



WEST OXFORDSHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

## WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Name and date of Committee	<b>Lowlands Area Planning Sub-Committee Monday 14 December 2020</b>
Report Number	<b>Agenda Item No. 7</b>
Subject	<b>Future Frequency of Meetings of the Sub-Committee</b>
Wards affected	All in the Lowlands Area
Accountable member	Councillor Ted Fenton, Chair of the Lowlands Area Planning Sub-Committee Email: <a href="mailto:ted.fenton@westoxon.gov.uk">ted.fenton@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Accountable officer	Keith Butler, Head of Democratic Services Tel: 01993 861521 Email: <a href="mailto:keith.butler@westoxon.gov.uk">keith.butler@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	To consider a possible change in the frequency of meetings of the Sub-Committee, such that it aims to meet on a four weekly cycle rather than once a month.
Annexes	None
Recommendation	That the Sub-Committee considers this report and gives a view to be considered by Council when it approves a programme of meetings for 2021/22.
Corporate priorities	N/A
Key Decision	N/A
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	None

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1. This report asks the Sub-Committee to consider a change in the frequency of its meetings, such that it would generally meet every four weeks rather than once a month.

## **2. MAIN POINTS**

- 2.1. For many years, both of the Area Planning Sub-Committees have met once a month. Uplands has usually been on the first Monday of the month, and latterly Lowlands on the second, although bank holidays, the Christmas period and elections all mean that this is not always the case.
- 2.2. This report asks the Sub-Committee to consider whether it would support a change such that it would generally meet every four weeks, starting after the annual meeting of the Council on May 2021. Planning officers advise that because of the additional time to prepare items for “virtual meetings” they have restricted referrals to committee to only applications required under the scheme of delegations. Prior to this the practice had been to refer some of the more controversial or strategic delegated decisions to members, and an extra meeting in the schedule each year would allow this desirable practice to resume.
- 2.3. Equally importantly, a change would additionally have the advantage that it would be easier to meet statutory deadlines as there would not be four five-week gaps built into the process.
- 2.4. By the time of this meeting, a similar report will have been considered by Uplands (at its meeting on 7 December), and account will be taken of the outcome of consideration by both Sub-Committees when a report is presented to Council on 20 January 2021 relating to the programme of meetings for 2021/2022.
- 2.5. In prior consultation with the Chair of the two Sub-Committees it was commented that some recent agendas/meetings have been very short, and suggested that there should be a proviso that if there is no business for a particular meeting which cannot await a future meeting, the Chair may agree to its cancellation. The Sub-Committee may wish to include this in its consideration of the matter.

## **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1. There would be minimal additional cost arising from an extra meeting of each of the Sub-Committees during the course of a year and indeed it may help to spread out the resources to service such meetings thereby reducing the burden on staff.

## **4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1. The report has no legal implications.

## **5. ALTERNATIVES/OPTIONS**

- 5.1. The Sub-Committee is free to agree to a change, to retain the current system, or to suggest something different.

## **6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 6.1. None