

Development Control

1 – Remit

The Development Control Committee is authorised to undertake (or sub-delegate) all of the Council's functions relating to town and country planning, development control and the protection of hedgerows and trees, as specified in Parts A and I of Schedule 1 to the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 (as amended by subsequent regulations).

The Committee is also authorised to exercise the Council's Local Choice Functions in relation to the obtaining of information under Section 330 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as to interests in land and the obtaining of particulars of persons interested in land under section 16 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (as specified in the table in Section 1 above).

In summary, the area of responsibility of this Committee includes all matters relating to the administration of Town and Country Planning legislation, Listed Building and Conservation Area legislation, Hazardous Substances legislation and the Building Acts and associated Regulations within the purview of the Authority as it relates to the following functions:-

- (1) The Committee determines all planning or similar applications which are:
 - (a) judged by the Head of Planning & Growth (after consultation with the Chairman and/or the Vice Chairman/men of the Development Control Committee) to be of such district-wide significance or to be so contentious that they should in the public interest be referred to the Committee for consideration and determination, and;
 - (b) applications proposing major development (as defined in Article 1(2) of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995) and where the recommendation of the Head of Planning & Growth would conflict with or would not substantially satisfy the written representation of the Parish/Town Council; or where a Member for the ward in which the application site is located, or who is a Member of the Council's Development Control Committee, has requested (in writing) consideration by Committee, and;
 - (c) applications proposing other than major development (as defined above) referred by the Head of Planning & Growth following consultation with the Delegation Panel.

- (2) A Delegation Panel Scheme (known as “the Panel”) has been set up to deal with applications for Planning Permissions, Listed Building Consents, Conservation Area Consent and Prior Notifications. This will apply in cases including applications from householders, advertised matters, applications for change of use, applications for minor residential development (as defined in Article 1(2) of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995), applications for a variation of conditions, applications relating to hazardous substances, notifications in relation to prior approval, TPO applications and applications for works to trees in Conservation Areas.

In cases referred to above where decisions will only be taken following consultation with the Panel which will comprise the Chairman and/or Vice Chairman/men of Development Control Committee and any local Ward Member(s) who has/have expressed any interest in writing.

The Delegation Panel scheme will operate as follows:

- (a) Meeting of the Panel will normally take place fortnightly.
- (b) A list of applications to be considered at the Panel will be circulated to all Members, and a written briefing report on each case prepared and circulated to the Chairman and Vice Chairman/men of Development Control Committee and any local Member(s) who has/have expressed any interest in writing, at least four clear working days in advance of the Panel meeting, with provision for emergency items at the discretion of the Chairman or Vice Chairman/men and Ward Member(s) or adjacent Ward Member with the approval of the Ward Member(s).
- (c) The local Member(s) may attend the Panel or submit representations in writing in order to make sure the Panel is clearly aware of their views and reasoning.
- (d) The Council’s Planning Case Officer(s) will present individual applications for discussion and decision, including all representations received and photographs of the site.
- (e) The formal decision will be made by the Head of Planning & Growth in consultation with the Chairman and/or Vice Chairman/men and any interested local Ward Member. In the absence of a consensus between the Members the application will be reported to the Development Control Committee.
- (f) The relevant Parish/Town Council will be informed of the decision verbally by the Council’s case officer within two working days of the Panel meeting and will be sent written reasons within 10 working days of the Panel meeting with

copies to the Chairman, Vice Chairman/men of Development Control Committee and local Member(s).

- (3) The Committee is responsible for matters relating to:
- (a) Development Control functions and enforcement including (but without limitation):
 - (i) The preservation of buildings and trees;
 - (ii) Controlling uses of land and buildings, including relocation of non-conforming uses, the making of discontinuance, revocation and modification orders and the making of agreements regulating the development and/or use of land or premises;
 - (iii) Determination of planning applications and commenting upon development proposals by Suffolk County Council and other public bodies;
 - (iv) Determination of planning applications made by or on behalf of the Council, whether submitted by or on behalf of the Council itself or jointly with another person;
 - (v) Determination of applications relating to signs and advertisements;
 - (vi) Enforcement by means of issue of enforcement notices, breach of condition notices, stop notices and any other lawful instrument and subsequent prosecution or legal proceedings.
 - (b) Building Control functions and enforcement, including but without limitation:
 - (i) approval of buildings and works under Building Regulations for the time being in force;
 - (ii) enforcement action including criminal, injunctive or other legal proceedings;
 - (c) To fix fees and charges for all services administered by the Committee.

2 – Membership and meeting arrangements

- 2.1 The Committee will comprise no more than the minimum number of members necessary to allow appointment on the basis of one member from each Ward, unless the obligation to achieve political balance necessitates more than one member from that Ward, but no more.
- 2.2 The Committee will be appointed annually by the full Council and will be politically balanced.
- 2.3 The Committee will appoint its own Chairman and Vice-Chairman/Chairmen.

- 2.4 The Committee will meet in accordance with a schedule of ordinary meetings approved by the Council, although meetings may be cancelled due to lack of business. Special meetings of the Committee may also be called.

3 – Delegation of Functions

- 3.1 The majority of the Committee's functions will be determined by officers, as set out in Section 4 of this part of the Constitution. These delegations are subject to:-
- (a) any such determination being consistent with Development Plans and adopted Borough and County Planning Policies;
 - (b) statutory and customary consultations being carried out; and
 - (c) the safeguards and consultative procedures listed in Part 1 above.
- 3.2 Those matters which will normally fall to be determined by the Committee are as defined part 1, paragraphs (1)(a) – (c) above. In exercising any of its functions, the Committee may refer any item to Council for a decision.

4 – Procedure at meetings

- 4.1 Procedure at meetings shall be in accordance with the Committee Procedure Rules, except as provided in 4.2 below.
- 4.2 The Committee shall have authority to determine from time to time its own arrangements for public speaking on applications, and which matters are to be included within those arrangements.

Joint Officer Appeals Committee

1. Membership and Meeting Arrangements

This is a Joint Committee between Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council. Membership of the joint Committee will comprise six Members, three from each Authority. In addition, each Authority will be able to appoint one Substitute Member.

The Committee will be appointed annually by the full Council and will be politically balanced.

Any Member of the Council may serve on the Committee provided that they are not also a Member of the Joint Officer Appointments Committee.

The Committee will appoint its own Chairman and Vice Chairman.

The Committee will meet on an ad hoc basis as required.

2. Functions/Remit

To consider appeals against dismissal and grievances by Chief Officers of Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council.

Joint Officer Appointments Committee

1. Membership and Meeting Arrangements

This is a Joint Committee between Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council.

Membership of the Joint Committee will comprise six Members, three from each authority. In addition, each Authority will be able to appoint one Substitute Member.

The Committee will be appointed annually by the full Council and will be politically balanced.

Any Member of the Council may serve on the Committee provided that they are not also a Member of the Joint Officer Appeals Committee.

The Committee must also contain at least one Member of the Cabinet.

The Committee will appoint its own Chairman and Vice Chairman.

The Committee will meet on an ad hoc basis as required.

2. Functions/Remit

To deal with the appointment, discipline and termination of employment of Joint Directors of Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council.

West Suffolk Joint Standards Committee

1. Membership and Meeting Arrangements

This is a Joint Committee between Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council. Membership of the Joint Committee will comprise six Members, three appointed by each Authority.

To ensure a wide representation across the Authorities, political balance rules do not apply to this Committee.

2. Functions/Remit

The Joint Standards Committee will have the following roles and functions in respect of both Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council:-

- (a) promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Councillors and co-opted Members.
- (b) assisting Councillors and co-opted Members to observe the Members' Code of Conduct.
- (c) advising the Council on the adoption and revision of the Members' Code of Conduct.
- (d) monitoring the operation of the Members' Code of Conduct.
- (e) advising, training or arranging to train Councillors and co-opted Members on matters relating to the Members' Code of Conduct.
- (f) granting dispensations to Councillors and co-opted Members from requirements relating to interests set out in Section 34 of the Localism Act 2011.
- (g) considering a report from the Monitoring Officer in respect of an allegation of a breach of the Members' Code of Conduct.
- (h) dealing with a report from the Monitoring Officer in respect of an allegation of a breach of the Members' Code of Conduct of a Town or Parish Council within the District of Forest Heath and the Borough of St Edmundsbury.

The West Suffolk Joint Standards Committee will not cover the conduct of Officers, for which separate provisions apply.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Council will appoint an Overview and Scrutiny Committee of up to 10 members, or as many as Council determines from time to time, and it will normally be politically balanced. No member of the Cabinet may be a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The primary purpose of the Committee is to improve the delivery of policies and services. To do this it will exercise the following

General Role:-

- (a) review and scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any of the Council's functions (subject to 7.9.1(h) below);
- (b) make reports and recommendations to the Council and the Cabinet in connection with the discharge of any functions;
- (c) consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants;
- (d) question Members of the Cabinet and officers about their views on issues and proposals affecting the area;
- (e) liaise with external organisations operating in the area, whether national, regional or local, to ensure the interests of local people are enhanced by collaborative working;
- (f) exercise the right to "call in", for reconsideration, decisions made but not yet implemented by the Cabinet, in accordance with the rules set out in Part 4 of this Constitution; and
- (g) consider any Councillor Calls for Action referred to it in accordance with the Protocol set out in Part 5 of this Constitution;
- (h) consider any matter which has been placed on the agenda of the committee by any member of the committee in accordance with the rules of procedure in Part 4 of this Constitution;
- (i) act as the crime and disorder committee for the purposes of section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006.

Scrutiny Role

Within its terms of reference, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may:-

- (a) review and scrutinise the decisions made by, and the performance of, the Cabinet, Committees and Council officers both in relation to individual decisions and over time;
- (b) review and scrutinise the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas, and carry out performance management reviews;
- (c) review the adequacy of policies and practices to ensure compliance with statutory and other guidance;

- (d) question Members of the Cabinet, Committees and officers about their decisions and performance, whether generally in comparison with service plans and targets over a period of time, or in relation to particular decisions, initiatives or projects;
- (e) make recommendations to the Cabinet and/or the appropriate Committee arising from the scrutiny process;
- (f) review and scrutinise the performance of other public bodies in the area and invite reports from them by requesting them to address the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and local people about their activities and performance and issues of wider concern;
- (g) question and gather evidence from any person (with their consent);
- (h) assist the Council and the Cabinet in the development of the policy framework by detailed analysis of policy issues and options, including research, and community and other consultation;
- (i) consider and implement mechanisms to encourage and enhance community participation in the development of policy options; and
- (j) consider how collaborative working with external organisations can enhance the interests of local people.

For specific issues, the above work can be carried out by task and finish groups, which will be appointed and managed by the Committee. These groups will draw upon the knowledge and expertise of all Members of the Council.

Holding the Cabinet to Account

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will hold the Cabinet to account for the discharge of its functions. The principal elements by which it will do this are as follows:-

- (a) scrutinising decisions which the Cabinet is planning to take, as set out in the Decisions Plan or of which proper notice is given (including decisions referred to it in accordance with paragraph 6.6.2 of Article 6);
- (b) scrutinising decisions of the Cabinet and individual portfolio holders before they are implemented and if necessary using the "call-in" mechanism to require the decision taker to reconsider the earlier decision;
- (c) scrutinising decisions of the Cabinet or Portfolio Holders after they have been implemented as part of a wider review.

PERFORMANCE AND AUDIT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Council will also appoint a Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee of up to ten members, which will normally be politically balanced. Within its terms of reference the Committee will monitor and scrutinise the performance of the Council's services by having regard to a variety of information, including performance indicators, financial information, reports from external inspections, audit reports, and monitoring of action plans. No member of the Council's Cabinet may be a member of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee will also assist the Council and the Cabinet in the development of the budget framework, and act as the Council's Audit Committee, and the nature of this role is specified in the Procedure Rules in Part 4 of this Constitution.

Finance

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee may exercise overall responsibility for any finances made available to them.

Annual Report

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee must report annually to the full Council on their workings and make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate.

Officers

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee may exercise overall responsibility for the work programme of any officers employed to support their work.

Proceedings of the Committees

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee will conduct their proceedings in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules set out in Part 4 of this Constitution.

Work Programme

The Rules of Procedure in Part 4 of this Constitution will also provide mechanisms to allow all Members of the Council the opportunity to place an item on the agenda of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee.

When practicable, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will publish a forward work programme or list of items likely to be considered over the next four months.

Working Methods

The following principles should be adhered to by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee when carrying out their work:-

- (a) a variety of different approaches and formats for meetings may be used;
- (b) 'task and finish' groups reporting periodically and at the end of reviews to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should be encouraged as the preferred method of scrutiny reviews;
- (c) membership of the Committees and their sub groups (if applicable) should be tailored to ensure appropriate skills and expertise, and external input, are brought to bear;
- (d) when appropriate, full consultation with all other stakeholder groups and organisations should take place;
- (e) the declaration of interest rules shall apply;
- (f) the imposition of the Party Whip is regarded as incompatible with the work of the Council's Scrutiny Committees;
- (g) the chairman and vice-chairman of each Scrutiny Committee will meet at least quarterly with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council to ensure that the work of these Committees is properly co-ordinated; and
- (h) where any Scrutiny Committee is reviewing the work of a Regulatory or other Committee of the Council (as opposed to the Cabinet) it will not scrutinise individual decisions made by such Committees, particularly decisions in respect of development control, licensing, registration, consents and other permissions. In particular, scrutiny will not be an alternative to normal appeals procedures. However, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has the power to make reports and recommendations on functions which are not the responsibility of the Cabinet, an option normally to be used as part of wider policy reviews.

Support

In order that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee can perform its roles properly, it shall be given the following support:-

- (a) effective and properly resourced support from officers;
- (b) appropriate financial resources;
- (c) access to the advice of the Council's Monitoring Officer;
- (d) the ability to require Members of the Cabinet and officers to attend to answer questions;
- (e) specific training and development for all persons who undertake overview and scrutiny duties; and

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- (f) the Decisions Plan, containing details of all the matters likely to be the subject of key decisions, or to be considered in private by the Cabinet, or its Committees or by officers, shall be made available to all Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

In order that the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee can perform its role properly it shall also be given the following support:-

- (a) effective and properly resourced support from officers;
- (b) appropriate financial resources;
- (c) access to external auditors who report direct to the Committee and to the Internal Audit Service Manager; and
- (d) specific training and development as required.