

Local Members' Interest
N/A

## **Planning Committee –2 December 2021**

### **Countryside and Rights of Way Panel Constitution change**

#### **Recommendation/s**

1. For the Planning Committee to note the Countryside and Rights of Way Panel's request to increase the size of the Panel from five Members to seven and remove the provision for substitute members in the constitution.
2. For the Planning Committee to recommend to the County Council a change in the constitution, that the membership of the Countryside and Rights of Way Panel be increased to seven members and to remove the provision for substitute members.

#### **Summary**

The Countryside and Rights of Way Panel is appointed at the first meeting of the Planning Committee following the annual Council meeting in each municipal year. In addition to the five Members of the Panel, five additional Members are also appointed as substitutes to serve on the Panel.

As the Countryside and Rights of Way Panel is currently a Committee of five, in the event of a number of apologies, although may still be quorate, there may only be a small number of Members at Panel. The Countryside and Rights of Way Panel feel that it is not ideal to consider matters as important as dealing with Rights of Way applications as these are usually contentious items, often challenged and the Panel not having full attendance may also be challenged.

To increase the size of the Panel to seven members, would have no impact on quorum of the Panel, but would increase the likelihood to have a good proportion of Members in attendance.

The Constitution extract for Substitute Members in the County Councils Constitution is as follows:

- For consideration of reports on applications for the registration of common land, or town or village greens and Section 53 items the Panel shall operate a formal substitute member system in cases where a full member of the Panel is the local member for the division in which the land is situated.

Following the constitution, the likelihood that a full member of the panel would be the local member for the division in which the land is situated is small, and with all the knowledge and training required to be a Member of the Countryside and Rights of Way Panel, the Panel feel that a substitute member would be disadvantaged due to the rarity of being required to attend which may be open to challenge

## Background

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee must serve as the Chairman and Vice-Chairman (respectively) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Panel

Substitute members are required for consideration of reports on applications for the registration of common land, or town or village greens and for Definitive Map Modification Order applications where a full member of the Panel is the local member for the division in which the land which is the subject of a report is situated.

The current membership of the Panel are as follows:

- Mark Winnington (C)
- David Smith (VC)
- Jak Abrahams
- Paul Snape
- Jill Waring

The current substitutes are as follows:

- Mike Sutherland
- Philip Hudson
- John Francis
- Richard Cox
- Tom Loughbrough Rudd

The terms of reference for the Countryside and Rights of Way Panel can be found using this link:

<http://moderngov.staffordshire.gov.uk/documents/s122772/MergedReWriteSection8.pdf>

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