



City of Westminster

Planning & City Development Committee

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Classification: General Release

Title: Discussion of the Future Format and Terms of Reference of the Planning & City Development Committee

Report of: Director of Town Planning & Building Control

Financial Summary: None.

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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of the current format and terms of reference of the Planning and City Development Committee and invites the new membership of the Committee to consider and discuss the future format and terms of reference of the committee.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 Members are asked to consider the contents of this report, which is provided for information and to support a discussion of the future format and terms of reference of the Committee.

3. Background – Current Planning & City Development Committee Format & Terms of Reference

- 3.1 The Council's current Constitution was approved on 15 February 2021. The [Constitution](#) delegates the following functions to the Planning & City Development Committee via the Committee's terms of reference:

- 1) *To consider proposed local plan policies (and supplementary planning documents) at appropriate stages of the statutory process for their preparation and adoption and make recommendations to the relevant Cabinet Member.*
- 2) *To have oversight of the practices and procedures of the Planning Applications Sub-Committees (but not to consider individual planning applications) making recommendations where necessary to officers, Planning Applications Sub-Committees and/or the Cabinet for Planning and Public Realm.*
- 3) *To consider and recommend a training programme for members of the Planning Applications Sub-Committees.*

- 3.2 The Committee is comprised of 15 members of the Council, consisting of 10 Majority party members and 5 Minority party members. These members are required to be members of the Planning Applications Sub-Committees. A minimum of 3 members are required to be in attendance at each meeting for it to be quorate.
- 3.3 Planning & City Development Committee meetings are held in a hybrid format and, unlike Planning Applications Sub-Committee meetings, members of the Committee are able to join the meetings remotely along with those observing the meeting.
- 3.4 For information, the topics and issues reported to recent Planning and City Development Committee meetings are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1 – Agenda items reported to the Planning & City Development Committee during 2020, 2021 and 2022.

Date	Agenda Item
30 March 2022	National Policy & Planning Reform Update
	Environmental Supplementary Planning Document
	Planning Enforcement Team Performance and Local Enforcement Plan
	Summary of Member Training During 2022
25 October 2021	Update on Temporary Covid-19 Related Legislation
	Updated Draft Early Community Engagement Guidance
	Article 4 Directions in Westminster
	Update on Neighbourhood Planning in Westminster
27 July 2021	City Plan and Planning Policy Update
	Annual Update on Planning Applications and Appeals Performance 2020/21
	Review of Planning Applications Sub-Committee Formats
18 March 2021	Proposed Class E to Residential Permitted Development Rights
	Draft Early Community Engagement Guidance
28 October 2020	Annual Update on Planning Applications and Appeals Performance 2019/20
	Recent Changes to Planning Legislation and Regulations
	The Planning White Paper 'Planning for the Future'
	Digital Planning Options
30 June 2020	Update on the Planning Review
	City Plan 2019-2040 Update
1 April 2020	Meeting Cancelled (due to impact of Covid-19)

- 3.5 Planning & City Development Committees have typically been held on a triannual basis following a regular pattern, with meetings held in the spring (March/April), summer (June/July) and autumn (October/November). The Constitution does not specify the frequency or timing of Committee meetings and the timing and regularity of meetings can be reviewed should members agree upon a different frequency for future meetings. However, as can be seen from Table 1, the current frequency and timing of meetings allows for the content of the meetings to be effectively managed so that meetings are neither under or oversubscribed in terms of papers for discussion.

4. Future Planning & City Development Committee Format & Terms of Reference

- 4.1 The new membership of the Committee is invited to discuss the future format and terms of reference of the Committee. For example, Members may wish to consider how the

format may be amended to make the function of the Committee more effective (such as by amendment of its frequency and timing) and/or consider amendment of its terms of reference (such as to enable the Committee to provide advice to the Cabinet Member on a wider range of planning issues or to confirm its role in overseeing the performance of the Council's planning function).

4.2 Future changes to the format and terms of reference of the Planning & City Development Committee that Members may wish to recommend can only be made by amendment of the current Constitution. The Monitoring Officer is currently undertaking a Council wide review of the existing Constitution. Therefore, there is an opportunity to implement any recommended changes to the format and terms of reference of the Planning & City Development Committee as supported by the Cabinet Member.

4.3 Whilst some minor drafting or other consequential amendments can be made to the Constitution under delegated powers by the Monitoring Officer, the extent of changes necessary to update the current Planning & City Development Committee terms of reference and format will mean that the new recommended terms of reference and format will need to be approved by full Council after the recommendations have been considered by the General Purposes Committee. As stated above at 4.2, this can be undertaken as part of the overall review of the Constitution.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 None.

6. Legal Implications

6.1 None.

7. Conclusion

7.1 The terms of reference set out in the Constitution limits the scope of the committee's considerations to those topics and issues identified in paragraph 3.1. The current Constitution provides significant scope for the committee to provide guidance and advice to the Cabinet Member on a wide range of planning policy issues, make recommendations to officers on the function of the Sub-Committees and the planning service more widely, and offer guidance on the future requirements for Member training.

7.2 As set out in the recommendation, Members are invited to consider and discuss the current Planning & City Development Committee format and terms of reference and provide recommendations for any future changes they wish to see to the format and terms of reference. The committee's recommendations will be reported to the Cabinet Member and will inform the Monitoring Officer's current review of the Constitution where they have the Cabinet Member's support.

If you have any questions about this report, or wish to inspect one of the background papers, please contact: Oliver Gibson (ogibson@westminster.gov.uk / 07971026919)

Background Papers:

None.