

Committee:	Governance Audit and Performance Committee	Date:	Wednesday
Title:	Planning Committee Working Group Recommended changes to the constitution		30 March 2022
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Summary

1. On 07 December Full Council agreed to set up a Planning Committee Working Group (PCWG).
2. The working group was established in order to take responsibility for implementing of some of the recommended actions in the East of England Local Government Association (EELGA) Peer Review of Planning. The specific areas of focus are Member Development (related to planning) and Planning Committee.
3. The working group had meetings on meetings on 16/12/21, 17/02/22, 02/03/22 and 23/03/22. They specifically discussed and considered reports about changes to the Call in protocol for planning applications, Member Training requirements for Planning Committee, Amendments to the Constitution relating to Planning and the Scheme of Delegation and Changes to the Protocol for Public Speaking. The reports and minutes are public documents and there is a link in the background paper section to this report to that part of the UDC website where these documents are available to inspect.
4. The group have been mindful of the recommendations in the PEER Review report and have sought to improve the functionality of the Planning Committee and support timely decision making.
5. It should be noted that this is one strand of the work that the group is doing. They are continuing to meet and follow up and implement the pathway actions from the PEER review.
6. In relation to Recommendation 1, there is one change to the call in protocol. The working group agreed that in order to support officers with achieving the statutory deadlines for determination of applications the time for a request for an application to be called to planning committee should reduce from 5 weeks to 4 weeks. This would still allow for the 3 week publicity to expire and give time for Cllrs to consider whether to exercise their call in.
7. In relation to Recommendation 2, the working group has considered whether to agree a wording change to introduce a requirement that Cllrs who wish to sit on Planning Committee should attend a mandatory training session. The current wording which introduces the mandatory element of training also

balances this with a requirement that training is offered on a more regular basis during the year and that the programme of training would be in agreement with the Chair of Planning.

- 8 In relation to Recommendation 3. the working group considered the existing scheme of delegation and received two reports about it. There are five changes that have been agreed. All of the changes are intended to increase the efficiency of the authority in dealing with minor applications and remove small applications from the agenda which do not need to be on the agenda.
- 9 In relation to Recommendation 4. the working group in considering any changes to the Protocol for Public Speaking were very mindful that the Protocol had been recently updated in 2020. Therefore, there is only one change. This change was considered to be sensible and part of best practice of and best practice. The change removes the right of an applicant to speak at Planning Committee where there is a recommendation for approval and there are no speakers against the recommendation for approval

Recommendations

- 10 **Recommendation 1.** To recommend to Full Council that the changes to the call in protocol (exact wording) as set out in Appendix 1 should be agreed as changes to the constitution.
- 11 **Recommendation 2** To recommend to Full Council that the changes to Member Training Requirements (exact wording) as set out at Appendix 2 should be agreed as changes to the constitution.
- 12 **Recommendation 3** To recommend to Full Council that the changes relating to Planning and the Scheme of Delegation (exact wording) as set out in Appendix 3 should be agreed as changes to the constitution.
- 13 **Recommendation 4** To recommend to Full Council that the changes to the Protocol for Public speaking (exact wording) as set out in Appendix 4 should be agreed as changes to the constitution.

Financial Implications

- 14 None

Background Papers

- 15 Agendas, reports and minutes of the [Planning Committee Working Group](#) are publicly available on the UDC website.

Impact

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Communication/Consultation	A briefing note for Councillors will be organised should the recommendations be
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	agreed by Full Council in April
Community Safety	None identified
Equalities	None identified
Health and Safety	None identified
Human Rights/Legal Implications	None identified
Sustainability	None identified
Ward-specific impacts	
Workforce/Workplace	None identified

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Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
<p>There are limited risks associated with the changes to the constitution recommended in this report Risk.</p> <p>The actions and work of the group flows from recommendations following a PEER Review of the Local Planning Authority</p>	1	2	<p>The working group continues to be operational and is committed to continuous improvement and especially during a time of hybrid working wants to make changes to ways of working for the Committee. Any consequences of the changes to the constitution can be reviews by the group</p>

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.