

**Governance Task Group**

**Planning Committee**

**Key Principles relating to the size of the Membership**

**Task Group responses**

	<b>Key Principle</b>	<b>Task Group response</b>	<b>Best Membership size</b>
<b>KP1</b> <b>Perceived Ward linkage</b>	To move away from the perceived linkage between the number of wards and the membership of the Committee to improve the objectivity of the Committee	Agreed to de-couple the perceived linkage in association with changes to the role of Ward Members at Planning Committee meetings.	Membership size was considered to be unrelated to the number of Wards on the Council.
<b>KP2</b> <b>Strategic decisions</b>	The strategic nature of the decisions	Mixed views in relation to the operation in practice as some applications required the strategic approach whereas others focussed more on local matters/knowledge.	No consensus.  Some Members considered that a smaller Committee would allow for more focussed debate, whereas other Members thought that a bigger Committee allowed for increased diversity on the issues considered.
<b>KP3</b> <b>Membership – an ‘odd’ number</b>	Maintaining an ‘odd’ number of Members to break the deadlock following an equality of voting.	The reality in practice had not impacted on the operation of the Committee so it was considered that an even number of Members would work ok.	An odd or even number of Members would work ok.
<b>KP4</b> <b>Quasi Judicial Nature</b>	Compliant with legal structure and decisions not open to challenge to protect the interests and reputation of the	The recommendations of the Task Group in relation to Executive Members and Ward Members would strengthen the governance of the Committee’s operations and further reduce the possibility of legal	No consensus.  Some Members considered that a smaller Committee would strengthen the governance of

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	authority.	challenge on decisions made.	the Committee, whereas other Members could not see any difficulty with retaining a bigger sized Committee.
<b>KP5</b> <b>Diversity of representations</b>	Allowing for the range of different views to be expressed from a broader range of representatives to maintain diversity	Mixed views. The Task Group was split on the advantages of managing a smaller number of Members on the Committee and the added value of a larger sized Committee that would inherently provide increased diversity.	No consensus.  Some Members considered that a smaller Committee of say 11 would not be disadvantaged. However other Members strongly supported the linkage between a bigger size and consequential increased diversity.
<b>KP6</b> <b>Ward Member removed from decision making</b>	Moving to a principle of not allowing Ward Members to determine applications within their ward or providing a maximum number of Ward Members on the Committee	The role of the Ward Member is proposed to change significantly as part of the Task Group's recommendations.  Provision of an enhanced arrangement for Ward Members is proposed as part of the de-coupling of the relationship between Wards and the Committee size. The proposal includes provision of a dedicated place at the Planning Committee and removing Ward Members from voting in the decision making.	Membership size was considered to be unrelated to Ward Members voting arrangements.
<b>KP7</b> <b>Principles of good governance</b>	Better decisions and good governance is achieved by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• better trained Members on planning policy and protocols;</li> <li>• developed specialist expertise;</li> <li>• ability to make swift and</li> </ul>	The Task Group accepted that the quality of decision making addressed by these key principles were relevant but that other mechanisms such as Member Learning and Development were more appropriate ways of achieving these principles.	The principles were not seen to be a determining factor on choosing the size of the Committee.

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	<p>rigorous and responsible decisions;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• knowledge of relevant factors;</li> <li>• Focussed debate on material issues;</li> <li>• Increased reputational standing; and</li> <li>• Testing the recommendations before the Committee.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>KP8</b></p> <p><b>Ward Member - reserved right to speak</b></p>	<p>Ward Members confirmed as the first speaker in the debate.</p>	<p>It was agreed that the Ward Member should be provided with a dedicated place in the discussions of applications at the Committee which is reflected in the recommendations.</p> <p>It was agreed that debates at the Committee would be managed through the Chairman's discretion.</p>	<p>This principle was not seen to be a determining factor on choosing the size of the Committee.</p>
<p><b>KP9</b></p> <p><b>Substitute Members</b></p>	<p>Substitute Members to replace full Members of the Committee for the consideration of matters in their Ward</p>	<p>This was rejected.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>KP10</b></p> <p><b>Workload requirements</b></p>	<p>The workload requirements on Members would be best managed with a particular Committee size.</p>	<p>The Task Group was unable to establish a linkage to a particular size for the Committee which would provide a better case for managing workloads.</p>	<p>Mixed views were received on this, although it was accepted that a decision would be required in the final report.</p>
<p><b>KP11</b></p> <p><b>Sub Committees</b></p>	<p>Establishing Planning Sub Committees</p>	<p>This was rejected.</p>	<p>N/A</p>

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<b>KP12</b> <b>Conflict of Interest</b>	Reduce the conflict of interest placed on Ward Members and provide more freedom to lobby to reduce potential of pre determination or bias allegations	This is addressed at KP8 above and agreed.	This principle was not seen to be a determining factor on choosing the size of the Committee.
	Members of the Executive to not be Members or Substitute Members of the Committee	Agreed that Executive Members should not be Members or Substitute Members of the Committee and that the Constitution be amended accordingly.	This principle was not seen to be a determining factor on choosing the size of the Committee.
<b>KP13</b> <b>Scheme of Delegation</b>	Changing the levels of decisions delegated to Officers to increase the strategic nature of matters referred to the Planning Committee.	<p>There was some support for changing the levels of decisions made under delegation to reduce the volume of business presented to the Committee, provided that there remained checks and balances for Members to refer such matters to the Committee in appropriate circumstances.</p> <p>Creating a level of representations that automatically resulted in matters referred to the Committee was rejected as it could be misused.</p>	This principle was not seen to be a determining factor on choosing the size of the Committee.