

SECTION 8

OTHER COMMITTEES

1. Committees

1.1 The County Council will appoint the Committees listed below to perform functions which cannot be dealt with by the Executive. The Committees will be appointed at the Annual Meeting of the County Council under Standing Order 24 of the Procedural Standing Orders in Section 11 of this Constitution.

1.2 The responsibilities and powers of each Committee are listed below and any of their powers that are delegated to officers of the Council are recorded in the Scheme of Delegation to Officers in Section 10 of this Constitution.

2. Planning Committee

2.1 The Planning Committee will be responsible for the discharging the following functions and delegated powers:-

- Deciding applications for planning permission and whether to impose any condition, limitation or other restriction on an approval, consent, licence, permission or registration granted and deciding any other terms to which any such approval, consent, licence, permission or registration is subject.
- Revoking, amending, modifying or varying any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration or any condition, limitation or term to which it is subject.
- Deciding applications to develop land without compliance with conditions previously attached.
- Deciding to grant planning permission for developments already carried out.
- Declining to decide applications for planning permission
- Deciding applications for planning permission made by a local authority, alone or jointly with another person.
- Deciding, giving approvals and agreeing certain other matters relating to the exercise of permitted development rights.
- Deciding to enter into agreement regulating development or use of land.
- Granting consent for the display of advertisements.
- Power to determine applications for hazardous substances consent, and related powers
- Deciding conditions to which old mining permissions, relevant planning permissions relating to dormant sites or active Phase I or II sites, or mineral permissions relating to mining sites, as the case may be, are to be subject.
- Deciding applications for listed building consent, and exercising the related powers and duties.
- Deciding applications for conservation area consent, and exercising the related powers and duties.
- Executing urgent works
- Making limestone pavement orders.
- Exercising the County Council's powers relating to the preservation of trees.
- Deciding whether, and how, to enforce any failure to comply with an approval, consent, licence, permission or registration; or a condition, limitation or term to which such approval, consent, licence, permission or registration is subject; and

any other contravention in relation to a matter with regard to which the function of determining an application for approval, consent, licence, permission or registration would not be the responsibility of the Cabinet. This includes the following powers:-

- To issue a planning contravention notice, breach of condition notice, stop notice (full) or temporary stop notice and to serve a completion notice.
- To require the discontinuance of a use of land.
- To issue or withdraw an enforcement notice and to waive or relax any requirement of the notice
- To apply for an injunction restraining a breach of planning control
- Exercising the County Council's powers and duties relating to Local Development Documents which are Development Plan Documents.
- Agreeing to establish a joint committee to be, for the purposes of Part 2 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, a local planning authority.

2.2 Where the Planning Committee are minded to refuse an application for planning permission which has been submitted on behalf of the Cabinet in respect of a County Council service, the application shall not be determined by the Planning Committee but shall be referred to a Special Ad Hoc Panel comprising five members of the Audit Committee who are not members of the Cabinet, the relevant Scrutiny Committee, or the Planning Committee.

2.3 Meetings of the Planning Committee will be subject to the Procedural Standing Orders in Section 10 of this Constitution and, in addition the Committee has agreed a protocol for Members of the public who have made representations to speak at meetings of the Committee. The operation of this protocol is regularly reviewed and the up to date version can be found at <http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/yourcouncil/committeesold/planningcommittee/default.htm>.

2.4 In addition the Planning Committee will establish a **Countryside and Rights of Way Panel** and **Licensing Panel** of five members of the Committee with full delegated powers to deal with the following matters detailed below.

2.5 **Countryside and Rights of Way Panel**

2.5.1 The Countryside and Rights of Way Panel will be appointed at the first meeting of the Planning Committee in each municipal year. In addition to the five Members of the Panel, five additional Members will be appointed to substitute for any Member of the Panel who is unable to consider a matter on the agenda which affects their Division.

2.5.2 The functions and responsibilities of the Countryside and Rights of Way Panel shall be as follows:-

- Registering common land or town or village greens, except where the power is exercisable solely for the purpose of giving effect to – (a) an exchange of lands effected by an order under section 19(3) of, or paragraph 6(4) of Schedule 3 to, the Acquisition of Land Act 1981 (c.67) or (b) an order under section 147 of the Inclosure Act 1845 (c. 8 & 9 Vict. C 118)
- Registering variation of rights of common
- Authorising erection of stiles etc. on footpaths or bridleways
- The creation of footpaths or bridleways, including by agreement.
- Keeping a register of information with respect to maps, statements and declarations.

- Stopping up footpaths and bridleways.
- Deciding applications for public path extinguishment orders.
- Making rail crossing extinguishment orders.
- Making special extinguishment orders.
- Diverting footpaths and bridleways.
- Making public path diversion orders.
- Making rail crossing diversion orders.
- Making special diversion orders.
- Requiring applicants for orders to enter into agreements.
- Making an Site of Special Scientific Interest diversion order.
- Keeping a register with respect to applications under sections 118ZA, 118C, 119ZA and 119C of the Highways Act 1980.
- Deciding to decline to determine certain applications.
- Exercising the duty to assert and protect the rights of the public to use and enjoyment of highways.
- Exercising the duty to serve notice of proposed action in relation to obstruction.
- Applying for variation of orders under section 130B of the Highways Act 1980.
- Authorising temporary diversions of surface of footpath or bridleway.
- Divert footpaths or bridleways temporarily.
- Exercising functions relating to the making good of damage and the removal of obstructions.
- Exercising powers relating to the removal of things deposited on highways causing a nuisance.
- Extinguishing certain public rights of way.
- Keeping the definitive map and statement under review.
- Including modifications in other orders.
- Keep a register of prescribed information with respect to applications under section 53(5) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
- Reclassifying roads used as public paths.
- Preparing a map and statement by way of consolidation of definitive map and statement.
- Designating footpaths as cycle tracks.
- Authorising stopping up or diversion of highway under Section 247 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1980.
- Authorising stopping-up or diversion of footpath or bridleway under Town and Country Planning Act.
- Extinguishing public rights of way over land held for planning purposes.
- Deciding to enter into agreements with respect to means of access.
- Exercising the power to provide access in absence of agreement.
- Exercising powers relating to the protection of important hedgerows.

2.5.3 Meetings of the Countryside and Rights of Way Panel will be conducted in accordance with the Procedural Standing Orders in Section 10 of this Constitution, however Standing Order 26 (Local Member Interest) will be modified so that Local Members may attend but may not speak.

2.6 Licensing Panel

2.6.1 A Licensing Panel will be appointed by Planning Committee when necessary to deal with matters in respect of the following functions and responsibilities:-

- Keeping a list of persons entitled to sell non-medicinal poisons
- Registering animal trainers and exhibitors
- Licencing the employment of children
- Approving premises for the solemnisation of marriages
- Granting a street works licence
- Licencing agencies for the supply of nurses
- Issuing licences for the sale or movement of pigs and licencing collecting centres for the movement of pigs.
- Issuing licences to move cattle from a market.
- Granting permission for the provision etc. of services, amenities, recreation and refreshment facilities on highway, and related powers
- Publishing notice in respect of proposal to grant permission under Section 115E of the Highways Act 1980
- Permitting deposit of builder's skip on highway
- Licencing planting, retention and maintenance of trees etc in part of highway
- Licencing works in relation to buildings etc. which obstruct the highway
- Consenting to temporary deposits or excavations in streets
- Dispensing with obligation to erect hoarding or fence
- Restricting the placing of rails, beams etc over highways
- Consenting to the construction of cellars etc under street.
- Consenting to the making of openings into cellars etc under streets, and pavement lights and ventilators.
- Sanctioning the use of parts of buildings for storage of celluloid.
- To conduct a public hearing for objections received to applications for licences to manufacture and/or store explosives and to decide whether to assent to the application.

3. The Audit committee

3.1 The purpose of an audit committee is to provide independent assurance of the adequacy of the risk management framework and the associated control of the environment, independent scrutiny of the authority's financial and non-financial performance to the extent that it affects the authority's exposure to risk and weakens the control environment, and to oversee the financial reporting process.

3.2 The Audit Committee has the following functions and responsibilities:-

- To approve authority's statement of accounts, income and expenditure and balance sheet, or record of payments and receipts (as the case may be).
- To approve, monitor, review and amend from time to time the Council's Code of Corporate Governance to ensure that it is adequate and effective.
- To advise on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Authority's internal control environment.
- To liaise with the Audit Commission over the appointment of the council's external auditor.
- To review any issue referred to it by the chief executive or a director, or any council body.
- To monitor the adequacy and effectiveness of the External Audit service and respond to its findings. This will include:-
 - Discussing the nature and scope of the audit of County Council services and functions, and considering the external audit fee and terms of engagement;

- Receiving and considering external audit reports and Management Letters and advise the County Council as appropriate;
- Monitoring the County Council's response to the external auditor's findings and the implementation of external audit recommendations.
- To work with and advise the Director of Finance and Resources in ensuring arrangements for the provision of an adequate and effective Internal Audit.
- To monitor the adequacy and effectiveness of the Internal Audit service and Chief Officers' responsibilities for ensuring an adequate control environment including:-
 - Receiving an annual internal audit plan from the Head of Financial Strategy and Support
 - Monitoring progress against the plan through the receipt of periodic progress reports and an annual Internal Audit report;
 - Receiving and considering major Internal Audit findings and recommendations;
 - Monitoring the response to major findings and the implementation of key recommendations.
- To oversee, review, and make any recommendations on, the effectiveness and operation of the Constitution and any of the provisions of it.
- To divide electoral divisions into polling districts at local Government elections.
- To declare vacancy in office in certain cases.
- To give public notice of casual vacancies for County Councillors
- To determine fees and conditions for supply of copies of, or extracts from, election documents.
- To provide staff etc. to person nominated by the Monitoring Officer
- To determine the voting rights of co-opted members of Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
- To make payments or provide other benefits in cases of maladministration etc.
- To establish Panels of five members of the Committee as and when necessary with full delegated powers to deal with Appeals against:-
 - (a) disciplinary or employment related action or grading from officers
 - (b) dismissal from teachers employed in Education Support Units
 - (c) Any executive decision where the law requires that a person shall have a right of appeal within the Council against that decision and for which no other provision is made under this Constitution
- To establish Panels of five members of the Committee who are not Members of the Cabinet, relevant Scrutiny Committee or Planning Committee to deal with Planning Applications referred to it under Paragraph 2.2 of this section
- To the extent that it relates to a function which is not a function of the Executive, authorising a person to exercise a function to which Section 70 of the Deregulation and Contracting Out Act 1994 applies, and revoking that authority.
- To deal with any other matter involving a regulatory, judicial, quasi-judicial or licensing function of the County Council which by law cannot be the responsibility of the Executive and for which no other provision is made in this Constitution.

4. Pensions Committee

- 4.1 The Pensions Committee will have full delegated powers to deal with all Functions relating to Local Government Pensions on behalf of the County Council.

4.2 The terms of reference of the Pensions Committee will be:-

- To decide and set from time to time:-
 - The strategic asset allocation and objectives of the Staffordshire County Council Pension Fund (“the Pension Fund”);
 - The strategic benchmarks for the performance of the Pension Fund against which the actual performance is to be measured;
 - The strategic targets against which the performance of the Pensions Panel and Fund Managers is to be measured;
 - The arrangements for consultation with the stakeholders that have an interest in the affairs of the Pension Fund.
- To review at not more than yearly intervals the performance of the Pension Fund and the Pensions Panel against the strategic objectives, benchmarks and targets set by them and to consider if, and to what extent, any change may be necessary to ensure the efficient and effective performance of the Pension Fund;
- To approve and keep under review the Statement of Investment Principles and Funding Strategy Statement.
- To maintain a Communication Strategy.
- To approve the Pension Fund Annual Report and Accounts.
- To receive a report at least annually on pensions administration activities.
- To approve and keep under review the Fund’s Additional Voluntary Contribution (AVC) arrangements.
- To approve the formal Actuarial Valuation.
- To approve the admission of employing organizations to the Fund where there is discretion to do so.
- To have due regard to the advice of the Chief Finance Officer and to the advice of Consultants appointed by the Committee for the purpose (the appointment of whom may be made by the Committee on such terms and conditions and for such duration as the Committee may consider appropriate) with expertise in either or both of the following fields:-
 - Actuarial matters and Risk/Liability assessment
 - Investment Strategy and Allocation;
- To monitor from time to time the advice received from Consultants.
- To have regard to the advice of the Pensions Panel on matters referred to the Committee for consideration by the Panel and to call for advice from any Adviser or Manager who could have been asked by the Pensions Panel to give the Panel advice.
- If the Pensions Committee shall disregard the advice of Consultants their reasons for so doing shall be recorded in the minutes of the Committee.
- To deal with any other matters arising in respect of Local Government Pensions.
- To Appoint a Pensions Panel of five Members of the Committee.

4.3 The Pensions Panel

- 4.3.1 The Pensions Committee will constitute a Pensions Panel of five members of the Committee with full delegated powers to deal as and when appropriate with the following matters:-

- The structure of the management arrangements necessary to achieve the effective management of the Pension Fund to meet the objectives set by the Pensions Committee;
- The selection, appointment and dismissal of, and the monitoring of the performance of, the Managers of the Pension Fund;
- The allocation of the assets of the Pension Fund and the generic selection of asset portfolios in order to meet the objectives set by the Pensions Committee;
- The monitoring of the performance of the Pension Fund and its portfolios on a regular and routine basis across all sectors of investment and management and the reporting arrangements to Panel may require from time to time for this purpose;
- To agree from time to time any restrictions to be placed on any one or more Managers of the Pension Fund as to particular classes of authorised investment or decisions they may take on behalf of the Pension Fund or as to the exercise of voting rights;

4.3.2 The Pensions Panel will review regularly and make recommendations to the Pensions Committee on the following matters:-

- Strategic Asset Allocation.
- Strategic Benchmarks.
- Strategic Performance Targets.
- The performance of Fund Investment Managers.
- The Statement of Investment Principles and the Funding Strategy statement.
- Legislative, financial and economic changes which impact on the investment activity of the Fund.
- The advice from advisers appointed by the Panel.

4.3.3 The Pensions Panel shall have regard to the advice of the Chief Finance Officer and to the advice of Independent Advisers appointed by the Panel for the purpose (the appointment of whom may be made by the Panel on such terms and conditions and for such duration as the Panel may consider appropriate) with expertise in any one or more of the following fields:-

- Tactical Asset Allocation/Investment Strategy Implementation;
- Equities/Stocks/Shares/Securities (whether in UK or Overseas)
- Property
- Bonds and Gilt-edged Investments
- Manager Selection and Performance Monitoring;

and to the advice of any one or more Managers of the Pension Fund as the Panel may request.

4.3.4 The Pensions Panel may make recommendations to the Pensions Committee on any other matter whether or not it falls within the delegated powers available to the Pensions Panel.

5. The Standards Committee

5.1 The County Council's Standards Committee will be composed of six County Councillors and three persons who are not County Councillors or officers of the

County Council or any other body having a Standards Committee (Independent Members).

- 5.2 Only one member of the Cabinet (but not the Leader of the Council) may be a member of the Standards Committee and that member may not be the Chairman of the Committee.
- 5.3 The Independent Members of the Standards Committee shall be entitled to vote and one of them shall be the Chairman of the Committee.
- 5.4 The Standards Committee will have full delegated powers to exercise the following roles and functions:-
- To promote and maintain a high standard of conduct by County Councillors and church and parent governor representatives.
 - To oversee the Registers of Members Interests.
 - To oversee the effectiveness of the Council's procedures for investigating and responding to complaints about Councillors.
 - To assist County Councillors and church and parent governor representatives to observe the Members' Code of Conduct and Protocols in place from time to time.
 - To advise the County Council on the adoption or revision of the Members' Code of Conduct and Protocols of the County Council and to monitor its operation.
 - To advise, train, or arrange to train County Councilors and co-optees on matters relating to the Members' Code of Conduct and Protocols.
 - To grant dispensations to County Councilors and co-optees from requirements relating to interests set out in the Members' Code of Conduct.
 - To establish two sub-committees of three members (chosen by the Chairman of the Standards Committee) each chaired by one of the Committee's Independent Members. One sub Committee will be responsible for dealing with the Assessment of Complaints and the other will be responsible for the Review of Assessments.
 - To consider and act on any reports from a case tribunal or an interim case tribunal and any report from the Monitoring Officer on any matter which is referred by an Ethical Standards officer to the Monitoring Officer.
 - To convene and conduct a hearing and to make a determination in relation to any matter which the Standards Committee is responsible for determining; to conduct such hearing using such procedures as it considers appropriate, including the establishment of Sub-Committees; to make such finding as it considers appropriate within those which it is entitled to make by law; to impose such sanction as it considers appropriate within those which it is entitled to impose by law; and to give such notices of its findings as are required by law.
 - To advise the County Council on the adoption or revision of Codes of Conduct, Protocols and Guidance relating to the officers of the County Council and to approve amendments to them where they are not incorporated within the Council's Constitution.
 - To monitor, review and oversee the County Council's arrangements in respect of ethical governance.