

Topcliffe Parish Council

Scheme of Delegation to the Clerk

Adopted: 18th December 2025

Reviewed 7th May 2026

Review Date: 31st May 2030

1. Introduction

This Scheme of Delegation sets out the authority delegated by Topcliffe Parish Council to the Clerk, who is the Council's Proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer (RFO).

The purpose of this document is to ensure the effective and efficient day-to-day management of the Council's functions, while enabling the Clerk to act within clearly defined parameters of authority.

This Scheme should be read in conjunction with the Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Code of Conduct, and all other relevant policies and procedures.

Ultimate responsibility for all decisions rests with the Full Council, which may at any time amend, withdraw, or review this Scheme.

2. General Principles

- The Clerk is authorised to take all necessary actions to implement decisions of the Council and its Committees, in accordance with approved policies, procedures, and budgets.
- The Clerk shall act on behalf of the Council in all matters of an administrative or urgent nature, ensuring that the business of the Council continues efficiently between meetings.
- Any action taken under delegated authority shall be reported to the next available meeting of the Council or relevant Committee.
- The Clerk may delegate specific tasks to other officers under their management, while retaining overall accountability.

3. Proper Officer Functions

The Clerk is the Proper Officer of the Council and is authorised to:

- Sign and serve on behalf of the Council any notices, summonses, agendas, or other documents required by law.
- Receive declarations of acceptance of office and notifications of disclosable pecuniary interests.
- Advise Members on statutory and procedural requirements governing meetings to ensure lawful decision-making.
- Prepare and issue agendas and minutes for Council and Committee meetings.
- Convene meetings of the Council, its Committees, or Sub-Committees as required by Standing Orders.

- Certify copies of bylaws, minutes, resolutions, and other Council documents.
- Act as the Council's principal point of contact for correspondence and information requests.
- Manage the lawful execution of all contracts, leases, and agreements.
- Manage compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Data Protection Act 2018, and associated legislation.

4. Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) Functions

As Responsible Financial Officer, the Clerk shall have overall responsibility for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs and is authorised to:

- Maintain the Council's accounting records in compliance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations and Financial Regulations.
- Prepare and present annual budgets, forecasts, and financial reports to Council.
- Authorise expenditure and income within the approved budget.
- Manage banking arrangements and sign cheques or authorise electronic payments as one of the approved signatories.
- Ensure adequate systems of internal control and audit.
- Prepare the annual accounts and Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for Council approval.
- Manage cash flow, investments, and insurance cover.
- Submit VAT returns and maintain HMRC compliance.
- Maintain a register of assets and ensure risk management processes are in place.
- Apply for and manage grant funding on behalf of the Council.

5. Staffing and Employment

The Clerk shall have delegated authority to:

- Manage all Council staff, including recruitment (where approved), training, appraisal, and discipline in accordance with Council policies.
- Approve staff annual leave, sickness, and absences within policy limits.
- Implement changes to staff roles or working arrangements within agreed budgets.

- Take action on disciplinary or grievance matters in line with Council procedures, reporting to the relevant Committee as required.
- Commission staff training and development within the approved training budget.

6. Asset, Property, and Land Management

The Clerk is authorised to:

- Manage and maintain all Council-owned property, assets, and land within the approved budget.
- Approve routine repairs and maintenance to buildings, land, and equipment.
- Arrange inspections and servicing of Council assets and facilities.
- Let or hire out Council facilities in accordance with approved fees and conditions.
- Commission professional advice or contractors for specialist works where expenditure is within budget or agreed thresholds.

7. Project and Service Delivery

The Clerk shall have authority to:

- Implement and manage projects approved by Council or its Committees.
- Manage consultation, procurement, and delivery of contracts in compliance with law and policy.
- Take operational decisions necessary for efficient service delivery.
- Develop partnerships with local authorities, agencies, and community groups in support of Council objectives.

8. Civic and Community Engagement

The Clerk shall:

- Support the Chairman and Councillors in delivering civic and ceremonial duties.
- Coordinate community events and represent the Council at meetings and forums.
- Manage communications and media relations on behalf of the Council.
- Respond to correspondence and public enquiries promptly and professionally.

9. Emergency and Urgent Decisions

- The Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman (or Vice Chairman), is authorised to take any necessary action to protect the interests of the Council or the community in cases of emergency or urgency.
- Any such action must be reported to the next meeting of the Council or relevant Committee.

10. Financial Limits and Procurement Thresholds

Type of Authority	Delegated Limit
Expenditure within approved budget	Up to £1,500 per item
Urgent or emergency expenditure (with Chairman’s consent)	Up to £2,000
Procurement – obtain 3 quotations	£5,001 – £25,000
Tenders – formal tender process required	Above £25,000

All procurement must comply with the Council’s Financial Regulations.

11. Reporting and Review

- The Clerk shall provide regular reports to Council and Committees on actions taken under delegated powers.
- This Scheme of Delegation shall be reviewed annually, or sooner if required.