



To:
All members of the
Members' Code of Conduct Committee

Please reply to:
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Date: 27 January 2020

Supplementary Agenda

Members' Code of Conduct Committee - Thursday, 30 January 2020

Dear Councillor,

I enclose the following items which were marked 'to follow' on the agenda for the Members' Code of Conduct Committee meeting to be held on Thursday, 30 January 2020:

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| 4. Review of Planning Code | 3 - 14 |
| To consider proposed changes to the Planning Code. | |
| 5. Substitutions Policy | 15 - 20 |
| To consider a report on a Substitutions Policy. | |

Yours sincerely

Gillian Scott
Corporate Governance

To the members of the Members' Code of Conduct Committee

Councillors:

Mr Murray Litvak (Chairman)	J.T.F. Doran	V.J. Leighton
C.F. Barnard	R.D. Dunn	R.W. Sider BEM
C. Bateson	A.C. Harman	R.A. Smith-Ainsley

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Report to: Members' Code of Conduct Committee

From: Monitoring Officer

Meeting: 30 January 2020

Possible Amendments to the Planning Code

At your meeting on 24 September 2019 there was a discussion on the possible amendments required to the Planning Code. There were discussions between officers and members on some of the current issues arising from recent cases.

A document was considered on 27 November 2020. A number of changes were suggested.

The document attached has been updated with the changes and this is now the document which is proposed to proceed to Council for recommendation.

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PLANNING CODE

Introduction

1. The purpose of this Code is to give clear guidance to all councillors about how they should carry out their duties in relation to planning and development proposals so as to ensure openness, impartiality, transparency and consistency in planning decisions.

General Role of Councillors

2. Councillors have a special duty to their ward constituents, including those who did not vote for them, but their overriding duty is to the whole community. Whilst representing their constituents on planning issues and taking account of their views, councillors must make their decision within the statutory planning framework and base these on material planning considerations and what they believe is best for the Borough as a whole. A councillor is not under any obligation to represent a resident on a specific planning application if, in the opinion of the councillor, there are no issues which have wider significance for the neighbourhood, ward or Borough as a whole.

General Role of Staff

3. Staff are responsible to the Council as a whole. They must always act openly and impartially and provide consistent professional advice based on the statutory planning framework, planning policies and procedures, ensuring councillors are aware of all relevant material planning considerations before decisions are made.

Codes of Conduct

4. Both councillors and staff are required to observe codes of conduct and statutory provisions ~~including the code of conduct for Members,~~ the aim of which is to ensure the integrity of the Council and individual councillors. These codes and procedures require the open disclosure of any pecuniary, non-pecuniary and conflict of interests in ~~issues-matters~~ being considered by the Council or its committees. Councillors and staff are also advised not to accept any gifts or hospitality, which might reasonably be considered to influence their judgement and to record any they do accept in the registers maintained for the purpose. Planning decisions in particular can affect the daily lives of everyone and it is important to ensure there can be no justifiable grounds for suggesting a decision has been biased or influenced in any way.
5. Training and guidance on the ~~code, and in particular the local eC~~Code of eConduct for Members on the declaration of interests, ~~has been~~is provided to all councillors following their election by the Council's Monitoring Officer and will be regularly updated. Members of the Planning Committee must be particularly careful to ensure that they are familiar with this. It is the personal responsibility of individual councillors to ensure they comply with the code and make all appropriate declarations at Planning Committee. If in any doubt they should seek advice from the Monitoring Officer or the solicitor to the Planning Committee. Staff with an interest in property in the vicinity of an application or

any relationship to an applicant, should disclose this to the Planning Development Manager, who will record the interest and make appropriate arrangements for the handling and supervision of the application to avoid any perception of a conflict of interest.

Lobbying of and by Councillors

6. Lobbying of councillors for or against proposals is a normal part of the planning process. The rules of natural justice mean that planning applications should be determined in an open and fair manner and taking account of relevant information and arguments. It is only at Planning Committee meetings that councillors will have, and be able to consider, all the relevant information and arguments about an application before making a decision.
7. Councillors should feel free to engage in free and frank discussion about all aspects of planning applications in advance of the Committee. Councillors may have strong views on a proposed decision, and may have expressed those views in public, and still participate in a decision. However, it is important to maintain the integrity of individual councillors and the Council as a whole that Members of the Planning Committee should:-
 - a) if lobbied, explain that, whilst they can listen to what is said, they cannot indicate before the relevant Committee meeting which way they intend to vote as it would prejudice their impartiality;
 - b) preface any discussion on a planning application to make it clear from the outset that discussions are not binding- and they will only be able to make a final decision at the Committee after hearing all relevant information and arguments;
 - c) declare at the Committee meeting, any ~~meetings-contact~~ they have had with applicants or objectors;
 - d) advise Planning Officers of letters/personal lobbying in relation to applications so the issues raised can be taken into account in the professional advice given to the Planning Committee-;
 - e) abide by the guidance in this Code with relation to site visits;
 - f) not organise support or opposition to any planning application, lobby other councillors or put pressure on staff for a particular recommendation because this might remove them from the decision making process.
8. Councillors are encouraged to be responsive to all residents about planning matters. Frequently, applications are daunting for residents who need advice and support about the issues which they raise. All councillors are able to have discussions with residents about planning applications even if that councillor is on Planning Committee.

Declarations of interest

9. If a councillor has received legal advice with regard to a declaration: a ~~D~~disclosable pecuniary interest, non-pecuniary or conflict of interest, then he / she may disclose the fact that legal advice has been given at the time when the declaration or interest is disclosed.

Predetermination and Predisposition

Predisposition

10. Predisposition is lawful. Councillors may have strong views on a proposed decision, and may have expressed those views in public, and still participate in a decision. The key issue is that the councillor ensures that their predisposition does not prevent them from consideration of all the other factors that are relevant to a decision, such as committee reports, supporting documents and the views of objectors. In other words, the councillor retains an “open mind”.
11. Section 25 of the Localism Act 2011 confirms this position by providing that a decision will not be unlawful because of an allegation of bias or predetermination “just because” a councillor has done anything that would indicate what view they may take in relation to a matter relevant to a decision. However, if a councillor has done something more than indicate a view on a decision, this may be unlawful bias or predetermination so it is important that advice is sought from the Head of Corporate Governance where this may be the case.

Pre-determination / Bias

12. Predetermination and bias are unlawful and can make a decision unlawful. Predetermination means having a “closed mind”. In other words, a councillor has made his/her mind up on a decision before considering or hearing all the relevant evidence.
13. Bias can also arise from a councillor’s relationships or interests, as well as their state of mind. The Code of Conduct’s requirement to declare interests and withdraw from meetings prevents most obvious forms of bias, e.g. not deciding your own planning application. However, councillors may also consider that a “non-pecuniary interest” or Conflict of Interest under the Code of Conduct also gives rise to a risk of what is called apparent bias. The legal test is: “whether the fair-minded and informed observer, having considered the facts, would conclude that there was a real possibility that the Committee was biased”. A fair minded observer takes an objective and balanced view of the situation but councillors who think that they have a relationship or interest that may raise a possibility of bias, should seek advice.
14. Members of the Planning Committee should bear in mind that it would not be appropriate to call-in an application, for consideration for the whole committee if they have already predetermined the matter themselves.

Meetings and pre-application discussions

15. Planning staff frequently hold meetings or have correspondence with applicants to give pre-application advice on their development ideas. Such advice will cover general planning policy ~~applying applicable~~ to a site, technical design and other requirements and the likelihood of a development being acceptable. Such pre-application advice, ~~however, it~~ is given is on a confidential basis so as to encourage early contact with the Council. ~~This early contact which~~ can assist in better planning proposals coming forward, or ideas which have no hope of being acceptable ~~in principle~~ being abandoned at an early stage.
16. These meetings or exchanges of correspondence are part of the normal planning process but are, and must be clearly stated to be, without prejudice to

the professional recommendation of Planning ~~staff officers~~ to the Committee and the decision of the Committee when all information is before it.

17. All applicants are encouraged to carry out pre-application consultation with neighbours to try and resolve issues at an early stage. For larger schemes this may be a more formal public consultation. Where councillors attend such pre-application consultation meetings run by the ~~potential~~ applicant they should abide by the guidance in this Code. The expectation is that where councillors are invited to attend that the applicant invites all ~~W~~ward ~~C~~councillors.
18. It is important that councillors do not give views to potential applicants either through pre-application consultations or other meetings that could be interpreted by them as giving planning advice and in turn taken as implied support for a proposal if those views are then followed.
19. If a councillor wishes to arrange a meeting with planning staff for themselves and a small number of constituents about a planning application this will be arranged at the Council Offices. If requested to do so staff will try to attend meetings arranged by councillors with their constituents away from Knowle Green provided all ~~w~~Ward ~~C~~councillors are invited to attend.
20. If attending public meetings arranged by local groups about a planning proposal the principles outlined above should be followed and, councillors of the Planning Committee should try to maintain an impartial role, listening to what is said but not expressing any opinion which could be construed as a final or fixed position. Planning Officers will not normally attend public meetings unless their attendance has been agreed by the Planning Development Manager and representatives of both the applicant and objector are given the opportunity to be present. Ward ~~C~~councillors and the Chairman of the Planning Committee will be advised of any public meeting in relation to a planning issue or which Planning Officers have agreed to attend.

Presentations on Likely Major Development Proposals

21. For ~~very~~ large ~~or~~ complex schemes, the Council may arrange appropriate presentations to Councillors by the ~~potential~~ applicant. This is seen as beneficial to inform councillors at an early stage and to encourage pre-application discussion and free flow of information on what are often ~~complex-controversial~~ issues. The Council itself will also organise presentations to keep councillors informed generally on matters which appear to have or are likely to have strategic importance for the Borough. The Planning Development Manager may also organise technical briefings on major developments at which developers may be present. At any such presentations, councillors should abide by the guidance in this Code, listening to presentations, raising concerns and questions, debating the issues but not coming to fixed or final positions in advance of the full debate at Planning Committee.

Site Visits

22. Formal site visits by the Planning Committee are rare because of the amount of material, including plans and photographs submitted with planning applications included in the Planning Committee agenda and presented at Planning Committee. Where they do occur they must be undertaken in accordance with the guidelines attached at **Appendix 'A'**. The necessity for such a visit will be agreed between the Chairman of the Committee and the Planning Development

Planning Code

Updated: 23/06/17

Manager- in advance. Ward Councillors who are not members of the Committee will be advised of any site visit and invited to attend. Members of the Planning Committee will often wish to make informal visits to an application site prior to Planning Committee to familiarise themselves with the context of the proposal. Such visits are encouraged. Please note that councillors have no right of entry to the application site. Provided that no other persons are present then councillors do not need to declare such a visit at Planning Committee. If other people are present at the site visit (e.g. applicant or objector) then councillors should have regard to the advice in paragraph 7 (lobbying) and are advised to declare such a visit at Committee before consideration of the item.

Planning Officer Reports to Committee

23. All matters requiring a decision by the Planning Committee must be the subject of a written report from Planning Officers which will give an accurate summary of all relevant planning issues. In particular it should include a clear outline of the site history, the relevant development plan policies, the response of consultees and the substance of objections. The report will include a clear recommendation with a technical appraisal justifying it. Any objections or other relevant issues arising after the report is printed will be reported verbally to the Committee at its meeting.

Procedure at Committee Meetings

24. Applicants and objectors will be able to address the Planning Committee in accordance with the protocol attached at **Appendix 'B'**. Further information on how to ask to speak at the Committee and the issues that can be covered are set out in the Planning pages of the Council's website.
25. Where there are major applications which require special consideration because of the large number of people wishing to speak, then the Chairman may, in his or her discretion, make provision for public speaking rights in excess of the usual procedure. The Chairman will be guided by the need to ensure overall fairness in the proceedings within the constraints of the time allowed in the meeting.
26. Where councillors who are not members of the Planning Committee have indicated to the Chairman, prior to a Committee meeting, their wish to speak on a matter in their ward being considered at the Committee, they will be entitled to speak immediately after representatives of the applicant and/or objectors have addressed the Committee. Non-members of the Committee should comply with the procedure for declaration of interests and contact with the applicant or objectors if they attend and speak at a Committee meeting in the same way as members of the Committee.

Ward Councillors may wish to address Planning Committee on:

- Applications which have caused interest amongst large numbers of residents of the Ward
- Applications which have significance for the character, facilities or environment of the Ward.

Ward Councillors should not usually seek to address Planning Committee on:

- Matters which are the subject of a dispute between two residents of the ~~W~~ward
- Matters which reflect the concerns of one resident only, unless there is some reason why the resident is not able to speak for himself at the Planning Committee.

Call-in procedure

27. Councillors must take the following into account before 'calling-in' a planning application for consideration by the Planning Committee:

- a) Subject to the terms of reference of the Planning Committee and these rules a planning application other than those identified in the weekly Planning Publicity Schedule can be called in by a Councillor for determination by the Committee;
- ~~b)~~ A councillor may only call-in an application which is in his or her ward. If the councillor considers that there is a matter of public interest arising in an application situated in another ward then early contact should be made with the relevant ward councillors;
- ~~b)c)~~ The guiding principle of 'Call-In' is that there is a wider public interest in the application being considered by the Committee. A wider public interest could include an effect on the street, the ward or the Borough but it must be more than a dispute between neighbours; ;
- ~~e)d)~~ Prior to a ~~c~~Councillor calling in an application he/she must inspect the submitted plans and is advised to discuss the application with the relevant case/planning officer;:-
- ~~d)e)~~ The 'call-in' will be activated by an email to the Planning Development Manager **and** the case officer which must give a justifiable planning reason why it should be determined by the Committee. In exceptional cases, the call-in can be made by phone provided it is then followed up with an email;
- ~~f)~~ The email or phone call must be received by Planning Officers no later than one day after the end of the public consultation period for that application. The date of which is set out on the weekly Publicity ~~S~~schedule in which it was publicised;:-
- ~~e)g)~~ Where no justifiable planning reason appears to have been provided by the councillor, or the Planning Development Manager does not agree with the planning reason submitted by the councillor, then the Planning Development Manager may refer the item to the Planning Committee Chairman for decision. After consultation with the councillor and the Planning Development Manager, the Chairman will decide if there is a public interest in the matter being heard by Committee;
- ~~f)h)~~ The Committee report will identify the ~~c~~Councillor who called in the application along with the reason given;:-
- ~~g)i)~~ Councillors who 'call-in' an application are expected to attend and speak at the Planning Committee setting out their concerns and issues. This will inform the general debate of the committee.

h)j) If the Councillors are unable to attend for any reason, they should send a statement to the Chairman setting out their issues and concerns so that they can be read out at the committee meeting.

i)k) Where the councillor who 'Called-in' an application is a member of the Planning Committee, that councillor will be given 3 minutes to speak following the public speakers and may then speak again as a member of the Committee during its debate on the item.

Call-over

28. The Council will organise a meeting immediately prior to the Planning Committee (a "Call-Over") which will deal with the following administrative matters for the Committee:

Any ~~W~~ward ~~C~~councillor speaking who is not a member of the Committee

Public ~~S~~speakers

Declarations of ~~i~~interests

Late ~~Information~~information

Withdrawals

Recommendations to defer

Changes to planning conditions, informatives or reasons for refusal; or any other procedural issues which in the opinion of the Chairman ought to be dealt with in advance of the meeting.

29. The Call-Over will be organised by staff who will be present. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, the meeting will be in the same room planned for the Committee. The Planning Committee Chairman will preside at the Call-Over. The Call-Over will take place in public and staff will advise the public of the proceedings at the meeting. Public speaking at the Call-Over either in answer to the Chairman's questions or otherwise will be at the sole discretion of the Chairman and his ruling on all administrative matters for the Committee will be final.

30. Councillors should not seek to discuss the merits of a planning application or any other material aspect of an application during the Call-Over.

Decision Making

31. A decision on a planning application cannot occur before the Committee meeting when all available information is to hand. All Councillors should bear in mind the need to keep an open mind about all the available evidence on a planning application.

32. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. If the Planning Officer's report recommends a departure from the development plan the justification for this must be included in the report.

33. Decisions must be made on planning merits and the reasons for making a decision should be clear and supported by material planning considerations.

The reasons for refusing an application should always be minuted as should any conditions attached to an approval.

34. Members of the Planning Committee who require information which is not contained within the Planning Committee report should request this in writing to the Planning Development Manager, one working day before the Committee meeting.

34.35. If the Committee wishes to make a decision contrary to the Planning Officers' advice, a member of Planning staff present at the meeting should be given the opportunity to explain the implications of such a decision. If the Committee wish to refuse an application the reasons for doing so must be clear, cogent and precise-comprehensive. They must also be and based on planning policies and provide a clear account of members' rationale for not accepting the Officer's recommendation. Similarly, any additional planning conditions must be properly justified and expressed. The decision and reasons for it as agreed by the Committee must be minuted.

36. Members of the Planning Committee who wish-are minded to propose an outcome against Planning Officer advice should first seek advice from the Planning Development Manager at the earliest opportunity and prior to the application being determined at a Planning Committee. Any motion contrary to Planning Officer advice should-must be formulated in writing with material planning reasons which can be handed up to the Chairman. Councillors should note the legal requirement be prepared to explain in full their material planning reasons for not agreeing with the Planning Officer's recommendation. Councillors should not rely on staff to produce the material planning reasons for their motion at the meeting.

37. The purpose of the Planning Committee meeting is to fully explore all matters and concerns of councillors pertaining to an application before a decision is made. Councillors should therefore prepare in advance of the meeting by making notes of concerns and matters which they will seek to raise in the Committee. Where a councillor decides to vote against a recommendation this should only arise once:

(a) the concerns have been articulated by the councillor to allow other members of the Committee to comment on them and Officers to advise on them, or,

(b) where another member has spoken in the debate and articulated those concerns and the councillor concerned has indicated that he or she is of the same mind as that councillor.

38. Where a member has not spoken in a debate and then votes against a recommendation then the Planning Committee Chairman may ask that member for an explanation. That explanation will be provided forthwith and recorded in the minutes. Where that explanation reveals that the decision was made on factors other than material planning considerations then the Planning Committee Chairman will be entitled to (i) reopen the matter, (ii) ask the Officer to advise (iii) invite the Committee to comment and (iv) put the matter to the vote once again.

~~35-39. Where there is a split decision and a member votes contrary to recommendation (as outlined in paragraph 38 above) then the Chairman may make such enquiries before he or she exercises a second or casting vote.~~

~~40. Members of the Planning Committee who require information which is not contained within the Planning Committee report should request this in writing to the Planning Development Manager, one working day before the Committee meeting. Members should devote their entire attention during the Planning Committee to the matters which are being presented and debated. It is not acceptable for Planning Committee members to:~~

- ~~• communicate with others via email or social media~~
- ~~• pass notes between each other or engage in private conversations~~
- ~~• undertake unrelated work or reading~~

~~36. Councillors who are predisposed to an outcome opposed to the Planning Officer's recommendation are encouraged to seek advice from Planning Development Manager prior to the meeting.~~

Applications Involving Councillors, Staff or the Council

~~37-41. Any planning application made by a councillor, member of staff or the Council itself should be determined by the Planning Committee and not by the Planning Development Manager- under delegated powers. The exception is for, unless they relate to those types of 'application' which do not relate to judge planning merits but are a legal determination as to whether permission is required or not. This includes are otherwise forms of notification to the Council including that 'permitted development' is proposed under what are called 'prior approval' procedures. —i~~ In these cases the Planning Development Manager will determine the application after discussion with the Chairman of the Planning Committee or, if unavailable, the Vice Chairman.

~~38-42. Members of the Planning Committee and staff should not normally act as agents for another person or body pursuing a planning matter with the Council and, if they do, any planning decision must be made by the Planning Committee and not under delegated powers.~~

~~39-43. Whenever possible a councillor making a planning application should appoint an agent to act on their behalf. The councillor must take no part in making a decision on the application and should leave the room for that item if in attendance.~~

Involvement of Councillors in Appeals

~~40-44. Where a councillor wishes to play a part in any appeal, he/she should seek first the advice of the Planning Development Manager and as a courtesy, inform the relevant ~~W~~ward ~~C~~councillors.~~

Training of Councillors in Planning Issues and Procedures

~~41-45. No councillor should be appointed to the Planning Committee without having agreed to undertake suitable induction training and familiarisation in planning procedures and the Code of Conduct. The Planning Development Manager, with the support of the Monitoring Officer, and after consultation with the Chairman of the Planning Committee, will arrange suitable ongoing~~

opportunities as required and will supplement this with written guidance. It is expected that such induction should take place within three months of appointment to the Committee.

46. The Members' Code of Conduct Committee will keep under review the planning training which has been provided to members of the Planning Committee (and councillors generally in their ward councillor capacity). Where a Committee member has failed to attend a suitable amount of training then the Chairman of the Planning Committee may request the relevant group leader to (a) change the group's representation on the Planning Committee or (b) direct that councillor to attend such further training as may be recommended. In this regard, "suitable" is a matter for the Chairman to decide in his discretion bearing in mind the personal circumstances of the councillor concerned. The Chairman should not exercise this power without prior warning to the councillor concerned and inviting his representations on the matter which should be received in a reasonable time. Where such warnings and requests are made, the Chairman of the Members' Code of Conduct Committee shall be informed in order to keep the training under review as required by this Code.
47. It is also envisaged that all ~~m~~Members of the Council will engage in induction and familiarisation about planning matters and this Planning Code so that as Ward Councillors they can effectively represent residents and promote the interests of the Borough as a whole.
48. As well as arranging formal training sessions, the Planning Development Manager and the Head of Corporate Governance will make available a range of planning materials online so that councillors can learn about planning matters in their own time.

Substitutions to Planning Committee

49. Where the Constitution of the Council allows substitutions to the Planning Committee, any member substituted must demonstrate suitable knowledge and training in order to take up the substitution. In this regard, "suitable" is a matter for the Chairman to decide in his discretion bearing in mind (a) the past experience and training of the councillor concerned and (b) the agenda of the meeting in question and the complexity of matters to be decided.
50. Where any member wishes to substitute on a Planning Committee the following procedure must be adopted:
51. Consultation with the Planning Committee Chairman by the councillor proposing to be absent as soon as possible
- 42:52. Notification of substitution to Committee Services and the Planning Committee Chairman by the proposed substitute, as soon as possible and in any event in advance of the Agenda dispatch

SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS ON PLANNING AND OTHER COMMITTEES

Meeting and Date: Members Code of Conduct Committee 30 January 2020

Report of: Head of Corporate Governance

Purpose of the report: To consider and review the rules governing the arrangements for appointing substitute members on Committees of the Council.

Recommendation: To recommend to Council (via Cabinet) to introduce new arrangements introducing substitutes for committee meetings.

1. Introduction and Background

1.1 The Leader of the Council has requested that a process introducing substitutes for committee meetings be explored.

1.2 Why should the Council have substitutes?

1.2.1 The primary purpose of appointing substitute members is to ensure at a basic level that a committee can achieve a functioning quorum of members in order to transact its business. However, it also serves to preserve the political proportionality of an individual committee which in turn is a reflection of the political proportionality of the authority as a whole.

1.2 What is the constitutional and legal basis for substitutes?

1.2.1. The rules governing the use of substitute members are set out in the Local Government Act 2000.

1.2.2 Members substitution is a process which has been adopted nationally and in some Surrey authorities as it allows members more flexibility in relation to attending meetings and helps underpin the statutory requirement of political proportionality in meetings.

1.3 The Council Procedure Rules could be amended to permit substitutes on all committees other than Cabinet and Council.

1.4 For clarity, this report will refer to members appointed to a committee in the usual way as primary members and refer to members appointed to act as substitute members.

1.5 The process appears to operate best in the following way:

- When primary members are appointed to committees (usually at the annual meeting of the council), a small number of additional councillors are appointed in addition as substitute members.
- If a primary member finds that they are unable to attend a meeting of a committee to which they have been appointed, they can contact any of the substitute members for that committee who are from the same party, and ask them to attend in their place.
- The primary member will then apologise to Committee Services in the usual way and state that he/she has asked a named substitute councillor to attend in their place.

- The named substitute member will then attend the meeting.
- If the primary member then arrives at the meeting after it has started and their substitute member is in attendance as planned, they (the primary member) cannot take part. This ensures that whoever is present (either the primary or substitute member) is party to the consideration of the entire meeting to ensure they have the whole picture when coming to make decisions.

1.6 The idea underpinning the process relates to political representation at meetings and is deemed to be part of the political process rather than part of the administrative process (i.e. it is for members or party whips to ensure that their party is fully represented at meetings of committees rather than officers). As such the responsibility for arranging substitutions and alerting officers in advance of the meeting lies with members and not officers.

1.7 There are several additional aspects of the member substitution arrangements to be considered;

- The law does not permit the use of a formal substitution process for the Licensing Committee or its panels (although the licensing panels are drawn on a case by case basis from the membership of the Licensing Committee so substitutions are not likely to ever be necessary).
- Substitute members are also not permitted on the Members Code of Conduct Committee.
- There is no prohibition on substitutions on other bodies although if there is a requirement for primary members to be trained (e.g. members of the Planning Committee), the substitute members will also need to be appropriately trained to the same level.
- Substitute members have all the powers and duties of any primary ordinary member of the committee but cannot exercise any special powers or duties exercisable by the person they are substituting (e.g. they cannot act as Chairman of a committee if they are substituting for a member who is the Chairman). This precludes any benefit from substitutes being appointed to the Cabinet and those bodies where Cabinet Members are appointed in that capacity as primary members)
- A substitute must be identified by name as replacing a primary member before a meeting.
- A substitute member may only substitute for one member at a meeting (i.e. a councillor may not take the place of two members).
- All substitute members must be elected councillors.
- Some changes to the constitution would be needed to adopt a substitute system as follows:
 - To allow the Council to appoint substitutes;
 - To allow committees to appoint substitutes for sub-committees/panels.
 - Explaining how the substitution system operates.

1.8 There is rarely a need to appoint more than two substitute members per party, although in some councils the same number of substitute members are appointed as there are members of the committee and in the same proportion. This however can be unwieldy and also present problems for parties when making appointments. It also allows for the unsatisfactory possibility of all members of a committee attending a meeting being substitute members.

1.8.1 In practical terms the Planning Committee could have the same number of substitutes as primary members to stop meetings being compromised by members being unable to sit due to conflicts of interests. This would also extend the knowledge of planning matters (as substitute members would need to be trained).

1.9 There is no need for political proportionality in relation to substitution as designated substitute members have no function except when called on to act in place of one of the primary members of a committee which will have primary members allocated to it in accordance with the proportionality rules. It should however be noted that substitutes cannot have a Special Responsibility allowance.

1.10 Members may consider that a substitute system may be useful for some bodies but not for others.

1.11 Some of the advantages of a substitute system are as follows:

- It allows for greater flexibility for member representation.
- It helps ensure that political proportionality is maintained.

1.12 Some of the disadvantages are:

- Members are appointed to a greater number of bodies.
- The existence of a substitution system can weaken a members' connection to the work of a body by making non-attendance easier. This could be a problem for scrutiny panels.

1.13 Members are asked to consider the benefits of introducing a substitute system and to propose a scheme of substitutions to Council (via Cabinet) to agree to introduce the arrangements from the start of the municipal year.

1.12 If Members are inclined to progress the idea, they are asked to express a view the following:

- Whether all formal bodies (except those forbidden by law or for which it would impractical) should be allowed substitutes, or only some (and if so, which)
- Whether a small number of substitutes should be permitted or whether the number of substitutes should equal the number of primary members on the committee.

2. Key Implications

2.1 The proposed change may be useful in giving members greater flexibility in relation to member representation at meetings.

3. Financial Details

3.1 The proposals have no cost implications.

4. Legal Details

4.1 These are incorporated into the body of the report.

5. Risk Management

There is no risk attached to these proposals except as identified in the body of the report.

6. Links to Council Priorities

6.1 The proposals may add to the efficient running of the Council and may support the Council's priorities.

7. Equalities, Human Rights considerations

7.1 There are no implications in relation to equalities and human rights.

8. Staffing implications:

8.1 There are no implications in relation to staffing.

9 Any Other Implications

9.1 There are no further implications.

10. Timetable for Implementation

10.1 If the Council agrees the proposals, they would be most suitably implemented from the start of the new municipal year.

11. Identification of Options

11.1 In reviewing the rules governing the limit on the number of substitute members that can be appointed to any given Committee, Sub-Committee or Working Group it is clear that any change to the existing arrangement must achieve a sensible, legal, transparent and workable arrangement. To that end it is suggested that any change to the rules governing the use of substitute members could be subject to review by the Members Code of Conduct Committee after a period of 12 months.

11.2 In addition, nothing in this report would change the requirement for Members to provide notice (either oral or in writing) to the Committee Services Officer named on the agenda of a substitution prior to the start of the meeting or allow such notice to be revoked in respect of a meeting.

12 Evaluation of Options

12.1 There are 3 options open to Members in respect of the arrangements governing the substitutes for Committees.

12.2 **Option 1** – To make no change to the existing arrangements governing the appointment of substitute members. This is not the recommended option as it does not increase flexibility.

12.3 **Option 2** – To make no limitation in the number of substitutes to allow the same number of substitutes in respect of each political group as that group holds ordinary a Committee (i.e. excluding Cabinet), while still keeping the requirement that to be eligible to substitute a member must have undergone training for those committees and that this should be a constitutional that requirement.

12.4 **Option 3** – To determine a different limit for all committees or for individual committees. It should be noted that if different limits were to be favoured for each type of committee it is likely to make them administratively cumbersome to support and potentially confusing to Members.

11. Background Information

11.1 There is no background information and no background papers in relation to this report.

APPENDIX

DRAFT APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS OF COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES AND PANELS/GROUPS

(1) A full member of a Committee or Sub-Committee or Panel/Group who is unable to attend a meeting and wishes a substitute member to attend the meeting in his/her place, shall make the necessary arrangements with any other member of his/her political group and shall either give, or arrange for the nominated substitute member or any other member of his/her political group, to give notice of the substitution before the time when the meeting is to commence, either in written or oral form to the Committee Officer named on the agenda.

(2) Neither the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Council nor any member of the Cabinet shall act as Substitutes for any member of any Scrutiny Committee.

(3) In no case shall the number of Substitute Members appointed by a political group to a Committee or Sub-Committee or Panel/Group exceed one third of the number of seats allocated to the political group calculated to the nearest whole number save that each political group shall have the right to appoint at least one Substitute Member in all cases.

(4) The effect of a valid notice of substitution (whether written or oral) shall be that the full member shall cease to be a member of the Committee or Sub-Committee or Panel/Group (as the case may be) for the duration of that meeting (and for the duration of any adjournment of that meeting) and that the substitute member shall be a full member of the Committee or Sub-Committee or Panel/Group (as the case may be) for the same period; and that the full member shall resume membership of that Committee or Sub-Committee or Panel/Group after the conclusion of that meeting (including any adjournment thereof).

(5) A valid notice of substitution (whether written or oral) once given in respect of a meeting of a Committee or Sub-Committee or Panel/Group may not be revoked in respect of such meeting or any adjournment of it.

(6) The Committee Officer (or his/her representative) shall announce the appointment of any substitute members made in accordance with this Standing Order at the commencement of the meeting.

(7) In the event of the Chairman of a Committee or Sub-Committee or Panel/Group being absent and appointing a substitute member to attend in his/her place, the substitute member may only act as an ordinary member and will not assume any rights of the full member to act as Chairman (and in such event the normal rules as to the Vice-Chairman taking the chair will apply). In the absence of both the Chairman and Vice-Chairman from a meeting (and the appointment of substitute members to attend in their place) the meeting shall appoint a Chairman for the meeting who may be drawn from any members (including any substitute member) present and with voting rights.

(8) Only members who have received the appropriate recent training may be appointed to act as substitutes on the Planning Committee.