



REPORT of PERFORMANCE, GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT WORKING GROUP

**to
PERFORMANCE, GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE
13 NOVEMBER 2025**

PLANNING COMMITTEES REVIEW

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To review planning committee arrangements in light of the Planning and Infrastructure Bill.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

To the Council:

- (i) That the Terms of Reference for a single Planning Committee are adopted as at **APPENDIX A** with a suggested implementation date of the Statutory Annual Council meeting on 14 May 2026;
- (ii) That the public speaking protocol at **APPENDIX B** is adopted as a way to help continue Ward Member roles in planning decisions to come into effect from the date that the number of members on the committee number reduce to less than 31 either by a decision of Council or by legislation.
- (iii) That three weekly Planning Committee meetings, starting at 7pm are included as part of the 2026 / 27 Schedule of Meetings.

3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 As part of the Planning and Infrastructure Bill (the Bill), it is expected that Area Planning Committees will be removed from legislation. As of 21 of October 2025, the Bill is at report stage in the House of Lords [Planning and Infrastructure Bill Stages - Parliamentary Bills - UK Parliament](#)
- 3.2 In order that the Council is prepared for this work, the Performance, Governance and Audit Working Group (the Working Group) has reviewed officer timetables and options for being 'legislation ready' ahead of the next Statutory Annual meeting of the Council on 14 May 2026.
- 3.3 Although the Council could wait until the law is enforced, there is a lot of operational work to constitute and schedule planning committee meetings and overlapping work with the sign off of the Committee Schedule for 2026/27 for example. Officer recommendation to avoid disruption to the planning process delivery is that we should seek to move to a form of single planning committee as part of the 2026 May Statutory Annual process.
- 3.4 The Working Group has reviewed options for this, including a full implementation of the Bill proposals and removal of the call in process accordingly. Another option

reviewed is to combine planning committee terms of reference as they currently sit, but into one singular committee. The preferred recommendation of the Working Group, attached at **APPENDIX A** is that One Planning Committee of all 31 Members is first established

- 3.5 Once the legislation is enacted, a further update to this committee terms of reference and member numbers will need to be implemented. The public speaking protocol updates suggested at **APPENDIX B** are suggested to be implemented when this legislation reduces committee size number, to allow for a role of the Ward Members.
- 3.6 The Working Group has also recommended that the Planning Committee could be scheduled every three weeks and starting from 7pm to allow for the possibility of more agenda items. This is suggested to the Council, who consider the schedule of meetings.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The Performance, Governance and Audit Committee is asked to review the recommendations of the Working Group, so that the proposal for a single planning committee can be referred to the Council.

5. IMPACT ON PRIORITIES AS SET OUT IN THE CORPORATE PLAN 2025 - 2028

5.1 Delivering good quality services

- 5.1.1 Addressing upcoming planning legislation changes ahead of the statutory annual Council reset means that a disruption to planning service delivery is less likely.

6. IMPLICATIONS

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – Addressing upcoming planning legislation changes ahead of the statutory annual Council reset means that a disruption to planning service delivery is less likely.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – There is a perception that local area representation may be reduced in removing Area Planning Committees. The suggested updates to the public speaking protocol allow for additional ward member representation where they may not sit on the Planning Committee.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk (including Fraud implications)** – None.
- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – None.
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – To implement the changes in year will have a significant impact on teams responsible for the planning process and committee management and delivery.
- (vi) **Impact on Devolution / Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)** – None.

Background Papers: None.

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