



**REPORT of
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**to
COUNCIL
21 DECEMBER 2017**

**COMMITTEE STRUCTURE REVIEW – PROPOSED CONSEQUENTIAL
CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES**

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To receive for approval and adoption a proposed consequential change to the Council’s constitutional documentation as a result of a decision taken by the Council at its last meeting.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Council approves the proposed change to the Terms of Reference of the Area Planning Committees as set out in **APPENDIX A** to this report.

3. AREA FOR DECISION / ACTION

- 3.1 At the last meeting of the Council, a number of decisions were taken in relation to committee processes. One decision was, in relation to the determination of planning applications, that the ‘Parish Trigger’ be discontinued and replaced by a revised Member call-in facility. This change impacts on the Terms of Reference of the Area Planning Committees, and the proposed consequential changes are set out in **APPENDIX A** to this report. The changes reflect the shift in emphasis from a Ward Member call-in to a Member call-in linked to groupings of Parishes with Area Planning Committee areas. For Wards within Maldon, Heybridge and Burnham-on-Crouch there is no change.
- 3.2 It is proposed that the particular Term of Reference simply refers the call-in procedure which will be reproduced as an annexe to the Terms of Reference. The procedure includes the notes set out under the existing Term of Reference.
- 3.3 Another decision taken at the last meeting was to introduce mandatory training to all Area Planning Committee members, which means all Members of the Council. It was considered essential for all Members to have up to date knowledge and training for them to be confident in their role as decision makers. Due to the significant responsibility and complexities of planning law it is recommended that a regular programme of mandatory training is delivered to all Members for their roles on the Area Planning Committees.

- 3.4 This decision gives strength and direction to what is included in the Planning Guidance document being separately recommended (by the Planning and Licensing Committee) to the Council for approval and adoption, along with some other associated consequential changes to constitutional documentation.
- 3.5 It was agreed that the mandatory training shall be provided to all Area Planning Committee members no later than the Statutory Annual meeting of the Council in May 2018. The mandatory training Programme will be compiled by the Director of Planning and Regulatory Services in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader and Chairman of Planning and Licensing. The programme will be delivered to an agreed timetable which will provide a number of opportunities for members to undertake the required training.

4. IMPACT ON CORPORATE GOALS

- 4.1 The updating of the corporate governance and associated arrangements underpins the decision making processes of the Council, is in part a matter of compliance with the law and is also linked to the Corporate Goal of aiming to be an organisation that delivers good quality cost effective and valued services in a transparent way.

5. IMPLICATIONS

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – It is important that the Council is able openly to explain, through well-presented and user-friendly constitutional documentation, the way in which it is set up and operates, and how it conducts its business. It is important that the Council’s procedures are seen as open and transparent.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – None.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk** – None.
- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – None.
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – None.
- (vi) **Impact on the Environment** – None.

Background Papers: None.

Enquiries to: Stuart Jennings, Corporate Governance Project Officer (Tel: 01621 875745).