

Planning Committee Training

Final Decision-Maker	Planning Committee
Lead Head of Service	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
Lead Officer and Report Author	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All
Recommendation	Approval of proposed training programme for Planning Committee Members and Substitute Members

Executive Summary

This report outlines a proposed training programme for Planning Committee Members and Substitute Members to ensure compliance with the Council's Constitution through knowledge and understanding of relevant local and national planning policies and legislation.

The report also strongly recommends attendance at a programme of optional training for Planning Committee Members and Substitute Members to facilitate their planning knowledge while serving on or supporting the Committee.

Purpose of Report

To agree the training requirements for Planning Committee Members and Substitutes for this municipal year.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the Training Programme set out in **Appendix 1** be approved.
2. That the following Members:
 - new Planning Committee Members
 - new Substitute Members (or Members who are likely to substitute at Planning Committee for the first time should the Council amend the Constitution) and
 - those Planning Committee Members and Substitute Members returning to the Committee after a break (or Members who are likely to substitute at Planning Committee after a break should the Council amend the Constitution)

must complete the Induction Training and Enforcement Training as outlined in **Appendix 1** by the end of September 2022, failing which such Members

shall be disqualified from participation at Planning Committee until this training has been completed.

3. That all other Planning Committee Members and Substitute Members (or all other Members with recent Planning experience who are likely to substitute at Planning Committee should the Council amend the Constitution) must complete refresher training covering the Duty under Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 incorporated within training on the Development Plan as outlined in Appendix 1 by 1 November 2022, failing which such Members shall be disqualified from participation in Planning Committee until this training has been completed.
4. That it is strongly recommended that all Planning Committee Members and Substitute Members, including all those Members who are likely to substitute at Planning Committee should the Council amend the Constitution, complete at least 2 specialised/best practice subject area training sessions (other than those in recommendations 2 and 3) covering those other topics set out in Appendix 1.
5. That Parish Councils continue to be invited to all training events.
6. That training sessions be delivered virtually.

Timetable	
<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Date</i>
Planning Committee	21 July 2022

Planning Committee Training

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place <p>Accepting the recommendations will materially improve the Council's ability to achieve corporate priorities. The reasons other choices would be less effective are set out in section 2.</p>	Head of Planning and Development
Cross Cutting Objectives	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation is reduced and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected <p>The report recommendations support the achievement of the cross-cutting objectives by ensuring Members are kept up to date on existing and proposed legislative changes and best practice.</p>	Head of Planning and Development
Risk Management	Covered in the risk section (5.1).	Head of Planning and Development
Financial	The proposals set out in the recommendations are all within budget.	Head of Planning and Development

Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Head of Planning and Development
Legal	Accepting the recommendations will fulfil the Council's duties under the Constitution.	Head of Planning and Development
Privacy and Data Protection	Accepting the recommendations will increase the volume of data held by the Council. We will hold that data in line with our retention schedules.	Head of Planning and Development
Equalities	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment.	Equalities & Communities Officer
Public Health	No specific implications	Head of Planning and Development
Crime and Disorder	No specific implications	Head of Planning and Development
Biodiversity and Climate Change	No specific implications	Head of Planning and Development

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council's Constitution sets out the responsibilities of Planning Committee Members and Substitute Members.
- 2.2 Paragraphs 2.2.6 and 2.2.7 of the Local Code on Planning Matters (Part D3 of the Council's Constitution) state:

"2.2.6. The Council has agreed that no Members will be able to serve on this Committee without having agreed to undertake a minimum period of training on the policies, procedures, legislation and guidance relevant to this Committee as specified by the Committee. This training must be completed to an agreed programme set by the Committee annually with a due date for completion. New Members must receive training, but the programme may include no training provision for experienced Members unless there have been relevant changes to legislation, policies, or guidance.

2.2.7. If a Member has not completed the specified training by the due date, the Member will cease to be a Member/Substitute Member of this Committee until the training has been completed. The Head of Policy, Communications and

Governance will keep a record of the training requirements of this Committee and of Members' compliance with the requirements."

- 2.3 As there will be a public examination into the Regulation 22 draft of the Local Plan Review it is strongly recommended that experienced Councillors attend the training on the Development Plan.
 - 2.4 Previous reports to Planning Committee confirmed that investigations had been carried out into an electronic version of refresher training which would allow Members to self-serve from a selection of topic-based subjects. Unfortunately, there were no market options available at the time and this would have required a bespoke suite of training packages to be developed and implemented. This option was not pursued any further due to resource and cost implications. However, training sessions are recorded.
 - 2.5 The Council at its meeting on 20 July 2022 will be recommended to agree that the Constitution be amended so that there is no restriction on the number of Members of a Political Group who may act as Substitutes on each Committee.
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3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

3.1 Option 1:

- That the following Members:
 - new Planning Committee Members
 - new Substitute Members (or Members who are likely to substitute at Planning Committee for the first time should the Council amend the Constitution) and
 - those Planning Committee Members and Substitute Members returning to the Committee after a break (or Members who are likely to substitute at Planning Committee after a break should the Council amend the Constitution)

must complete the Induction Training and Enforcement Training as outlined in Appendix 1 by the end of September 2022, failing which such Members shall be disqualified from participation at Planning Committee until this training has been completed.

- That all other Planning Committee Members and Substitute Members (or all other Members with recent Planning experience who are likely to substitute at Planning Committee should the Council amend the Constitution) must complete refresher training covering the Duty under Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 incorporated within training on the Development Plan as outlined in Appendix 1 by 1 November 2022, failing which such

Members shall be disqualified from participation in Planning Committee until this training has been completed.

- That it is strongly recommended that all Planning Committee Members and Substitute Members, including all those Members who are likely to substitute at Planning Committee should the Council amend the Constitution, complete at least 2 specialised/best practice subject area training sessions (other than those in recommendations 2 and 3) covering those other topics set out in Appendix 1.
- That Parish Councils continue to be invited to all training events.
- That training sessions be delivered virtually.

3.2 **Option 2**

The same as bullet points 1 and 3 above but with a change to bullet point 2 in so far as all other Planning Committee and Substitute Members (or all other Members with recent Planning experience who are likely to substitute at Planning Committee should the Council amend the Constitution) are not required to attend refresher training covering the Duty under Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 together with training on the Development Plan.

3.3 **Option 3**

The same as bullet points 1 and 3 above but with a change to bullet point 2 in so far as all other Planning Committee Members and Substitute Members (or all other Members with recent Planning experience who are likely to substitute at Planning Committee should the Council amend the Constitution) select refresher training of their choice.

3.4 **Option 4**

Members of the Planning Committee and Substitute Members (or all other Members who are likely to substitute at Planning Committee should the Council amend the Constitution), are not required to attend training events.

4. **PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 **Option 1** is the preferred option as it provides for induction training on key knowledge areas which are essential to making considered decisions on planning applications and compliance with the Constitution and refresher training. It also caters for additional voluntary training with the recommendation that Members attend at least 2 specialised/best practice subject area training sessions. This will help expand the knowledge of Members.
- 4.2 This option also builds upon experiences gained over the last year during Covid where the only options available for training were via virtual means. Experience has shown that attendance increased with a greater number of

attendees able to participate. The intention would again be to record the training sessions (subject to agreement) and make these available for viewing later. This would also allow for the potential of assessment of understanding.

- 4.3 Options 2 and 3 are not favoured because the refresher training has been selected based on past training and the forthcoming public examination into the Regulation 22 draft of the Local Plan Review.
- 4.4 Option 4 is not favoured as it fails to meet the requirements of the Constitution.
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5. RISK

- 5.1 The risks associated with this proposal, including the risks if the Council does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.
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6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 A draft schedule of training topics forms Appendix 1, and, if agreed, Councillors will be invited to attend these virtual training sessions via Microsoft Teams.
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7. REPORT APPENDICES

- 7.1 The following document is to be published with this report and forms part of the report:
- **Appendix 1:** Draft Training Programme