



**REPORT of
LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES MANAGER AND INTERIM HEAD OF
PLANNING SERVICES**

to
**PLANNING AND LICENSING COMMITTEE
13 NOVEMBER 2014**

PLANNING COMMITTEES GOVERNANCE AND ARRANGEMENTS

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To note that a report is to be put to the December meeting of the Council on options for streamlining its Planning Committee arrangements for dealing with strategic / major planning applications which affect the area of more than one Area Planning Committee.

2. AREA FOR DECISION / ACTION

- 2.1 This report is for Members' information only.
- 2.2 The need to look at the possible streamlining of arrangements focusses specifically on circumstances in which a planning application affects the area of more than one Area Planning Committee. The constitution currently provides that where this occurs an application will be determinable by the Planning and Licensing Committee after taking into account the views of the respective Area Planning Committees. If necessary, a special meeting of the Planning and Licensing Committee will be arranged.
- 2.3 While the above provision relates to any category of application, Officers are mindful of the potential for the submission over the coming months of applications of a strategic nature ahead of the progression in terms of the Examination in Public and final adoption of the Local Development Plan.
- 2.4 The fact that the Heybridge Garden Suburb strategic housing allocation in the submitted Local Development Plan straddles the North-West and Central Planning areas, there is the likelihood that applications in respect of this allocation will fall to be considered under the above provision, and there is the prospect of major applications for areas beyond those the subject of strategic allocations that may also require to be dealt with similarly. If not caught by the provision relating to sites straddling Area Committee boundaries, there is the likelihood that such applications will be regarded under the provisos to the terms of reference of the Area Planning Committees as involving a major policy decision.
- 2.5 An assessment of the potential workload associated with these applications associated with the rather cumbersome and resource-intensive route for them to follow ahead of determination, leaves Officers to conclude that a different approach is required. A

more streamlined approach will offer the best prospect for safeguarding performance, not only so far as the determination of such applications are concerned, but in other areas as well as a result freeing up Planning Officer time. Preparatory work is in progress for the Examination in Public of the Local Development Plan and Officer time is heavily committed to this.

3. IMPACT ON CORPORATE GOALS

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

4. IMPLICATIONS

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – This documentation will help demonstrate how the Council’s planning processes operate and how decisions are taken.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – None identified.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk** – Streamlining will maximise performance opportunity for determination of strategic/major applications within the prescribed period.
- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – None identified at this point. It is likely however that a streamlined process will provide efficiencies in terms of being less resource intensive.
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – None identified at this point. It is likely however that a streamlined process will provide efficiencies in terms of being less resource intensive
- (vi) **Impact on the Environment** – None identified.

5. RECOMMENDATION

The Committee notes this report.

Background Papers: None.

Enquiries to: Stuart Jennings, Committee Services Manager, (Tel.01621 875745).