

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council
2023

25th October

Recommendations from the Constitution Review Working Group

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Charlie Hotham
Portfolio Holder Consulted	
Relevant Head of Service	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services
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Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	An Effective and Sustainable Council
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

Council is asked to RESOLVE that:-

- 1) Meetings of the Planning Committee should be live streamed;**
- 2) White nameplates should be used at meetings of the Planning Committee for Councillors;**
- 3) The Chairman should introduce all the officers present at the start of Planning Committee meetings;**
- 4) A review should be carried out of the content of officer reports to ensure that they are proportionate to the size and complexity of the proposal being determined;**
- 5) Members of the Planning Committee should continue to be offered the choice to either access agenda packs for meetings electronically or in paper form;**
- 6) A greater number of spare copies of the supplementary packs containing the update reports should be made available for the consideration of the public at meetings of the Planning Committee, with clarification provided to the public that copies will be made available on a first come first served basis to residents attending meetings in person;**

- 7) Where possible, members of the Planning Committee should provide Officers with prior notice of any technical questions relating to applications on the agenda;
- 8) Refresher training should be provided on the roles and responsibilities of Planning Committee members;
- 9) Appeal decisions and planning application performance should be reported to and discussed by the Planning Committee;
- 10) the Code of Practice – Planning Services, at Part 25 of the Constitution, be amended to require all Members to leave the room when they have spoken as a Ward Councillor on a Planning Matter, draft wording of the amendments proposed is contained within Appendix 1. These amendments should be incorporated into the Constitution for ratification at Full Council;
- 11) the quorum for meetings of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee should be reduced to 3 Members;
- 12) the content of the Policy Framework be updated as detailed in Appendix 5 to the report;
- 13) the Chief Executive be delegated authority, as Proper Officer, to declare the office of Councillor vacant immediately after a person has ceased to be a Councillor where they have not attended a Council or Committee meeting for six months or more; and
- 14) the Council should undertake a trial allowing Members to ask supplementary questions at Council meetings during consideration of Questions on Notice.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Meetings of the Constitution Review Working Group took place on Thursday 26th January, Thursday 31st August 2023 and Thursday 28th September 2023.
- 2.2 During these meetings, a range of issues were discussed by Members of the group and a number of recommendations were agreed which have implications for the content of the Council's constitution as well as arrangements for both Council and Planning Committee meetings.

- 2.3 This report provides further information about the background to each of these recommendations and Council is asked to consider whether to approve the actions proposed.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

External Review of the Planning Committee

- 3.1 During the 2022/23 municipal year a review was undertaken by the independent Planning Advisory Service (PAS) of the Council's Planning Committee. The outcomes of this review were recorded in a report alongside nine recommendations that were proposed by PAS and which were designed to improve the operation of the Planning Committee at the Council (Appendix 1).
- 3.2 The Constitution Review Working Group discussed each of the recommendations that had been made by PAS in turn and in doing so considered and agreed the following:
- Live streaming: Members discussed the benefits arising in terms of the transparency of Planning Committee meetings where these meetings could be live streamed. It was noted that group leaders had already requested that Council meetings should be live streamed moving forward. As there tends to be public interest in the items on the agenda for Planning Committee meetings, Members agreed that live streaming of these Committee meetings on a regular basis would be justifiable.
 - White nameplates for Members at Planning Committee meetings: The group noted that Planning Committee meetings are quasi-judicial meetings which should be apolitical. The use of white nameplates for Councillors at meetings of this Committee reflects the apolitical nature of these meetings. Therefore, Members agreed that the proposal to use white nameplates at meetings of the Planning Committee should be agreed.
 - The Chairman introducing Officers present at Planning Committee meetings: Members agreed that where the Chairman introduces the officers present and clarifies their roles, this provides greater transparency in the process. It should be noted that these introductions have already been incorporated into Planning Committee meeting arrangements at Bromsgrove District Council.

- **Review of the content of reports to Planning Committee:** The group discussed the content of reports to the Planning Committee and agreed that the proposal from PAS to ensure that the content of reports is commensurate with the size and complexity of the application was sensible. Members raised concerns that at present, the use of a standard format for all reports results in a significant amount of repetition of points between reports which Members suggested was unnecessary.
- **Accessing Agenda Packs for Planning Committee Meetings:** In their report, PAS had suggested the Council should improve connectivity to facilitate a paperless process. Members of the group had some concerns about this proposal, on the basis that they felt that Councillors should be able to choose whether to opt to receive paper copies of agenda packs or to access these electronically. The group did note that Members can access agenda packs electronically using the modern.gov app and training can be provided by Democratic Services to Members in respect of how to use the app.
- **Availability of Update Reports and Supplementary Packs at Planning Committee Meetings:** The PAS report proposed that the update report should be made available to everybody present at the meeting. The group noted that, in addition to already providing all interested parties with electronic access to these packs on the Council's website, spare paper copies of this pack are always made available for members of the public to access at the meeting. Unfortunately, it is not possible to predict in advance the exact number of members of the public who will attend each meeting, as this varies. Therefore, the group agreed that, in addition to printing a higher number of update reports for Planning Committee meetings, clarification should be provided in the papers that these would be available in hard copy form on a first come first served basis.
- **Prior Notice of Members' Questions at Planning Committee:** The PAS report had proposed that Members should provide Officers with 48 hours' notice of questions due to be asked at Planning Committee meetings and during the group meeting it was clarified that this related to questions of a technical nature. Members expressed concerns about this proposal, noting that questions could arise during a debate that had not previously been anticipated and also that this could be viewed as curtailing the democratic process. To assist planning officers, due to the time that could be required to answer questions of a technical nature, the group instead suggested that, where possible, notice should be provided by Members to Planning Officers of any technical questions.

- Refresher Training on the Roles and Responsibilities of Planning Committee Members: The group noted that comprehensive training had been provided to Members at the start of the 2023/24 municipal year, including refresher training to more experienced Members and there was general agreement that this should continue.
- Reporting Appeal Decisions and Planning Performance to Planning Committee: The group was advised that the outcomes of appeals in respect of decisions taken at meetings of the Planning Committee had implications for the authority's performance in respect of planning matters. In this context, Members agreed that it was important to ensure that Planning Committee Members were kept informed about the outcomes of appeals in respect of their decisions and how this had impacted on the Council's performance.

Planning Committee – Code of Practice

- 3.3 During the 2022/23 municipal year, issues were raised by Members in terms of Councillor involvement in Planning Committee meetings, in particular when a member of the Planning Committee wishes to speak as a Councillor in respect of an application that affects their Ward.
- 3.4 The issues raised by Members of the Planning Committee in this context have included;
- Having to leave the room prior to the debate and the decision.
 - Having to leave the room prior to public speaking.
 - Being disadvantaged by being on the Planning Committee compared to Councillors who are not a member of the Planning Committee.
- 3.5 The Planning Procedure Rules within the main body of the Council's Constitution (at Part 14) currently do not specifically address any of these issues. However, to date Councillors affected are asked to leave by the Chairman of the Planning Committee and do so in line with good practice, which is an arrangement that has been in place for a number of years.

- 3.6 Part 25 of the Constitution at paragraph 2.2 broadly states that if a member speaks on a Planning Matter they must remain in the public gallery. Also, in Part 25 in paragraph 2.9 it is stated that *“where a Member has campaigned for or come to a final view prior to a meeting, the member should not take part in the decision making process. Depending on the circumstance and to preserve the appearance of propriety, the member should also consider whether or not to withdraw from the public gallery, after making his or her representations to the planning committee.”*
- 3.7 Guidance is given in the publication ‘Probity in Planning: Advice for Councillors and Officers making planning decisions’ which is published by the Local Government Association (LGA). A relevant extract from page 13 states *“If any councillor, whether or not a committee member, speaks on behalf of a lobby group at the decision making committee, they would be well advised to withdraw from the meeting once any public or ward member speaking opportunities have been completed. This is to counter any suggestion that members of the committee may have been influenced by their continuing presence. This should be set out in the authority’s code of conduct for planning matters.”*
- 3.8 It should be remembered that Planning Committees are quasi-judicial Committees and are subject to appeals to the land Tribunal as well as Judicial Review. That is the basis as to why it is considered best practice for Planning Committee Members to leave the room to prevent any allegations that they influenced any decisions either by their presence or by their conduct.
- 3.9 It is still considered good practice, even when a Councillor insists their presence would not influence any decision. Planning Committee decisions often attract considerable interest both from the applicant and/or the community and it is entirely possible that even if a Councillor does not believe or intend to influence, their actions could be interpreted as such and form part of an appeal, it is also possible that such allegations could be made maliciously. In addition to the potential impact on an appeal, such actions could be the subject of Code of Conduct complaints either in isolation or in addition to any appeals.
- 3.10 During the PAS review of the Planning Committee, Officers were advised that current arrangements are considered good practice and that the majority of Councils exclude members of their Planning Committee from the room during the debate and decision, where they have declared an interest and/or addressed the Committee as an interested party. In addition, Officers have been informed that a significant number of Councils exclude all Councillors from the room during the debate and

decision in those circumstances, whether they are a member of the Planning Committee or not.

- 3.11 In the current context, the Constitution Review Working Group concluded that it would not appear to be a good time to reverse the practice of asking Planning Committee members to leave the room for the debate/decision. However, Members concluded that a reasonable concession would be to allow Councillors that are also members of Planning Committee (and relevant Parish Councillors) to remain in the room during public speaking of the applicant/supporters/objectors.
- 3.12 The group also agreed that another reasonable concession would be that, if a Councillor has been asked to leave the room, they should still be enabled to view the live stream of the meeting. The reasons for excluding Councillors from the debate/decision process is to prevent the appearance of influence, it is not intended to make it difficult for Councillors to report back to residents/interested parties or to prevent them from knowing what was discussed and the reason for any decision without waiting for the minutes to be published.
- 3.13 The final issue is about Councillors on Planning Committee feeling disadvantaged compared to other Councillors. The group concluded that the easiest way to 'level the playing field' would be to have all Councillors that speak on an issue leave the room.
- 3.14 Appendix 2 to this report outlines suggested amendments to the Code of Practice – Planning Services document that reflects these proposed arrangements.

Audit, Standards and Governance Committee - Quorum

- 3.15 Bromsgrove District Council has a single Audit, Standards and Governance Committee which focuses on making decisions on a combination of audit, governance and standards matters on behalf of the Council.
- 3.16 The Audit, Standards and Governance Committee has a very important role in the Council's corporate governance arrangements and in respect of the standards regime. The Committee is a key source of assurance about the organisation's arrangements for managing risk, maintaining an effective control environment, and reporting on financial and non-financial performance.
- 3.17 In this context, it is really important to ensure that meetings of the Committee take place when scheduled and that all business on the agenda is transacted in a timely manner.

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- 3.18 There are currently 11 members appointed to the Committee, which has a quorum of 5 members. In previous years there was a membership of 9 councillors and a quorum of 5 Councillors. The total membership of the Committee was increased at the start of this municipal year.
- 3.19 In recent years, there have been a limited number of occasions where all members of the Committee have been present, although attendance has improved so far in the 2023/24 municipal year. There have also been times when the meeting has only just been quorate or close to only just being quorate, as detailed in Appendix 3 to the report.
- 3.20 The terms of reference for the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee stipulate that members of the Cabinet and the Chairman of the Council must not be members of, nor act as substitutes at meetings of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee. Whilst this helps to ensure that appropriate checks and balances are in place in the decision-making process, it does reduce the pool of potential members from which substitute appointments can be made.
- 3.21 To help address this problem, the Constitution Review Working Group is proposing that the quorum for the Committee should be reduced from 5 to 3. This would help to ensure that meetings could proceed without delay, particularly in cases where there may be limited numbers of possible substitutes available to attend meetings of the Committee at short notice.
- 3.22 The size of the quorum for the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee at Bromsgrove District Council is currently higher than the size of the quorum for equivalent Committees at other Councils in Worcestershire, as detailed in Appendix 4 to the report. Therefore, it would not be inappropriate to have a quorum of 3 for the Committee.

Policy Framework

- 3.23 Bromsgrove District Council has a Leader and Cabinet model of decision making and is working towards a hybrid Leader and Cabinet model following decisions made at the Council meeting held on 20th September 2023. Within this structure of decision making, there are some decisions that must be taken by full Council, some decisions that must be taken by the Cabinet, some decisions where there are shared responsibilities and some “local choice” functions, whereby the authority determines whether the decision is taken by Cabinet or Council.
- 3.24 The Council is required to have a policy framework, comprising a list of important policies and strategies. Only full Council can make decisions about policies and strategies included in the Policy Framework.

- 3.25 A list of items currently included in the Council's Policy Framework can be found at Paragraph 4 in the Articles of the constitution (an extract from which can be found at Appendix 5).
- 3.26 Items that form part of the Policy Framework can only be determined by Council, although will be debated at a prior meeting of Cabinet. This is a lengthier decision-making process than that in place for items that can be determined by the Cabinet alone, or which have been delegated to other Committees, and so can cause delays to implementation. It is therefore important for Members to ensure that the most appropriate items, including those items where there is a legal requirement to do so, are included in the Policy Framework.
- 3.27 The content of the Policy Framework can be reviewed by the Council from time to time to ensure that it remains suitable for the authority. When reviewing the content of the Policy Framework, Members should take into account the legal requirements in respect of responsibilities for functions, as detailed at Part 3 of the Council's constitution.
- 3.28 Members may also wish to take into account the current content of the Policy Frameworks at other local authorities in Worcestershire (Appendix 7).
- 3.29 Suggested changes to the Policy Framework have been highlighted in track changes in Appendix 6 to the report. The suggested changes are being proposed on the basis of the following information:
- Annual Performance Plan – There is no longer an Annual Performance Plan. Instead, the Council's performance is monitored in quarterly finance and performance monitoring reports. These reports are considered by the Cabinet and Finance and Budget Working Group (the latter in respect of the budget). The Constitution Review Working Group has suggested that the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee might be the most appropriate body to monitor the performance data in these reports alongside Cabinet.
 - Crime and Disorder Reduction Plan – Overview and Scrutiny has a statutory duty to scrutinise the work of the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, which is the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership, on an annual basis. The Overview and Scrutiny Board fulfils this role, with the latest such meeting taking place on 8th February 2023. It is suggested that the Board could scrutinise the content of the plan as part of this work.

- Plans and strategies which together form part of the Local Development Framework / Development Plan – The Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services has reported that the Local Development Framework and Development Plan are essentially the same thing. It is therefore proposed that this should be reflected in the Policy Framework, with reference made to the Development Plan as a single item. Members are asked to note that planning policies require Council approval and cannot be determined by Cabinet alone.
- Carbon Reduction Strategy – Due to the importance of the green thread in the Council Plan, it is suggested that the Carbon Reduction Strategy should be added to the Policy Framework.
- Contract Procedure Rules – Due to the importance of effective Contract Procedure Rules to good governance, it is proposed that this should be added to the Council's Policy Framework. This should help to provide Members with assurance that the Council is complying with best practice.
- Pay Policy – It is proposed that the Pay Policy should be removed from the Policy Framework as it does not need to be listed in the framework. As the Pay Policy forms part of the Council's budget it will continue to be determined by Council.

Six Month Rule – Declaring a Vacancy

- 3.30 A Councillor ceases to be an elected Member should they fail to attend a meeting of the authority for six consecutive months since their previous attendance at a meeting. This could involve attendance at meetings of Council or Committees.
- 3.31 Currently, at Bromsgrove District Council, should a Councillor fail to attend a Council or Committee meeting in this period, the vacancy can only be declared at a Council meeting. This could potentially cause delays between the person ceasing to be a Member and the vacancy occurring as it is dependent on the date of the next Council meeting.
- 3.32 The Association of Electoral Administrators (AEA) has provided guidance indicating that it is considered best practice for a Council's constitution to provide delegated authority to the proper officer of the Council to declare vacancies that occur in these instances.

- 3.33 The Constitution Review Working Group is therefore recommending that the Chief Executive, as Proper Officer, be delegated authority to declare vacancies that occur in the event of a Councillor failing to attend a Council or Committee meeting in a six month period.

Supplementary Question at Council Meetings

- 3.34 During the meeting of the Constitution Review Working Group held on 31st August 2023 Members discussed arrangements for the consideration of Questions on Notice at Council meetings.
- 3.35 At present, each Member is entitled to submit a single Question on Notice for consideration at a Council meeting. However, supplementary questions are not permitted.
- 3.36 The Constitution Review Working Group made reference to arrangements for consideration of Questions on Notice at other Councils in Worcestershire. At present, a single supplementary question is permitted per Member at Council meetings held at Malvern Hills District Council, Redditch Borough Council, Worcester City Council, Worcestershire County Council and Wyre Forest District Council.
- 3.37 The Constitution Review Working Group agreed that it would be worthwhile to trial the inclusion of supplementary questions at Council meetings held at Bromsgrove District Council. In line with other Councils, this would consist of a single supplementary question per Member and the supplementary question would need to be based on the original question that was asked or the answer provided to that question.
- 3.38 During the Constitution Review Working Group meeting it was noted that there would be occasions where the Member to whom the question is directed would be unable to answer the supplementary question at the meeting. This could be because additional information might be required from partner organisations in order to provide an answer or because specific data might need to be referenced in the response. In such cases, Members were asked to note that responses to supplementary questions might need to be provided to the relevant Member in writing after the meeting.
- 3.39 Currently, there is a limit of 15 minutes at Council meetings dedicated to the consideration of Questions on Notice. Members may wish to give consideration to extending the time period available for the consideration of Questions on Notice during this trial period in order to accommodate the asking and provision of answers to supplementary questions.

Other Issues discussed by the Constitution Review Working Group

3.40 During the meetings of the Constitution Review Working Group held on 26th January, 31st August and 28th September 2023 Members also discussed a number of issues that did not result in recommendations being made to Council. This included consideration of the following points:

- Officer Scheme of Delegations – The Officer Scheme of Delegations is reviewed by Council on an annual basis. When the Scheme of Delegations was reviewed at the Annual Council meeting held in May 2022, a number of questions were raised and suggestions made about certain delegations. These delegations were revisited at the Constitution Review Working Group meeting together with responses that had been received from Officers to the points raised by Members at the Council meeting. Based on this information, the group chose not to recommend any changes in respect of those delegations.
- Government grant funding – The Constitution Review Working Group considered a proposal for the Section 151 Officer be delegated authority to accept, administer and distribute ring fenced Government Grant Funding, or funding from bodies acting on behalf of Government, and to make the necessary and corresponding adjustments to the Medium Term Financial Plan following consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder and subject to meeting the conditions of grant funding. This would have related to grants that could only be used for specific purposes which were subject to tight deadlines and where there was a risk that the funding would need to be returned to the Government if it was not processed quickly. Members discussed this proposed delegation but did not agree any recommendation. Instead, the group proposed that this matter should be referred to the Finance and Budget Working Group for further discussion.
- The Governance Systems Task Group – At the meeting held on 28th September 2023 Members discussed the next steps in the process in terms of the proposals made by the Governance Systems Task Group and approved at the Council meeting held on 20th September 2023. Members agreed that there should be regular meeting of the Constitution Review Working Group, held on approximately a monthly basis, to consider progress in respect of these recommendations. It should also be noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Board is due to receive an update on progress at every meeting held during the 2023/24 municipal year.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 No specific financial implications have been identified in relation to the recommendations detailed in this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Review and revision of the Constitution is governed by Article 15 of the Constitution.
- 5.2 Only Council can make changes to the constitution. The Constitution Review Working Group can review sections of the constitution and make recommendations to Council about changes that could be made to the constitution.

Planning Committee

- 5.3 There are no Acts or Regulations that specifically address Planning Committee members speaking as ward Councillors. The general principle in terms of Local Authority Decision Making is addressed in the Localism Act Section 31 (10), which specifically refers to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and states "*Standing orders of a relevant authority may provide for the exclusion of a member or co-opted member of the authority from a meeting while any discussion or vote takes place in which, as a result of the operation of subsection (4), the member or co-opted member may not participate.*"

Audit, Standards and Governance Committee

- 5.4 As detailed in the Local Government Act 1972 (Schedule 12, paragraph 6) the legal requirement in terms of the quorum for Council meetings is that at least one quarter of the whole number of members of the Council must be present.
- 5.5 A quorum of 3 would suffice under these rules for a Committee with a total number of 11 seats.
- 5.6 Councils can choose to set the quorum for each Committee at a particular level that the authority deems to be appropriate. This can include setting the quorum for the Committee at a level higher than one third of the members of the Committee.
- 5.7 At Bromsgrove District Council, the quorums for Committees are detailed in the Committee Terms of Reference at Part 5 of the constitution. The quorums for the Committees are also recorded in many of the Committee procedure rules that are included in the constitution.

Policy Framework

- 5.8 The Local Government Act 2000, in particular Section 13 (Functions which are the responsibility of an executive) details the matters which are the responsibility of the Executive (Cabinet).
- 5.9 The Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 (as amended) gives effect to section 13 of the Local Government Act 2000 by specifying in Schedule 1 to the regulations which functions are not to be the responsibility of the Executive (Cabinet). In other words, the Executive cannot by law make the decision on those matters.
- 5.10 The areas that the Executive (Cabinet) cannot determine, so instead are the preserve of full Council, fall under the following headings:
- Functions relating to town and country planning and development control (planning policies)
 - Functions relation to Licensing and Registration (many of which are delegated in Bromsgrove to the relevant regulatory Committees)
 - Functions relating to health and safety at work
 - Functions relating to elections (many of which are delegated to the Electoral Matters Committee)
 - Functions relating to name and status of areas and individuals
 - Power to make, amend, re-enact or enforce byelaws
 - Power to promote or oppose local or personal Bills
 - Functions relating to pensions
 - Miscellaneous functions

Six Month Rule – Declaring a Vacancy

- 5.11 Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) gives a general power to local authorities to discharge functions through officers. Local Authorities are required by the same Act to maintain a list of these, which is referred to as the Scheme of Delegation. This sets out those powers of the Council which can be carried out by officers of the Council.
- 5.12 Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 states that if a member of a local authority fails, throughout a period of six consecutive months from the date of their last attendance, to attend a meeting of the authority, they shall cease to be a member of the Council. An exception applies if their non-attendance has been approved by Council before the expiry of the six-month period.

5.13 Section 86 of the Local Government Act 1972 states that where a Councillor has ceased to be a Member, the Council will forthwith declare the office to be vacant.

5.14 The AEA advises that the requirement for the Council to forthwith declare the office to be vacant places an expectation that this will happen without delay. By delegating authority to the proper officer, any such vacancies can be declared in the timely manner anticipated by the legislation.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Strategic Purpose

6.1 It is appropriate to review the operation of Committees from time to time to ensure that they function in a manner that supports the strategic purpose “an effective and sustainable Council”.

6.2 Similarly, it is important to review the Council’s Policy Framework on occasion to ensure that the content remains relevant and supports the Council’s ability to be “an effective and sustainable Council”.

6.3 Members need to ensure that meetings of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee are quorate so that the business on the agenda can be transacted in a timely manner.

6.4 Regular review of the Council’s Scheme of Delegations helps Members to determine whether the delegations remain fit for purpose. This supports the strategic purpose to be an Effective and Sustainable Council.

Climate Change Implications

6.5 Currently, the Carbon Reduction Strategy and plans do not form part of the authority’s Policy Framework. Given the significance of the green thread as a priority in the Council Plan, the Constitution Review Working Group is suggesting that the item should be added to the Policy Framework.

6.6 Any other changes to the Scheme of Delegations which could have climate change implications would be reviewed on a case by case basis.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

6.7 There are no specific equalities and diversity implications to this report.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 There is a risk that if the quorum for the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee remains at 5 Members, there may be meetings of the Committee in future which are not quorate. Should this occur, decisions could not be taken at these meetings, which could undermine the Council's corporate governance processes.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Bromsgrove District Council Planning Committee Review – Planning Advisory Service

Appendix 2 – The Code of Practice – Planning Services with suggested amendments (Part 25 of the Constitution)

Appendix 3 – Audit, Standards and Governance Committee – Committee Attendance Figures

Appendix 4 – Quorums for Audit Committees in Worcestershire

Appendix 5 – Extract from the Articles – Current Policy Framework

Appendix 6 – Extract from the Articles – Suggested Amendments to the Policy Framework

Appendix 7 – Policy Frameworks at other Councils in Worcestershire

Background Papers:

AEA Guidance – 'Casual Vacancy – Failure to Attend Meetings.'

Bromsgrove District Council's constitution

The Localism Act 2011, paragraph 31: [Localism Act 2011 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

Minutes of the meeting of the Annual Council meeting held on 18th May 2022: [Minutes of the Annual Council meeting - 18th May 2022](#)

Probity in Planning: Advice for Councillors and Officers making planning decisions by the Local Government Association.

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Review of Delegations, report to the Annual Council meeting held on 18th May 2022: [Scheme of Delegations Review - 18th May 2022](#)
Scheme of Delegations, report to the Annual Council meeting held on 24th May 2023: [Scheme of Delegations report](#)

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Charlie Hotham	
Lead Director / Head of Service	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services	
Financial Services	Pete Carpenter, Interim Section 151 Officer	
Legal Services	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services	
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	Helen Mole, Business Transformation Manager	
Climate Change Team (if climate change implications apply)	Judith Willis, Head of Communities and Housing Services	