

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE - 3 JULY
2023

SUBMITTED TO THE COUNCIL MEETING – 18TH JULY 2023

(To be read in conjunction with the Agenda for the Meeting)

Present

Cllr Andy MacLeod (Chair)
Cllr John Robini (Vice Chair)
Cllr Janet Crowe

Cllr Michael Goodridge
Cllr John Ward

Apologies

Cllr Peter Nicholson

Also Present

Cllr Paul Follows

SGP3/23 MINUTES (Agenda item 2.)

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meetings held on the 30th November 2022 and the 7th of June 2023.

SGP4/23 PROPOSED REVISIONS TO THE SCHEME OF DELEGATION TO OFFICERS
AND COUNCILLORS' PLANNING CODE OF GOOD CONDUCT (Agenda item 6.)

Joint Executive Head of Planning, Claire Upton-Brown, addressed the Committee and introduced the recommendations set out in the report.

Cllr Goodridge raised a concern about paragraph 2.12 of the proposed Planning Procedure Rules and noted that questions and debate should be incorporated into this as the Chair will not be able to judge the general opinion of Committee regarding the officer's recommendation. Members agreed to the suggested amendment. He further raised that there should be a procedure rule that ensures that Members are in attendance for the entire debate to be allowed to vote on it; they must take into consideration all information and points raised in the meeting. Members queried the decision to call in applications and expressed that they were keen to keep the Chair involved in this consultation with the Executive Head of Planning. The Executive Head of Planning and Chair would then discuss if the application has reasonable planning grounds to call the application into Committee. It was argued that this may help ensure transparency of decisions. Further, Cllr Ward noted that a Member representative within this decision process would also encourage better engagement with the Committee. Members were in agreement with this.

Members further suggested that Ward Councillors who call in an application should attend site visits and the Committee meeting. Some concern was raised about paragraph 22.3 of the proposed Planning Committee Procedure Rules, which prohibit pre-prepared speeches and notes. The Chair suggested amending the

wording of this to note that it is discouraged but not prohibited, so long as they are not pre-determined in their judgement. Paragraph 22.2 of the same prohibits Councillors from communicating or passing notes during the meeting; Members felt that this showed mistrust towards the integrity of Councillors and would be difficult to regulate with the possibilities of electronic communication via mobiles. It was further argued that it should be with the discretion of the Chair to stop disruptive behaviour if it were to take place. Members therefore agreed that the wording should be amended to discourage communication between Councillors but not prohibit it. The Chair also suggested that the wording is amended in paragraph 2.11 to note that Ward Councillors should move to the back row of the Chamber, rather than the public speaking area while an application in their ward is being considered.

Following the discussion, the Committee agreed to recommend the following amendments to the Proposed revisions to the Scheme of Delegation to Officers, the Planning Committee Procedure Rules and the Councillors' Planning Code of Good Conduct, with delegation to the Joint Executive Head of Planning to make the changes:

- i. To include a clause that states that Ward Councillors are expected to be at Committee meetings and site visits if they have called in an application.
- ii. To amend Councillor's Planning Code of Good Conduct 22.2 and 22.3 to note that these are discouraged, not prohibited
- iii. To amend proposed Scheme of Delegation to Officers Call-in Procedure to include "in consultation with the Chair of the Planning Committee"
- iv. To amend the Planning Committee Procedure Rules, paragraph 2.12, to include questions, then debate, then consideration of an alternative motion.
- v. To amend the Planning Committee Procedure Rules, paragraph 2.11, to note that Councillors are to step away from the Committee table and not necessarily go to the public speaking area
- vi. To include requirement for Members to be present for the whole agenda item in order to cast a vote.
- vii. To amend typo on page 33 to say Waverley instead of Guildford.

Subject to the changes mentioned above, the Committee resolved to;

- 1.1 *Approve the proposed revised Scheme of Delegation to the Joint Executive Head of Planning Development, attached at Appendix 1A.*
- 1.2 *Approve the proposed revised Planning Committee Procedure Rules, attached at Appendix 2.*
- 1.3 *Approve the proposed revised Councillors' Planning Code of Good Practice, attached at Appendix 3A.*
- 1.4 *Agree that a consultation with Councillors should be undertaken to inform the content of a Memorandum of Understanding between planning officers and Councillors.*

SGP5/23 REVIEW OF THE WAVERLEY BOROUGH CONSTITUTION (Agenda item 7.)

Joint Executive Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Susan Sale, addressed the Committee and explained the recommendations set out in the report. She further clarified that the proposals would work towards aligning key aspects of the Waverley Borough Council and Guildford Borough Council Constitutions in light of

the collaboration; however both Council's would retain their sovereignty and this exercise would not seek to merge the two Councils. She further emphasized that the Group would work on the review of Waverley Borough Council's Constitution, and to do so in collaboration with partners from Guildford Borough Council, with an overall objective of aligning key parts thereof, where appropriate to do so. It is important to note that both Councils would both retain their own Constitutions and make recommendations back to this Committee, to then go forward to Full Council.

The Committee were in agreement that the political proportionality of the group should relatively reflect that of the Council. It was agreed to include 1 Exec Member, 1 Farnham Resident, 1 Conservative and 1 Liberal Democrat. It was also agreed upon that substitutes for Members of the Group should not have to be from the same political group as the absent Member.

The Committee resolved to;

- 1.1 Agree to establish, jointly in conjunction with Guildford Borough Council's Corporate Governance and Standards Committee, a new Joint Constitutions Review Group (JCRG).*
- 1.2 Approve the draft terms of reference of the Joint Constitutions Review Group, as set out in Appendix 1 to this report.*
- 1.3 Appoint the following Members to the proposed Joint Constitutional Review group;*
 - *Cllr Follows/ Substituted by another Member of the Executive*
 - *Cllr Andy Macleod*
 - *Cllr Michael Goodridge*
 - *Cllr Gemma Long*

SGP6/23 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (Agenda item 8.)

The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and concluded at 8.00 pm

Chairman