

South Lakeland District Council
Council
Thursday, 11 November 2021
Planning Committee Membership

Portfolio:	Housing Portfolio Holder
Report from:	Director of Strategy, Innovation and Resources
Report Author:	Linda Fisher – Legal, Governance and Democracy Lead Specialist (Monitoring Officer)
Wards:	(All Wards);
Forward Plan:	Not applicable

Links to Council Plan Priorities: Ensuring that the Planning Committee operates in an efficient and effective manner, delivering decisions based on sound planning grounds, assist in meeting the vision, priorities and values of the Council Plan.

1.0 Expected Outcome and Measures of Success

1.1 The purpose of the report is to review the reduction in size of the Membership of the Planning Committee following the 12 month trial period which commenced in September 2020.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that

- (1) the report be noted; and**
- (2) the reduction in size of the Membership of the Planning Committee from 18 to 14, as approved by Council at C/32 (2020/21), be reconfirmed.**

3.0 Background and Proposals

3.1 Council, at its meeting on 28 July 2020, considered a detailed report proposing changes to the Membership of the Planning Committee from 18 to 14 (C/32 (2020/21) refers). The report took into consideration, amongst other things, recommendations of a Peer Review carried out by the Local Government Association Planning Advisory Service in 2015 (Minute No.P/104 (205/16) refers) and Planning Committee attendance statistics for the previous three municipal years.

3.2 At the meeting, Members had approved the reduction in size of the Committee for a trial period of 12 months, including the appointment of three named substitutes from the political groups represented on the Council, those substitutes to receive an allowance of £250.

3.3 Attendance statistics for the past four Municipal Years, including those for meetings of the Planning Committee with reduced Membership between September 2020 and September 2021, are attached as Appendix 1 to the report. These statistics demonstrate that, out of a total of 12 scheduled meetings, four of which were cancelled, there was an average attendance of 13 Members, an average of two apologies and attendance by one Substitute Member per meeting. It is felt that the arrangements

have not resulted in any negative impact on the work of the Committee and, in fact, that the reduced Membership has facilitated better focussed debate and the ability to conduct business more efficiently and effectively, with more consistent decision-making in accordance with legislation and policies.

- 3.4 Members are, therefore, being asked to reconfirm the decision taken at C/32 (2020/21).

4.0 Appendices Attached to this Report

Appendix No.	Name of Appendix
1	Planning Committee meetings attendance statistics

5.0 Consultation

- 5.1 Planning Committee Chair; Portfolio Holder; Leaders of all parties.

6.0 Alternative Options

- 6.1 Council could choose to revert to the previous Membership of 18 or to alter the Membership to a different number.

7.0 Implications

Financial, Resources and Procurement

- 7.1 The reduction in Membership of the Planning Committee in September 2020 from 18 to 14 has resulted in a saving of £250.

Human Resources

- 7.2 None.

Legal

- 7.3 The Planning Committee must operate within the bounds of Planning and Local Government Law and in accordance with the Council's Constitution.
- 7.4 Part 4 (Rules of Procedure) of the Council's Constitution states under paragraph 1.2(b) that the Council will decide the size and terms of reference of committees.

Health and Sustainability Impact Assessment

- 7.4 Have you completed a Health and Sustainability Impact Assessment? No
- 7.5 If you have not completed an Impact Assessment, please explain your reasons: A Health, Social, Economic and Environmental Impact is not required

Equality and Diversity

- 7.7 Have you completed an Equality Impact Analysis? No
- 7.8 If you have not completed an Impact Analysis, please explain your reasons: There are no equality impacts relating to this matter

Risk

Risk	Consequence	Controls required
Political balance implications.	Some smaller political parties may not be represented on the Committee.	Planning is a non-political decision making body.
Committee is not quorate.	Cancelled meetings.	The quorum for a Committee of 14 is four,

Risk	Consequence	Controls required
		and this is considered to be manageable. Together with the substitutes this mitigates the risk.

Contact Officers

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Background Documents Available

Name of Background document	Where it is available
Council Minute No.C/448 (2002/03)	Council minutes of meeting held on 15 October 2002
Report to Planning Committee on 25 February 2016	Planning Committee Agenda for meeting on 25 February 2016
Planning Committee Minute No. P/104 (2015/16)	Planning Committee minutes of meeting held on 25 February 2016
Report to Council on 28 July 2020	Council Agenda for meeting on 28 July 2020
Council Minute No. C/32 (2020/21)	Council minutes of meeting held on 28 July 2020

Tracking Information

Signed off by	Date sent	Date Signed off
Section 151 Officer	27 September 2021	04 October 2021
Monitoring Officer	21 September 2021	21 September 2021
CMT	23 September 2021	23 September 2021

Circulated to	Date sent
Lead Specialist	Report Author
Human Resources Lead Specialist	N/A
Communications Team	N/A
Leader	22 September 2021
Committee Chairman	22 September 2021
Portfolio Holder	22 September 2021
Ward Councillor(s)	N/A
Committee	N/A
Executive (Cabinet)	N/A
Council	5 October 2021