

**ITEM NO. 12**

**REPORT TO THE COUNCIL MEETING OF 30 JULY 2018**

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**Meeting:** Council  
**Date:** 30 July 2018  
**Subject:** Planning Committee Membership  
**Report of:** Verina Wenham- Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer  
**Portfolio Holder:**  
**Status:** Decision  
**Relevant Ward(s):** All

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- 1 Purpose Report
- 1.1 For Council to consider the size of the membership of the Planning Committee
- 2 Recommendations:
- 2.1 **The Council to consider reducing the membership of the Planning Committee from twelve to 9 members; and**
- 2.2 **Subject to approval of 2.1 that the quorum for meetings of the Planning Committee is at least 5; and**
- 2.3 **That subject to the approval of 2.1 and 2.2 above the changes are implemented on 31 July 2018; and**
- 2.4 **The Monitoring Officer is authorised to amend the Constitution to reflect the change in membership and quoracy of the Planning Committee as approved.**
- 3 Summary of Reasons for the Recommendations
- 3.1 As set out in paragraph 5.4 below.
- 4 Impact on Communities
- 4.1 None as far as this report is concerned.

## 5 Key Facts

- 5.1 The composition and terms of reference for all of the Council's committees are set out in the Constitution. The Council has delegated to the Planning Committee its functions as local planning authority, which are detailed in Part 3 Section B of the Constitution.
- 5.2 Part 3 Section B1.2 sets out the membership of the Planning Committee, which is currently 12 members and politically balanced, with a quorum of seven members.
- 5.3 During 2016/17 the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) carried out a review of the electoral arrangement for the district of Harborough. This has resulted in a reduction in the number of councillors from 37 to 34 from the next district council elections in May 2019.
- 5.4 Following discussions with the Chairman of the Planning Committee and the Leader and the Portfolio holder, it has been suggested that the Council should consider reducing the size of the Planning Committee in readiness for the reduction in the number of councillors next year, whilst at the same time ensuring that there is an appropriate number of members to call upon, who are fully trained and conversant with the responsibilities of the Planning Committee, which will retain public confidence in its operation. Currently the Planning Committee is the largest committee of the Council (along with Licensing and Regulatory). The membership of the Ethical Governance Committee and Constitutional Review Committee were reduced from 12 to 7 in May 2016, and whilst the Licensing and Regulatory Committee remains at 12 it meets on an irregular basis
- 5.5 It is proposed that consideration is given to reducing the size of the Planning Committee from 12 to 9. The Planning Committee has the highest profile of any of the Council's committees and has the highest public attendance at its meetings. To ensure public confidence in the democratic profile of the committee it is not suggested that there is a similar reduction in numbers in line with the committees referred to in 5.4 above. The Planning Committee must be politically balanced. If there were a reduction in the size of the committee from 12 to 9 this would currently result in a membership of seven conservatives and two liberal democrats. .
- 5.7 Under the current arrangements the Planning Committee is quorate with at least 7 members present, which equated to over 50% of the membership. . This is different to other committees which require 25%. It is suggested that quorum for the Planning Committee should be five members.

## 6 Legal Issues

- 6.1 It is a function of Council to determine the membership of its committees.

7 Resource Issues

7.1 A reduction in the membership of the Planning Committee would see a potential reduction in member expenses but this would be minimal

8 Equality Implications

8.1 None as far as this report is concerned.

9 Impact on the Organisation

9.1 None as far as this report is concerned

10 Community Safety Implications

10.1 None as far as this report is concerned

11. Carbon Management Implications

11.1 None as far as this report is concerned

12. Risk Management Implications

12.1 None as far as this report is concerned

13 Consultation

13.1 The Leader has consulted with the Portfolio holder and the Chairman of the Planning Committee

14 Options Considered

14.1 There is no legal requirement to reduce the membership of the Planning Committee at this stage. There is a requirement that the Planning Committee is politically balanced, in accordance with the proportionality rules in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

15 Background Papers

15.1 Local Government Act 1972; Local Government and Housing Act 1989

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**Previous report(s):**

**Information Issued Under Sensitive Issue Procedure:**

**Ward Members Notified:**

**Appendices:**