

Annex B: RAG rated PAS review action plan

Rec No.	Recommendation	Responsible Department	Officer Comments	Actions
<b>Red – requires Council decision</b>				
I.1- Committees – Review number, Title and Purpose	Review the title and purpose of the DC Committee, as the ‘DC Committee’ title seems inappropriate and fails to announce its purpose.	Democratic Services	The name of the committee is largely due to historic practices and officers agree with the recommendations to update the name. This will be considered as part of the recommendation to review the need for the two area sub-committees	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consult with CWG on renaming the Development Control Committee e.g. Strategic Planning Committee – name tbc based on final committee structure below.</li> </ol>
I.2 - Committees – Review number, Title and Purpose	<p>Review the need for 2 area sub-committee with so few applications, amalgamate them to one committee to reduce cost, enable a more efficient planning service and consistent decision making.</p> <p>Note: refer to PAS modernising planning committees national survey 2025 and technical consultation on reforms to Planning Committees</p>	Democratic Services	The basis for the two are planning sub-committees is that Members can feed in specific knowledge about the north and south of the district (with a key difference being that the north is largely in the Cotswold National Landscape area). However, the PAS guidance strongly discourages councils from having planning committees split by geographic area. In the case of WODC, the peer reviewers did not find this to be a strong enough reason. They were more supportive of retaining a review mechanism in being able to refer	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consult with CWG on option to combine the Uplands and Lowlands Planning Sub-Committees into one committee, rename the new body e.g. Development Management Sub-Committee.</li> <li>2. The Independent Remuneration Panel would need to be consulted on any proposed changes as there would be implications for member allowances i.e. Currently the Chair of Development Control Committee is paid a very small</li> </ol>

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			<p>applications to a separate/higher body (which is currently the Development Control Committee). It was also noted in the report that many of the sub-committees have had a low volume of applications.</p> <p>Officers agree that combining the two sub-committees into one sub-committee would save taxpayers money (savings made on officer time which could be used elsewhere and member expenses), enable efficiency and more consistency across decision making.</p> <p>Members raised points about local knowledge, distances for site visits, the size of meetings, the 3-hour time limit (option for overspill meetings), and the need for contributions to be disciplined.</p> <p>Members requested data on the length of uplands and lowlands meetings to support decision-making.</p>	<p>allowance but is always the chair of one of the planning sub-committees, which is the majority of the source of their special responsibility allowances.</p> <p>3. Full Council approval of the final committee structure, ideally at the March 2026 meeting.</p>
2.3 – Committee Organisation and Process	Amend the speaker’s protocol to lengthen the time-period available for the applicant/objector	Democratic Services	Officers have considered this proposal and consulted with other authorities through the Association of Democratic Services Officers. The public speaking rules have been reviewed very	<p>1. Consult with the Working Group on officer recommendation that the speaker’s protocol is not changed, or to separate out the</p>

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	depending on whether the Parish are supporting or objecting to the application, to ensure balance (timewise) of views are heard by the committee.		recently. Officers consider that the proposal has some merit but also disadvantages and that the current arrangements remain fit for purpose.  Members felt there wasn't an imbalance as applicants have a lot of opportunity to engage with the planning service over and above public participants and members see the written objections/comments.	Applicant/Agent from Supporters (affording 3 mins to each).
2.4 – Committee Organisation and Process	Review Members' Planning Code of Good Practice, introduce a clearer protocol and training regarding role demarcation at committee (voting member, ward councillor).	Democratic Services	There is currently no written protocol for ward members, so one will be put in place.  Members agreed with the need for greater clarity about the role and positioning of ward members at the meeting and the need to avoid perceptions of pre-determination.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review Members Planning Code of Good Practice.</li> <li>2. Development a clearer protocol on ward members at planning meetings.</li> <li>3. Consult with CWG on the protocol and whether it should form part of the Constitution.</li> </ol>
2.5 – Committee Organisation and Process	Amend the protocol to ensure that the motion that is being voted upon is clear to all taking part and viewing the item by (i) The Chair clearly sets out the motion that is to be voted upon; (ii) if comments are made or questions asked by members of the Committee before the	Democratic Services	Again, there is currently no written procedure for the order of proceedings at planning meetings so one will be introduced to include this.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish an order of proceedings for planning meetings, informed by PAS and best practice from other authorities.</li> <li>2. Consult with the Working Group on the proposed order of proceedings and whether it should form part of the Constitution.</li> </ol>

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	<p>vote, the Chair clearly sets out what is included in the motion and what is not, and repeats the motion immediately before the vote; and (iii) for absolute clarity for those watching, after the vote is taken, the chair clearly states what has been voted on and the decision that has been made.</p>			
<p><b>Amber- officer decision but requires consultation with members</b></p>				
<p>2.2– Committee Organisation and Process</p>	<p>Amend the committee procedures to allow the officers to present the site, surroundings and context of the application but also to follow on immediately to present the proposal and highlight the key issues that have led to the officer recommendation. Members can then be given the opportunity to question the officers to clarify any points in advance of the</p>	<p>Democratic Services</p>	<p>There is currently no written procedure for the order that applications are presented in, but this would help the clarity and flow of the meeting.</p> <p>Members felt that the current approach has merits and were concerned about the optics of presentations being given in full prior to public participation. Also raised the importance of officers having a right to reply.</p> <p>A middle ground e.g. not splitting the presentation but allowing the officers a right to reply to the speakers within the</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish an order of proceedings for planning committee, informed by PAS and best practice from other authorities.</li> <li>2. Consult with the CWG on the proposed order of proceedings and whether it should form part of the Constitution.</li> </ol>

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	<p>speakers. This will give members a clearer understanding of what is being proposed and what the material planning consideration are at the beginning of the item. Following the speakers officers should be asked to address any matters that have been referred to by the speaker that are not material, or where they feel factual clarification is required, prior to the Members debating the item.</p>		<p>procedure could be explored to address member concerns while still addressing the recommendations.</p>	
<p>2.7 – Committee Organisation and Process</p>	<p>Delegated Decisions- introduce their electronic communication to members, and/or ask for them to be noted en masse and take a questions by exception.</p>	<p>Planning</p>	<p>Members can sign up for electronic public access alerts on the planning portal and select the wards they are interested in. Officers would support publishing a monthly list on the Portal as an alternative to delegated decisions being noted at meetings.</p> <p>Members commented that the delegated decisions take up very little committee</p>	<p>I. Consult CWG on delegated decisions being communicated electronically outside of meetings and/or dealt with by exception at meetings.</p>

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			time and members like to see them, so they could be taken by exception rather than paged-through at meetings.	
4.1 - Officer and Member Relationship and Chairing Committees	Pre meetings to take place at least two working days in advance of the committee to enable Chairs (and potentially other Councillors) concerns with the information provided in the report, or need for additional information, to be identified and provided to the committee to aid their decision making.	Planning/Democratic Services	Accepted, as this is largely the existing schedule. Schedule to be set in advance and Chairs to be made aware at appointment.  Members welcomed this approach, which is already current practice.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Schedule pre-meetings to take place at least two working days in advance of meetings.</li> <li>2. Clarify expectations when communicating with political groups to seek nominations.</li> </ol>
4.2 - Officer and Member Relationship and Chairing Committees	Provide all Chairs and Vice Chairs with specific training and provide Chairs with Peer Support – for example by attending PAS-run leadership essential courses	Planning/Democratic Services	The Council has provided annual planning training which was well attended, as well as ‘chairing skills’ training, which was available to all current and aspiring committee chairs, and has signposted to LGA courses including the PAS leadership essential course.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review training and support</li> <li>2. Schedule chairing skills training early in the new civic year.</li> <li>3. Consult A&amp;G on induction and training plans in March 2026.</li> </ol>

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Green – officer implementation subject to CWG approval. No further consultation with members is needed.				
2.6 – Committee Organisation and Process	The electronic voting system is an excellent, clear and transparent approach to decision making but more training is required to operate it consistently and for the viewer to see the decision that has been taken the slides need to remain on screen until after the vote is registered electronically.	Democratic Services	<p>The positive feedback on the electronic voting system is welcome and the suggestions for improvements are noted.</p> <p>The Democratic Services team have had training. While we will be more aware of this issue this is a partial limitation of the system, which requires a lot of manual input to display votes and is sometimes therefore prone to user error. This can be mitigated by ensuring the Chairs of the sub-committees/ a future potential committee are aware of the need to ensure the vote is visible at home.</p> <p>Members noted the need for voting to be clear to all, including those viewing at home.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Make chairs aware of the issues around electronic voting and the need for results to be made clear for those watching the webcast.</li> <li>2. Broadcast voting by individuals during live votes.</li> </ol>
2.8 – Committee Organisation and Process	Refer to <a href="#">LGA Probity in Planning</a> , <a href="#">PAS best practice guidance on schemes of delegation</a> and <a href="#">Planning Committee Protocols</a> in undertaking your review of	Planning/ Democratic Services	Accepted.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review planning committee protocols.</li> <li>2. Review Members’ Planning Code of Good Practice.</li> <li>3. Consult CWG on any proposed changes.</li> </ol>

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	the committee procedures, Members' Planning Code of Good Practice			
3 - Statutory Consultees and Other Responses	Provide specific member training regarding the role of statutory consultees, and the material planning considerations, legislation and Government policy, to avoid straying into other regimes.	Planning/Democratic Services	Annual training already provided, and these topics are covered within that. Training to be made mandatory within constitution yearly.  Members welcomed additional training.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue to provide an annual planning training session for members at the start of the civic year.</li> <li>2. Explore the option of PAS providing a tailored training session for WODC Councillors.</li> <li>3. Hold a mock committee prior to first committee meeting(s) in new civic year.</li> </ol>
4.3 - Officer and Member Relationship and Chairing Committees	Create a regular forum for Officers (Planning, Democratic Services, Legal) and the Chairs of the Planning Committees to discuss issues impacting committee, and improvements, as a feedback loop – including what training is required.	Democratic Services	Members and Officers welcome this suggestion.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Meetings to be set up on a twice-yearly basis.</li> </ol>
4.4 - Officer and Member Relationship and Chairing Committees	An officer, not the case officer, to proof-read all committee reports.	Planning	Case officers' reports are checked by the Principal Planners and the Principal Planners' reports are checked by the Development Manager.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue current practice.</li> </ol>

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<p>5.1 - Review the Legal and Senior Officer Representation at the Planning Committee Meetings</p>	<p>The current legal representation should be reviewed and resources provided for a specialist planning lawyer to attend all planning committees (in person) and be involved in pre committee preparation.</p>	<p>Legal Services/ Planning</p>	<p>The current practice is that specialist planning support is requested via the Head of Legal on a case by case basis. It is not considered necessary or a good use of time for legal services to attend every meeting.</p> <p>Members supported legal representation at meetings on a case by case basis.</p>	<p>1. Continue current practice of the Planning Service requesting legal support at meetings from the Head of Legal Services on a case-by-case basis.</p>
<p>5.2 - Review the Legal and Senior Officer Representation at the Planning Committee Meetings</p>	<p>Senior Planning officers should review their representation at the Planning Committees, to support more junior officers, and intervene when gravitas, knowledge and/or experience are required</p>	<p>Planning</p>	<p>Senior Officers are currently attending as required. This will be reviewed.</p> <p>Members welcomed this suggestion.</p>	<p>1. Senior Officer(s) to attend meetings when needed to support colleagues.</p>
<p>7 – Training</p>	<p>Provide planning training for Town and Parish Chairs and Clerks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PAS - Defensible decision including housing land supply and tilted balance.</li> </ul>	<p>Planning/ Democratic Services</p>	<p>Planning training is currently provided by the Council through the OALC.</p> <p>Training will be delivered after the elections on standards, and a combined session on these topics will be delivered by WODC officers.</p>	<p>1. Offer planning (and standards) training to town and parish councillors and clerk post-election.</p> <p>2. Signpost town and parish councillors to PAS and other relevant planning training.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PAS - Defensible decision case study training.</li> <li>• Policy topic specific training.</li> </ul> <p>Consultations, regulatory roles and the role of statutory consultees in planning. application decision making e.g. Thames Water.</p>		<p>Signposting to PAS training.</p> <p>To consider providing PAS training to WODC members.</p>	
Grey – Paused				
6.1 - Delegation	<p>Review the current scheme of delegation in relation to situations where the Parish/Town Council hold an opposing view to the Head of Planning which results in a significant number of applications going to committee (except Householder and advert applications). Refer to <a href="#">LGA Probity in Planning</a>, and <a href="#">PAS best practice guidance on schemes of delegation</a></p>	Planning	<p>This will be looked at but paused in light of expected Government changes to the national scheme of delegation.</p> <p>Members noted that town and parish councils need to feel heard and requested information on how many applications have been referred to members on this basis.</p>	<p>I. To be reviewed (if still relevant) following the outcome of the government consultation.</p>

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	<p>Note: However, this recommendation for action should await the result of the Government Consultation on Planning Committee - <a href="#">technical consultation on reforms to Planning Committees</a> (unless that appears unlikely to happen in the immediate future) and be amended in light of any Government changes.</p>			
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