



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Name and date of Committee	STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE - 20 MAY 2026
Subject	APPOINTMENT OF PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE
Wards affected	None
Accountable member	Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee
Accountable officer	Andrew Brown – Head of Democratic and Electoral Services. Email: andrew.brown@westoxon.gov.uk
Report author	Anne Learmonth – Democratic Services Officer. Email: anne.learmonth@westoxon.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To invite the Strategic Planning Committee to appoint members to the Development Management Sub-Committee for 2026.
Annexes	Annex A – Development Management Sub-Committee nominations (to follow)
Recommendation(s)	That the Strategic Planning Committee resolves to: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Appoint 12 members to the Development Management Sub-Committee in accordance with political proportionality and the wishes of political groups (5 Liberal Democrat, 4 Conservative, 2 Labour, 1 Green), as set out in Annex A.2. Note that any Member of a Member's political group, having undertaken planning training, is permitted to substitute for a Member of the Development Management Sub-Committee, in accordance with the wishes of the Member being substituted.
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working Together for West Oxfordshire
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Leaders of political groups that are entitled to seats on the sub-committee have been asked to nominate members.

I. BACKGROUND

- I.1** In September and October 2025, the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) undertook a review of the planning committee function at West Oxfordshire District Council ('the Council').
- I.2** Following the review, on 25 March 2026, Council agreed to rename the Development Control Committee to "Strategic Planning Committee", with effect from the start of the 2026/27 civic year. Council also agreed to combine the two-area planning sub-committees (Lowlands and Uplands) into a single, district-wide 12-Member "Development Management Sub-Committee" (quorum 3), with effect from the start of the 2026/27 civic year.
- I.3** The Council's Constitution provides that the Strategic Planning Committee will appoint a Development Management Sub-Committee.
- I.4** The responsibilities detailed below relate to the Development Management Sub-Committee who shall have the following power in respect of decisions in relation to all wards in the District.
 - To determine planning applications, other than those of strategic significance that affect the District as a whole, the terms of planning agreements and such other matters as are considered appropriate from time to time, excluding matters relating to policy.
 - To refer planning applications to the Strategic Planning Committee where appropriate.
 - To determine matters relating to planning as a Local Planning Authority excluding strategic planning matters such as the preparation, adoption and review of the Council's statutory Local Development Plan and representation of the Local Planning Authority's view to other bodies as appropriate on strategic planning matters.
 - Without prejudice to the Council's Scheme of Delegation, the Development Management Sub-Committee shall be responsible for those matters set out in Part A (Functions relating to Town and Country Planning and Development Control) of Schedule 1 to the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000.
- I.5** The power to appoint members to sub-committees lies with the "parent" committee i.e. the Strategic Planning Committee.

4. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE.

- 4.1** It is proposed that the Strategic Planning Committee appoints 12 members of the committee to the Development Management Sub-Committee for the 2026/27 municipal year, in accordance with political proportionality, as set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Political proportionality on the Development Management Sub-Committee

Group	Liberal Democrat	Conservative	Labour	Green	Total
Real entitlement	4.90	3.92	1.96	0.98	11.76*
Rounded entitlement	5	4	2	1	12
Seats allocated	5	4	2	1	12

**This figure does not sum to 12 due to the impact of one non-grouped councillor on overall proportionality.*

5. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

5.1 The Constitution provides that any Member of a Member's political group, with the requisite training, is permitted to substitute for a Member of the Development Management Sub-Committee, in accordance with the wishes of the Member being substituted.

5.2 Planning training is scheduled to take place on 1 June 2026 and is open to all councillors.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The legal issues relating to the appointment of sub-committees are detailed in the body of the report.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT

8.1 Appointing a sub-committee in accordance with the provisions of the law and the Constitution will help to ensure that planning applications can be determined in a timely fashion and will reduce the risk of decisions being successfully challenged.

9. EQUALITIES IMPACT

9.1 The Strategic Planning Committee is advised to have due regard to the need to promote equalities when appointing the Sub-Committee.

10. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no climate or ecological implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

11. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

11.1 If the Strategic Planning Committee wishes to change the size of the planning sub-committee it could pass a resolution requesting that officers bring a report to a future meeting with alternative proposals.

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1 None

(END)