

MINUTES OF THE MEETING STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY, 13TH NOVEMBER, 2025, 7.00 - 7.26 PM

PRESENT:

Councillors: Barbara Blake, Erdal Dogan, Ibrahim Ali (Chair), Scott Emery and Simmons-Safo

60. FILMING AT MEETINGS

RESOLVED:

The filming at meetings notice was noted

61. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were none.

62. URGENT BUSINESS

There was none.

63. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

64. MINUTES

The Committee discussed the minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on the 30 June 2025 as a correct record.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on the 30 June 2025 were agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

65. CHANGES TO THE PLANNING PROTOCOL

The Director of Planning & Building Standard introduced the report.

It was explained that the proposed changes to the Planning Protocol were to ensure good practice was followed when Members determine planning applications, that processes would be transparent and would assist resident involvement in those determinations. It was noted that general changes to the Planning Protocol were outlined, which included a removal of duplications, clarified the Committee running order, stressed that decisions were not to be made on a party political basis, rename

the Development Management Forum to the Planning Forum for clarity, and other administrative changes.

Members noted that they welcomed the proposed changes outlined in the report, which would support the planning process in the Council.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee:

1. Considered the proposed changes to the Planning Protocol shown in track changes in Appendix 2 and recommended adoption of those changes by Full Council on 24 November 2025.

66. CHANGES TO THE FINANCIAL REGULATIONS.

The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources (S151) introduced the report.

It was explained that the Financial Regulations within the Council's Constitution were overdue for review, noting that the changes proposed would bring additional financial rigour.

It was explained that the Council would look to undertake extensive engagement with budget holders to ensure that they align with the proposed new finance regulations and requirements within the Constitution.

It was stressed that there was a requirement within the proposals to strengthen the accountability for budget managers, including a requirement for budget holders to remain within budget and for Corporate Directors to notify the Section 151 Officer of all underspends, over-recovery of income or windfall benefits arising within revenue and capital budgets.

It was noted there were also some administrative changes which were included within the report.

Members welcomed the additional financial controls that were contained within the report.

RESOLVED:

That the Standards Committee:

1. Endorsed the proposed changes to the Financial Regulations set out at Appendix 1 to Full Council in November 2025.

67. PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE COUNCIL'S CONTRACT STANDING ORDERS

The Chief Procurement Officer introduced the report.

It was explained that the proposed amendments to the Contract Standing Orders (CSO's) were intended to address some minor omissions following the revised CSO's introduced in March 2025 and some audit recommendations.

It was noted that the proposed changes would allow Directors to be able to vary or extend a contract, where the aggregated value of the award, variation or extension is less than £500,000. This would be consistent with Delegated powers afforded to Directors elsewhere in the Constitution.

It was also noted that the provisions would tighten rules around contract Letters of Intent and that the Chief Procurement Officer is advised of all contract novation's.

Members welcomed the changes outlined in the report

RESOLVED:

That the Standards Committee:

1. Recommended that the Council adopt the proposed revised Part Four of the Constitution, Section J Contract Standing Orders.
2. The Standards Committee noted and recommend that Council approve the following key amendments:
 - a. Directors may approve extensions and variations of contracts with an aggregated value of less than £500,000;
 - b. Letters of Intent would be restricted to 50% of the contract value, where the contract value is £100,000 or less.
 - c. Directors would record decisions to novate contracts and notify the Chief Procurement Officer of such decisions.

68. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Cllr Simmons-Safo joined the meeting at 7.12pm

It was outlined by officers that that Central Government had published its response to Strengthening the standards and conduct framework for local authorities in England consultation. It was explained that this could have future implications on Standards Committees, that the Committee agreed to receive a future report.

It was suggested that the Committee undertake a review of the Member-Officer Protocol to ensure that it is fit for purpose.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Committee noted the work programme and agreed to undertake a future review of the Member-Officer Protocol and the Strengthening the standards and conduct framework for local authorities in England consultation.

69. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

There was none.

70. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

RESOLVED:

The dates of future meetings were noted.

71. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no exempt items.

72. NEW ITEMS OF EXEMPT URGENT BUSINESS

There were none.

CHAIR: Councillor Ibrahim Ali

Signed by Chair

Date