee will be reviewed annually at the annual meeting of the Council

13. Meetings will be held as required, subject to receipt of complaints appeals or FOI/DSAR review matters

14. The Clerk will provide secretarial services unless there is deemed to be a conflict of interest where in that instance a Councillor will complete

15. The Council will ratify minutes and make decisions based on recommendations

16. The Clerk may attend meetings in an advisory capacity but will not be a voting member

17. These Terms of Reference shall be reviewed annually by the Full Council and amended as necessary

Remit of the Committee

18. The Committee is authorised by the Parish Council to:

- Investigate and respond to formal appeals in accordance with the Parish Council's relevant policy under review
- Ensure compliance with statutory timescales and requirements under FOI, EIR, and Data Protection legislation
- Make recommendations to Full Council where changes to policies or procedures are required
- There is no automatic right to review, and a complaint can only be made on the basis of alleged failure in relation to procedural justice or similar. The complainant must exhaust other routes of review (the initial decision and the secondary review, if available) before their case can be referred to the review panel by the Clerk or Deputy Clerk

The Committee shall:

- Ensure that all complaints are dealt with in a fair, consistent, and timely manner
- Maintain impartiality and confidentiality throughout the complaint appeal and review processes
- Assess and determine the outcome of internal reviews under the FOI Act and UK GDPR
- Consider whether requests should be refused on grounds such as vexatiousness or manifestly unreasonable burden, with due regard to ICO guidance
- Liaise with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) where necessary

- Monitor patterns or trends in complaints and FOI requests to help improve council processes