

REPORTS OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 23 OCTOBER 2024

Present: Councillors David Boothroyd (Chairman), Aicha Less, Ellie Ormsby and Paul Swaddle

PLANNING & CITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE & SUB-COMMITTEE FUTURE OPTIONS & COMMITTEE PROPORTIONALITY

- 1) The Head of Governance and Councillor Liaison introduced the report and confirmed that there were two elements to the report. Firstly, the Committee was being asked to assess options to reshape the whole planning committee structure and provide more direction and purpose to the overall system of committees focused on planning matters. Secondly, following the by-elections held on 19 September 2024 consideration was also required on the impact of these results on the political balance of the Council and the number of committee seats allocated to each party.
- 2) The Committee discussed the two planning structure options set out in the report. A concern was raised that reducing the number of committees would result in a lack of flexibility which would include members having to attend more meetings, therefore placing them under significant additional pressure. A query was also raised over whether introducing an informal planning members forum to discuss policy and legislation changes instead of at the Planning & City Development Committee would lead to a lack of transparency.
- 3) Members then discussed the proposal to introduce a smaller parent committee, the Strategic Planning Committee, with two sub-committees sitting underneath it. It was recognised that currently some planning members had to sit on two sub-committees yet only received one special responsibility allowance for doing twice the amount of work and this system had more potential to ensure there was a fairer distribution of work. The Committee noted that planning members would have to sit more frequently under this option but there would not be an increase in the number of applications coming before Members. In terms of introducing a members' forum it was felt this would allow detailed member training to be held along with briefings on planning related matters including policy and legislative changes which it currently was not possible nor appropriate to undertake in a formal committee setting.
- 4) Following a detailed discussion the Committee agreed that Option 2 was the preferred planning committee structure. It was considered that creating a new parent committee with a primary role to determine applications and additional strategic functions akin to some of the listed functions fulfilled previously by the P&CD Committee, offered a more balanced and flexible approach which had the opportunity to produce better outcomes.
- 5) In terms of proportionality the Committee agreed that following the recent by-elections some remediation was required to ensure there was adequate

political balance across all committees. As such, Members agreed that the Opposition Party would receive an extra seat on General Purposes, Audit and Performance and the Pension Fund Committees, totalling an additional three seats.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That Full Council be recommended to adopt Planning Option 2 as set out in the General Purposes Report, namely the creation of a Strategic Planning Committee with two Sub-Committees sitting underneath it, all consisting of three Majority Members and two Opposition Members, along with the adoption of the proposed terms of reference as set in Appendix B.
- 2) That Full Council be recommended to adopt Proportionality Option 2 as set out in the General Purposes Report which would include the Opposition Party receiving an extra seat on the General Purposes Committee, Audit and Performance Committee and the Pension Fund Committee.
- 3) That Full Council be recommended to amend the Member Allowances scheme to make provision for an additional Pension Fund Committee member and other minor adjustments in relation to points 1 & 2 above.

David Boothroyd, Chair

Report/Minutes: General Purposes Committee (23.10.2024)